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CONCEPTS OF HAPPINESS:
THE INFLUENCE OF LUDWIG FEUERBACH
ON THE FICTION OF GEORGE ELIOT

by

JENNIFER MARY BRADSHAW

Dissertation submitted to
the School of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the Ph.D. degree in English

University of Ottawa



Jennifer Bradshaw, Ottawa, Canada, 1990



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ABSTRACT

The search for happiness is a vital theme in George Eliot's fiction. Eliot's treatment of this theme owes much to nineteenth-century utilitarianism, which stemmed from Jeremy Bentham's "greatest happiness principle," and the religious demythologization of the German philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach, who interpreted Christianity in terms of human consciousness. In 1854, Eliot translated Feuerbach's Das Wesen des Christenthums, in which Feuerbach describes the components of man's being as feeling, thinking, and willing.

George Eliot saw an opposition between utilitarianism and Feuerbach's humanism. This fact is fundamental for our understanding of the rhetorical structure of Eliot's moral universe. In her fiction, utilitarianism as utility, the pursuit of pleasure, utility, avoidance of pain, and calculation of pleasure over pain (the "felicific calculus") is shown by her, paradoxically, often to lead to wrongdoing, suffering, and even crime. For some of her protagonists, however, it contributes to a primary stage of their development, since their consequent suffering may lead to a greater awareness. The movement from suffering to sympathy in

Eliot's novels is profoundly Feuerbachian, for it involves the "essence" of Christianity which he described as man's essential nature. Despite her scepticism as to the efficacy of Bentham's principle of utility, Eliot endorsed the utilitarian principle of consequences as a fundamental aspect of her ethic.

A detailed analysis of the way in which Eliot counterpoints utilitarianism with Feuerbach's ethic in Scenes of Clerical Life, Adam Bede, "The Lifted Veil," The Mill on the Floss, Silas Marner, "Brother Jacob," Romola, Felix Holt, Middlemarch, and Daniel Deronda demonstrates that, in Eliot's fiction, true self-fulfilment, involving moral freedom, is consistently derived from adherence to the fundamental laws of human nature, as embodied in Feuerbach's particular description of the human "essence." Although other philosophical and psychological influences can be discerned, certain characteristics of Eliot's fiction, such as the mélange of idealism and an abiding sense of human limitation and alienation, may be traced to her confrontation with utilitarianism through a Feuerbachian morality.

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PREFACE ON EDITIONS

The recently published Clarendon edition of George Eliot's novels published by Oxford University Press (London) has been used wherever possible; for those works not yet available in this edition, I have referred to the Cabinet edition published by William Blackwood and Sons (Edinburgh and London: [1878-1885]), which contains George Eliot's final corrections. In my textual references, the page number follows the chapter number, and where necessary (as in most of the Cabinet edition volumes), the volume number precedes the chapter number.

The Cabinet edition has been used for Adam Bede, "The Lifted Veil," "Silas Marner," "Brother Jacob," and Romola; the Clarendon edition for Scenes of Clerical Life, The Mill on the Floss, Felix Holt, Middlemarch, and Daniel Deronda.

Gordon S. Haight's edition of The George Eliot Letters, 9 vols. (New Haven: Yale UP, 1954-1978), is referred to throughout as GEL, and his George Eliot: A Biography (London: Oxford UP, 1968), is referred to as Biog. References to the Harper edition (New York: n.d.) of John Walter Cross's George Eliot's Life are given as Life.

I have, of course, used George Eliot's translation of Ludwig Feuerbach's The Essence of Christianity (New York: Harper & Row, 1957), and refer to this in the text as EC. References to Feuerbach's Gesammelte Werke, edited by Werner Schuffenhauer, 20 vols. (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1967-1988), appear in the text as GW, while references to his Sämtliche Werke, edited by Wilhelm Bolin and Friedrich Jodl, 13 vols. in 12 (Stuttgart-Bad Canstatt: Fromann Verlag, 1959-1964), appear as SW.

INTRODUCTION

The notion of happiness is recurrent in George Eliot's fiction which, like Aristotle's Ethics, distinguishes between pleasure and happiness. The views on human well-being expressed in Eliot's novels relate to utilitarianism--the nineteenth-century inheritance of Jeremy Bentham's "greatest happiness of the greatest number"--and the religious demythologization of Ludwig Feuerbach. The latter has been considered with special reference to Eliot's literary interpretation of Feuerbach's concept of "essence," or essential nature, as denoted in his Essence of Christianity (1841).¹

Feuerbach's interpretation of Christianity is especially akin to certain "moral sense" theories which stress such things as conscience and an innate moral intuition of what is right and good. For Feuerbach, the highest element of thought is reason and the highest or most noble element of feeling is love, which manifests itself in compassion and forgiveness, in altruism. Bentham, for his part, in a challenging statement propounds a doctrine in which mankind is placed under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure:

It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do. On the one hand the standard of right and wrong, on the other the chain of causes and effects, are fastened to their throne. They govern us in all we do, in all we say, in all we think. . . . The principle of utility recognises this subjection, and assumes it for the foundation of a system, the object of which is to rear the fabric of felicity by the hands of reason and of law. Systems which attempt to question it, deal in sounds instead of sense, in caprice instead of reason, in darkness instead of light.²

His principle approves or disapproves of every action whatsoever according to the tendency which it appears to have to augment or diminish the happiness of the party whose interest is in question.

George Eliot is on the whole unconvinced by Bentham's arguments; indeed, her treatment of utilitarianism reflects a bias. Yet many practical questions are left unanswered by Feuerbach's inspiring guidelines about the essential nature of man. For instance, how is his theory concerning the necessary interrelationship of thought and feeling to be implemented, given a particular set of circumstances? (Bentham provides a practical answer, however imperfect, in his "felicific calculus.") Karl Marx, in his "Theses on Feuerbach" (written in 1845 and found by Engels forty years later in an old notebook), criticized Feuerbach's idealism. Noting that Feuerbach resolved the religious essence into the human, Marx argued that the human essence was no abstraction inherent in each individual; it was the

ensemble of the social relations (thesis VI).³ As will be seen, in Eliot's novels, redolent of Feuerbachian philosophy as they are, the social relationships of communities and classes are indeed explored, in particular sets of circumstances varying from industrial and rural England to Renaissance Florence, as are the fates of the individual human beings.

T. L. S. Sprigge has recently maintained, in The Rational Foundations of Ethics, that "a kind of utilitarianism" emerges as the one fully rational form of ethics, and today some critics believe that utilitarian premises are irreconcilable with any moral theory. Others have noted persuasive and powerful tendencies toward the synthesis of opposing tendencies.⁴ In her fiction, Eliot constantly wrestles with this unresolved problem, testing the possibility of replacing simple utilitarianism with a more profound theory.

Other influences besides that of Bentham also have a bearing on the Feuerbachian framework. Comte's influence certainly cannot be ignored. Eliot's Feuerbachian stress on feeling and the common humanity of man is also profoundly Wordsworthian. Benedict de Spinoza, whose Ethics Eliot translated, influenced Feuerbach as he would George Eliot; Feuerbach's Essence of Religion and his Essence of Christianity are also indebted to Hegel. I have given some consideration to each of these influences,

and to those of her immediate circle, such as Charles Bray, Charles Hennell, George Henry Lewes, and Herbert Spencer.

The implicit confrontation between Feuerbach and Bentham enacted in Eliot's fiction is displayed in the following pages. Eliot's idealism usually encompasses Feuerbachian assumptions, whereas her subversive irony is intended to undercut many utilitarian ones. Her difficulty in maintaining a consistent and convincing stance could reflect a struggle against rational positions from, at times, an intuitionist position. But her analysis of happiness and the human situation is still immensely valuable for the "kind of fragrance of moral elevation" that Henry James spoke of in his Partial Portraits.⁶ As James said, this arises out of her generous, far-sighted vision and "constant effort to hold high the torch in the dusky spaces of man's conscience."

Notes

¹In 1854 Eliot translated Feuerbach's Das Wesen des Christenthums, 2nd, rev. ed. (Leipzig: O. Wigand, 1843). The Essence of Christianity, trans. Marian Evans (London: John Chapman, 1854). Future references, unless otherwise specified, will be to the Harper Torchback edition, trans. George Eliot (New York: Harper, 1957). Textual references will be given as EC. Volume 5 of Feuerbach's Gesammelte Werke, ed. Werner Schuffenhauer (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1973) reproduces the first edition, noting the changes of the second and third editions. Future references to the Gesammelte Werke, 20 vols. (1967-1988), will be given as GW, and to the Sämtliche Werke, ed. Wilhelm Bolin and Friedrich Jodl, 13 vols. in 12 (Stuttgart-Bad Canstatt: Fromann Verlag, 1959-1964), as SW.

²"An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation." Vol. 1 of The Works of Jeremy Bentham, 11 vols., ed. John Bowring (New York: Russell & Russell, 1962) (reproduced from the Bowring edition of 1843) ch. 1, s. 1, p. 1. Future references to Bentham's works, unless otherwise specified, will be to this edition (in textual references as IPML). The other edition used is the Clarendon edition, ed. J. H. Burns and H. L. A. Hart (Methuen: London, 1970). On Bentham, see also Appendix B.

³[Karl] Marx and [Friedrich] Engels, The Holy Family, or Critique of Critical Criticism: Against Bruno Bauer and Company [1844] (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975) was written largely under the influence of Feuerbach and contains elements of the criticism of Feuerbach's metaphysical and contemplative materialism given by Marx in his "Theses on Feuerbach" (10). Engels's view of Feuerbach's idealism is propounded in his book Ludwig Feuerbach and the Outcome of Classical German Philosophy [1888], ed. C. P. Dutt (New York: International Publishers, 1941). An appendix reproduces Marx's "Theses on Feuerbach" (82-84); according to Eugene Kamenka this version is not wholly true to the original; The Ethical Foundations of Marxism (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962) 125. Kamenka views Marx's and Engels's positions as being unsound; they are claiming that all truth is relative, while putting forward their own claims as "absolute," i.e., unambiguous, truth (126-31).

⁴(London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1988). Sprigge has advocated a utilitarian position enriched by the incorporation of elements from other positions in moral philosophy, in particular those of self-realization ethics and rights-based theories, even suggesting that there is an affinity between utilitarianism and a certain kind of metaphysical idealism (177). See also Jerome B. Schneewind, "Moral Problems and Moral Philosophy in the Victorian Period," Victorian Studies 9 (1965-1966), supp.: 29-46. Diana Postlethwaite, Making It Whole: A Victorian Circle and the Shape of Their World (Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1984) (e.g., Preface), and Wendell V. Harris, The Omnipresent Debate: Empiricism and Transcendentalism in Nineteenth-Century English Prose (DeKalb: Northern Illinois UP, 1981) (e.g., 17).

⁵(1888; rpt. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood P, 1970) 61-62.

CHAPTER 1
THE EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE
OF GEORGE ELIOT

George Eliot's philosophical affinities can be traced to her emotional and intellectual development before she began to write fiction. Her childhood and early life were spent at Griff in Warwickshire; she moved to Coventry in 1841 and won acceptance into the profoundly intellectual circle of the Brays and the Hennells; and finally her work at the quarterly Westminster Review in London brought her into contact with leading personalities, and with radical, philosophical, and scientific opinion of the day. The following account will omit many biographical details and represents research on the formation of George Eliot's philosophy that is particularly relevant to the thesis.

CHILDHOOD AND EARLY LIFE AT GRIFF

Mary Ann Evans attended a dame's school, then at the age of five a boarding school a few miles away at Attleborough, near her Aunt Everard's, where her sister Chrissey was a boarder, then a school in Nuneaton. Here, the principal teacher, Maria Lewis, influenced her in her direction of Evangelicalism, an important factor in her

early life. At the age of thirteen, she went to the Misses Franklin's school in Coventry, where the pupils attended Mr Franklin's nonconformist chapel. At this school she wrote her earliest manuscripts in her notebook, an essay about affectation and conceit and a story "Edward Neville."¹

She was deeply attached to her local environment, and especially to her father and her brother Isaac: her youthful, uncritical love of places and people created an enduring foundation for human sympathy.² In his Life of George Eliot, John Walter Cross, whom she later married, described her as capable of the keenest enjoyment and the keenest suffering, while Charles Bray from an earlier vantage point noted that her character had its sunny and shady side.³ Many of her early letters expressed concern about her egoism and a belief that those people who were happiest were not engaged in "projects for earthly bliss" (GEL I, 6). She was already concerned with happiness as a philosophical principle. To Maria Lewis, in August 1838, she expressed the view that, though men talked about the inequalities of this world, happiness was very equally distributed. Here, she was speaking of happiness as connected with externals, noting piously however that "those who have the Lord for their portion enjoy satisfaction utterly unknown to those without hope and without God in the world" (GEL I, 8).

She later attributed the first unsettlement of her orthodox views to having read Walter Scott. They were further shaken when, at the age of thirteen, she read Bulwer Lytton's Devereux, a story about a virtuous atheist which suggested that religion was not a requisite to moral excellence. She may have read Bulwer's utilitarian novel, Pelham, and Paul Clifford, which implicitly criticizes the order of society--and perhaps also his England and the English (1833), with its Appendix, J. S. Mill's "Remarks on Bentham's Philosophy." There would be a remarkable similarity between Mill's criticism of Bentham and the approach to Benthamism expressed in Eliot's fiction. Her thorough reading of Wordsworth by her twentieth birthday was another important landmark.⁴

THE COVENTRY CIRCLE

At Coventry, Mary Ann Evans moved into a stimulating new intellectual world. The Brays were Unitarians, and Charles Bray had undergone a religious conversion and subsequent disillusionment similar to Mary Ann Evans's present experience. His Philosophy of Necessity (1841), as well as Charles Hennell's Inquiry Concerning the Origin of Christianity (1838; second edition, 1841), which drew similar rational conclusions to German scholars, contributed to her mental ferment.⁵ She inscribed her name and the date, "Jany 1st, 1842," in her copy of Hennell's book, which she read twice around this time.

Notably, he stated that a devotion to the cause of happiness could exist with or without a creed (xiv). Only two months earlier she had made an enigmatic confession to Maria Lewis. Her whole soul had been engrossed in the most interesting of all enquiries, possibly leading in a direction that would startle Maria Lewis: "my only desire is to know the truth, my only fear to cling to error" (GEL I, 120-21). Five years later, in 1847, Mary Ann Evans reread Hennell's book. While thoroughly appreciating its dry wit, she was now more sceptical than Hennell.

Mary Ann Evans's reading of Charles Bray's Philosophy of Necessity was perhaps her first formal introduction to the utilitarian philosophy. His book was a synthesis, an interpretation of Bentham's "greatest happiness principle."⁶ In his Preface, Bray expressed his debt to Bentham, and in the book he quoted Bentham's Deontology extensively.⁷ He concurred in Bentham's view that man's only motive is the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain, that the immoral action is a miscalculation of self-interest, and that "for a man not to pursue what he deems likely to produce to him the greatest sum of enjoyment, is in the very nature of things impossible" (258-59).

Whatever her initial reactions to Bray's book, Eliot had reservations after translating Feuerbach. On November 15, 1857, the year in which Blackwood's Magazine published

the three stories of her Scenes of Clerical Life, her response to his proposal of a second edition was lukewarm, and she mentioned her especial dislike of a passage

in which you appear to consider the disregard of individuals as a lofty condition of mind. My own experience and development deepen every day my conviction that our moral progress may be measured by the degree in which we sympathize with individual suffering and individual joy.

(GEL II, 403; emphasis mine)

She was almost certainly reacting to an application of Bentham's method that would also have horrified the "master," wherein Bray argued that an old woman's murder might contribute to the general good.⁸ Nonetheless, Bray's book had inevitably affected her outlook, and her view about the "softening" effect of suffering was probably derived from him.⁹ She had absorbed Bray's message that happiness was the end to be sought by man.

Her emerging views on egoism probably owe something to Bentham via Bray, but her detection of a difference in quality between different kinds of egoism is more in line with Bentham's disciple and critic, John Stuart Mill. In his 1838 article on Bentham, Mill had criticized Bentham for ignoring the role of conscience and human need for sympathy and objects of admiration and reverence. In his "Utilitarianism" (1861), Mill would argue that there were qualitative differences between pleasures, and reject the purely quantitative approach of Bentham's "felicific

calculus."¹⁰ Cara Bray was certainly influenced by Mill, as an entry read in her Commonplace Book shows; a definition of happiness here is an existence made up of few and transitory pains, many and varied pleasures, with a decided predominance of the active over the passive, and having as the foundation of the whole no expectation of more from life than it is capable of bestowing.¹¹

Bentham did not in fact see any basic difference between "free will" and "Necessity," and Bray also regarded choice as not entirely invalidated by the cause-effect sequence, since he emphasized that knowledge of causes and their effects in similar circumstances should be used to calculate the best chance of pleasure or happiness (these synonyms for well-being were interchangeable in the utilitarian philosophy).¹² What has sometimes been considered inconsistency in Eliot's handling of the freewill/determinism issue may well be attributed to her early exposure to the utilitarian doctrine, especially in Bray's Philosophy of Necessity.

In Eliot's early experience, sorrow and joy were closely related. At the age of twenty-two, she could "ruminate on possibilities" without dreading lest her conclusions be everlastingly fatal (GEL I, 143-44). But her stand on religion had led to estrangement from her father. Banished to Griff, staying with Isaac and his wife, she discovered that happiness derived from within:

her own deep love for her father was the mainspring of her existence. Thus, in March 1842, she felt herself to be acquiring a new independence of "external good"--wealth or status, for instance, which in Bentham's and Aristotle's philosophies contributed to happiness. However, to her it was nature and thoughts of the good and the great that were indispensable; in her comparative isolation, she became more impressed with the "duty" of finding happiness.

The advent of Sara Hennell to the Brays' residence of Rosehill in July 1842 assuaged Mary Ann Evans's loneliness. During the last illness of Sara Hennell's sister, Evans found it almost enviable to have the care of a sickroom, "with its twilight and tiptoe stillness and helpful activity" (GEL I, 156). The painful fact of death must be accepted, because each stage of joy and suffering contributed to life's wholeness and beauty (GEL I, 159). At this time Mary Ann Evans was continually revising her views on religion. She had at first felt liberated from the "wretched giant's bed of dogmas" on which her soul had been "racked and stretched ever since it began to think" (GEL I, 162). But by October 9, 1843 her original feeling of freedom had faded. The intellectual errors that had grown into the living body of religion could not be removed without destroying its vitality.

Early in 1844, now happier than she had been

earlier, she began to translate Strauss's Life of Jesus. While Strauss's thesis that Christianity exhibited the growth of a religious myth was similar to Hennell's, Strauss's more scholarly work went further, approaching what he admitted in his "Concluding Dissertation" to be an act of desecration. Even while Mary Ann Evans wearied of Strauss's perpetual debunking of miracles, she was being prepared for the more direct psychological interpretation of Ludwig Feuerbach. In May, she told Sara Hennell that she really did like reading Strauss; he was so "klar und ideenvoll" (GEL I, 218). On June 18, she wrote to Cara Bray: "tell [Sara] I do not wish to distress her conscience with the purchase of an atheistic book, but I feel sure there is a 'Bauer's [sic] Wesen des Christenthums' published at Berlin." Gordon S. Haight has noted that no book by Ferdinand Christian Baur, founder of the Tübingen school of biblical criticism, bears this title and suggested that she was at that time thinking of Ludwig Feuerbach's Das Wesen des Christenthums (GEL I, 177, and n. 9). Possibly she confused him not with Baur but with Bruno Bauer, who wrote searching criticisms of the Gospels from 1840 to 1842. Her translation of The Life of Jesus, Critically Examined by David Friedrich Strauss from the Fourth German Edition was published by Chapman in three volumes in June 1846. At least one review provoked some response on her part, that of the

Prospective Review.¹³ On the whole, she thought it was shallow and unfair.

Sara Hennell wrote to her mother, on September 25, 1846, that Mary Ann looked "very brilliant" and she fancied she must be writing her novel.¹⁴ In fact, Mary Ann Evans was writing a number of anonymous reviews for Bray's Coventry Herald, and some essays entitled "Poetry and Prose from the Notebook of an Eccentric," published therein between December 4, 1846 and February 19, 1847, which are suggestive of Feuerbach's influence.¹⁵ This was her first published original work, except for a poem entitled "Farewell," which had appeared in the Christian Observer, January 1840. These essays looked forward to her later work. For example, an "Introductory" essay about the dying Macarthy, who bequeathed his writings to a friend, anticipated Latimer of "The Lifted Veil." "The Wisdom of a Child" concerned the "true" philosophy and indicated Mary Ann Evans's anti-utilitarian stance at this time. The Hamadryad "fable with a great moral" anticipated a major later concern of Eliot's fiction: egoism.

Evans's translation of Strauss had not assuaged her desire for knowledge. A specific subject she wanted to work out was the "superiority of the consolations of philosophy to those of (so-called) religion" (GEL I, 240). This Boethian enterprise, which preoccupied her at the end

of 1847, was probably the germ of her proposed work "The Idea of a Future Life." Already, she was applying a psychological interpretation of religion to her own experience; the prophecy of Daniel was seen as an allegory of her own life, where her passions and vain fancies were to be subdued by the spirit of love, "the Catholicism of the Universe" (GEL I, 242). She also composed a fanciful tale about a sprite, a "poor sketch of a soul" found by the dark-eyed maiden (Sara Hennell) and those other bright and good mortals (the Brays and the Hennells); "they pitied and helped it, so that at last it grew to think and to love" (GEL I, 273). Eliot's "doctrine of sympathy" grew as she came to recognize the full extent of her own need for love.

She came under more stress as her father's health deteriorated. By February 1848, now in her twenty-ninth year, she wrote to her friend John Sibree: "Evils, even sorrows, are they not all negations? . . . The intellect by its analytic power, restrains the fury with which [the passions and senses] rush to their own destruction, the moral nature purifies beautifies and at length transmutes them" (GEL I, 251-52). This view of sorrows and the passions seems to derive more from Benedict de Spinoza than Charles Bray, for whom, in July 1842, she had translated part of Spinoza's Ethics. On February 18, 1847, she had referred to a work by Spinoza that Bray had

evidently borrowed from Dr Brabant. On February 28, she had asked Sara to obtain a copy of the same edition; this may have been the Tractatus Theologico-Politicus. She had undoubtedly discussed Spinoza with Bray.¹⁶

During her father's illness, she attributed to herself a false outer life trying to impose itself on a true inner life. Now, she recognized that thought was the matrix of creation, and that sympathy grew out of the moral life (GEL I, 251). Creative intellect and love together would cast out the demons of egotism. However, her conviction that happiness derived from doing one's duty was reinforced. By April 1848 she had discovered some of the "sweet uses" of adversity, considering trouble to be only a deepened gaze into life. Yet by May 1848, on holiday in St Leonard's with her father, she experienced a "sort of madness," a loss of identity. She castigated her "fit of sensitiveness" as egotism and mental idleness. In June, she wrote to Charles Bray from St Leonard's: "thought and love are active, thought the formative power, love the vitalizing, there can be no sadness" (GEL I, 265-66); for her, they contributed to "the highest species of faith." Such purging experiences brought a necessary renewal for the soul; they were conducive to attainment of a "fount of truth" (GEL I, 264). After two months, they returned to Foleshill. She had undergone a metamorphosis, having transcended the philosophy of self-interest on

which she had been consistently nurtured. A welcome consolation had been afforded by her reading of Rousseau, George Sand, and Thomas à Kempis's Imitatione Christi, a book whose piety had its foundations in the depths of the "divine-human" soul (GEL I, 278).¹⁷

Spinoza, however, was her main project, and by April 1849 she had begun translating his Tractatus. She was patently happy with the task, which was "such a rest to her mind."¹⁸ This translation was an important continuation of Evans's former involvement with the "higher criticism." In his plea for religious liberty, Spinoza maintained true religion consisted of simple piety independent of philosophical speculations; he deduced the dogmas framed by theologians to be based on superstition, resulting from fear. He conceived that:

a man's true happiness consists only in wisdom, and the knowledge of the truth, not at all in the fact that he is wiser than others, or that others lack such knowledge: such considerations do not increase his wisdom or true happiness.¹⁹

Mary Ann Evans's attendance at her father's sickbed was evidently a salutary as well as sorrowful experience. To Charles Bray, in May 1849, she confessed that these were "the happiest days of life" to her: "The one deep strong love I have known has now its highest exercise and fullest reward--the worship of sorrow is the worship for mortals" (GEL I, 283-84). Her reverential feelings had been turned toward human sorrow. Shortly before his

death, she confessed that without her father it would seem as if a part of her moral nature were gone.

The Brays took her to the Continent to recuperate. Mary Ann Evans wished to stay in Geneva, and on July 25, Bray deposited her in a pension, and returned with Cara to Coventry. Evans's time in Geneva turned out to be happy and rewarding. The D'Albert Durades, with whom she eventually lodged, exhibited none of the meanness and worldliness that she heartily despised. She loved the scenery of Geneva; however, England was the land of duty and affection. On her return, she reviewed Robert William Mackay's Progress of the Intellect as Exemplified in the Religious Development of the Greeks and the Hebrews, published by John Chapman in 1850.²⁰ In this important early review, George Eliot's sensitive awareness of human error, her positivistic views, and the optimistic meliorism of her fictional "experiments in life" were all articulated.

LONDON AND THE WESTMINSTER REVIEW

George Eliot moved to London, where her social and intellectual life expanded further through her work at the Westminster Review. Among its notable contributors were George Henry Lewes and Herbert Spencer.²¹ She soon formed a firm friendship with Spencer, and read his Social Statics; or the Conditions Essential to Human Happiness, which outlined his "evolutionary utilitarianism," objected

to Bentham's method rather than his principle, and offered an alternative. Spencer argued that happiness, the "Divine Idea," as he called it, was a certain state of consciousness; that the means to happiness was exercise of the faculties.²² The essence of ethics lay in cooperating with evolution.²³ In Diana Postlethwaite's view, Spencer's Social Statics is no less than an attempt to synthesize two opposing schools of social theory: Shaftesbury's moral sense school with Bentham's greatest happiness of the greatest number.²⁴

On holiday at Broadstairs, in Kent, Eliot wrote to Spencer three times.²⁵ Responding to her invitation, he joined her, probably on Saturday, July 10, 1852, staying nearby. However, he was unable to bring himself to matrimony through his inability, however unphilosophic, to reconcile himself to her lack of formal beauty. In a passionate, undated letter which she appears to have handed to him following his rejection of her love, she pleaded with him not to forsake her (GEL VIII, 56-57). In a letter to Charles Bray of July 13, she spoke of her "burthen of sadness" (GEL II, 43). But by July 21 she was recovering. In correspondence with Bray, she told him she was reading Aristotle "to find out what is the chief good" (GEL II, 46); for Aristotle, it was happiness, arrived at through virtuous action as well as contemplation. Her continuing interest in Aristotle's Ethics, even up to her notetaking for her last, unwritten novel about the

Napoleonic Wars, would have been fostered by George Henry Lewes, who came to replace Spencer in her affections.²⁶

Spencer made Eliot aware that the classification of the sciences by Auguste Comte, also known for his "Religion of Humanity," was not perfect, as, according to Spencer, she had naively supposed.²⁷ In an introduction to a 1910 edition of the Bridges translation of A General View of Positivism, Frederic Harrison defined positivism as partaking of a system of philosophy and a scheme of social regeneration, harmonizing them under one dominant conception that was equally philosophic and social: "'Its primary object,' writes Comte, 'is twofold: to generalize our scientific conceptions and to systematize the art of social life.'"²⁸ Eliot later considered that the first chapter of the fourth volume of his Système de Politique positive was his finest. Comte's comprehensive synthesis provided her with numerous insights based on historical, social, scientific, and political considerations.²⁹ Yet Eliot later turned down her positivist friend Frederic Harrison's suggestion that she write a book illustrating Comte's thesis, not wishing to submit her aesthetic teaching to the confines of a Comtian doctrine. She answered that avowed utopias did not work on the emotions (GEL IV, 300).³⁰

Through her work for the Westminster, Eliot had become increasingly familiar with John Stuart Mill's

writings;³¹ his Logic was an invaluable companion to her. Less satisfactory, in her view, was his article in the October 1852 issue of the Westminster, which was sharply critical of the orthodox moral philosophy of the Cambridge philosopher William Whewell (GEL II, 61).³² In his Lectures on the History of Moral Philosophy in England (1852), Whewell had criticized other writers on moral philosophy, particularly those who derived their ethical conclusions not from internal intuition but from an external standard, especially that of utility, or the tendency to happiness (Bentham's definition), as the principle or test of morality.

In the topical debate between utilitarianism and intuitionism, Whewell divided schemes of morality into two kinds. The first asserted that the law of human action was to aim at some external object (external to the mind which aims), such as pleasure, or utility, or the greatest happiness of the greatest number, as its true end, and the second would regulate human action by an internal principle, such as conscience or a moral faculty, or duty, or rectitude, or the superiority of reason to desire. He held that the latter (independent morality, as opposed to dependent morality) was the true scheme. Mill saw this definition as unfair to utilitarianism: terms such as conscience were as much a part of the ethics of utility as intuitionism. Mill went on to defend Bentham, and this

defence preoccupied him more than the deficiencies in Bentham's scheme of human nature and of life, and the consequent want of breadth in his secondary principles (174). Very likely this ardent defence of utilitarianism was the reason why Eliot found his article "unsatisfactory." Eliot had by now been exposed to several types and variations of utilitarianism, through Bray, Spencer, and J. S. Mill, exponents of a broader (if less logical) variety than Bentham's. She had also become versed in the debate between utility and intuitionism, particularly the expositions of Whewell and Mill.

In her loss of faith in the utilitarian philosophy Eliot was following the trend of the times.³³ Although at the opening of the nineteenth century utilitarianism was the creed beloved by radical reformers, a certain disillusionment followed the passing of the Poor Law Act of 1834, a law based largely on utilitarian principles. By the middle of the century the revulsion against the utilitarian philosophy--expressed by Dickens in Oliver Twist (1837-38) and Hard Times (1854)--was in full swing, though its basic economic applications were not fully challenged until the advent of socialist writers such as Karl Marx.³⁴

However, certain pro-utilitarian views were expounded in an article in the July 1853 number of the Westminster which Eliot probably edited. In "Young

Criminals," Caroline Francis Cornwallis argued that the present system of reforming young offenders was inefficient and proposed a solution based on what might be called Benthamite laws of man's nature, in which pleasure, present or remote, was the motive for action, and pain, or uneasiness, was uncongenial and avoided.³⁵ According to the writer, the usual beginnings of crime were but the irregular development of this instinctive longing for pleasure. She argued that the solution lay not in solitary confinement but in educating the young criminal (Bentham's major concern had, of course, been reform of the penal system). Eliot's fiction would show her expanding on the idea that the search for pleasure and the avoidance of pain is the basic motivation for crime. Her friendship with George Combe, the well-known philanthropic reformer and phrenologist, familiarised her with the topic of crime and prison reform.³⁶

The first number of the New Series of the Westminster Review of January 1852 contained a review by Eliot of Carlyle's Life of John Sterling (1851). A certain affinity to Feuerbach, whose work she was planning to translate,³⁷ can be detected in her assertion:

This 'Life of Sterling' is a touching monument of the capability human nature possesses of the highest love, the love of the good and beautiful in character, which is, after all, the essence of piety. (Essays 51)

For her, "piety" (dutifulness in religion) is evocative of

Feuerbach's conception of religion as man's ideal nature. Moreover, like Feuerbach, she sees love as the central element in religion, grounds it firmly in human nature, and links it to morality. In the review of Carlyle's book, worship of the ideal qualities in human nature is revealed to be her "religion."

On June 18, 1853, Chapman advertised the Feuerbach translation, together with The Idea of a Future Life, which had been in Eliot's mind for some time. Her primary task until her departure from the Westminster Review was to translate Feuerbach's Das Wesen des Christenthums, helped by Sara Hennell, who checked the sheets sent to her.³⁸ Eliot now thoroughly aligned herself with Feuerbach: "With the ideas of Feuerbach I everywhere agree. . . ." She had found the proof-reading "really a pleasure," opening up afresh to her what there was "of truth and beauty in the book" (GEL II, 153, 155). In exposing the truths and the contradictions of Christianity to her, Feuerbach had emphasized the outer life and the inner life, of which the latter has relation to his species--to his general, as distinguished from his individual, nature:

Man is himself at once I and thou; he can put himself in the place of another, for this reason, that to him his species, his essential nature, and not merely his individuality, is an object of thought. (EC 2)

The doctrine of original sin characteristic of

Christianity was, in Feuerbach's view, opposed to this idea of the species. His universal notion of the species led Eliot at last to understand that her troubles were important only to her own consciousness, "which is but as a globule of dew on a rose-leaf that at mid-day there will be no trace of" (GEL II, 156).

Feuerbach's interpretation of religion, which was not only a theory of personality but an ethic, was to influence a notable variety of persons besides George Eliot, including the radical followers of Hegel, the founders of Russian Marxism, the revolutionary poet Herwegh, the realist novelist Gottfried Keller, Richard Wagner, and, most notably, Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx. Just as Bentham's theories were disseminated beyond local boundaries, Feuerbach's thought had a wide impact.³⁹ Feuerbach saw force of will, reason, and love as absolute perfections of being, man's highest powers--"Man exists to think, to love, and to will" (EC 3)--and equated happiness and divinity.⁴⁰

The Essence of Christianity, translated from the second German edition by Marian Evans, translator of "Strauss's Life of Jesus," was published in the second week of July 1854 as No. VI of Chapman's Quarterly Series. (Eliot's Idea of a Future Life never appeared.) The reviews tended to be violently hostile or, like the Leader, ignored the book entirely (Biog. 158). The review

in the Spectator, although competent and informed, was disappointing, and the one in the Unitarian Prospective Review exemplified an uncomprehending attitude toward this "painful" book. However, a glowing review by Sara Hennell praising Eliot's translation appeared in the Coventry Herald of July 7, 1854.⁴¹

Recalling Feuerbach's euphoric disquisition on the nature of love, Gordon S. Haight has suggested that the sensual side of her nature developed while she was translating The Essence of Christianity.⁴² Here, we must not discount Chapman's personality. Earlier, Eliot had fallen under the magnetic spell of this womaniser. Her subsequent disillusion, as well as her affair with Spencer, probably contributed to her Spinozan view that the passions needed governance by reason, or "rational emotion."

What she now felt for Lewes was a product of both love and thought. Eliot had found a partner with whom she could fully share her intellectual interests.⁴³ Later, Lewes would not only support his four children but provide Eliot with the loving appreciation she needed and relieve her from the strain of coping with many practical matters. At present, she was unable to marry him because of his inability to obtain a divorce from his unfaithful wife, Agnes. However, in defiance of public opinion, Eliot chose at the age of thirty-four to join her life to his.

At the time of their departure, July 19, 1854, Eliot sent a brief note to the Brays and Sara Hennell to say that she was leaving (GEL II, 166). On holiday together in Germany after Eliot had left the Westminster, she helped Lewes with his book on Goethe and wrote some articles. Most important, she began to translate Spinoza's Ethics. She was to complete it less than two years later, on January 19, 1856. Like Feuerbach's Essence of Christianity, Spinoza's Ethics was to remain a lasting influence.

The articles Eliot wrote from the time she left the Westminster Review to the time she began to write fiction indicate the direction in which her thought was consolidating. Her views were pro-Feuerbach, anti-evangelical, and anti-utilitarian. Her affiliation to Feuerbach was apparent in her July 1855 review of Geraldine Jewsbury's Constance Herbert. Eliot attacked her "copy-book morality" as calculated prudence. She observed that true development was undermined by substituting something extrinsic as a motive to action, instead of the immediate impulse of love or justice which alone made an action truly moral,⁴⁴ indicating her alignment with Feuerbach on the inner life and spontaneity of an innately virtuous action.⁴⁵ For Feuerbach, this spontaneity arises out of the passive, receptive nature of the heart (EC 9). Her October 1855 review of Tennyson's Maud confirmed further her alignment with Feuerbach in

warmly praising Tennyson's In Memoriam for enshrining "the highest tendency of this age." For her, its deep significance lay in its "sanctification of human love as a religion."⁴⁶

That same month, October 1855, she reviewed for the Leader D. M. J. Meiklejohn's translation of Immanuel Kant's Kritik der reinen Vernunft, which had made the eminent German philosopher available to English readers.⁴⁷ Kant's "categorical imperative"--in the Critique of Pure Reason--presupposed freedom to perform a right action and imposed a moral obligation to do so, as a law that was universally binding. George Eliot's own Kantian idea of duty originally stemmed from her linking of duty with affection during the period when she kept house for her father at Griff and remained equally strong in her last years. Thus, F. W. H. Myers, a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, described Eliot walking in the Fellows' Garden on a rainy evening in May. Stirred beyond her wont, she took as her text the words "God, Immortality, Duty"--

pronounced, with terrible earnestness, how inconceivable was the first, how unbelievable the second, and yet how peremptory and absolute the third. Never, perhaps, have sterner accents affirmed the sovereignty of impersonal and unrecompensing Law.⁴⁸

For Eliot, such moral imperatives were not purely theoretical, as in Kant's Categorical Imperative; as for Feuerbach, they were grounded in human nature.

In the October 1855 number of the Westminster, she attacked the preaching style of the Scottish evangelist Dr John Cumming as offensive, morally perverse, and antithetical to her doctrine of sympathy. Morality, she now asserted, was dependent on the regulation of feeling by intellect, and the idea of God was moral in its influence only when God was contemplated as sympathizing with the pure elements of human feeling. In this article, her awareness of the necessary interrelation of thought and feeling closely echoed Feuerbach's own insights. As Feuerbach put it, in a formula similar to Comte's: "Love is the subjective reality of the species, as reason is its objective reality" (EC 268).

Her article on the worldliness and other-worldliness of the poet Edward Young, whom she had formerly admired, was published in the Westminster in January 1857; in it, we come closer to George Eliot's essential quarrel with utilitarianism. In a passage on the doctrine of religious reward for virtue in an after-life, she categorically stated: "Fear of consequences is only one form of egoism, which will hardly stand against half-a-dozen other forms of egoism bearing down upon it" (Essays 374). It becomes plain in her articles that the aspects of utilitarianism she most disliked were its apparent accent on numbers rather than individuals, its emphasis on self-interest (Bentham's "self-regarding prudence") which could so

easily become egoism (seen as egotism, meaning selfishness), and the calculation of consequences, as opposed to the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" advocated by Wordsworth in his Preface to the Lyrical Ballads. Certainly her previously established liking for Wordsworth's poetry predisposed her to adopt a Feuerbachian ethic.

In her review of the third volume of Ruskin's Modern Painters, she stressed that the truth of infinite value that he taught was realism, "the doctrine that all truth and beauty are to be attained by a humble and faithful study of nature"; Ruskin was a prophet not only for his teaching of truth, but for his power to compel men's attention and sympathy.⁴⁹ She was also particularly struck by Ruskin's description of classical landscape, especially the hortus amoenus, noting, however, that the medieval feeling for landscape was less utilitarian than the Greek, which tended to press every feature to human service (631-32). At the beginning of Part III of the second volume of Modern Painters, Ruskin had discussed the utility of art, giving to the word "Useful" a more universal meaning than was generally then accepted. Men insolently called themselves Utilitarians, he noted, though, if they had their way, they would turn themselves and their race into vegetables.⁵⁰ Ruskin's call for a universal, inclusive notion of beauty, his love of

honesty, and his belief that other things were important besides wealth were intrinsic aspects of his thought, and of Eliot's. Later, her empirical view of realism would undergo a considerable change as she came to realize the degree of complexity in "knowing" a tenuous, diverse, and differentiated reality. Ruskinian "definite, substantial reality" would grow less definite and less substantial.⁵¹

It was a logical consequence of her involvement with Ruskin that, on holiday in Ilfracombe in May and June 1856, she experienced a constantly growing desire "to escape from all vagueness and inaccuracy into the daylight of distinct, vivid ideas" (GEL II, 251); it heralded her fictional realism.⁵² The "Recollections of Ilfracombe" in Eliot's journal, with its detailed descriptions of nature, and her article on W. H. Riehl's studies of German life manifested her current preoccupation with realism. Her article on Riehl saw the highest function of art to be the extension of our sympathies for "a real knowledge of the People."⁵³ The question of what was required to bring about morality was for Eliot a vital question: "To make men moral, something more is requisite than to turn them out to grass" (Essays 269-70). In fact, sympathies could be extended by the artist, so as to surprise "even the trivial and the selfish into that attitude to what is apart from ourselves" (Essays 270). Like Feuerbach and Comte, Eliot defined morality in terms of a turning aside

from egoism. Eliot's desire to extend the sympathies of the reader through their greater understanding of commonplace characters did not, of course, emerge from her Feuerbachian, Comtian, Ruskinian, or Wordsworthian affinities alone, but from the whole tradition of sympathy in eighteenth-century thought.

In the October 1856 number of the Westminster, her article "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists" was intended to be the vehicle of some wholesome truth as well as of amusement. In it, Eliot criticized several species of writing by women novelists;⁵⁴ none of these novels was realistic. She herself had a genuine contribution to make. First, her own great powers of sympathy had been extended by her reading of such writers as Feuerbach, Comte, Wordsworth, and Spinoza, so that, seeing men and women without idealization, she still could love them as they were, as F. W. H. Myers puts it. Second, her philosophy of happiness had shaped itself into what she felt was a living truth. Her reading of Hennell, Strauss, Comte, and Feuerbach had given her not only an extremely broad understanding of religion but a new ethic, while her reading of Bray, Spencer, and Mill, together with her own experience, had led her to find fault with the prevailing utilitarian ethic. Although Bentham's "greatest happiness principle" had suggested that the philosophical and practical end to be sought by man was pleasure or

happiness, Eliot now fully understood the profound equation between religion and Feuerbach's "ultimate felicity of man." Feuerbach had himself seen his anthropology to constitute a new philosophy (EC xliii), and it was this Feuerbachian philosophy that she would promote in her fiction as energetically as in her reviews and essays.

Urgently wanting now to teach the novel-reading public something of what she herself had learned (later she would admit this didactic purpose), she now entered the ranks of the women novelists--anonymously, since she did not want her fiction to be judged along with theirs. "Silly Novels" was finished on September 12, 1856, and on September 23 she began "The Sad Fortunes of the Reverend Amos Barton."

Notes

¹See George Eliot: A Biography, ed. Gordon S. Haight (London: Oxford UP, 1968) App. 1 (554-62). Many facts about George Eliot's life, not attributed in the text, are from this work and from The George Eliot Letters, edited by Haight in 9 vols. (New Haven: Yale UP, 1954-78). Subsequent references to the George Eliot Letters and to the Biography will be given parenthetically in the text, respectively as GEL and Biog.

²In October 1840, Mary Ann Evans described the surroundings in which she had grown up as having "grown in" to her affections (GEL I, 71). See also GEL I, 243.

³J. W. Cross, ed. George Eliot's Life as Related in Her Letters and Journals, 3 vols. (New York: Harper, n.d.) I, 11. Future references to this work will be given as Life. Charles Bray, Phases of Opinion and Experience

During a Long Life: An Autobiography (London: Longmans, Green [1884] 73, 75; hereafter referred to as Aut.

⁴Wordsworth and Feuerbach had at least one main theme in common: love. On Wordsworth, see Richard Gravil, "Wordsworth's Ontology of Love in 'The Prelude,'" Critical Quarterly 16 (1974): 231-49. It is well known that Mary Ann Evans was a voracious reader.

⁵The Philosophy of Necessity; Or, The Law of Consequences; as Applicable to Mental, Moral, and Social Science (London: Longman, Orme, Brown, Green, & Longmans, 1841). Quotations from Hennell's Inquiry are from the second edition, published in London by T. Allman, 1841. Bray was subsequently accused of theism but denied it; yet his theistic language and conception of a spiritual "force" bore a close surface resemblance to a pantheistic "religion of nature."

Bray's book was a synthesis, an interpretation of Bentham's "greatest happiness principle." In it, Bray chose to concentrate on the cause-effect sequence in nature and human relations that made utilitarianism possible, what he called his "Philosophy of Necessity." The doctrine of Philosophical Necessity, or Law of Consequences, stated that for every consequence, or effect, there is an antecedent cause, which is always able, under like circumstances, to produce the same effect, and can produce no other. Bray concluded that as we attain the knowledge of such causes, we gain mastery over our own condition for good or evil, happiness or misery, pleasure or pain (484).

⁶Bray was not satisfied with the prevailing system either of metaphysics or morality, which were based upon "popular theology." He had read Jonathan Edwards's A Careful and Strict Inquiry into the Modern Prevailing Notions of . . . Freedom of Will (1754), but it was Bentham's Deontology which first directed his course (Aut. 53). Bentham's Deontology; Or, The Science of Morality (1834) had been edited by Bentham's executor, John Bowring. The work reiterated many of the ideas presented in Bentham's famous Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation (1789, 1823), which outlined his principle of utility, and in his Table of the Springs of Action (printed 1815, published 1817). In the latter, he provided the foundation for his principle in his "censorial" characterization of the springs of human action. In his preface to the Deontology, Bowring did not claim to introduce any new ideas, but merely to present the master's ideas so as to appeal to a popular audience.

In fact, the fifth sanction of sympathy was an additional element, present in Bentham's notes but not mentioned in his IPML. See Jeremy Bentham, Deontology Together With a Table of the Springs of Action and the Article on Utilitarianism, ed. Amnon Goldworth (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1983) xxi and 151, n. 1.

⁷See Bray, PN 258.

⁸Bray posited the case of a housebreaking which resulted in the murder of an old woman, the murderer being hanged for the offence. Was it equitable, he asked, that the old woman should be murdered, and the murderer hanged, that the rest of mankind might take warning of their fate? He answered that the consistent Necessitarian would not hesitate to reply in the affirmative; he would regard the parties merely as links in the chain of causation, as "atoms of the great mass of sensation which it appears to be the object of the Deity to produce." They were each made the vehicle of ten thousand more pleasurable sensations than painful ones, and the balance of enjoyment being, in all probability, in favour of the old woman, during their lifetime they were both gainers by the law that rendered their examples efficacious to the good of society. Had it not been for some former example, similar to that which the man himself afterwards furnished, the housebreaker might have murdered the woman ten years before (PN 204-206).

⁹See GEL I, 140. Cf. her letter to Maria Lewis of May 27, 1842. In relation to religion, see Mary Ann Evans's letter of February 28, 1842, in which the language and sentiment echo Bray's Philosophy (GEL I, 296-97).

Bray would have expanded Eliot's horizons in another way when she discovered his infidelity to Cara Bray. He had two illegitimate children by the same woman. The infants were adopted by the Brays, the first very briefly--for some reason the child was unsatisfactory--and the second until her death from consumption at the age of nineteen. Cara Bray was very attached to her adopted daughter. See "George Eliot's Bastards," George Eliot: A Centenary Tribute, ed. Gordon S. Haight and Rosemary T. VanArsdel (London: Macmillan, 1982) 1-10.

¹⁰The concept of virtuous self-denial expanded in Eliot's fiction would usually lie between the extremes of martyr and sycophant. She would usually refer to egoism in a detrimental sense, i.e., as egotism. Mill's theory anticipates Freud's pleasure principle, where the

hedonistic element is central, not in the conscious calculative sense, but as the tendency of the organism toward gratification by the release of tension built up by instinctual energies.

Utilitarianism lends itself to being interpreted in an egoistic way, where the consequences to be considered relate to one's own happiness, or as universalistic, where they relate to everyone's interests. The early utilitarians did not especially distinguish between the two doctrines, although Bentham's recently published marginalia to his Table of the Springs of Action show him to have been well aware of the problem that arises in this connection. "According to utility, proper end: greatest happiness of greatest number. Actual end: each man's own. Hence, from each, in so far as his interest is or appears to him to be adverse to ditto of greatest number, opposite to the principle of utility will naturally be to be expected." Deontology Together With A Table of the Springs of Action and the Article on Utilitarianism, ed. Goldworth, op. cit., 37-38, para. 370. The later ideal utilitarians, such as G. E. Moore, held that states of consciousness could be intrinsically good or bad, and that the goodness or badness of a state of consciousness could depend on things other than pleasure; for example, on various intellectual and aesthetic qualities, such as knowledge and the contemplation of beauty. J. S. Mill took an intermediate position in holding that, although pleasure was a necessary condition for goodness, the intrinsic goodness of a state of mind could depend on things other than pleasure. See also Appendix B on Utilitarianism.

¹¹The Diary and Commonplace Book of Caroline Bray, now in the Coventry and Warwickshire Collection of the Coventry Public Libraries, 72. The quotation is from J. S. Mill's "Utilitarianism" (1861), see Essays on Ethics, Religion and Society (1969), ed. J. M. Robson et al. Collected Works of John Stuart Mill, ed. F. E. L. Priestley, et al., 29 vols. (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1965-1988) 10: 215.

¹²See IPML para. 7, 218 (ed. Bowring; in Clarendon ed., 112, where quotation marks are used in place of italics). See also George Levine, "Determination and Responsibility in the Works of George Eliot," PMLA 77 (1962): 268-79.

¹³[Charles Wicksteed] "Strauss's Life of Jesus," The Prospective Review 2 (1846): 479-520.

¹⁴GEL I, 233, n. 4. According to J. W. Cross, Mrs Bray wrote this to Sara Hennell, Life I, 108. The manuscript in the Beinecke Library at Yale University can be interpreted as consistent with either reading.

¹⁵Republished in 1919 as Early Essays by George Eliot; reprinted (with the exception of "Vice and Sausages") in Essays of George Eliot, ed. Thomas Pinney (New York: Columbia UP; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963); subsequently referred to as Essays. John Kucich regards them as striking borrowings from Feuerbach's inward dialectic. He views Feuerbach's influence on Eliot as relating to an inward dialectic that converts constraints into catalysts for inward desire, for self-completion; he terms these restraints "repression." See Repression in Victorian Fiction: Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot, and Charles Dickens (Berkeley: U of California P, 1987) 127-30.

¹⁶See Appendix B on Spinoza.

¹⁷Now in the Coventry and Warwickshire Collection of the Coventry Public Libraries.

¹⁸GEL I, 280, n. 6. The translation has not been found.

¹⁹Benedict de Spinoza, A Theologico-Political Treatise and A Political Treatise, trans. from the Latin by R. H. M. Elwes (New York: Dover, 1951) 43.

²⁰Westminster Review 54 (Jan. 1851): 353-68 (subsequently referred to as WR); Pinney, Essays 27-45 (28-31).

²¹The Westminster Review (1824-1900) was a journal of the Philosophical Radicals, one of the original founders having been Jeremy Bentham. John Bowring was its first editor. John Chapman bought the London and Westminster Review (1836-1840) from William Edward Hickson and Henry Cole, on condition that the original title be restored. The previous (and more capable) editors were Thomas Falconer, the nominal editor, and J. S. Mill, the real but unnamed editor. For a history of the Westminster Review and list of articles published in it, see The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals, 1824-1900, ed. Walter E. Houghton (Toronto: UP, 1979) 3: 528-705.

²²R. H. Hutton, who anonymously reviewed Spencer's book, thought he did not elaborate sufficiently on this aspect. See "The Ethics of the Voluntary System," The Prospective Review (1852): 57-92. He considered Spencer's theory was a "poor mechanism for arriving at the wishes of the majority" (see 91-92).

²³Harris, The Omnipresent Debate 40.

²⁴Noting the utilitarian underpinnings of Bray's Philosophy of Necessity, Postlethwaite has suggested that Eliot recognized the tension between Bray's and Spencer's ideas, and saw the latter's (usually categorized as evolutionary utilitarianism) as a counter to Benthamite philosophy, coming from the contrary dogma which emphasized the innate foundations of the human mind. Yet, as she notes, ultimately the similarities between Bray and Spencer override their differences, as Spencer, like Bray, attempts to mediate between a science of mind and a system of ethics (183-86). On Spencer's intermediary position in Social Statics, see T. S. Gray, "Is Herbert Spencer's Law of Equal Freedom a Utilitarian or a Rights-Based Theory of Justice?" Journal of the History of Philosophy 26 (April 1988/No. 2): 259-78. Spencer's attempt at a synthesis has affinities with Eliot's desire, recorded by E. Montégut, to reconcile Locke's philosophy with that of Kant; Ecrivains modernes de l'Angleterre, Première série (Paris: Hachette, 1885) 79. The article on George Eliot appeared initially in the Revue des Deux Mondes, March 1883.

²⁵See GEL VIII, 50-52, 56-57, 61; also Selections From George Eliot's Letters, ed. Gordon S. Haight (New Haven: Yale UP, 1985) 100-102, 105.

²⁶She had begun a quarry (as she called it) for this novel; for details, see William Baker, "George Eliot's Projected Napoleonic War Novel: An Unnoted Reading List," Nineteenth-Century Fiction 29 (1975): 453-60. According to Baker, one of the books she read related to the moral situation in which a man is suspected of a great crime of which he is innocent, although "he is indeed guilty of another wrong which society would consider 'practical' and therefore justifiable" (457). The book is now in Dr Williams's Library. The pencilled reading list which Baker discovered includes Aristotle's Ethics and portions of Wordsworth. Baker notes that Eliot appears to have been particularly interested in the Radicals of the period (454-56). Apparently Eliot's proposed novel of intrigue which contains Cyril Ambrose who sacrifices his ambition

of developing a philosophical system to sell his destructive invention would have been concerned with issues that are vitally addressed in her previous novels.

²⁷ See Spencer, Aut. I: 398. Comte classified the sciences according to their decreasing generality and increasing complexity, with mathematics at the base and sociology at the pinnacle of his structure. George Eliot's enthusiasm for Comte had more effect on Lewes than on Spencer.

²⁸ Introduction, A General View of Positivism; or, Summary Exposition of the System of Thought and Life, Adapted to the Great Western Republic, Formed of the Five Advanced Nations: the French, Italian, Spanish, British and German Which, Since the Time of Charlemagne, Have Always Constituted a Political Whole by Auguste Comte, trans. J. H. Bridges, Introd. Frederic Harrison (Paris, 1848; London: Trübner, 1865; Rpt. [London]: Routledge, 1910) viii. Future references to Comte's General View of Positivism will be to the Bridges translation (rpt. Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Reprint Library, 1971). For a recent assessment of Harrison's Comtian positivism, see Charles D. Cashdollar, The Transformation of Theology, 1830-1890: Positivism and Protestant Thought in Britain and America (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1989), 209-220. See also Appendix B on Comte.

²⁹ Comte's synthesis appealed to Eliot more than Karl Marx's more radical belief that the contradictions in the secular world that gave rise to the projection of an ideal, imaginary world must be eliminated. Following the 1848 revolutions, London attracted many radicals, and Karl Marx visited the Westminster with Chapman's friend Andrew Johnson. There is no record of Eliot's meeting with Marx. On a later occasion, in 1869, Lewes and Eliot when in Germany were clearly not pleased to find themselves in the same carriage with Johnson and Marx (Biog. 99, 415).

³⁰ Eliot had drawn inspiration from Rousseau and George Sand without subscribing to their moral codes. Similarly, she drew from Comte an inspiration that did not necessarily entail her agreement on every point. See also Mathilde Blind's view that Eliot was not a Positivist in the strict sense of the word, George Eliot (London: W. H. Allen, 1888) 212-13. Mathilde Blind comments on Eliot's dislike of much of Comte's later speculation, and reports her words: "I cannot submit my intellect or my soul to the guidance of Comte" (212).

³¹J. S. Mill's and Harriet Taylor's joint "Enfranchisement of Women" was published in WR 55 (July 1851): 289-311. (Mill's article on Bentham was published in the London and Westminster Review in August 1838.) His "Utilitarianism" was to be published in Fraser's Magazine 64 (Oct., Nov., Dec. 1861 issues). The Lewes library would house a copy of John Stuart Mill's Auguste Comte and Positivism, reprinted from the Westminster Review (London, 1865) and annotated by Lewes; this contained a cutting from the Sheffield Telegraph of a curious letter written by J. S. Mill at the age of thirteen to Sir Samuel, the brother of Jeremy Bentham, consisting of a detailed account by Mill of his studies, listing the books he had read. It was indeed a remarkable document, worth preserving (now in Dr Williams's Library).

³²"Whewell on Moral Philosophy," WR 58 o.s., 2 n.s. (Oct. 1852): 349-85; reprinted in John Stuart Mill's Essays on Ethics, Religion and Society, CW 10: 166-208.

³³See "Lectures on Moral Philosophy," The Prospective Review 8, No. 31 (1854): 545-63 (563) (in the Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals (3: 355) attributed to James Martineau); J. S. Mill, "Whewell on Moral Philosophy," op. cit; Essays on Ethics, Religion and Society, CW 10: 170.

³⁴On utilitarianism, see Elie Halévy, The Growth of Philosophic Radicalism (Boston: Beacon P, 1955). See also Robert L. Heilbroner, The Worldly Philosophers: The Lives, Times, and Ideas of the Great Economic Thinkers. 6th ed. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1986, for a readable account of economic policies from Adam Smith through to Keynes (the author does not note the connection with Benthamism). Despite the volte face of public opinion, Bentham's reforming influence should not be underrated. He influenced the national system of education, free trade, legislative reform (Reform Acts, Poor Law reform, public health, municipal reform), parcel post, modern police force, establishment of a modern Civil Service, the 1836 Population Census and Censuses of Statistics, and prison reform. See also Wendell V. Harris, The Omnipresent Debate 15.

³⁵This question of "uneasiness" as a spring of action preventing us from paying attention to "remoter absent good" was a question that evidently was of fundamental interest to Eliot, since a passage relating to "uneasiness" was underscored in her copy of Locke's Essay Concerning Human Understanding (in Dr Williams's Library).

In fact, Locke's conception that every human action had its source in "uneasiness" was dismissed by Bentham in the Deontology (I, 81), when he pointed out that uneasiness, in Locke's sense, was not a painful feeling but a presentiment of a capacity for enjoying at some future time a pleasure not then present. George Eliot admired Locke, and her copy of his Essay (London, 26th ed., 1828) was autographed by her. She wrote above it: "Reread, December 1876."

³⁶ See Charles Gibbon, The Life of George Combe, Author of "The Constitution of Man," 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1878) 2: 315, 328. She had stayed with the Combes in Edinburgh in October 1852. Before she left the Westminster, she edited a lengthy article by Combe, which was finally published in the April 1854 edition and subsequently issued as a pamphlet entitled "The Principles of Criminal Legislation and the Practice of Prison Discipline Investigated."

³⁷ Translating Feuerbach had been in her mind since July 1851, when she had talked at the Brays' with Robert Noel, who had lent her Feuerbach's Das Wesen der Religion (1845), a shorter work which Eliot later described as containing the same fundamental ideas as Das Wesen des Christenthums. Noel had been anxious to have this translated (GEL II, 144). It is reasonable to suppose that this led to Eliot's desire to translate The Essence of Christianity, a work that had achieved a high reputation in Germany. In Das Wesen der Religion, Feuerbach primarily considers God in Nature, rather than God in man. Gordon S. Haight incorrectly gives the title as Das Wesen des Religions (Biog. 137). Lewes had mentioned Feuerbach in passing in his Biographical History of Philosophy, 4 vols. in 2 (London: C. Knight, 1845-1846).

The Lewes library would contain an 1848 reprint of the 2nd edition of Feuerbach's Das Wesen des Christenthums (Leipzig: O. Wigand), his Philosophische Kritiken und Grundsätze (Leipzig, 1846) and his Geschichte der Neuern Philosophie von Bacon von Verulam bis Benedict Spinoza (Leipzig, 1847). In addition to these, there would be Lewes's large collection on Aristotle, including Sir Alexander Grant's edition of his Ethics (2nd ed., 2 vols., London, 1866), the Account of the Life and the Writings of Spinoza, to Which Is Added, An Abstract of His Theological Political Treatise (London, 1720), autographed by Lewes and dated 1853, Locke's Essay Concerning Human Understanding, op. cit., several of Auguste Comte's works, including his General View of Positivism and Catéchisme

positiviste, and Jeremy Bentham's Traité de législation civile et pénale: Ouvrage extrait de MSS., ed. Etienne Dumont (1858), amongst other works. For a full list of the works contained in the George Eliot--George Henry Lewes Collection in Dr Williams's Library, London, see William Baker, The George Eliot--George Henry Lewes Library: An Annotated Catalogue of Their Books at Dr. Williams's Library, London (New York: Garland, 1977); see also Anthony McCobb, George Eliot's Knowledge of German Life and Letters, Salzburg Studies in English Literature 102:2 (Salzburg, Austria: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Universität Salzburg, 1982) 111.

³⁸Her copy of her translation, The Essence of Christianity (London: John Chapman, 1854), which rests in Dr Williams's Library, was seen to have a number of markings and "non-utilitarian comments" in her hand (with writing in another hand); they indicate some passages she considered important. Anthony McCobb believes the annotations to have been made by later readers (111). He has, however, noted Eliot's numbering of sections in the appendix of her 1848 copy of Das Wesen des Christenthums (Leipzig: O. Wigand). (This edition, which appeared in 1849, contained a strongly altered preface by Feuerbach directed toward a wider readership.) A copy housed in the Coventry Public Library contained very few markings and no commentary.

³⁹Nietzsche, Karl Barth, Martin Heidegger, and Jean-Paul Sartre have been seen to owe something to Feuerbach. A more obvious impact of Feuerbach's philosophy is to be found in the Italian philosophers Enzo Paci and Franco Lombardi, as well as in Erich Fromm and in Martin Buber's "I-Thou" philosophy. For Feuerbach's influence on Wagner, see Hugh Ridley, "Myth as Illusion or Cognition: Feuerbach, Wagner and Nietzsche," German Life and Letters 35 (1980-1981): 74-80 (75-76).

⁴⁰See Feuerbach, The Essence of Religion. God the Image of Man. Man's Dependence Upon Nature the Last and Only Source of Religion. Trans. [and abridged by] Alexander Loos (New York: Asa K. Butts, 1873) 71. As Feuerbach later expressed it, "Jeder Trieb ist ein Glückseligkeitstrieb"; "Der Glückseligkeitstrieb ist der Trieb der Triebe." See the fragment first published, under the heading "Zur Moralphilosophie," by Karl Grün in volume 2 of his Ludwig Feuerbach in seinem Briefwechsel und Nachlass sowie in seiner Philosophischen Charakterentwicklung (Leipzig and Heidelberg: C. F. Winter'sche, 1874) 253-305. According to Grün, this was written between 1868 and 1869. The passage is included in

Feuerbach's Sämtliche Werke, ed. Bolin and Jodl, op. cit., under the title "Zur Ethik: Der Eudämonismus," 10: 230-288. At the time of writing, I have not been able to obtain the volume of the recent Gesammelte Werke containing this fragment. See also Feuerbach's Theogonie, vol. 7 of his GW. He also considered that where there is no drive, there is no will, but where there is no drive to happiness, there is no drive at all. He saw the drive to knowledge as the drive to happiness satisfying itself by means of the understanding, "just as later in the development of culture, when the drive to knowledge becomes an independent one, it satisfies itself within the understanding. See "Über Spiritualismus und Materialismus . . .," SW 10:108; GW 11:70. Trans. Eugene Kamenka, The Philosophy of Ludwig Feuerbach (New York: Praeger, 1969), 130. In his Table of the Springs of Action, Bentham considers that if the motives of pleasure and pain were removed, not only happiness, but justice, duty, obligation, and virtue would be meaningless; Works 1: 206, (c) 15. See also Appendix A on Feuerbach.

⁴¹Appendix A includes some reviews of George Eliot's translation of Feuerbach's Essence of Christianity.

⁴²George Eliot and John Chapman, With Chapman's Diaries (New Haven: Yale UP, 1940) 80-81.

⁴³Lewes's intellectual bent is demonstrated by his annotations, e.g., he considered that "the only Wisdom [was] that of Ideas, their corelatives [sic] (Laws) being the only important things in the universe": "No one doubts that the Law is worth a thousand phaenomena. Hence the philosophical object is to turn all the phaenomena into Laws." Annotation by Lewes to Samuel Taylor Coleridge's The Friend, Essay VII, 3: 128-29 (in Dr Williams's Library).

⁴⁴[Westward Ho! and Constance Herbert] WR 64 (July 1855): 288-96; Pinney, Essays 123-36 (126, 134-35).

⁴⁵Feuerbach had quoted Luther to help explain the meaning of the Incarnation, noting, "The gentle manhood of Christ our God should at a glance fill all hearts with joy"; the mystery of the Incarnation should create "such a fervour in us men that we should heartily love each other" (EC 58).

⁴⁶[Tennyson's Maud] WR 64 (Oct. 1855): 596-601; Essays 190-98 (191).

⁴⁷The review of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason appeared as "Translations and Translators," Leader VI (20 Oct. 1855): 1014-1015; Essays 207-211 (207-208).

⁴⁸"George Eliot," Century Magazine 23 (Nov. 1881): 57-64 (62). The occasion was probably during the Leweses' visit to the Sidgwicks, May 31-June 1877, during which time they visited Cambridge; see GEL VI, 380 and 463-65.

⁴⁹"Art & Belles Lettres," review of Modern Painters, vol. 3, by John Ruskin, WR 65 (April 1856): 625-33 (626).

⁵⁰John Ruskin, Modern Painters: Their Superiority in the Art of Landscape Painting to All the Ancient Masters Proved by Examples of the True, the Beautiful, and the Intellectual, From the Works of Modern Artists, Especially From Those of J. M. W. Turner (London: Smith, Elder, 1843-1860).

⁵¹See also George Levine, "George Eliot's Hypothesis of Reality," Nineteenth-Century Fiction 35 (1980): 1-28 (1-4).

⁵²In this connection, Locke's Essay Concerning Human Understanding gives us further insight into her conflation of realism with the search for "true knowledge" (382). Locke considered that language was often misused and that this obstructed discoveries of useful truths. Bentham, too, had found that the traditional associations of language could obscure meanings.

⁵³"The Natural History of German Life," WR 66 (July 1856): 51-79; Essays 266-99 (271). It is interesting to note that, in her article on Riehl, George Eliot follows the classification of the sciences of Comte's Positive Philosophy, concluding that a wise social policy must be based not simply on abstract social science, but on "the Natural History of social bodies"; Essays 289-90.

⁵⁴These she termed the mind-and-millinery, the oracular, the white neck-cloth, and the modern-antique species (concerned respectively with dress, wealth, high society, snobbery, and frivolous heroines with their exaggerated crises; ignorant speculation about difficult problems; dull, pious evangelicalism; and ponderous and leaden details of domestic life).

CHAPTER 2

SUFFERING AND SYMPATHY IN SCENES OF CLERICAL LIFE

When George Eliot, with Lewes's encouragement, finally tried her hand at fiction, she turned to the subject of religion. For close to two decades, she had systematically analyzed the philosophical currents of her time, and it was inevitable that she should integrate certain positivist views held by Comte, Spinoza, Strauss, and Feuerbach, which reflected her reading and work of translation. In her Scenes of Clerical Life, she would not only criticize those aspects of religion that she considered destructive but, more important, use religion to convey crucial Feuerbachian concepts which accorded with her experience of life.¹

Eliot regarded her artistic purpose as superior to that of the silly women novelists at whom she had poked fun. Her aim was not a trivial one, her writing not mechanical; she desired to interpret human character and events as faithfully as it lay in her power. Any moral that emerged from her writing would reflect the truth about human nature. "Art is the nearest thing to life," she would shortly write; "it is a mode of amplifying experience and extending our contact with our fellow-men

beyond the bounds of our personal lot" (Essays 271).

Her enterprise was Wordsworthian. In his Preface to the Lyrical Ballads, Wordsworth had spoken of his desire to make the incidents of common life interesting by tracing in them the primary laws of man's nature, specifying that he would concentrate on low and rustic life because it provided a better soil in which the essential passions of the human heart could mature. Eliot's early works have a rustic setting reminiscent of Wordsworth, and her raw material, too, is the basic passions of mankind. Through the transforming power of the imagination, her readers might be stirred to a wider awareness. Timothy Pace finds her method "confessional," and compares the indirect rhetoric of her confession detrimentally with the more straightforward displaced religious confession of Wordsworth in The Prelude; Eliot attempts to create a text that will demonstrate her faith in the capacity of individuals for spontaneous sympathy. The higher sympathetic capacity contains a wider awareness of what is apart from the experiencing subject, and is a vital, life-enhancing power reminiscent of Coleridge's "primary Imagination," as opposed to "fancy."²

Eliot's earlier concern about her own egoism had been transformed through her familiarity with Comte, Feuerbach, Spencer, and Bentham into a fuller understanding of the complex relations that existed

between egoism and altruism in human affairs. In her Scenes of Clerical Life, Eliot demonstrates the need for clergymen to realize that, fundamentally, religion is not a matter of dogma or of reason only; it arises from the heart. Feuerbach had asserted that the Jewish religion was based on the principle of egoism: "Utilism is the essential theory of Judaism" (EC 113). As Feuerbach saw it, in the Jewish interpretation of religion, the miracle-raising Jehovah or Divine Providence was the personified selfishness of the Israelites and an indication of their national exclusiveness. In Christianity, man was not loved for his own sake but for the sake of Christ and salvation. Narrowness, intolerance, and exclusiveness were ingredients of monotheism, though its essence lay in human sympathy.³

In Eliot's fiction, the movement from egoism to sympathy will be necessary to the attainment of happiness. In "Amos Barton," a religious egoism is depicted in Barton's initial attention to his religion at the expense of his family and ultimately himself. Through sorrowful experience, he gains the love or sympathy that, in his chapter on the contradiction of faith and love, Feuerbach speaks of in terms of natural goodness, truth, humility, tolerance, and compassion. These can be expressed in simple, everyday human acts, and, in "Amos Barton," sympathy is exemplified by such things as a neighbour, Mrs Hackit, speaking kindly of the absent Barton and sending

him and his wife a cheese and a sack of potatoes, or by a friendly, compassionate presence, as when another clergyman, the Rev. Martin Cleves, calls at Barton's home after his wife's death.

"THE SAD FORTUNES OF THE REVEREND AMOS BARTON"

Amos Barton was drawn from the Rev. John Gwyther who resided at Chilvers Coton when George Eliot kept house for her father, but with the details sketched in by Eliot's imagination. Barton lives with his wife and six children on an annual stipend of only eighty pounds, for Eliot wished to stir her readers' sympathy with commonplace troubles: "sorrow such as may live next door to you--such as walks neither in rags nor in velvet, but in very ordinary decent apparel" (1:56). Through the "sad fortunes" of Amos Barton, Eliot elaborates one of Feuerbach's primary concerns, that is, human feeling in terms of weakness, vulnerability, and suffering. To Feuerbach, like Hennell, the Christian religion in its emphasis on suffering and humility expressed a crucial aspect of man's nature. "God loves man," Feuerbach wrote, "--i.e., God suffers from [for] man" ("Gott leidet vom Menschen"; Eliot translates literally): "Love does not exist without sympathy, sympathy does not exist without suffering in common" (EC 54).

The "mystery of the suffering God" is for Feuerbach

the mystery of human feeling or sensibility: "feeling is absolute, divine in its nature" (EC 63). In the Passion, love attested itself by suffering, purely expressing the nature of the heart through self-sacrifice. Suffering per se was also represented by the Passion as an expression of "passibility" (suffering) in general ["insofern es ein Ausdruck der Leidensfähigkeit überhaupt ist"] (EC 59-60). Christ represents the self-confession of human sensibility. As Feuerbach noted, the Redemption is only the result of the suffering; "the suffering is the cause of the redemption," for the suffering takes deeper root in the feelings, making itself an object of imitation. Like Feuerbach, Eliot enunciates through suffering her central theme of love.

In the story, Eliot destroys the existing clerical scene--Barton and most of his colleagues--and rebuilds a new Feuerbachian framework. First she deconstructs, making the reader aware of the deficiencies of Amos Barton and the inherent contradictions of traditional religion; then she evokes the reader's sympathy on behalf of her protagonist. As a result of this dual purpose, a conflict arises, for satire and sympathy generally mesh with difficulty. Her narratorial identity as the translator of Strauss and Feuerbach disguised by a male pseudonym, Eliot tried to resolve this problem by excusing his behaviour as she turns on him the battery of her satire.

Barton along with his fellow clergy are contrasted with the Rev. Martin Cleves, while Barton is also contrasted with his angelic wife. Eliot's contemporary readers responded to her methods, captivated by the story's pathos and probably unaware of the extent to which she was undermining the traditional structure of religion. Her dual aim may explain the defensiveness of the narrator's tone, and the abrupt narratorial movements toward intimacy, and then away. Timothy Pace senses an anxious insistence on advocating sympathy which, he believes, arises from a deeply-felt fear that sympathy might not actually exist as a fundamental quality of human nature (83-86). However, in this story the stress is on the tardiness of human sympathy, an aspect fostered cleverly, but imperfectly, by the intrusive narratorial technique. This was the first novel of an essayist, and George Eliot herself recognized that her hand was "not well in" when she wrote the Scenes.

Amos Barton is Everyman in his quintessential mediocrity, and the narrator separates his audience into those who would instinctively be interested in Barton's sad fortunes and those who would not. He addresses the latter in a passage that has been deprecated as well as praised:

Depend upon it, you would gain unspeakably if you would learn with me to see some of the poetry and the pathos, the tragedy and the comedy, lying in the experience of a human soul that looks out

through dull grey eyes, and that speaks in a voice
of quite ordinary tones. (5:42)

The narrator then expresses a point which is central to George Eliot's Feuerbachian conception of humanity: all human beings share an essentially similar nature, and this is just as true of "commonplace" people as it is of others. These simple people have unspoken sorrows and "sacred" joys; they also have consciences. This last point is of primordial importance in Feuerbach's interpretation of religion. Feuerbach had noted that of all the attributes which the understanding assigned to God in the Christian religion the preeminent one was moral perfection. God as a morally perfect being was, however, nothing else than the realized idea of morality, the fulfilled law; in other words, the moral nature of man posited as the absolute being. This absolute, in reality, was man's own conscience (EC 46). Recognizing that these attributes existed in commonplace people, Eliot found a pathos "in our comparison of their dim and narrow existence with the glorious possibilities of that human nature which they share" (5:42).

The narrator's opening reminiscences of Shepperton Church twenty-five years ago when Mr Gilfil was the residing clergyman serve to set up the reader for the sequel, "Mr Gilfil's Love-Story," and will contribute to the linking of the Scenes. They also show the Rev. Amos

Barton in the process of carrying out improvements which are not to the narrator's taste. With self-deprecating irony, the narrator confesses that his own mind is not modern and well-regulated; he liked the old customs, now considered to be abuses. The illuminating and unkindly gossip at Cross Farm, which continues the reader's introduction to Amos Barton, throws a light on his unpopularity. Barton's suggestion to the miserly Mrs Patten that she subscribe to the rebuilding of Shepperton church had not been well received; his talk about her sins and need of mercy conflict with her view that as a good wife--her cheeses don't swell and she is economical--"If I'm not to be saved, I know a many as are in a bad way" (1:14). Barton plans also to displace the old singers in the church and, though unable to control his own temper, preaches meekness. When he preaches without book, his spontaneity--an important aspect of Feuerbach's morality--fails him dismally: he flounders like a fallen sheep.

However, Amos Barton has improved church attendance and established contacts with poor people. It would not help Barton to know his reputation. Thank heaven that a little illusion is left to us, remarks the narrator, to enable us to be useful and agreeable. Paradoxically, Eliot accepts this statement--the emphasis is on "little"--but she also considers it important to dispel

illusions and reveal truth, according to Feuerbach's notion of truth, which resides in both feeling and objective facts. Feuerbach had considered that man must have faith in himself and in other men, rather than place his faith in a transcendent God.

Amos Barton's basic honesty, which we may see as an aspect of Feuerbach's "truth" and a prerequisite to "reason," is unfortunately accompanied by poor judgment, as evinced in his good opinion of the Countess Czerlaski, widow of a handsome but impecunious dancing-master. She has cultivated the Bartons, and Barton succumbs to her flattery and accepts her at face value.

The narratorial mixture of sympathy and irony in the description of Barton is maintained in the description of his visit to the Workhouse. Although Barton understands the "cure of souls" in something more than an official sense, he often misses the right note:

We read, indeed, that the walls of Jericho fell down before the sound of trumpets. . . . Doubtless they were trumpets that gave forth clear ringing tones, and sent a mighty vibration through brick and mortar. But the oratory of the Rev. Amos resembled rather a Belgian railway-horn, which shows praiseworthy intentions inadequately fulfilled. (2:24)

A graphic account of the "pauper mind" shows us the unsympathetic material with which Amos has to deal. Mrs Brick, a "hard undying old woman," is sensitive only on the theme of snuff, her "embalming powder": this is her

"religion" and the way to her heart. But in giving her a sermon instead of snuff, Barton shuts up her heart as she clicks shut her unrefurnished snuffbox. His "geographical, chronological, exegetical mind" cannot approximate the pauper point of view.

In his exposition of Exodus, he avows the value of instruction through familiar types and symbols, and the narrator comments that

the interest or comprehension of your hearers may stop short precisely at the point where your spiritual interpretation begins. And Mr Barton this morning [in speaking of unleavened bread] succeeded in carrying the pauper imagination to the dough-tub, but unfortunately was not able to carry it upwards from that well-known object to the unknown truths which it was intended to shadow forth. (2:27)

He is also ineffective when he tells Miss Fodge's undisciplined little boy that if he is naughty God will be angry and he will burn in hell, and if he is good God will love him and he will grow up to be good. The narrator has made clear his dislike of the "hideous doctrine of expediency," but now merely observes dryly that Master Fodge had no distinct vision of the benefit that would accrue to him from this change of behaviour. Conscious of not having produced the desired effect, Barton feels a chill come over him: his illusions do not completely protect him.

Much the same pattern emerges when we see Amos

Barton in his home. The narrator, who has a sympathy for "mongrel ungainly dogs, who are nobody's pets" (2:19), excuses Amos Barton's neglect of the "very minor morals." Barton shows no appreciation of his wife's considerate attentions, but settles himself in his armchair, his mind on his clerical task. Here again, traditional religion displaces Feuerbach's essence. Yet deep in his heart Barton loves his wife--"in his way" values her as his best treasure (2:20). His discovery of how much Milly means to him and his perception that his love was not understanding enough leads to the religion which for Feuerbach is "the solemn unveiling of a man's hidden treasures" (EC 13).

Other defects are elaborated. Barton marches "very determinedly along the road he thought best; but then it was wonderfully easy to convince him which was the best road" (2:30). He considers his opinions "a little too far-sighted and profound to be crudely and suddenly communicated to ordinary minds" (2:30). However, his doctrines, influenced by the Tractarian satire on the Low Church and the intellectual movement that has resulted in regular clerical meetings in Shepperton, are acceptable to neither low nor high churchgoers and establish Amos as a "mongrel." More pungently, he is like an onion that has been rubbed with spices: "The Low-Church onion still offended refined High-Church nostrils, and the new spice was unwelcome to the palate of the genuine onion-eater"

(2:30). He is confident of his shrewdness and practical ability, and full of plans, which are "something like his moves in chess--admirably well calculated, supposing the state of the case were otherwise" (5:45). Thus, his plan to introduce anti-Dissenting books into the Lending Library has not in the least bruised the head of Dissent, only made Dissent "strongly inclined to bite the Rev. Amos's heel" (5:46). It is not worth detesting Barton, for his very faults are middling; he is "the quintessential extract of mediocrity" (5:45).

Most of the clergymen in the district indulge in gossip, and the monthly clerical meetings provide an opportunity over an excellent dinner. On an occasion when Amos has absented himself, the discussion includes the latest scandal, the addition of Countess Czerlaski to Amos Barton's household, as well as his deficiencies and ungentlemanlike qualities. There is little "spirituality" about this conversation, and with the exception of Mr Ely and Mr Cleves, they are not a prepossessing group. In them, the characteristics of servility, aggression, materialism, hypocrisy, showiness, and a concern for perfect appearances are evident.

Mr Ely and Mr Cleves are, however, superior to the rest. Mr Ely is a tall, dark-haired, distinguished-looking man, regarded as having exceptional powers and learning; by his brother clergy he is considered both

discreet and agreeable. Tolerance, moderation, and a sense of humour are among his good characteristics. Yet even he does not represent what should be the true spirit of Christianity according to Feuerbach:

Mr Ely never got into a warm discussion; he suggested what might be thought, but rarely said what he thought himself; he never let either men or women see that he was laughing at them, and he never gave any one an opportunity of laughing at him. (3:36)

He has no sense of humility, and is not warm-hearted or "fervent" like Amos Barton, who is disparaged and laughed at. The Countess finds Mr Ely's preaching too cold: "It has no fervour--no heart" (3:33). For Feuerbach, the "heart" was a key word:

Whatever is God to a man, that is his heart and soul; and conversely, God is the manifested inward nature, the expressed self of a man,--religion the solemn unveiling of a man's hidden treasures, the revelation of his intimate thoughts, the open confession of his love-secrets. (EC 12-13)

Perhaps it is Mr Ely's own lack of fervour, combined with his satirical sense of humour, that causes him unkindly to caricature Barton's "fervour and symbolic action" and raise a laugh.

Only one clergymen represents the true spirit of Christianity. The Rev. Martin Cleves, with his negligently-tied cravat and large irregular features, is the plainest and least clerical-looking of the party, and

yet "there is the true parish priest, the pastor beloved, consulted, relied on by his flock" (6:53). He is helpful, preaches understandable sermons, calls a spade a spade. There is both humour and feeling in his grey eyes, and about the corners of his roughly-cut mouth. His sessions with the working men provide conversational lectures on practical matters or accessible texts. He is considered "a uncommon knowin', sensible, free-spoken gentleman; very kind an' good-natur'd too" (6:53), though he is one of the best Grecians of the party. In his exceptional qualities, he stands in strong contrast to the Rev. Amos Barton.

Amos Barton is endangering his finances, his wife's health--Milly is pregnant again--and his personal happiness by his hospitality to the Countess Czerlaski. After her stay with the Bartons has extended from weeks into months, the "settled convictions" even in the minds of Barton's most friendly parishioners are that the Countess is having an affair with him, countenanced by Milly. Foolishly allowing such a state of affairs to go on, Barton incurs new debts, endangers his pregnant wife's delicate health through overwork, and subjects his wife and family to gossip that leads to their ostracism from local society. The Countess herself has expedient intentions of "becoming quite pious" once she has her carriage and settlement: her previous happy marriage has given her a healthy respect for financial security.

However, her real religion is herself. Having been shunned by Milby society for no very good reason, in need of friends, she looked up to Mr Barton as a spiritual mentor, the cold and discriminating Mr Ely not having been forthcoming. Unable to accept her brother's marriage to her maid, the Countess left in a huff, and was taken in by the obliging Bartons. Her egoism is far more deeply ingrained than Barton's, due to her assumption that rank denotes superiority and the fact that she has only herself to think about.⁴ In satirical vein, the narrator points out:

It is true, the Countess was a little vain, a little ambitious, a little selfish, a little shallow and frivolous, a little given to white lies. But who considers such slight blemishes, such moral pimples as these, disqualifications for entering the most respectable society! (4:40)

As the narrator notes, the severest ladies in Milby would have found these characteristics created no wide distinction between the Countess and themselves. Yet this accumulation of "moral pimples" is the root cause of the Stygian fate that descends on Amos Barton's household from the Countess's egoism.

Strongly contrasting with the Countess, Milly is a "gentle Madonna," representing Feuerbach's ideal: he had stressed the womanly, tender heart of the Mother and the Son (EC 72). While Milly's character is somewhat sentimentalized, a Victorian "Angel in the House," her

speech and behaviour are realistic enough. Her lovely appearance owes nothing to costly apparel; generous proportions, chestnut curls, well-rounded cheeks, large, tender, short-sighted eyes, long arched neck, shyness with strangers, even a weakness for dress, all contribute to make her the essential woman in the opinion of the male narrator:

Soothing, unspeakable charm of gentle womanhood! which supersedes all acquisitions, all accomplishments. You would never have asked, at any period of Mrs Amos Barton's life, if she sketched or played the piano. You would even perhaps have been rather scandalized if she had descended from the serene dignity of being to the assiduous unrest of doing.
(2:19)

Sketching and playing the piano would be expected accomplishments in high society, but of course these are not applicable to Milly, who in caring for her large family is far from idle.

In chapter 26 of The Essence of Christianity, Feuerbach speaks of the contradiction of faith and love. This vital distinction is found in "Amos Barton" in the difference between Milly's "religious" attitude and Barton's religion. While the essence, or latent nature, of religion is for Feuerbach the identity of the divine being with the human, the form of traditional religion distinguishes between them; God is presented as a distinct being. The basis, or hidden essence, of religion is Love; that which constitutes its conscious form is Faith

(EC 247). Whereas faith can place itself in contradiction with morality, reason, and the sense of truth in man, love universalizes, makes God a common being, the love of whom is one with the love of man. The inward disunion produced in man by faith can, however, be healed by love. While Barton's exegetical mind constitutes "faith" in Feuerbach's sense, an all-encompassing love is manifested by Milly in the small sphere of her own family. The essence of Milly's being may readily be identified as Feuerbachian love, an unegoistic love for her husband and children which perseveres despite weariness or ill-health. The universal nature of her love is suggested by her feeling that she is near a "fountain of love" that will care for her family better than she can foresee; yet this belief in a divine love does not prevent her from doing her utmost for her family--rising early to renew her chore of darning stockings, for instance.

Milly's Feuerbachian attributes are not solely composed of her generous love. In his chapter on God as a being of the understanding--the highest aspect of which is reason--Feuerbach described man's objective nature as "the categorical, impartial consciousness of the fact as fact," as consciousness of law, necessity, rule, measure, "the necessity of the nature of things under the form of spontaneous activity" (EC 34). Only through the understanding, he noted, could man judge and act in

contradiction with his personal feelings when "the God of the understanding," that is, law, necessity, or right, demanded it. Despite her reluctant participation in the "scandal" created by the Countess, Milly is not blind to their position. She feels the slander almost entirely on her husband's account, but realizes that it will soon be her unpleasant duty to tell her inconsiderate friend to leave. If Milly is at fault in allowing the situation to go on for too long, the error resides in her qualities of human sympathy and readiness to sacrifice herself for others. She could be regarded as a perfect representative of Comte's submissive womanhood. This element of self-sacrifice is insisted on by Feuerbach, but not to the extent that it will result, Christlike, in the subject's death, as it will for Milly, who dies shortly after the death of her premature baby.

When the Countess has packed her bags, the consequences of her visit cannot be remedied. The bills remain, the neighbours stay away, the unsavoury reputation of the Rev. Amos Barton lingers, the past is "not expunged." The worst consequence, of course, is Milly's death. George Eliot's stress on consequences is especially noticeable in this story. Though Eliot did not favour utilitarianism as a philosophical doctrine, she invariably respects positivistic assumptions and the validity of the law of consequences.

Knowing she will not live long, Milly tells Amos that he has been very good to her and made her very happy. The climactic deathbed scene creates an effective, if somewhat sentimentalized, pathos and shows the softening effect of suffering, in accordance with Feuerbach's contention that suffering can be remedial. The sentiment has been prepared in the description of Milly's character and of Amos Barton's need for her.⁵ Feuerbach saw music to be "a monologue of emotion" (EC 9); and Milly's last words to Amos speak of some ethereal music that she hears. Feuerbach's equation of music with "divine" feeling is reflective of Milly as an exemplar of tender feeling.⁶

In time of need, sympathy resurfaces, indicative of the good nature that often lies buried in the course of daily life and needs suffering to bring it out. Old friends revisit: Mrs Hackit offers sympathy and practical help; Mr Cleve silently grasps Barton's hand. But the main point of the story is the effect of personal suffering on Barton. In the empty vicarage, he realizes that "day after day, month after month, year after year, would have to be lived without Milly's love" (9:67):

O the anguish of that thought, that we can never atone to our dead for the stunted affection we gave them, for the light answers we returned to their complaints or their pleadings, for the little reverence we showed to that sacred human soul that lived so close to us, and was the divinest thing God had given us to know. (9:68)

To Eliot, the words "sacred" and "divinest" express reverence for those highest aspects of human nature which she had extolled in her article on Carlyle's life of Sterling. Amos had been an affectionate husband, but now he recognizes that his sympathy had not been "quick and watchful enough." With the "terrible keenness of memory and imagination which bereavement gives"--Eliot specifies why suffering leads to regeneration--he realizes that his very love needs a pardon for its poverty and selfishness (||:68). Amos Barton must be brought to understand the full implications of man's mortality.⁷

Barton's daughter Patty will eventually provide some consolation, making him feel that Milly's love has not quite gone out of his life. But significantly omitted during the onrush of the clergyman's initial grief is the inward solace of prayer. For Feuerbach prayer is the self-division of man into two beings, a dialogue of man with himself, with his heart. Barton's love turns predominantly toward Milly, not God, because it was a living human being, his wife, whom he discovers that he deeply loved and revered. Yet Feuerbach's view was that the love which the religious mind places in God is "a real, true love . . . the divine love is only human love made objective, affirming itself" (EC 55-56). Involuntarily "prayer wells forth in sound; the struggling heart bursts the barrier of the closed lips" (EC 123). On

a later visit to Milly's grave, the remorseful widower "prays" in this human way, crying out, "'Milly, Milly, dost thou hear me? I didn't love thee enough--I wasn't tender enough to thee--but I think of it all now'" (10:71). To Feuerbach the "light-reflecting drops" of tears mirror the nature of the Christian God, as repentance and yearning (EC 61).

Even those people who had lightly charged Barton with sin now perceive him as "consecrated" anew by his great sorrow, and outward solace does come, for Milly's memory has hallowed her husband. His recent troubles have called out people's better sympathies, "and that is always a source of love" (10:70). Where Amos Barton had failed to tap the spring of goodness in his sermons, he does so effectually in his sorrows. Having to leave Milby is a new ordeal, but his departure, with the additional anguish incurred, is necessary. Without this terrible parting from the material links with the past, especially Milly's grave, he would remain a popular pastor yet not reach the depths of his new awareness. He must learn to love the living as he should have loved Milly. His attainment is suggested by his demeanour on his next and last visit to his wife's grave. His children have grown up, his glance is calm and cheerful, and his neat linen bespeaks a woman's care: "Milly did not take all of her love from the earth when she died. She had left some of it in Patty's

heart" (Conclusion 71). In these words, Eliot expresses Feuerbach's purely human concept of immortality. Patty "makes the evening sunshine of his life" in sacrificing her own life for her father, but we may assume that in this relationship Barton tenderly reciprocates her care.

This first story explores Feuerbach's assumption that human nature can achieve the freedom and happiness of self-realization. The superimposition of glorious possibilities on the imperfect world of Eliot's clerics has been seen by U. C. Knoepfelmacher as compromising the plausibility Eliot aimed at. However, Leslie Stephen found an impressive dignity in the unobtrusive yet constant suggestion of the depths below the surface of a life that is, like many lives, a trivial one.⁸ "Amos Barton" describes how suffering may contribute to the overcoming of egoism; it also arouses sympathy for the human mongrel whom Eliot cares for even in portraying his deficiencies.

"MR GILFIL'S LOVE-STORY"

The Rev. Maynard Gilfil is in love with an Italian-born orphan whose thoughts "are no more than the fleeting shadows cast by feeling" (7:132). The "ground tones" of her nature are intense love and fierce jealousy (2:97). Tina (Caterina) Sarti has, not

surprisingly, been viewed as a device to expose "unhealthy sentimentalism."⁹ Thomas Noble damns with faint praise, finding that, at best, "Mr Gilfil's Love-Story" has the charm of an old romance, while Leslie Stephen found it almost faultless.¹⁰ Although George Eliot herself preferred "Amos Barton," George Henry Lewes saw in "Mr Gilfil's Love-Story" a "subtle truth in delineation of complex motives" (GEL II, 335, 307).

The story describes Tina's repressed passion for Captain Anthony Wybrow, the nephew of her adoptive parents, Sir Christopher and Lady Cheverel. Passion here comprises an essentially egoistic and illusory form of love, capable of destroying individual happiness through jealousy. While illustrating one love that runs counter to some of Feuerbach's primary assumptions, George Eliot simultaneously depicts another that affirms them. The true love is shown by the Rev. Maynard Gilfil, who waits patiently for Tina to overcome her obsession.

George Eliot arouses the reader's sympathy for Gilfil. Beginning with the description of the vicar as an old man, she breaks down the reader's resistance to hearing about a love story that, in its painfulness, is reminiscent of Charlotte Brontë's Shirley (1849), and proceeds to describe the romance. We return to Gilfil later with a greater appreciation of his qualities; in the middle of the tale, involved in Tina's agonizing and

immature passions, it is easy to forget his existence. However, it is his story, and the central weight of Tina's could be considered a structural weakness.

This old vicar does not shine in the mandatory functions of his office; he performs them, like Irwine in Adam Bede, with "undeviating attention to brevity and dispatch" (1:77). His short sermons, chosen at random from a heap of old ones, are not of a highly doctrinal or polemical cast, and do not tax the intellect or even appeal powerfully to the conscience, but no one has ever found fault with them. Gilfil's parishioners like and respect their vicar, and he converses with the farmers in a friendly equality. Kind to children and Dame Fripp, who loves her pig more than bacon, he is outspoken with regard to abuses, has an old brown setter for a companion, and drinks gin and water.

This comfortable but unromantic picture does not seem a likely prelude to the dramatic realization of love as the powerfully material yet spiritual force lauded by Feuerbach in his Essence of Christianity (EC 48). However, the narrator pleads to his "refined lady-readers" that gin and water, like obesity, baldness, or the gout does not exclude a vast amount of antecedent romance. Eliot is redefining the term "romance":

I, at least, hardly ever look at a bent old man, or a wizened old woman, but I see also, with my mind's eye, that Past of which they are the shrunken remnant, and the unfinished romance of rosy cheeks and bright eyes seems sometimes of feeble interest and significance, compared with the drama of hope and love which has long ago reached its catastrophe, and left the poor soul, like a dim and dusty stage, with all its sweet garden-scenes and fair perspectives overturned and thrust out of sight. (1:83)

Opening the door on Gilfil's past love life, Eliot introduces us to his private chamber. This he keeps up and airs once a quarter, retaining the secret fresh in his memory yet not allowing it to intrude too much upon the present. The room is a symbol of the secret chamber in his heart, "where he had long turned the key on early hopes and early sorrows, shutting up for ever all the passion and the poetry of his life" (1:84). We shall go back in time to witness the reality that this room represents, a painful reality as well as a sweet garden scene thrust out of sight, corresponding to the treasure within man of which Feuerbach speaks (EC 13).

Sir Christopher has arranged a suitable marriage for his nephew, Anthony Wybrow, to Miss Beatrice Assher, who is not only an heiress but the daughter of his childhood sweetheart. Conveniently, sentiment is added to the utility that Wybrow will marry money as well as inherit the Cheverel estate. Since Sir Christopher has an inflexible will and no intention of changing his plans to suit anyone else, the marriage constitutes a certain

"necessity," which the emotional Tina has difficulty in accepting. Wybrow, for his part, sees it as his duty to marry Miss Assher. "Captain Wybrow always did the thing easiest and most agreeable to him from a sense of duty," the narrator observes (4:114), underlining the fact that his sense of duty arises not from within (as from Feuerbach's conscience), but relates to ease and pleasure.¹¹ Captain Wybrow's duties include dressing expensively, because he owes it to his position, taking care of his delicate health, and adapting himself to Sir Christopher's intention, which it would be troublesome to resist.

"Love attests itself by suffering," affirmed Feuerbach; "what makes more impression on the heart?" he asked (EC 59). Eliot's story provides a thoughtful commentary as it sweeps from ungoverned emotion to suffering and, potentially, to crime. The setting in the summer of 1778, the year prior to the French Revolution, is used to illustrate the turbulence of Tina's passion:

the great nation of France was agitated by conflicting thoughts and passions, which were but the beginning of sorrows. And in our Tina's little breast, too, there were terrible struggles. The poor bird was beginning to flutter and vainly dash its soft breast against the hard iron bars of the inevitable, and we see too plainly the danger, if that anguish should go on heightening instead of being allayed, that the palpitating heart may be fatally bruised. (3:99-100)

In such palpably sentimental lines, George Eliot warns

that this story will not have a happy ending. The Fates, she said to Blackwood, had willed that it should be a very melancholy story (GEL II, 310).

The setting is Cheverel Manor, based on Arbury Hall, Nuneaton. The emotions harboured by Tina may conceivably have had their origin in Eliot's infatuation for John Chapman, a man who was free with his affections, though not hers to love. If so, George Eliot was able to look at her past "affair" objectively.¹² She could now see that passion was a matter of choice. This objective narratorial stance was also sympathetic, and designed to produce a certain effect on the reader. However, the sentimental or mock-sentimental attitude which the narrator takes toward Tina inhibits our sympathy with her suffering; certainly the frequent pitying epithets detract from our intimacy with Tina as they veil the objective view of an author who implicitly criticizes her heroine's behaviour.

George Eliot had often bemoaned her own egoism, and she criticizes this characteristic in her heroine. Immersed in a self-centered world of personal anguish, Tina cannot put the desires of Sir Christopher or Wybrow before her own. Her love for Wybrow does not evince the self-sacrificing quality of Feuerbach's "love"; nor is it conjoined to reason, as Feuerbach would have it, but it is founded on an illusion. Wybrow is incapable of loving

anyone but himself. To Tina, he is godlike: prior to his marriage arrangement, he had flirted with her, arousing a passionate response, anticipatory of Arthur Donnithorne with Hetty in Adam Bede. Tina's "religion" has been directed toward a worthless object, just as her father had worshipped a tinsel Madonna. To the reader, Wybrow's shallowness is obvious; he remains little more than a caricature of a class type.

William Myers has maintained that the contrast between a cultured cold-heartedness and coarse rustic humanity is the principal theme of "Mr Gilfil's Love-Story."¹³ Sir Christopher himself is cultured but not cold-hearted, but Myers's generalization contains an important truth, for Tina's struggle can be seen in another light than that of a useless ranting at unchangeable circumstances. The necessity of the engagement is induced by a self-interested seeking by Sir Christopher after enhanced status, although this is not always typical of his behaviour. Lady Cheverel's own charitable benevolence is distinguished from a Feuerbachian type of sympathy that arises from the heart; she has, in fact, a "rather cold heart" (2:87). Curiously, she is described as essentially kind, though not tender-hearted; but this "essential kindness" is adulterated by her liking "to dispense benefits like a goddess, who looks down benignly on the halt, the maimed,

and the blind that approach her shrine" (3:101). Eliot, aware of the emphasis on benevolence in Bentham's utilitarianism, was distinguishing between it and genuine sympathy.

The adoption itself can be seen as utilitarian, as a benevolent rather than a sympathetic act. Notably, Lady Cheverel, and not Sir Christopher, was involved in the adoption. However, the emotion especially prized by Feuerbach and Comte, mother love, is not granted to Tina by Lady Cheverel. Tina was not originally intended to be brought up as one of the family, but as a dependent who would be "ultimately useful" (3:104). Only her talent for singing has helped her partially bridge the class barrier that imposes artificial restraints on human sympathy. Tina's unavailing fight for Wybrow's love could, then, be categorized as a natural resistance against an attitude which would not regard her, an orphan, as a possible mate for Wybrow.

Tina's inner turbulence is brilliantly defined by imagery appertaining to the false or illusory garden paradise. The garden where she walks seems to her a gala "where all was happiness and brilliancy, and misery could find no sympathy" (2:94); it symbolizes her longed-for sensory dreamworld. With its undulation of the ground, crowned at one end with an orangery, glowing with colour and sending up incense, it symbolically represents a mount

of Venus, suggesting the passionate encounter absent in Tina's love life, later described by her as "that hard unfeeling happiness of lovers flaunting in the eyes of misery." The flowers seem to look at her with wondering eyes, knowing nothing of sorrow, giving her an intolerable feeling of isolation and wretchedness. And yet there is a loving human being close beside her--Mr Gilfil. Eliot's archetypal description of a false garden represents Tina's illusions relating to happiness. The "real garden" is present, and unrecognized. The archetypal illusory paradise is again represented by the "island" home of Mr Bates, the gardener. Tina visits him, and in this nestlike paradise the little "bird" feels she has escaped Miss Assher's unwelcome presence. But the conversation turns to the marriage, Miss Assher's beauty, and the possibility of Captain Wybrow and his future wife having a "fain family," and Tina's joy turns to ashes (Assher's). The point seems to be that she cannot escape reality, and needs to accept the frustrating situation.

Infatuated with Anthony Wybrow, she is irritated by Gilfil, knowing his desire for her contradicts her desires, that he regrets the "folly" of her hopes. Subconsciously, she is aware of her unreasonable egoism. Consciously, she believes that she cannot alter her feelings. The petition with which Gilfil ends his evening service, "Lighten our darkness," is apposite.

The major part of the tale exemplifies a Spinozan lack of the will. Spinoza makes a vital distinction between the actions of the mind and its passions (Ethics, Pt. III, Prop. III): mental actions arise only from adequate ideas, passions from inadequate ideas. As "the slave of this voice and touch" (2:98), Caterina illustrates Spinozan bondage, "servitude" or human lack of power to moderate or check the emotions. Spinoza emphasizes that a man who is submissive to his emotions is not in power over himself, but "in the hands of fortune to such an extent that he is often constrained, although he may see what is better for him, to follow what is worse" (Pt. IV, Pref.).¹⁴ Tina has not achieved Spinozan "adequate ideas," and she follows what is worse. Her behaviour clearly exhibits her loss of control over herself, and the sorry consequences are dramatically portrayed in her attempt to kill her former lover. Eliot describes how "inadequate ideas" can lead to heartbreak and even crime.¹⁵ The very fact that Tina takes a dagger with her to the assignation with Wybrow hints that at this juncture she is capable of murder. However, Eliot saw her as temporarily deranged but not basically a criminal, and this tells us something of her view of a "criminal" or person involved in "crime." (Earlier, when Tina threw Wybrow's locket across the floor, cracked it, and then repented, we had a Spinozan illustration of Tina

"following the worse" and repenting after the deed [Ethics, Pt. III, Prop. II].) George Eliot's primary condemnation is not for Tina, but for Wybrow, who initially encouraged the young girl's false hopes.

Feuerbach saw the consciousness of love as the means by which man reconciled himself with his own nature; in religion, the contemplation of God as human was the "mystery" of the Incarnation. God loved man for man's sake, that he might make him "good, happy, blessed," and man's Saviour and Redeemer was not God but Love (EC 50-53). Tina's own emotive nature is a mixture of contraries, and this will make it hard for her to achieve the reconciliation which Feuerbach describes. Unchecked by the discipline of an education, her natural "talent for loving" does suggest a capacity for happiness. However, her nature is marred by a certain vindictiveness. Tina has been spoiled by Sir Christopher and the manor staff, as well as neglected, and the child's response to frustration foreshadows her vindictiveness when frustrated later in love.¹⁶ The imagery of bird and animal life, and flowers, together with Sir Christopher's pet name of "little monkey," conveys her dependence, her fragility, and her impulsive mischievousness. In her conflict over Wybrow, love, anger, and jealousy fight for dominion, and she is not helped by her sense of her own insignificance. She is far from having achieved Feuerbach's joy in the

self's perfection. In the pattern that emerges, love turns to scorching jealousy, which triggers an intense anger, bordering on a feverish madness; a similar pattern (without the love) will recur in Daniel Deronda. Love has not led to the happiness that she desires, and at the height of her troubles a solution occurs to her one day while the others are at church. Her own thoughts are not with God, the symbol of man's harmony and fulfilment; instead they turn to a poor friend who "looked so happy when she was in a decline" (11:142). By falling into a decline Tina will eventually seek an escape.

Prior to this event, Tina's only means of assuaging her pain is through music; for instance, in singing an aria from Gluck's Orfeo that expresses her feelings ("Ho perduto il bel sembiante"): "Those full deep notes she sent forth seemed to be lifting the pain from her head--seemed to be carrying away the madness from her brain" (10:141). Thus, she epitomizes Feuerbach's comparison of feeling to the musical power in man:

Just as man has a musical faculty and feels an inward necessity to breathe out his feelings in song; so, by a like necessity, he in religious sighs and tears streams forth the nature of feeling as an objective, divine nature. (EC 63)

Eliot will make a similar point more explicitly in Adam Bede. Here, we are shown that Tina's feelings for Wybrow have their origin in her innate power to love. As

Feuerbach explained, the absolute to man is his own nature, and the power of the object over him is therefore the power of his own nature. Thus, the power of the object of feeling (God or Wybrow) is the power of (Tina's) feeling itself (EC 5). Though Tina's power of loving is directed toward an unworthy object, it still indicates her capacity for love. In strong contrast, Miss Assher, tall, beautiful, and self-assured, is less capable of fine feeling; her sharp jealousy is a foil to Tina's, which arises from deeper feelings. Sir Christopher provides another contrast to Tina when he finds himself disillusioned in relation to his earlier romanticizing about Miss Assher's mother, his childhood sweetheart. She has become a bore. His feelings were neither strong nor hard to dislodge, for he could scarcely ignore her deficiencies. Tina is more loving but less insightful in connection with his nephew. Her passion is notably humourless.

We saw in "Amos Barton" that for Feuerbach tears mirrored the nature of the Christian God, representing yearning and repentance. In this story, the ability to cry is always suggestive of suffering with a redemptive potential, for it is indicative of a genuine moral feeling. After witnessing the lovers together, Tina's painful jealousy finds relief in tears. The contrast between tears and stifled emotion is suggested by her

reflection:

She was so thankful she could cry, for the mad passion she had felt when her eyes were dry, frightened her. If that dreadful feeling were to come on when Lady Cheverel was present, she should never be able to contain herself. (5:125)

Her suffering is throughout contrasted with the calm inexorable movement of Nature and the world, with its thoughts and actions, which conjures up Feuerbach's universal notion of the species. This he equates with man's essential nature as "I" and "Thou" (EC 2). Tina's isolated grief is unproductive:

While this poor little heart was being bruised with a weight too heavy for it, Nature was holding on her calm inexorable way, in unmoved and terrible beauty. The stars were rushing in their eternal courses; the tides swelled to the level of the last expectant weed; the sun was making brilliant day to busy nations on the other side of the swift earth. The stream of human thought and deed was hurrying and broadening onward. The astronomer was at his telescope; the great ships were labouring over the waves; the toiling eagerness of commerce, the fierce spirit of revolution, were only ebbing in brief rest; and sleepless statesmen were dreading the possible crisis of the morrow. (5:125-26)

This picture of worldwide activity minimizes Tina's passions, and stresses the egoism of her solitary outlook. However, there is another note:

What were our little Tina and her trouble in this mighty torrent, rushing from one awful unknown to another? Lighter than the smallest centre of quivering life in the water-drop, hidden and uncared for as the pulse of anguish in the breast

of the tiniest bird that has fluttered down
to its nest with the long-sought food, and has
found the nest torn and empty. (5:126)

The tragic dimension of individual suffering is epitomized by the bird imagery, a religious echo of God's care for sparrows. Even apparently trivial sorrow like Tina's is immensely significant. The passage, too, in its insistence on the importance of the bird (the individual), may be seen as an Eliotian refutation of utilitarianism as a purely numerical calculation of happiness, with Tina's sole birdlike misery set against the happiness of the majority. Thomas A. Noble has drawn attention (81) to a manuscript passage of the story which stresses that human pain is immeasurable:

But who can measure pain? Who can fix the value
of a single human consciousness? If human
thought in an attempt to grasp the universal,
learns to think the anguish of one living being
trivial, this is only because human love is feeble,
and human wisdom narrow.

Tina makes it plain to Wybrow that she is in love and jealous when she retorts: "O pray don't make love to Miss Assher for the sake of my happiness" (6:127). This is neither kind nor wise, or even good manners, since his fiancée is staying in the manor; Tina's words bring "the fascination of old habit" back to Wybrow, who kisses Tina, thus encouraging a return of her illusory hopes.

Tina's openness in showing her feelings persuades Maynard Gilfil to act as her mentor, voicing the author's

moral views. In a communication that exemplifies Feuerbach's idea of community, as human unity, he advises Tina not to keep alive feelings that destroy her peace of mind and may have bad consequences for others (by nature his sensible advice makes some use of the utilitarian doctrine of consequences). He recommends that she act with politeness and indifference: "You must see by this time that he is not worth the feeling you have given him" (9:136). He further warns that Captain Wybrow's position with Miss Assher is such that her own love will bring her nothing but misery: the couple is formally engaged. The simple solution he offers is time and absence, and trying to do what is right. Gliding over Tina's egoism, he emphasizes that she must not raise any suspicion in Sir Christopher of what has happened in the past. The peace of the whole family depends on her power of governing herself.

Gilfil's clear outlining of the situation meets with a minimal response because Tina's lack of willpower stems from her almost total subjection to feeling, which the author earlier emphasized in describing her character. Tina's heart is breaking and she does not know what to do: part of the confusion to be expected of "inadequate ideas." In his chapter relating to the understanding, Feuerbach had spoken of the role of the will in creating a purposeful existence; this ostensibly can be achieved by

setting realizable goals. According to Feuerbach, the understanding is the criterion of reality, due to its power to coordinate, make connections, inquire into causes. Tina is inadequate in this domain.

Yet Gilfil's sympathetic advice is not wasted. Her next outburst of anger is followed by a fit of weeping, and then thoughts of others: of Sir Christopher, and of Mr Gilfil's tenderness and generosity. But the desired unity of feeling and reason is not complete, for, after learning that Wybrow himself suggested her marriage to Mr Gilfil, a trifling incident pushes her over the brink of sanity:

See how she rushes noiselessly, like a pale meteor, along the passages and up the gallery stairs! Those gleaming eyes, those bloodless lips, that swift silent tread, make her look like the incarnation of a fierce purpose, rather than a woman. (13:155)

If the direct appeal to the reader detracts from the realism, Tina's deranged mentality, the inner metamorphosis, is the more readily apparent. The curious objects in this gallery, such as queer old-fashioned family portraits and antiquarian curiosities that include huge beasts' horns, Hindoo gods, Roman lamps, models of Greek temples, strange shells, swords, and daggers, are emblematic of her inner world. This is where the lovers had met, the place she associates with Anthony, and the memorabilia in the gallery point to Tina's own alienation from reality in their mysteriousness, strangeness, and

obsolescence. Tina has been living in the weird world of her imagination and in the past, and now in the madness of her passionate obsession dreams she can kill the man whose very voice unnerves her. Such ferocity is contrary to her natural sensitivity and unwillingness to harm a living creature.

We do not know whether Tina would have carried out her evil project, for she is miraculously saved from the consequences of her behaviour by Wybrow's unconvincing heart attack, in a scene characterized by Thomas A. Noble as a compendium of the clichés of sensational romantic fiction (143). At the sight of Wybrow lying dead, her resentment and hatred are immediately forgotten: she returns to "the old sweet habit of love." As the author notes, the "earliest and the longest has still the mastery over us" (15:160).

Her flaws are again demonstrated when she attempts to escape the place which holds so many miserable memories. It does not occur to her that people will worry about her disappearance: she is still the centre of her troubled world. She finds a refuge with Dorcas, a former servant of the Cheverels, but now Gilfil's suffering is fully highlighted, as he awaits the results of the dragging of the pond, and turns over leaves expecting any minute to come across her dead body. This confirms Gilfil's enduring love and Tina's thoughtlessness.

Indeed, the reader feels guilty at having forgotten Gilfil's troubles; possibly the structural weakness that lends so much weight to Tina's passion was intended to serve this purpose.

The last part of the tale describes the suffering of repentance. This will lead to a better love, not based on illusion. Once again, tears herald Feuerbachian remorse: "the flood-gates were opened, and the heart-easing stream gushed forth . . . the heavy icy pressure that withheld her misery from utterance was thus melting away" (19:177-78). The "dry scorching stare of insanity" has been averted through Gilfil's tender sympathy and active care.

Tina's confession to Gilfil that she meant to kill Anthony Wybrow is vastly significant, for it expresses not only her recognition of wrongdoing but implies a decision to change, as opposed to the easy alternative of a decline. In the name of God, the Rev. Gilfil absolves her, but it is his human absolution of her "bad passions" that is important, illustrating the power not of the Logos, God's Word, but of human words: "The forgiveness of sins lies in the confession of sins" (EC 79). The bird imagery is extended when he compares her to an immature fledgling: "Your sorrow and suffering had taken such hold of you, you hardly knew what you did" (19:178). As Feuerbach put it, the understanding judges according to

the stringency of law, but the heart accommodates itself and is considerate, lenient, and relenting: "the heart has compassion even on the sinner . . . love makes him free" (EC 47-48). This reconciliation leading to freedom was something Tina could not have achieved on her own.

Gilfil removes the evidence of the dagger, illustrating love not law, and reassures Tina that her bad intentions were not comparable to the deed. He clearly exemplifies Feuerbach's real love that has flesh and blood, and "which vibrates as an almighty force through all living" (EC 48). Such a love, Eliot's story shows, can exist in individuals who do not appear in the least romantic. Conversely, it is not necessarily present in apparently romantic individuals such as Wybrow, or even in "passionate" emotion. The clergyman's accommodating, steadfast love is in an entirely different category from Tina's former selfish passion; it expresses Feuerbach's love that attests itself by suffering and compassion. As the philosopher uniquely phrased it, "Mercy is the justice of sensuous life" (EC 49) ["Die Barmherzigkeit ist das Rechtsgefühl der Sinnlichkeit"]. Gilfil himself feels as if in the long hours of that night the bond that unites his love for ever to Tina has acquired "fresh strength and sanctity." The narrator's comment suggests how a Feuerbachian love is "consecrated" and how it is almost inseparable from want and pain:

It is so with the human relationships that rest on the deep emotional sympathy of affection: every new day and night of joy or sorrow is a new ground, a new consecration, for the love that is nourished by memories as well as hopes--the love to which perpetual repetition is not a weariness but a want, and to which a separated joy is the beginning of pain. (19:180)

Feuerbach had spoken of the feminine (tender) principle implicit in the Son of God (EC 71), and Gilfil's gentle nursing of Tina through her dark night of despair gives him that Christlike quality.

Gilfil places her with his sister, Mrs Heron, whose "sisterly equality" and sympathy are more nurturing than Lady Cheverel's "uncaressing authoritative goodwill," and exude none of the class consciousness or patronage which diminishes sympathy. Through the demands of Mrs Heron's little boy, Tina recaptures "gleams of her childhood coming athwart the leaden clouds" (20:182). Memory, which previously impeded her recovery, now contributes to it. Feuerbach had spoken of memory in connection with interpretations of the Trinity, which he considered to be a symbol of wholeness, but had not elaborated (EC 65). However, Eliot fully recognizes its importance as Tina is initiated into a real love, nourished and consecrated by memories as well as by hopes. (Such a sense of continuity in Eliot's fiction owes much to Comte.)

Feuerbach's insistence on the need for an aim in life which united heart and mind in such a way that it

could be thought of as a religion is now given priority. Tina can only become well (in terms of unified thought and feeling) by regaining her love of life, and this happens through her innate love of music. Gilfil speeds her recovery by providing her with a harpsichord. A telling image, one we might see as Jungian in content,¹⁷ of the inner change in Tina effected by Gilfil is his striking of his whip on a deep bass note. He produces a vibration such that it seems "a new soul [is] entering into her, and filling her with a deeper, more significant life":

In a moment her fingers were wandering with their old sweet method among the keys, and her soul was floating in its true familiar element of delicious sound, as the water-plant that lies withered and shrunken on the ground expands into freedom and beauty when once more bathed in its native flood.
(20:183)

Feuerbach had made the important point that man feels unhappy and unsatisfied until he has come to the last, or highest, degree of a power, whether it be love, reason, science, or art. "For only in the highest proficiency is art truly art; only in its highest degree is thought truly thought, reason" (EC 36). Music for Tina partakes of the nature of Feuerbach's true art, because it expresses her divinest soul. The difference between this image of music and the former one in which she poured out her hopeless passion manifestly indicates the change in her.

To U. C. Knoepfmacher, the passage from Gluck's Orfeo which Tina had months before sung to Sir Christopher and his nephew now takes on a new meaning.¹⁸ "Ho perduto il bel sembiante": she has lost the illusory paradise; now she is glad, no longer miserable, when she sings this refrain.

Gilfil's boyhood love of carpentry "considered as a fine art" and Sir Christopher's love of architecture also appertain to Feuerbach's "true art." Earlier, the narrator had made a special point in this connection, apparently opposing this Feuerbachian love of a divine object to the utilitarian spirit:

. . . I, who have seen Cheverel Manor, as he bequeathed it to his heirs, rather attribute that unswerving architectural purpose of his, conceived and carried out through long years of systematic personal exertion, to something of the fervour of genius, as well as inflexibility of will; and in walking through those rooms, with their splendid ceilings and their meagre furniture, which tell how all the spare money had been absorbed before personal comfort was thought of, I have felt that there dwelt in this old English baronet some of that sublime spirit which distinguishes art from luxury, and worships beauty apart from self-indulgence. (4:110)

Sir Christopher's reconstruction of the Manor is unsettling to other people, but we can see why he is impervious to criticism. The need to direct love toward a venerable object, is, in fact, a crucial element of the story. In Tina's case, music is the objective expression of her soul's divinity.

The wedding provides a Feuerbachian climax in its expression of renewed sympathy. After the wedding, Tina's hand rests with "the pressure of contented affection on Maynard's arm" and her dark eyes meet his glance "with timid answering love" (21:184). Sir Christopher's other nephew is also present, for he will be the new heir to his estate.

This last situation is again indicative of the remedial influence of suffering, for his sad experience has given Sir Christopher, like Amos Barton, added insight into the minds of the people he loves. First, he understood that his "little monkey" loved his nephew, Anthony, and then he realized how deep his sister's grief must have been in losing a child of her own. This, as much as his desire for an heir, has led Sir Christopher to reconcile his differences with his sister after many years, for a certain utilitarianism has not subjugated his human qualities of love. We recall his striving for beauty through architecture, and how he helped the widow on his estate, providing her with a cottage when her husband died. Finally, the bitterness of grief has lent him the power of forgiveness. His inflexible will having failed him, he has gained humility and with it humanity, though he has aged in the process. Sir Christopher is one of the most appealing of those of George Eliot's characters who blend utility with sympathy. His

determination to have his own way had been fostered by his position in life; his native goodness, especially in relation to his sister, had been overlaid by prejudice and impercipientence.

However, the happy marriage lasts only a few months. Tina dies in childbirth, and Gilfil's love goes with her "into deep silence for evermore" (21:185). John Blackwood, we are told, would have liked "a larger gleam of sunshine before poor Tina passed away" (GEL II, 323), but this ending points the moral, since we are to infer that Tina's flowerlike and birdlike fragility was undermined by suffering. In other words, her death is the eventual result of her blind, egoistic passion. This points once more to George Eliot's insistence on the irrevocability of deeds: "God send the relenting may always come before the worst irrevocable deed!" (12:151). Deeds cannot be altered, even though atonement and forgiveness may lead to a fresh start.

Tina is one of those unfortunate individuals who are the victims of their own nature and of circumstance, and Eliot feels thoroughly sorry for this particular victim. As in "Amos Barton," realization comes too late to amend all the consequences. Her demise also allows the story to return to Gilfil. While Eliot's description of suffering in this story has not shown it to be wholly good--too great a suffering, or suffering of a wrong kind, can

affect future well-being--Gilfil's patient, loving suffering makes him a true Feuerbachian exemplar.

The Epilogue reaffirms Gilfil's self-sacrificing nobility. Scarred by his experience of love, he has "something of the knotted whimsical character of the poor lopped oak" which still retains

the main trunk of the same brave, faithful, tender nature that has poured out the finest, freshest forces of its life-current in a first and only love--the love of Tina. (187)

"JANET'S REPENTANCE"

My irony, so far as I understand myself, is not directed against opinions--against any class of religious views--but against the vices and weaknesses that belong to human nature in every sort of clothing. . . . I should like not to be offensive--I should like to touch every heart among my readers with nothing but loving humour, with tenderness, with belief in goodness. (GEL II, 348)

In her essay on the female alcoholic in Victorian fiction, Sheila Shaw has pointed out that George Eliot broke all the rules when she wrote "Janet's Repentance." Janet Dempster, an unhappy, battered wife, "is not poor, not depraved, not comical, not invisible, and not always sober."¹⁹ This story, with its dynamic purpose of redeeming Janet, has a realism and a cutting edge that give it a more radical bent than her two earlier stories, its sentimentality tempered by a sardonic, often caustic,

wit.

Again, John Blackwood would have liked a pleasanter picture--"surely the colours are rather harsh for a sketch of English County Town life only 25 years ago." When, he asked, was George Eliot going to give his readers a good active clergyman who was neither absurdly Evangelical nor absurdly High Church? (GEL II, 344-45).

Since Blackwood considered it risky to publish her story in his magazine, George Eliot believed she might have failed with regard to Janet. Her letter to him, as given in the epigraph above, expressed her motivation. The conflict was not between "bigoted churchmanship" and Evangelicalism, she noted, adding: "Religion in this case happens to be represented by evangelicalism. . . ." The conflict lay "between immorality and morality--irreligion and religion" (GEL II, 347). Though her Feuerbachian interpretation was non-denominational, Evangelicalism was now the medium for her ideas on the subject, because this form of dissent, with its fervour for converting the human soul, could well be adapted to her melioristic purpose.

Her leisurely opening description of the town elaborates a central issue, the clash between "irreligion" and "religion," the two faces of Milby; only the latter conforms to her Feuerbachian thesis. In an interpretation compatible with the Feuerbachian/utilitarianism dialectic of the present study, David Carroll has suggested that

this story embodies Eliot's essential ideas in the form of a myth, at once organic and dialectical, in which she adapted the conventional triangle of romantic love to express the process of growth in the individual and in society. He sees the vital dialectic of life as a harmonious growth based on the tension and reconciliation of opposites; in Milby, polar opposites are seen as contradictions but, after conflict and potential tragedy, there comes renewed growth.²⁰

Among the things which comprise "irreligion" in this dingy and largely ignorant industrial town are worldliness, class-consciousness, vanity, immoderation in drinking, intolerance, and ignorance. Milby intellect is personified by Peter Dempster, the junior partner in a law firm. In the Red Lion, he displays a boorish blustering which covers up gaps in his knowledge. Dempster exhibits viciousness both in his treatment of his alcoholic wife, Janet, and in his dealings with Mr Tryan, the new evangelical clergyman. The Milbyites do not regard their town as immoral; as Eliot puts it, the standard of morality is not inconveniently high, and "an ingenuous vice or two was what every man expected of his neighbour" (2:201). Thus, Dempster's physical abuse of his wife seems more acceptable to some neighbours than his wife's addiction to alcohol, which is clearly caused by this abuse.

At church, worldliness reigns: "few places could present a more brilliant show of out-door toilettes" (2:198). The respect for the Sabbath is offset by considerable levity, especially in ogling females. Mrs John Cash recalled how Mary Ann Evans, looking at the gaily-dressed people at the new church at Foleshill, reflected that life would be easier and she would stand in better estimation of her neighbours if only she could take things as they did, be satisfied with "outside pleasures," and "conform to the popular beliefs without any reflection or examination." After being in the company of educated persons professing to call themselves Christians, Mary Ann commented on the tone of the conversation which, though often frivolous and sometimes ill-natured, seemed to excite in no one any sense of impropriety (Cross, I, App., 358). In Milbyites, this frivolousness and ill nature is satirized and constitutes "irreligion."

The narrator is first identified as a self-conscious male youth appearing in church for the first time in coat-tails, very much a part of Milby society, more conscious of girls than of the sermon mumbled inaudibly by Mr Crewe. The narrator is present again in church as a candidate to be confirmed by the Bishop. His chief emotion is a sense of sheepishness, and the girls to be confirmed are concerned with their physical appearances. At this point, the narrator's attitude aligns him with an

audience who have a less serious approach and a scantier comprehension of the "essence" of religion than Eliot. Later, this callow youth will be discarded for a wise and sympathetic omniscient narrator, a more appropriate vehicle to express Feuerbachian truths appertaining to human nature. The onlookers are not affected by the spectacle of confirmation and "I think the eyes must have remained dry . . ." (6:230-31).

The regular churchgoers, the Milby gentry, virtually ignore the existence of other creeds, and their notion of Methodism is vague and unflattering. Dissent shows the same secular spirit as the established church, being lax and indifferent:

The doctrine of adult baptism, struggling under a heavy load of debt, had let off half its chapel as a ribbon-shop; and Methodism was only to be detected, as you detect curious larvae, by diligent search in dirty corners. (2:201)

Belying its name, the Salem chapel is not always a haven of peace, for it is "unfortunate" in its choice of ministers. Some orthodox church members, chiefly tradespeople, support Dissent for reasons of self-interest: Congregationalism consumes candles (2:202). Self-interest and intolerance are shown even by the doctor, Mr Pilgrim, who will unite with his rival to evict a new surgeon from the town. George Eliot's version of religion and society in a manufacturing town scourges the

mass of the inhabitants.

The town has become divided into two factions, the Tryanites, who support Mr Tryan, and the anti-Tryanites, who are opposed to the evangelical clergyman lecturing in the parish church. Under Dempster's leadership the anti-Tryanite virulence develops into an organized opposition. This feuding by members of the established church with the Evangelicals exemplifies what Feuerbach speaks of as "faith" in contradistinction to love. Laxity and mild religious intolerance have ceded to a more serious form of irreligion; that is, religious persecution. Feuerbach saw such actions as a deep-rooted consequence of Christian dogma: "How should not he who has always the image of the crucified one in his mind, at length contract the desire to crucify either himself or another?" (EC 62). The true meaning of Christian suffering, "God is a heart," is violated in the intolerant persecution of Mr Tryan.

The most frightening of the Irreligionists is Dempster, who has become "callous in worldliness, fevered by sensuality, enslaved by chance impulses." Essentially, however, it is hard to kill what Eliot calls the "deep-down fibrous roots of human love and goodness" (7:237), and this remains true even of such a man. Potentially, Dempster is capable of redemption. In tolerating the intolerant, Eliot's novel reflects the

Feuerbachian doctrine that she preaches.

Feuerbach had seen the love of man for woman as receiving its religious consecration in the love of the son for the mother (EC 71). Yet the "highest and deepest love is the mother's love," he noted in explicating the mystery of the Trinity (EC 72). Both elements, mother love and the love of the son for the mother, are depicted through Mrs Dempster and her son, Peter, even though she is a petty, narrow woman and he has a streak of cruelty in him. Dempster's evil is held in abeyance until Mrs Dempster dies. Then his good angel deserts him, alcoholism loosens the restraints on his behaviour, and his viciousness becomes diurnal. Mrs Dempster believed in him, and this held his viciousness in check. The narrator maintains:

an unloving, tyrannous, brutal man needs no motive to prompt his cruelty; he needs only the perpetual presence of a woman he can call his own. A whole park full of tame or timid-eyed animals to torment at his will would not serve him so well to glut his lust of torture; they could not feel as one woman does; they could not throw out the keen retort which whets the edge of hatred. (13:268)

Eliot's reading of Mrs Gaskell's life of Charlotte Brontë in April 1857 may have suggested such a horrifying portrait of vice as innate and motiveless. She had been arrested by the picture of Branwell's vice and the tragedy of the old father and three sisters "trembling day and night in terror at the possible deeds of this drunken

brutal son and brother" (GEL II, 319-20). Janet, too, is apprehensive, in awaiting her husband's return from a drinking bout, prior to being subjected to his physical abuse.²¹

Another aspect of "irreligion" is utilitarianism. Eliot makes this connection very obviously in chapter 22, where her anti-utilitarian stance is presented by the narrator, whose views evidently reflect her own. "It was probably a hard saying to the Pharisees," he observes, "that 'there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance'" (Luke 15:7). This passage logically implies that immorality with repentance is more admirable than continued adherence to morality; realizing this, Hennell, in his Inquiry, had taken some pains to justify it. In "Janet's Repentance," the Pharisees become aligned with the utilitarians in the narrator's observation that "certain ingenious philosophers of our own day must surely take offence at a joy so entirely out of arithmetical proportion."²²

The narrator's view is not only anti-utilitarian, but decidedly Feuerbachian:

a heart that has been taught by its own sore struggles to bleed for the woes of another-- that has "learned pity through suffering"-- is likely to find very imperfect satisfaction in the "balance of happiness," "doctrine of compensations," and other short and easy methods

of obtaining thorough complacency in the presence of pain; and for such a heart that saying will not be altogether dark. (22:301)

He argues that the emotions are little influenced by arithmetical considerations--to the mother whose last baby dies, the tiny, dimpled corpse is not "one of a necessary average." The balance of happiness is a complacent doctrine; it may be "highly rational," but emotion is "obstinately irrational" and insists on caring for individuals:

it absolutely refuses to adopt the quantitative view of human anguish, and to admit that thirteen happy lives are a set-off against twelve miserable lives, which leaves a clear balance on the side of satisfaction. (22:301)

George Eliot's strong dislike of utilitarianism at the time she wrote "Janet's Repentance" finds vent in further irony about the "inherent imbecility of feeling":

one must be a great philosopher to have got quite clear of all that, and to have emerged into the serene air of pure intellect, in which it is evident that individuals really exist for no other purpose than that abstractions may be drawn from them--abstractions that may rise from heaps of ruined lives like the sweet savour of a sacrifice in the nostrils of philosophers, and of a philosophic Deity. (22:301)

Feuerbach had pointed out that human sacrifice belonged to the very idea of religion: "Bloody human sacrifices only dramatize this idea" (EC, App., 330). While intellect without feeling, as the narrator intimates, can be as

heartless and unjust as the Old Testament God who demanded bloody sacrifices, the man who "knows sympathy because he has known sorrow" will understand that the biblical passage (about the joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth) has a meaning which does not jar with the language of the heart. There is a transcendent value in human pain which refuses to be settled by equations, thus the misery of one casts so tremendous a shadow as to eclipse the bliss of ninety-nine (22:201-302).

Evidently, George Eliot's anti-utilitarian stance derives in part from a common misinterpretation of that philosophy, one which Bentham had himself facilitated by his use of the phrase "the greatest happiness of the greatest number." Bentham would, however, have found it difficult to regard pain as having a "transcendent" value.²³ To George Eliot, pain has an intrinsic value, and it is this, rather than her argument about the biblical passage, that constitutes the major difference in their views. Her interpretation of this passage is applicable to the story as a whole, in its theme of Janet's suffering and repentance.

Certain utilitarian tendencies are apparent in the general Milby intellect. Mr Tomlinson, on discovering that his foreman was a Tryanite, "would have cashiered that valuable functionary on the spot, if such a retributive procedure had not been inconvenient" (10:252).

Some of the Tryanite tradespeople are threatened with losing their custom, but the narrator enjoins that "convenience, that admirable branch system from the main line of self-interest, makes us all fellow-helpers in spite of adverse resolutions" and notes that it is probable that no speculative or theological hatred would be ultimately strong enough to resist the persuasive power of convenience (10:253).

Surprisingly, Milby does contain poetry as well as prose, "religion" as well as "irreligion." Apparently a dreary town, it can be transformed to beauty in springtime, and the same is metaphorically true of the human life there when one looks closer. A scented geranium "giving forth its wholesome odours amidst blasphemy and gin in a noisy pot-house" (2:205) is a wry garden image used to convey the rejuvenation. The better face of Milby, "religion," or morality, is apparent in Janet's doing good works when not "fit to be out" (3:215) (i.e., "hungover"), in Miss Crewe carrying half her dinner to the sick or hungry, in the kind heart of the befeathered Miss Phipps, and in the image of grey-haired men in drab gaiters whose integrity has been the basis of their rich neighbours' wealth. It is also apparent in the wealthy Mr Jerome, who has a "fountain of pity" in his heart (8:247), using his wealth to help others.

Mr Jerome has become a Dissenter because Dissent seemed to have the balance of piety, purity, and good works on its side: it seemed to him identical with choosing God instead of choosing Mammon. The utmost extent of his polemical discussion is to query whether one should observe Christmas and Easter by any peculiar observance other than eating mince pies and cheesecakes (8:242). He vents his irritability in righteous indignation of which Bentham would have approved. Mr Jerome's garden paradise reflects his mind. This truly archetypal garden is suggestive of Feuerbach's impartial love, as opposed to the faith that discriminates. In this garden there is "no finical separation between flower and kitchen garden," "no monotony of enjoyment for one sense to the exclusion of another; but a charming paradisiacal mingling of all" (8:239). Correspondingly, Mr Jerome does not distinguish between rich and poor when someone needs his help.

Janet's friend, the widow Mrs Pettifer, is likewise ready to help anyone in trouble. Janet's mother, Mrs Raynor, has "no saving views on justification" but finds divine lessons in the Bible: "how to bear the cross meekly, and be merciful" (5:230). "Let us hope," observes the narrator, making no attempt to conceal his irony, "that there is a saving ignorance, and that Mrs Raynor was justified without knowing exactly how." Mrs Raynor's cross is her daughter's behaviour and misery, and she

bears it with patient resignation.

In Mr Tryan, George Eliot's "religion" is most fully realized. In him the essence of Feuerbach's Christianity is not purified of all theological dogmas and contradictions (Eliot regarded the dogma of justification by faith as a form of egoism), but exists in his heartfelt desire to do good:

And out of the heart, out of the divine instinct
of benevolence which desires to make all happy
. . . out of the moral duty of benevolence in
the highest sense, as having become an inward
necessity . . . has sprung what is best, what is
true in Christianity. . . . (EC 60)

Earlier in his career, Mr Tryan had set a young girl, Lucy, on the road to prostitution and suicide. This led to his deep urge to help suffering humanity. At one point, his identification with suffering even caused him to repudiate dogma; he felt his sin against Lucy was greater than his sin against God. Although he is tubercular, he has chosen to live in an unsalubrious industrial part of the town, shortening his life for the sake of being near the poor.²⁴

"The blessed work of helping the world forward," the narrator observes, "happily does not wait to be done by perfect men" (10:256). George Eliot does not present Mr Tryan as flawless, since he identifies Christianity from a too narrow doctrinal system and is culturally limited (10:257). Mr Tryan's over-dependence on sympathy makes

his persecution by Dempster, especially the lampooning playbill which exhibits the coarseness of Milby humour, excessively painful; occasionally, he breaks down in private. His fear of physical pain is a real weakness: he is afraid of what his short future will hold for him in the temporal sphere. But in him Feuerbach's feeling is manifested; notably, Mr Tryan gives more thought to others than himself. His main hope is to live long enough to see his good work accomplished in Janet's redemption.

"Religion" coexists with "irreligion" in some of Mr Tryan's female supporters (Mrs Pettifer and the newly evangelical Miss Rebecca Linnet are the exceptions). Miss Pratt, the Milby blue-stocking, possesses no less than five hundred volumes and can conduct a conversation on any topic--significantly a quantitative, not qualitative, estimation of her abilities. She has published some work "calculated for popular utility" (3:211) and has a high opinion of her own intellect, yet is impressed by Mr Tryan's interpretation of the "great justification of faith." Notably, she lacks the fundamental quality of sympathy, having little compassion for Janet Dempster. However, Miss Pratt's stanzas to Mr Tryan beginning "Forward, young wrestler for the truth!" indicate her religious enthusiasm if not literary talent. Miss Mary Linnet also has an earnest desire to do good, although compared with Rebecca she is ostentatious in her worship

of outward forms.²⁵ The Tryanites have their faults, weaknesses, and utilitarian tendencies, but they also have much to commend them. The narrator at once criticizes and defends them for their religious endeavours. Feuerbach's concept of a religious egoism is apparent in their prominent notion of "a heaven in reserve for themselves," and yet this goal leads them to behave with an exemplary purity of heart, Christ-like compassion, and a subduing of selfish desires:

they had at least the feeling that sin was to be avoided and resisted, and colour-blindness, which may mistake drab for scarlet, is better than total blindness, which sees no distinction of colour at all. (10:255-56)

Evangelicalism has brought into Milby society something that accords well with Feuerbach's definition of morality:

that idea of duty, that recognition of something to be lived for beyond the mere satisfaction of self, which is to the moral life what the addition of a great central ganglion is to animal life. (10:255)

We know that in Milby "folly often mistook itself for wisdom, ignorance gave itself airs of knowledge, and selfishness, turning its eyes upward, called itself religion" (10:255). Such a mixture of folly and evil

often makes what is good an offence to feeble and fastidious minds, who want human actions and characters riddled through the sieve of their own ideas, before they can accord their sympathy or admiration. (10:256)

Nonetheless, the evangelical movement has its virtues. Through it, Eliot is also making a plea for the sympathy that overcomes religious intolerance and for less egoism in applying personal standards to others.

The main theme of Janet's redemption by Mr Tryan is, of course, the primary example of "religion." Her suffering and consequent vice was brought about almost imperceptibly over fifteen years of marriage to Dempster. An originally loving marriage has turned into a nightmare, and it does not supply the love that her nature desperately needs. She made a bad choice, not estimating Dempster's character correctly. According to Miss Pratt, Janet's friends had advised her against the marriage, but were ignored. Although Janet was in love with Dempster, utility was a consideration: Dempster was a professional man, and she did not want to be a governess. Her mother's approval was also a factor; while Mrs Raynor had not initially liked Dempster, practical considerations evidently induced her to change her mind.²⁶ To look further back into causes, Mrs Raynor had spoiled Janet as a child; as a consequence, despite Janet's generosity, she tends to be egoistic. She is also extremely proud, independent, and impulsive. Addiction has added to Janet's problems, and in her rational moments she knows she has fallen into sin and loathes herself.

Her aloneness, partly due to pride and egoism, and partly to the lack of someone who would truly understand her feelings, compounds Janet's problems in relation to physical abuse and addiction:

no human soul had measured her anguish, had understood her self-despair, had entered into her sorrows and her sins with that deep-sighted sympathy which is wiser than all blame, more potent than all reproof--such sympathy as had swelled her own heart for many a sufferer.
(15:276)

Janet has scarcely any of that contact with humanity on the level of feeling that Feuerbach recognized to be crucial to human existence. With children to look after, she "might never have needed that fiery poison" to still the cravings of her "poor hungry heart." As a mother, she might have been "saved from much sin, and therefore from much of her sorrow" (13:267-68). The rhapsodies on motherhood of Feuerbach and Comte allow Eliot to concentrate conventionally in "Janet's Repentance" on the saving grace of motherhood (as in "Amos Barton" she insisted on daughterhood), accepting family responsibilities as therapeutically necessary for the female.

Janet is shown as not independent enough to exchange the known misery of marriage for the mysterious unknown; her strength is only that of the vine which has to cling to a support. However, her response to her predicament is to inflict her own bitterness on her supportive mother.

She takes her mother's love very much for granted, and even reproaches kind Mrs Raynor with being cruel. Janet feels life has sent her nothing but misery, yet she is incapable of taking her life. She has tried and failed. After violent scenes with her mother, she breaks down, and her angry feelings are replaced by relenting and tenderness; the whole constitutes a vicious cycle.

When Dempster threatens to kill Janet, life is so hideous that she is ready to face death. Ignominy such as being forced out into the street in her flimsy nightdress is a fate worse than death to her. In her extreme isolation, she senses no Divine Pity; life to her means anguish and despair, but she has to cling to life. At this point, she feels herself to be a total outcast from society and God. This is a type of suffering that is in no way beneficial, because it does not contain within itself the seeds of a better life:

Her mother had sometimes said that troubles were sent to make us better and draw us nearer to God. What mockery that seemed to Janet! Her troubles had been sinking her lower from year to year, pressing upon her like heavy fever-laden vapours, and perverting the very plenitude of her nature into a deeper source of disease. (15:276)

Her wretchedness comprises a tortured sense of pain and maddened craving for relief. Though she longs for some ray of hope, pity, or consolation, longs to believe in a "Divine love," she has no faith or trust. She regards her

mother as only a fellow-sufferer in her lot. However, now she is forced to ask for help, and turns to Mrs Pettifer, who takes her in.

At night, the suffering imagination takes false, fitful, and exaggerated forms, but these are infinitely better than the "dreary persistence of definite measurable reality" that comes with waking and the return of rationality. Janet's "moment of intensest depression" undoubtedly owes something to what we call today "withdrawal symptoms."²⁷ Even such suffering may ultimately be beneficial. In relation to the Christian Redemption, Feuerbach had particularly emphasized the importance of suffering as the initial cause that provoked the later act of redemption (EC 62). Certainly Janet's situation will subsequently improve. Overwhelming despair again motivates her to overcome her pride and seek help: a small step, but one that leads to her meeting Mr Tryan and eventually reforming her character, as through his ideas are made tangible. "Blessed influence of one true loving soul on another!" comments the narrator. Ideas are "poor ghosts" until made flesh in a living soul with all its conflicts, its faith, and its love: "Then their presence is a power, then they shake us like a passion, and we are drawn to them with gentle compulsion, as flame is drawn to flame" (19:293).

Mr Tryan's experience of suffering as a repentant sinner allows him to recognize the depths of her anguish and provide that sympathy which is born of understanding. Her deep despair makes a strong impression on him, and he longs to help her. As U. C. Knoepfelmacher notes, Tryan's predicament as a sufferer who belongs to, yet rises above, Dempster's mundane present is meant to steer us and Janet toward the "purity, happiness and beauty" alluded to in Eliot's letter to Blackwood (82). Janet had been on the anti-Tryanite side; she had helped Dempster draw up the lampooning playbill, had had no great opinion of Mr Tryan and liked to make fun of him, but recently, in overhearing him confess his fear of physical pain, and on meeting his eyes--a direct form of human contact--she has received a different message. She begins to think of him with more sympathy. He has often been laughed at for being fond of sinners, but now she sees a new and personal meaning in the words. She experiences a vital urge to confess her wrongdoing, because he is the one person who might understand: "If she could pour out her heart to him! . . . for the first time in her life, unlock all the chambers of her soul!" (16:282).

In George Eliot's novels, confession represents a sacrosanct bond joining two human souls in a baring of guilt which frees the conscience from the burden of bearing sin alone, and purifies the soul. It involves

acceptance by both parties of the sin confessed, and is integral to redemption. For Janet and Mr Tryan, the scene is one of mutual confession, and a reciprocity marks Janet's relationship with Mr Tryan, as they help and then come to love each other. Sympathy does not exist without suffering in common, Feuerbach had noted (EC 54). The narrator observes that because sympathy is "but a living again through our own past in a new form" confession often prompts a response of confession (18:288). Mr Tryan's admission of his failings reflects Feuerbach's essence of Christianity, where Christ represents the admission of human weakness; like Feuerbach's version of Jesus, Mr Tryan's Christ does not demand, as men do, that man must first merit his love:²⁸ "He bids you stretch out your hands, and take of the fullness of His love" (18:290).

The vital question of "strength" had already been explored in the gossip about Janet at Miss Linnet's, where Miss Pratt was of the opinion that a woman should find support in her own strength of mind and Rebecca Linnet questioned whether this was enough. Without Mr Tryan's advice, encouragement, and belief in her, Janet would not have been sufficiently motivated to overcome her addiction. Paradoxically, strength is acquired through submission, and here we come to a significant feature of Mr Tryan's message. He tells her that as long as we live in rebellion against God, desiring to have our own will

(egoism), and seeking happiness in the things of this world, we poison our natures. Submission will bring relief--health, strength, and gladness (18:290).

His insistence on resignation and images of imprisonment and freedom--poisoned air, as opposed to pure free air and the infinite heavens--bring to mind Spinoza's concepts of Necessity and of human nature, but, above all, Mr Tryan's concept of divine will encompasses a Feuerbachian faith in the future:

There are unseen elements which often frustrate our wisest calculations--which raise up the sufferer from the edge of the grave, contradicting the prophecies of the clear-sighted physician, and fulfilling the blind clinging hopes of affection; such unseen elements Mr Tryan called the Divine Will, and filled up the margin of ignorance which surrounds all our knowledge with the feelings of trust and resignation. Perhaps the profoundest philosophy could hardly fill it up better. (22:302)

According to Mr Tryan, as soon as we submit to God's will, desiring to be united with him and made pure and holy, we are fed with his spirit, which gives us new strength to act as we should. Submission, resignation, or acceptance is a necessary concomitant to gaining the requisite strength of mind. Janet tells him this is what she wants, and that she has left off minding about pleasure. She means worldly pleasures; the well-being granted through submission that Mr Tryan has in mind has nothing to do with such things. Here, Eliot is creating a distinction between pleasure and happiness that does not exist in

Benthamite utilitarianism. Nor is it Spinozan, apparently, for by the word "pleasure" (laetitia), Spinoza sees "the passion [emotion] by which the mind passes to a higher state of perfection," and by pain (tristitia), the passion by which it passes to a lower state of perfection. For Spinoza, pain and the painful emotions are linked to vice and are signs of weakness or lack of freedom.²⁹ If we substitute the word happiness for pleasure, then this description would fit George Eliot's ethics. Eliot's distinction is a crucial one.

The Feuerbachian influence of Mr Tryan's sympathy on Janet is fairly obvious. The Scenes of Clerical Life have been seen as dominated by one thinker, Feuerbach; Derek and Sybil Oldfield have noted that Janet's "sin" of despair is a sin in the Feuerbachian sense of a contradiction of her personality with her fundamental nature (8, 17). Thomas A. Noble has found this story to be the one in which the Feuerbachian doctrine of sympathy is most marked; in it, human pain has a twofold value, of arousing sympathy and creating an active opportunity for its expression (77, 82). Above all, the influence of "one true loving soul on another" is incalculable and not logically deducible; it is

mysterious, effectual, mighty as the hidden
process by which the tiny seed is quickened,
and bursts forth into tall stem and broad
leaf, and glowing tasselled flower. (19:293)

In Mr Tryan's endeavours, knowledge is allied with feeling, according to Feuerbach's and Comte's prescriptions, and the "only true knowledge" of our fellow-man is that which enables us to feel with him. The narrator notes that our subtlest analysis of schools and sects must miss the essential truth, "unless it be lit up by the love that sees in all forms of human thought and work, the life and death struggles of separate human beings" (10:257). There is probably a caustic reference to utilitarianism in the narrator's following comment, which expresses Eliot's then-current view of egoism in relation to martyrdom:

To persons possessing a great deal of that facile psychology which prejudices individuals by means of formulae, and casts them, without further trouble, into duly-lettered pigeon holes, the Evangelical curate might seem to be doing what all other men like to do--carrying out objects which were identified not only with his theory, which is but a kind of secondary egoism, but also with the primary egoism of his feelings. Opposition may become sweet to a man when he has christened it persecution. . . . But Mr Tryan was not cast in the mould of the gratuitous martyr. (8:245-46)

The immediate positive results of the interview are Janet's reunion with her mother--she acknowledges her failures and promises to be a better daughter--a new hopefulness, and a feeling "of purification and inward peace" (Eliot's metaphor is "spring-time," as a renewal). Janet's prayer for "light and strength" has been granted,

but there will be moments of depression and temptation. After smashing the brandy bottle found in Dempster's cabinet, she experiences a return of her old anguish, and on the site of Dempster's grave tries to utilize her memories of her past misery to drive herself out of this depression, but to no avail. Only Mr Tryan's sympathy and understanding can effect that change. Hence, her walk home in the starlight after seeing him remains for ever in her memory as "one of those baptismal epochs, when the soul, dipped in the sacred waters of joy and peace, rises from them with new energies, with more unalterable longings" (25:322). This moment of Janet's redemption is Wordsworthian in its nature.

Janet's return to Dempster after his accident might seem irrational in light of her husband's treatment of her, but the nursing episode is integral to George Eliot's theme, illustrating generosity and powers of Christian forgiveness, an aspect of feeling that Feuerbach profoundly stressed. Janet had chosen to marry Dempster and had shared his life for fifteen years, and the way to happiness could not be through abdicating her marital responsibilities now he needs her help. In nursing him, Janet manifests the change in her outlook, and finds peace.

Dempster's sickbed ramblings, his delirium tremens, indicate the anxiety, amounting to an existential anguish,

engendered in him by his villainy.³⁰ His words also reveal that he is not only worldly, sensual, and vicious, which we already knew, but a thief who has been blackmailed. A terrifying possibility is hinted, in his references to the iron closet which he always keeps locked: he has had thoughts of doing away with Janet. His threat to kill her may not have been idle or unpremeditated, merely due to rage. This possibility of homicide occurred to Kitty, Janet's maid, after seeing that Janet had left without her bonnet: "It's my belief he's murdered her, and shut her up i' that closet as he keeps locked al'ys. He's capible on't" (21:297).³¹ His wild thoughts return obsessively to the idea of her burying herself in the iron chest and to her possible strangulation of him with her hair, creating in the reader a question of whether that was not his projected method with regard to her. Dempster is "imprisoned in misery" for his past sins, writhing grotesquely like the serpents--Janet's hair and arms--that his imagination conjures up. Dempster's anguish makes Feuerbach's point in reverse: that immorality leads to misery.

By contrast, the description of Janet has a peaceful quality perhaps drawn from George Eliot's own experience of egoism quenched by sick-bed duties, when

all the forces of our nature rush towards the channels of pity, of patience, and of love, and sweep down the miserable choking drift of our quarrels, our debates, our would-be wisdom, and our clamorous selfish desires. This blessing of serene freedom from the importunities of opinion lies in all simple direct acts of mercy, and is one source of that sweet calm which is often felt by the watcher in the sick-room, even when the duties there are of a hard and terrible kind.
(24:310)

The act of mercy brings freedom from philosophical doubt. It is a duty about which all creeds and philosophies are at one, and it provides offices that demand no self-questionings, casuistry, assent to propositions, or weighing of consequences--as utilitarianism does, the narrator implies. In his chapter on "Supervision of Art and Culture in the Sickroom," Daniel Cottom has suggested that sickroom suffering was a passive situation where Eliot could view individuals and act toward them as an individual; in the duty inspired by such a scene one can feel but not think. He envisages the scene of suffering as exemplifying Eliot's art: those involved in it "are bound to each other by the mysterious knowledge constituted by pain, which appears as the experience of humanity and thus as the truth of society embodied in culture." His definition of Eliot's conception of feeling, as "individual experience that is not individual but essential and universal" resembles Feuerbach's idea of feeling.³²

The "love of God" which Mr Tryan stressed, which is paralleled in human sympathy, is exercised by Janet here. Later, Janet and Mr Tryan mutually express the necessity of love in human relationships through a special bond. Their relationship becomes warmer than that of pure friendship after Janet exerts herself on his behalf, using considerable subterfuge to induce him to move to a healthier area. Their new intimacy builds up very gradually to reach the high level of sympathy that becomes love. Janet has lived through a great tragedy and her emotions need time to recover. The thought of Mr Tryan is associated for her with repose from conflict of emotions, trust in the unchangeable, and with "the influx of a power to subdue self"; she is not yet conscious that the hold he has on her heart is other than that of

the heaven-sent friend who had come to her like
the angel in the prison, and loosed her bonds,
and led her by the hand till she could look
back on the dreadful doors that had once closed
her in. (27:331)

This image of Janet's freedom from imprisonment may justifiably be called Spinozan.

On the day when Janet persuades Mr Tryan to become a tenant at Holly Mount, her other house, where she has installed Mrs Pettifer, she is completely happy. When Mr Tryan sees through her subterfuge to the thought behind it, life has a new sweetness for him, too. As his disease progresses, Janet nurses him, and "no one could feel she

was performing anything but a sacred office" (27:332). When they finally part, a "sacred kiss of promise" seals Janet's vow to be there for him at the end--equivalent to saying that she will not slip back into the degeneracy from which he has rescued her. The vocabulary indicates the sacred nature of their feeling, which for Janet is not extinguished by his death.

Afterwards, Janet cannot feel he is quite gone: the unseen world so near to her holds "all that had ever stirred the depths of anguish and joy within her" (28:333). The burial service is not a hollow form, because every heart is filled with the memory of a man who, "through a self-sacrificing life, and in a painful death, had been sustained by the faith which fills that form with breath and substance" (28:333).

Mr Tryan achieves immortality in Feuerbach's sense.³³ He is commemorated not only by a gravestone but in Janet's heart--a memorial which bears a fuller record, since she has been rescued from self-despair, strengthened with divine hope, and will look back on years of purity and helpful labour. "The man who has left such a memorial behind him, must have been one whose heart beat with true compassion, and whose lips were moved by fervent faith" (28:334): these words conclude the story. In saving Janet from her sin, he also redeemed himself.

Janet now thirsts for no pleasure, craves no worldly good. She sees the future in terms of "resigned memory":

Life to her could never more have any eagerness; it was a solemn service of gratitude and patient effort. She walked in the presence of unseen witnesses--of the Divine love that had rescued her, of the human love that waited for its eternal repose until it had seen her endure to the end.
(28:334)

Yet she does not end her life in resignation. She recovers her popularity, and she adopts a daughter so that in her old age she "has children about her knees, and loving young arms round her neck" (28:334). Even the anti-Tryanites concede that she is a changed woman due to Mr Tryan's influence. A change has come over Milby, too; sneers against the evangelical curate have ceased to tickle the Milby mind. The change was measured as the former hoots and jeers gave way to deep silence as Mr Tryan's funeral procession passed through the town. Mr Tryan, in providing an example of "divine" human goodness, has given the community something to reverence.³⁴ Janet is no longer alone, because her active research in the matter of adoption has created her happiness.³⁵ But this felicity also owes something to the "seed being sown silently and unseen"--"We reap what we sow, but Nature has love over and above that justice, and gives us shadow and blossom and fruit that spring from no planting of ours" (5:230). Once again, archetypal garden imagery points up the theme that runs through "Janet's Repentance." Offsetting the pessimism of Dempster's history is a

fundamental optimism that human beings can develop their essence, their capabilities, to the utmost, illustrating the joy of self-perfection that Feuerbach spoke of in his Essence of Christianity. The relatively simple "Mr Gilfil's Love-Story" and "Janet's Repentance" depend on such imagery to bring out Eliot's point about happiness.³⁶

This story ends on a happier note than "Mr Gilfil's Love-Story," although in each case the "beloved object" who had taken the place of God in another human heart has passed on. "Janet's Repentance" shows that living in memory is not enough. So long as he lives, man must continue to enjoy life and to love other human beings. The "best powers of humanity" must be devoted to life (EC 272).

While George Eliot has been describing a predominantly utilitarian society, her assumptions are not utilitarian, and both her hero and heroine are finally motivated by Feuerbachian love. The meaning of "religion," as opposed to "irreligion" (or morality versus immorality), is everywhere implicit in her depiction of individual human nature, Nature, society, and the workings of Nemesis. It is contained in the conception of Mr Tryan being sustained "by the faith that fills that form with breath and substance" and Janet being granted light and strength. This last story of the "Clerical Scenes" contains a more fully developed rendering of George

Eliot's philosophy of religion than the first two stories: simply enough, Janet's redemption, accomplished by Mr Tryan, provides a "fuller record."

Notes

¹See Derek and Sybil Oldfield, "'Scenes of Clerical Life': The Diagram and the Picture," Critical Essays on George Eliot, ed. Barbara Hardy (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970) 6-7, and David Lodge, Introduction, Scenes of Clerical Life by George Eliot (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973) 17.

²"'The Sad Fortunes of the Rev. Amos Barton': George Eliot and Displaced Religious Confession," Style 20 (1986): 75-78, 80-83. Coleridge never retracted his doctrine of the imagination but the concept later ceased to be a key one in his thought; reason, the faculty of direct access to truth, claimed a more exclusive attention, according to Ben Knights, The Idea of the Clerisy in the Nineteenth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1978) 54-55.

³Similar conclusions were drawn by Auguste Comte and J. S. Mill. See Suzanne Graver, George Eliot and Community: A Study in Social Theory and Fictional Form (Berkeley: U of California P, 1984) 56.

⁴Given George Eliot's views, it is no coincidence that she comes from the upper echelons of society. The venial type of egoism that is characteristic of the Countess Czerlaski and Amos Barton was once referred to by George Eliot as "Sibreeanism" (GEL 1: 315); it is not deliberate, but merely thoughtless.

⁵See Lodge, 19; Thomas A. Noble, George Eliot's "Scenes of Clerical Life" (New Haven: Yale UP, 1965) 106-107, 121; Noble also compares Eliot's realistic handling of death with that of other Victorian novelists, 109-121.

⁶See Bettina L. Knapp, Music, Archetype, and the Writer: A Jungian View (University Park: The Pennsylvania State U, 1988).

⁷See U. C. Knoepfelmacher, George Eliot's Early Novels (Berkeley: U of California P, 1968) 44; hereafter cited as Early Novels. Knoepfelmacher sees the unaltered clock on the tower at Shepperton as a fitting emblem for the "permanence of impermanence," time and change being the only constants in the evolutionary world that George Eliot portrays (46). It might also symbolize Shepperton's adherence to old ways in the face of reform.

⁸Ibid. 39-40. Leslie Stephen, George Eliot (London: Macmillan, 1902) 63.

⁹Knoepfelmacher, Early Novels 67.

¹⁰Noble 144; Stephen 58.

¹¹As in utilitarianism, "duty" is aligned with pleasure. Bentham saw "love of duty" as an impossible motive in so far as duty was synonymous to obligation. Bentham, then, defined duty as an act seen or supposed to be amicable to mankind at large, or to his own countrymen in particular, or any such act as a man may love to do, either on that consideration or on any other. He noted, however, that it was not possible for a man to derive any pleasure from the thought of being forced to do it. "Sense of duty" was a motive synonymous with "love of duty," except that it could include fear of pains that might befall the individual should he neglect to carry out the act, such as fear of legal punishment, loss of amity or reputation, or the fear of God. In Bentham's "love of duty" the motive of sympathy is implicit, but not mentioned. Evidently, Bentham did not consider that love of duty, separated from the idea of pleasure, was a useful term. See The Works of Jeremy Bentham, ed. John Bowring, vol. I (New York: Russell & Russell, 1962), 219; Deontology, ed. Goldworth, op. cit. 114.

¹²Her later relations with Chapman were strictly on a businesslike basis. Although Tina in her tiny proportions and dark colouring does not resemble George Eliot, she does resemble her in sensitivity; also, Tina has "no positive beauty" and "a voice that, in its low-toned tenderness, recalled the love-notes of the stock-dove" (4:110).

¹³The Teaching of George Eliot (n.p.: Leicester UP, 1984) 89.

¹⁴Spinoza's Ethics and On the Correction of the Understanding, trans. Andrew Boyle (1910; Everyman's Library, London: Dent, 1986) 141. George Eliot's translation reads: "For when man is subject to passions he is not in his own power, but in the power of destiny, so that he is often compelled, even while seeing the better, to follow the worse." Benedict de Spinoza, Ethics, trans. George Eliot, ed. Thomas Deegan (Salzburg, Austria: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, 1981) 153.

¹⁵Another solution proffered by Eliot, and also by J. S. Mill, lies in education; but Tina has lacked this advantage. On a difficulty pointed out by Marx in this connection, i.e., on the contradiction of an education that goes hand in hand with the extension of democracy and equality and one that guarantees the enlightenment of the educators (hence, presupposing a hierarchy), see Ben Knights, The Idea of the Clerisy in the Nineteenth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1978) 142.

¹⁶The "little southern bird had its northern nest lined with tenderness, and caresses, and pretty things," and the point is made that a loving, sensitive nature is too likely, under such nurture, to have its susceptibility heightened into unfitness for an encounter with any harder experience, "all the more, because there were gleams of fierce resistance to any discipline that had a harsh or unloving aspect" (4:109). The emphasis on Tina's sensibility obscures the fact that she is spoiled. It is implied that she needs loving discipline.

¹⁷On C. G. Jung's concept of individuation, see The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, trans. R. F. C. Hull, 2nd ed., Bollingen Ser. 20 (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1980).

¹⁸Early Novels 70.

¹⁹Sheila Shaw, "The Female Alcoholic in Victorian Fiction: George Eliot's Unpoetic Heroine," in Nineteenth-Century Women Writers of the English-Speaking World, ed. Rhoda B. Nathan; Papers given at the Nineteenth Century Women Writers' International Conference, November 1980, held at Hofstra U (New York: Greenwood P, 1986) 173, 177. Eliot was not concerned with producing pleasing pictures to the exclusion of all disagreeable truths (GEL II, 348-49). However, everything--her topic of alcoholism, bestiality, and marriage breakdown--was "softened from the fact, so far as art is permitted to

soften and yet to remain essentially true." The real town was more vicious than her Milby, the real Peter Dempster "far more disgusting," the real Janet had a far sadder end than her heroine who would "melt from the reader's sight in purity, happiness and beauty" (GEL II, 347). Cf. Gordon S. Haight, "George Eliot's Originals," From Jane Austen to Joseph Conrad: Essays Collected in Memory of James T. Hillhouse, ed. Robert C. Rathburn and Martin Steinmann (Minnesota: U of Minnesota P, 1958) 177-93. He suggests that the shadows in the Buchanans' married life were seen at their blackest through Miss Lewis's eyes (180).

²⁰"Janet's Repentance' and the Myth of the Organic," Nineteenth-Century Fiction 35 (1980): 331-48 (348). Carroll suggests that, since reality is dialectical, the extremes in the balanced struggle are unstable and Eliot's view of the world more precarious than is usually acknowledged.

²¹Eliot departs from a Benthamite view of human nature in describing vice as innate and motiveless, and some natures as inherently vicious. This view of human nature is also opposed to that of Spinoza. Bentham's philosophy is fundamentally optimistic: man seeks pleasure and avoids pain; pleasure is a good and pain an evil. For Spinoza, man's basic motivation consists in an endeavour to persist in his own being (*conatus*), and in man there is a tendency toward self-perfection as well as self-preservation. While there appears here to be some inconsistency on Eliot's part with regard to Dempster's retention of "deep-down fibrous roots of human love and goodness," the facts indicate that these roots have been progressively weakened through Dempster's habitual forays into vice.

²²U. C. Knoepfelmacher notes that "Janet's Repentance" is replete with sarcastic allusions to the Benthamites prescribing felicity according to "arithmetical proportions." The narrator claims that they see the world only in material terms. Eliot's novels, however, describe the mysterious, incalculable processes that have to do with feeling, where ideas are sometimes made flesh, as in Mr Tryan's influence on Janet; Early Novels 86. Eliot's conception of utilitarianism around this time is also indicated by her dislike of Henry Thomas Buckle's History of Civilization in England (1857-61); see GEL II, 486. Buckle seemed to her "irreligious."

²³Bentham would have agreed that the pain of the one, if considerable enough, might outweigh the happiness of the greater number. In his marginal notes to his Table of the Springs of Action [recently published], he noted that the principle of utility should be applied with caution, giving the following example of a misapplication: "Per utility, greatest happiness of greatest number the end. Suppose your own state at war with one more populous. Per Utility, you ought to sacrifice your own to the hostile state." Deontology, ed. Amnon Goldworth, op. cit., 37. In an appendix to his Ludwig Feuerbach and the Outcome of Classical German Philosophy, op. cit., 95, Frederick Engels reproduced the following quotation from Bentham: "The interests of the individual . . . should give way to public interests. But . . . what does that mean? Is not every individual as much a part of the public as any other? This public interest, which you personify, it is only an abstract expression: it represents only the mass of individual interest. . . . If it were good to sacrifice the happiness of an individual in order to increase that of the others, then it would be still better to sacrifice the happiness of a second, of a third, without being able to set any limit. . . . Individual interests are the only real interests." (Bentham, Theory of Rewards and Punishments, etc., Paris, 1835, 3rd ed., II, 230.)

²⁴He is not deliberately being a martyr. Knoepfelmacher notes that in his "obsessive desire for martyrdom" he refuses Mr Jerome's offer of a horse (Early Novels 84), but Mr Tryan does so because it would be more trouble to him. Later, when his parochial duties have diminished, he accepts. Nor does he refuse to move into the comfortable house which Janet furnishes for him, which is near the poor people's cottages. Eliot envisaged deliberate martyrdom for one's beliefs as a form of egoism. See also the quotation on p. 166.

²⁵The chief ornaments of her bookcase are neatly-bound copies of Dryden's Virgil, Hannah More's Sacred Dramas (Eliot's original rapture over Hannah More was replaced by a more severe judgment), Falconer's Shipwreck, Mason on Self-Knowledge, Rasselas, and Burke On the Sublime and Beautiful, all inscribed with her name, showing that she values them.

²⁶Eliot disapproved of marriages of convenience; see Cross, I, App., 363-64.

²⁷See Sheila Shaw on the three stages of Janet's detoxication, 175-76. In overcoming temptation, Janet will regain control of her life. Shaw speculates (176) that George Eliot's source was either Nancy Wallington Buchanan or Maria Lewis, who was an intimate companion of Nancy Buchanan. Miss Lewis accompanied the ailing Mrs Buchanan to Margate, where she died in 1840 at the age of thirty-seven. The Mrs Wallington who ran the school George Eliot went to was Nancy Wallington's mother.

²⁸Knoepfmacher refers to the German philosopher's comparison of the death scenes of Socrates and Jesus. While Socrates empties the cup of poison with unshaken soul, Christ exclaims, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." Feuerbach notes that "Christ is in this respect the self-confession of human sensibility" (EC 60-61). In addition, Knoepfmacher draws attention to the fact that Auguste Comte's Catéchisme positif was being translated by Richard Congreve, who became George Eliot's friend, around the same time that she was working on "Janet's Repentance," and that in it Comte expounded his religion through the "systematic conversations" of a woman with a "priest" of the new secular faith; Early Novels 81-82.

²⁹See, e.g., Ethics, Pt. III, Prop. XI.

³⁰Sheila Shaw has here seen George Eliot as dealing explicitly with the unpoetic nature of alcoholism (174). Blackwood was uneasy about this section.

³¹George Eliot and George Henry Lewes took a considerable interest in the trial of William Palmer, who was convicted at Stafford in May 1856 for the murder by poison of J. P. Cook; see GEL II, 362-63.

³²Social Figures: George Eliot, Social History and Literary Representation (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1987) 142-43, 148.

³³See Feuerbach, Thoughts on Death and Immortality, trans. James A. Massey (Berkeley: U of California P, 1980). Mr Tryan survives in men's memories, in history, for it was the quality of his life that was important.

³⁴See Joseph Butwin, "The Pacification of the Crowd: 'Janet's Repentance' to Felix Holt," Nineteenth-Century Fiction 35 (1980): 355-56, and Noble, 87. Butwin emphasizes the community's repentance and advance in piety generally.

³⁵Here we have a reflection in the story of Cara Bray's earlier situation. Although Eliot was a career woman, she participated in motherhood through the Brays's experience of adoption, through her sister Chrissey's experience of having six children, and through herself becoming a mother to George Henry Lewes's sons. Her comments on children in her letters and fiction are, however, not invariably sentimental. It is clear that she liked children, but only when they were not spoiled.

³⁶Eliot's use of archetypal imagery, especially light, water, and garden imagery, with sometimes a combination of these, is especially noticeable in this story. The images convey the meaning of both "religion" and "irreligion," in terms of the inner life (usually Janet's). Feuerbach, in speaking of the Trinity as man's consciousness, had noted that God and Christ are conceived of in terms of light: "the Father is light, although light was chiefly a predicate of the Son, because in him the Godhead first became clear, comprehensible" (EC 68). In the story, they evoke emotions ranging from existential despair to happiness and self-fulfilment. While at Mrs Pettifer's, recovering from Dempster's harsh treatment, Janet's life seems "a sun-dried, barren tract, where there was no shadow, and where all the waters were bitter" (16:281). However, during Janet's first visit to Paddiford church to hear Mr Tryan, she feels a spring of love within her; a door has been opened in her cold, dark prison of self-despair "and the golden light of morning was pouring in its slanting beams through the blessed opening." There is "sunlight in the world" and a divine love caring for her. The images of light are connected not only with the good and the right, with the illumination of dawning knowledge, but are often equated with the heart, with feeling, and especially with love. In an image evocative of Feuerbach, Janet dreams that nursing Dempster back to life with all-forgiving love will eradicate the old harshness and cruelty under the "heart-sunshine" she will pour around him (24:311). An interesting use of light imagery evokes Dempster's macabre inner world in terms of pictures and light to convey the effect of memory (10:254).

CHAPTER 3

RELIGION AS SELF-PROJECTION IN ADAM BEDE

George Eliot's next work of fiction began as a clerical scene and expanded into a major novel. Although in Adam Bede she continued to write about clerical figures, her central character, Adam, was a simple artisan. An earlier review article had detected in her Strauss translation the hand of a discerning and well-informed theologian,¹ and such an authorial presence is indeed patent in Adam Bede. Yet the demythologizing elements in this novel were remarked only after Eliot's identity as the translator of Strauss became known. In fact, Adam Bede strongly reflects Feuerbach's revolutionary concept appertaining to the hypostatization of the religious mind, which was a considerable advance on Strauss's mythic theory of religion, and one that Strauss himself had acclaimed. Feuerbach had maintained that, when it was unconscious, such an objectification or projection of a man's own needs and feelings caused self-division within man.

Through her use of this specifically psychological as well as moral theory, Eliot's treatment of religion becomes fundamental to the theme and is incorporated into the plot of Adam Bede as she portrays the consequences of

such a human lack of awareness. Her use of contrasting clerical figures, a worldly Anglican, the Rev. Adolphus Irwine, and a young Methodist preacher, Dinah Morris, points up the divisive nature of the unconscious projection described by Feuerbach, and creates a context which paves the way for her demythological interpretation of religion. Extensive critical discussion has taken place over the respective merits of Irwine and Dinah, and Irwine has often been seen as lax and negligent in his semi-paternal relationship with Arthur Donnithorne of Donnithorne Chase, who seduces Adam's sweetheart, making her pregnant with a child whom she ultimately leaves to die. However, Eliot's description of Irwine and Dinah, which also implicitly raises the question of the relative merits of hedonism versus asceticism, makes an important statement in a demythologizing far more radical than that of "Janet's Repentance." Contrary to certain views, Eliot approves of Irwine, especially in relation to his self-awareness, and shows his anthropomorphic brand of religion to be in many ways superior to that of Dinah, although in other ways she thoroughly admires her heroine and her religious efforts.

Eliot's reading of Feuerbach endorsed her own feeling that religious projections and dogmas could have a harmful influence on individuals and their relations with others. On the other hand, it had also supported her

contrary feeling that the pure elements of religion reflected the highest aspects of man's nature. Accordingly, she portrays her Methodists, Dinah and Adam's brother, Seth, in such a way that the human essence of love and understanding emerges almost unscathed by their beliefs. As we have seen, Feuerbach's interpretation of religion contained this same duality, causing Max Stirner unjustly to accuse him of creating a new religion.²

The character who is most profoundly affected by an illusory religious projection is the muscular, black-haired carpenter, Adam Bede, whose deep feelings for Hetty Sorrel spring from a stern and proud morality. Similarly, Arthur Donnithorne, the squire's grandson, is prone to a projection of unconscious drives, to which he will not admit, with Hetty as their object. Through her dramatic presentation of this triangular love affair, the author evokes a confrontation that will dispel their "religious" illusions, causing them to suffer, and finally changing their nature.

A pattern of human development that had its basis in a Feuerbachian view of human nature, sketched by Eliot in her earlier stories, becomes more emphatic within the greater scope afforded by Adam Bede. In this connection, we may recall that, in "Janet's Repentance," Eliot branded Bentham's philosophy in terms of "immorality" as opposed to "religion" or morality. Likewise, at the core of her

first novel, and intricately connected with the relations between Adam and Hetty, there lies a similar thematic juxtaposition between utilitarianism and another ethic based on the kind of principles that Feuerbach espoused.

Thus, in Adam Bede utilitarianism is explicitly portrayed in its most basic sense as utility, the search for pleasure and avoidance of pain, and those calculations of self-interest aimed to produce a balance of pleasure over pain. George Eliot saw inherent problems in Bentham's system and propounded them in "a country story--full of the breath of cows and the scent of hay" (GEL II, 387). While this sounds paradisaical, the farmers of the village of Hayslope in Loamshire are pleased to profit from the rise in the price of bread resulting from flood damage to others' land; the village schoolmaster, Bartle Massey, knows that the only way to "bring round" the squire of the Hall at Donnithorne Chase would be to show him what was for his own interest. Even the landlord and landlady who shelter the pregnant Hetty are self-interested, rather than sympathetic, in suggesting that she pawn her locket and earrings when Hetty is short of money during her desperate errand to seek out Arthur.

The line between an unreasonable degree of self-interest, perhaps selfish, callous, and egotistical, and a more moderate form, called by Eliot "self-interest rightly understood," which stops short of a saintly

abnegation, will be a frequent concern in Eliot's fiction. The former, a too narrow perspective on human affairs, contradicted Feuerbach's interpretation of ideal human nature since it did not (contrary to Bentham's assumption) lead to individual or the general happiness. As revealed in "Janet's Repentance," pleasure is not equivalent to happiness; it tends to be inferior and egotistical.³ The description of the self-satisfied farmers denies an assumption implicit in Bentham's principle of utility: that man is able to move from self-interest to an interest in the general good. And although the narrator pretends to excuse the landlord and landlady, their attitude underlines the difference between Eliot's concept of utilitarianism and a Feuerbachian ethics. In the former, self-interest predominates; in the latter, "the true human love, which alone is worthy of the name, is that which impels the sacrifice of self to another" (EC 53). It is in Hetty's story that the effects of utilitarianism are expanded as Hetty's shallow philosophy of life conflicts with the stern morality of Adam Bede.

REALISTIC ANTHROPOMORPHISM VERSUS THEOLOGY

Realism in the 1799 world of Adam Bede is Eliot's vehicle for her doctrine of sympathy. The manifesto of realism announced in the famous seventeenth chapter has its foundation in a belief that man is lovable; in line

with positivism, human nature is seen as social and sympathetic. The narrator has learned the "deep pathos" and "sublime mysteries" of human nature by living among commonplace, vulgar, and faulty people, and this novel will deal with them (II, 17:271). Religion, philosophy, and art, the narrator insists, should take into account the existence of coarse, common people:

Paint us an angel, if you can . . .; paint us yet oftener a Madonna . . .; but do not impose on us any aesthetic rules which shall banish from the region of Art those old women scraping carrots with their work-worn hands. . . . (II, 17:270)⁴

Although the mind's mirror is defective, the narrator in Adam Bede feels as bound to tell the reader the precise reflection perceived as if he were on oath in the witness box. Hetty Sorrel's story reflects those of Mary Dove, in the tale related by Eliot's aunt, and of John Wesley's sister, Hetty, who broke the sacred code of family morality.⁵ The parallels between the histories of Hetty Sorrel and Hester Prynne of The Scarlet Letter, as well as with Wordsworth's ballad "The Thorn," reinforce the realism announced by the narrator. We have already seen that Wordsworth's humane philosophy was compatible with that of Feuerbach, and that in her fiction Eliot will draw on it frequently to express Feuerbachian insights.

The manifesto of realism has a specific function. It acts as an authorial apology for not being able to

depict an ideal clergyman, and many readers appear to have taken this at face value. The Rev. Adolphus Irwine somewhat resembles Gilfil of the Scenes and is anticipatory of Farebrother in Middlemarch. In fact, the narrator's apology for Irwine's defects--reminiscent, too, of the alternately sympathetic and critical narratorial technique in "Amos Barton"--paves the way gently for Eliot's unorthodox interpretation of Christianity. Significantly, the vicar's imperfections relate to the mere forms of religion. Irwine has a pagan "mental palate": no lofty aims, we are told; no theological enthusiasm. Though he is open to criticism for this, his parishioners thoroughly approve of him. In his relations with people Irwine is caring and thoughtful; his approach is human rather than stern and dogmatic. The rector happily is not "torn apart" by his clerical function like Eliot's friend John Sibree, who abandoned the ministry.⁶

Irwine's relaxed style strongly contrasts with the earnest persistence of the Methodists to propagate their religion.⁷ Although his aims are not lofty, they are commendable. The novel depicts him as kind, sympathetic, and distinctly moral. Significantly, Irwine is more effective in his short sermons than the zealous Dinah Morris is in her Methodist preaching to the villagers, and an independent observer on horseback, struck by the drama of her eloquence, admires her person rather than her

sermon. Dinah's attempted conversion of Bessy Cranage, a vain and ignorant village girl, humorously enacts Spinoza's point that religious superstition is engendered and fostered by fear (Tractatus, Pref., 4), and, in the long term, it leaves Bessy untouched. Dinah's Methodist view of human sinfulness is a concept that Feuerbach would not have endorsed. Irwine, on the other hand, does not instil fear into his parishioners, and he realistically perceives the limited capacities of his audience:

If he had been in the habit of speaking theoretically, he would perhaps have said that the only healthy form religion could take in such minds was that of certain dim but strong emotions, suffusing themselves with a hallowing influence over the family affections and neighbourly duties. (I, 5:99)

Affection and duty: these are qualities esteemed by Feuerbach in his own interpretation of religion. While appreciating these beneficial results fostered by religion, Irwine is manifestly conscious that the villagers' imaginings about the godhead may, if carried to extremes, be harmful.

Significantly, the narrator tells us that Irwine has the capacity of distinguishing between the inner and outer self, and of delving beneath the surface to grasp essential human nature. In this, he differs from his mother, who thinks that people's characters can be told from externals. The essential qualities are not discovered by a superficial appraisal, although Eliot

maintains that the outer appearance can provide some indications of character, as in Irwine's case. While his advice to his parishioners does not appear to be spiritual, the superior refinement of his face, which at the birthday feast is more striking than that of Arthur Donnithorne, reflects a "large-hearted, sweet-blooded" nature that never has a grudging thought:

epicurean, if you will, with no [religious] enthusiasm, no self-scourging sense of duty; but yet . . . of a sufficiently subtle moral fibre to have an unwearying tenderness for obscure and monotonous suffering. (I, 5:97-98)

With his keen perception of human suffering, Irwine does not find his sisters uninteresting, as do many of his parishioners, or "superfluous," as the later Gwendolen Harleth will find hers in Daniel Deronda.

Notably, Irwine's religion is an integral part of his character, and, if we accept Feuerbach's theory that an unconscious religious projection is self-divisive, then Irwine's wholeness provides yet another indication that he does not unconsciously project his own desires in this way. His nature is not divided. Irwine's standpoint is not the absolute and arbitrary one of divinity, but that of the infinite human consciousness. Adam notes that he "acts up to what he says," and "made folks love him and respect him, and that was better nor stirring up their gall wi' being over-busy." Hetty's and Dinah's aunt, the

plain-spoken Mrs Poyser, says that he is like "a good meal o' victual, you were the better for him without thinking on it," whereas Mr Ryde (the zealous clergyman who succeeds Irwine) is like "a dose o' physic, he gripped you and worreted you, and after all he left you much the same" (II, 17:275). If Irwine's sermons are short, they throw a new light on old truths. In his funeral oration for Thias Bede, with its theme that in the midst of life we are in death, he aptly stresses that the present moment is the time for works of mercy, righteous dealing, and family tenderness.

Irwine has been particularly criticized for his part in Arthur's lapse, that is, for not probing more fully into his affairs. Thus, Murray Krieger has viewed Irwine's human response as a turning aside from the stern priestly role of judgment, of firm ethical guidance; and A. G. van den Broek has found in Adam Bede a community experiencing a crisis of faith brought on by Irwine's brand of religion which has almost lost any spiritual comfort.⁸ But a less discerning person than Irwine would not have even suspected Arthur of possible wrongdoing. A close reading of the text does not suggest that Irwine is slack. The fine friendship between them is aided by the rector's delicate tact and is based on trust. First, his words to Arthur should have carried a sufficient warning in themselves:

Our deeds carry their terrible consequences, quite apart from any fluctuations that went before--consequences that are hardly ever confined to ourselves. And it is best to fix our minds on that certainty, instead of considering what may be the elements of excuse for us. (I, 16:258)

This strongly implied denunciation of immorality expresses not only positivist law and a Benthamite doctrine of consequences but Feuerbach's idea that virtue is a means to well-being. It is, however, softened by his initial statement that the worst form of Nemesis is the inward suffering that results from a violation of moral law. Irwine further asks Arthur if he is referring to some danger of his own, which Arthur denies. Arthur shrinks from confession; it is the direct question that has restrained his impulse to confess. The image of Hetty crosses Irwine's mind, but Arthur's disclaimer, in conjunction with Irwine's own reason, tells him there is no need to worry. With hindsight, he blames himself, but the circumstances do not suggest that the blame for Arthur's conduct should rest upon Irwine's shoulders. Rather, it lies on Arthur's, for deciding not to relate to his friend and religious mentor an unpleasant fact--his liaison with Hetty.

Yet Irwine is "tender to other men's failings, and unwilling to impute evil" (I, 5:100), and his habitual demeanour strikingly exemplifies one of the "rules and lessons for life" which Eliot's friend Mary Sibree

recollected having received from Miss Evans during her lessons with her.

In the proverb, 'Live and let live,' she saw a principle involved, harder to act upon, she would say, than the maxims of benevolence,-- I think, because bringing less credit with it.⁹

With his motto of "live and let live," Irwine enacts this harder principle of tolerance. Eliot's bias in favour of him can be further discerned from the half-ironic observation that he was not intolerant as some philanthropists and zealous theologians have been, and from her reference to him as one of those uncommon species of men of whom the best can be known only by following them out of the public place.

Irwine harmonizes with the peaceful, rural landscape of Loamshire. If his "epicurean" nature aligns him somewhat with the hedonism thought to be characteristic of Benthamism, his sympathy for others counteracts this. If his work ethic lacks enthusiasm, the difficulty of relaying with enthusiasm an orthodox dogma which is not fully credible must be borne in mind. The most salient fact is that his self-awareness and awareness of others precludes the hypostatized projection of his religion into a God; his is an anthropomorphic religion. This may partly explain his tolerance of Dinah Morris's encroachment on his territory in her preaching, when Irwine's benign humour refuses to be upset by what at

least one villager regards as presumption on Dinah's part.

Irwine's comfortable lifestyle and leisurely manner contrast with Dinah's asceticism; his religious self-awareness contrasts with her unconsciousness of her religious projection; and his impartiality and tolerance set off her occasional partiality and intolerance, expressed in her distrust of the worldly rector. We have seen that he is in unity with himself, but Dinah's nature will be divided when she has to choose between her love of religion and her love of Adam Bede. She is superstitious, and her preaching on the village green displays a certain religious fanaticism in its stress on sinfulness.¹⁰ Almost imperceptibly, she will move toward a greater tolerance and self-awareness. Thus, later she admits that God manifests himself by our silent feeling, and makes his love felt through ours (V, 45:242), an instance of Eliot's demythologizing through Dinah. In marrying Adam Bede and giving up preaching, Dinah opts for a humanistic ethos which largely displaces her religious projection, although she retains the outward forms of her belief.

THE ESSENCE OF RELIGION

Feuerbach had stressed not only the danger involved in a religious projection but the holiness, truth, and purity that lay at the core of religion. Eliot regarded Dinah as a significant character in Adam Bede precisely because it is this latter aspect of religion that she

exemplifies. By contrast, Hetty has no religion and very little feeling. In this novel, Eliot chooses Methodism to portray Feuerbach's lofty ideals of feeling, and here Dinah's aims, which involve her wholehearted effort to seek out ways to help the poor people, express an ardour and zeal that is lacking in Irwine. She incarnates the active principle of sympathy as the most necessary element in human relations. Feuerbach considered that only in sympathetic communication could egoistic sensation rise into feeling (EC, App., 283).

While the Methodists, Dinah and Seth, are at the opposite pole to Feuerbach's demythologizing in their literal interpretation of the Bible, the narrator points out that erroneous theories can coexist with very sublime feelings. Though their interpretation of religion appears flawed and they could be looked on as "coarse, common people" (their diction is incorrect, and their instruction illiberal), their faith is regarded by Eliot as infinitely superior to the idea that certain people have of that religion:

dingy streets, sleek grocers, sponging preachers,
and hypocritical jargon--elements which are
regarded as an exhaustive analysis of Methodism
in many fashionable quarters. (I, 3:52)

Along with Feuerbach, George Eliot recognizes that religion is far from meaningless; she sees the divine as the universally human projected imaginatively into space:

the objectified attributes belong to man, to the human species. In this for Feuerbach lies the mystery of religion. Hence, Eliot takes exception to a narrow view of a particular religion and proceeds to expound the real essence of religion through her description of Dinah and Seth.

Although in her speech on the village green Dinah displays a certain tendency, as noted, toward the fanaticism that Feuerbach reproves, in the main she echoes Feuerbach's ideal of God as merciful love. The author maintains that Dinah's physiognomy expresses her heart and soul: her eyes shed love and have the liquid brightness which tells that the mind is full of what it has to give out. Feuerbach saw consciousness of God as self-consciousness: "Whatever is God to a man, that is his heart and soul" (EC 12). In his chapter on the "mystery of the Incarnation," Feuerbach had explained God as love, or a being of the heart. What, he asked, did the words "God is love" mean? Who is our Saviour and Redeemer: God or Love? It is Love, he pointed out, that has saved man, love which transcends the difference between the divine and human personality (EC 50-53).¹¹

One of the most fundamental aspects of Feuerbach's interpretation of religion was his realization that the ultimate meaning of religion lay in man's yearning for happiness. His concept that the dogmas of Christianity

represent realized wishes of the heart (EC 140) is reflected in Dinah's principal message that God's love turns poverty into riches and satisfies the soul. She is, however, concentrating on the essence of religion, rather than the dogmas. As Feuerbach saw it, from a theoretical standpoint, God satisfies the wants of man because he represents perfect blessedness and has no wants himself (EC 196).

Feuerbach's "essence" may further be described thus. Interpreting religion in terms of man, Feuerbach saw reason, love and force of will as perfections in man; they are powers, or, strictly, "constituent elements" of man's nature. (Force of will was considered by him to parallel freedom of will, although he did not see the will as actually being "free" but rather man as striving for freedom.) The power of love, thought, the desire for knowledge, energy of will, the force of morality: all these govern man. Feuerbach considered that man was nothing without an aim, an object in which he could invest or realize his powers; this object (religion) was essentially his own reflected powers; or, as he put it, his own objective nature:

Der Mensch ist nichts ohne Gegenstand. Grosse, exemplarische Menschen--solche Menschen, die uns das Wesen des Menschen offenbarer--bestätigen diesen Satz durch ihr Leben. Sie hatten nur eine dominierende Grandleidenschaft: die Verwirklichung des Zwecks, welcher der

wesentliche Gegenstand ihrer Tätigkeit war.
 Aber der Gegenstand auf welchen sich ein
 Subjekt wesentlich, notwendig bezieht, ist nicht
 anders als das eigne, aber gegenständliche Wesen
 dieses Subjekts. (GW 33)¹²

He makes a similar point elsewhere, in stating that consciousness of the objective is the self-consciousness of man, his manifested nature or objective ego, and the absolute to man is his own nature (EC 5). In conformity with this reasoning, Dinah's religion, as manifested by her power of loving, objectifies her own inner nature.

For Feuerbach, as noted, morality (perfect will) is the means to happiness (EC 141). This is also implicit in Dinah's avowal to her audience that uneasy desires and fears can be ousted, the temptation to sin extinguished, and heaven begun on earth because "no cloud passes between the soul and God, who is its eternal sun" (I, 2:43). Images of light in this novel recall the metaphors of light so prevalent in "Janet's Repentance," and again suggest the extent to which the inner life conforms with ideal human nature. In her letter to Seth, Dinah speaks of the blessed time when the outward light is fading and the body is wearied with its work and labour: "Then the inward light shines the brighter, and we have a deeper sense of resting on the Divine strength" (IV, 30:59). Thus, like Irwine, she has the capacity to see within as well as without, although her inner vision is rendered in terms of an "external" divinity by her imagination and

beliefs.

Further aspects of her preaching conjure up Feuerbach's "essence." In relation to subjective human feelings, Feuerbach had observed that Jesus, as contrasted with God, represented man's objectification of the more personal feelings. In the more human Jesus, the Christian religion, and the essence of religion in general was realized (EC 148). In line with this idea (after vividly recreating the villagers' sinfulness), Dinah speaks of the manifestation of God's forgiveness in the life of Jesus, dwelling on Christ's lowliness and acts of mercy. Like Feuerbach, she emphasizes Jesus's humane receptiveness, as opposed to God's terrible, awesome quality. Dinah's description of Jesus's agony in the garden, with his words "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," and her reminder that he called not the righteous, but sinners, to repentance, iterate Feuerbach's stress on suffering as feeling and on the human need for compassion.

Feuerbach regarded prayer as the essential act of religion, "that in which religion puts into action what we have designated as its essence" (EC 193), and Dinah's praying is a solitary and pantheistic communion with nature rather than a ritual. Leaning out of her window on her last night at Hayslope, she closes her eyes, so that she may

feel more intensely the presence of a Love and Sympathy from the earth and sky. That was often Dinah's mode of praying in solitude. Simply to close her eyes, and to feel herself enclosed by the Divine Presence; then gradually her fears, her yearning anxieties for others, melted away like ice-crystals in a warm ocean. (I, 15:235)

She prays to alleviate her fears about Hetty, for Dinah's inward life has its basis in a love which is allied with an extreme sensitivity to human suffering. To Feuerbach, it is in Christ that the blending of feeling and imagination are realized (EC 148), and Dinah herself becomes almost Christlike, in this sense, as her sympathy and imagination work in unison to create "a thorny thicket of sin and sorrow" in a meditation which simulates the Crucifixion. In her bedchamber, she meditates upon Hetty, seeing her in imagination "torn and bleeding, looking with tears for rescue and finding none."¹³ Dinah's internal consciousness of Feuerbach's "suffering god" lends her a special sensitivity in imagining Hetty's future trials.

Dinah's interpretation of religion, then, focuses especially on the components of feeling that Feuerbach had esteemed, love and sorrow. These are inseparable to her: "is [Christ] not one with the Infinite Love itself--as our love is one with our sorrow?" (IV, 30:59). In her letter to Seth, she describes how, in meditation, she shares the Redeemer's cross with a "willing pain":

infinite love is suffering too . . . that is
 a blind self-seeking which wants to be freed from
 the sorrow wherewith the whole creation groaneth
 and travaileth. Surely it is not true blessedness
 to be free from sorrow, while there is sorrow
 and sin in the world: sorrow is then a part of
 love, and love does not seek to throw it off.
 (IV, 30:59)

Her belief that "infinite love" must suffer, and that the desire to be free from suffering is pure egoism, again represents Dinah's alignment with Feuerbach's universal, self-sacrificing love. The true cross of the Redeemer, she believes, was the sin and sorrow of this world, and "that is the cup we must drink of with him, if we would have any part in that Divine Love which is one with his sorrow" (IV, 30:60). In embracing suffering in such a sense, Dinah's doctrine stands in contrast to utilitarianism, where pain is on the whole to be avoided.

While Dinah spends much of her time helping people in loving relationships, she spends time alone, too. Feuerbach had maintained that to be able to be solitary is a sign of character and thinking power: "Solitude is the want of the thinker, society the want of the heart." He further asserted that we are independent only in the solitary act of thought, and that solitude is "self-sufficingness" (EC 67). This self-same independence is manifested as Dinah confides to Mr Irwine that she can sit silent all day long with the thought of God overflowing her soul:

For thoughts are so great. . . . They seem to lie upon us like a deep flood; and it's my besetment to forget where I am and everything about me, and lose myself in thoughts that I could give no account of, for I could neither make a beginning nor ending of them in words.
(I, 8:131)

She has had this reflective habit as long as she can remember. Dinah's understanding also reveals the objectivity, or impartiality, which belongs to Feuerbach's reason. Her attitude to Hetty indicated that she is above pettiness and jealousy; she can feel compassion for her cousin without requiring any reciprocity on Hetty's part, an indication of her objectivity.

Sometimes, however, speech comes to her without any will of her own, and with a spontaneity that issues from a profoundly moral, meditative, and loving habit. Dinah's Methodism emphasizes spontaneous emotion, as does Wordsworth's religion of nature.¹⁴ Words are given to her; they "came out as the tears come, because our hearts are full and we can't help it" (I, 8:131). Significantly, the narrator notes that the foundation of her religious inspiration is human thought and feeling;

do we not all agree to call rapid thought and noble impulse by the name of inspiration? After our subtlest analysis of the mental process, we must still say, as Dinah did, that our highest thoughts and our best deeds are all given to us.
(I, 10:168)

Although Dinah's Methodism occasionally reinforces

misconceptions which exemplify Feuerbach's concept of a faith that is opposed to love--she relies on "divine" guidance in deciding to leave her Aunt Poyser's farm for Stonyshire--her nature testifies to the interrelationship of thought and feeling typical of Feuerbach's universal love, which rules only where reason also rules (EC 257). She projects her nature ardently into her religion and does much good thereby. Moreover, her friendship with Irwine illustrates her progress. She learns that he is not a worldly Sadducee and now sees him differently: his countenance is "as pleasant as the morning sunshine." He draws her out, and this communion of souls between a simple Methodist preacher and an Anglican rector who is a man of the world illustrates that, although their religions divide them, their humanity can in mutual sympathy overcome this artificial barrier.

Feuerbach's divine human love must unfold itself in concrete acts, in what he alludes to as "common duties" and "the natural ties of humanity" (EC 260, 254). Dinah's primary aim is to help the miners and their families--people who spend their days "in the mines away from the sunlight" (a metaphorical meaning is present). Striding over the hills on a bleak, cold day, a feeling of blessedness and a love of God possess her soul, and she carries this love to the lonely, bare, stone houses "where there's nothing else to give comfort" (I, 11:178). Her

self-sacrifice of living in Snowfield, Stonyshire, can be understood in terms of Feuerbach's I-Thou relationship, where man, as a "species being," can be properly understood not as a single individual but only in terms of a minimum of two, an "I" and a "Thou," and where love includes self-sacrifice. (This self-sacrificial aspect is not predominant in Irwine's behaviour.)

Like many of George Eliot's heroines, Dinah has had experience of tending the sick and the mourning, and has discovered how to persuade them to listen to her spiritual advice. She is particularly careful not to oppose any feeling of Adam's mother, Lisbeth, for this preacher relies, in her smallest words and deeds, on the tactful sympathy that Eliot considered women are particularly able to express. Touch and eye contact play a role here, for Lisbeth understands their language far better than the Bible or the hymn-book. To Lisbeth, she brings a peacefulness of spirit as the lonely woman becomes attached to her; and the benefit of love conferred is returned when Lisbeth is responsible for bringing Adam's love into Dinah's life, Adam himself not being perceptive enough to see that Dinah is in love with him. The late joining together of Dinah and Adam (suggested by Lewes, and immediately accepted by Eliot) has frequently been thought of as a problem in the novel. However, the nature of Dinah as a Feuerbachian exemplar, rather than simply a

sweet Methodist plaster saint, gives her a complexity that explains more fully the relationship that develops between Adam and her, and makes the book itself finally more complex.

Seth Bede's "resignation," suggesting a lack of vital spirit in him, has also been a problem for readers. However, if one regards him as an embodiment of Feuerbachian qualities, additional interpretation is called for. We are introduced to this representative of Methodism as a young man aged twenty-three, when he has just learned a lesson of primary importance--how to love ideally. Seth's love for Dinah is given "with that adoration which a young man gives to a woman whom he feels to be greater and better than himself" (I, 3:50), and the narrator considers Seth's love to be barely distinguishable from religious feeling, as is any "deep and worthy" love. Here we have another instance of a religious projection, and George Eliot invests it with profound significance, indeed:

Our caresses, our tender words, our still rapture
under the influence of autumn sunsets, or pillared
vistas, or calm majestic statues, or Beethoven
symphonies, all bring with them the consciousness
that they are mere waves and ripples in an
unfathomable ocean of love and beauty; our emotion
in its keenest moment passes from expression into
silence, our love at its highest flood rushes
beyond its object, and loses itself in the
sense of divine mystery. (I, 3:50)

Charles Bray quoted the passage in his Autobiography

(199), associating it with "the unspeakable beauty, the illimitable splendour, the infinite play of force." Eliot's references to art and music conjure up the "divinity" of Seth's feeling ("Music is the language of feeling--feeling communicating itself" [EC 3-4]) and her words convey the "divine mystery" of the universe which she expressed not long afterwards in another context. On reading Darwin's Origin of Species in December 1859, she observed:

to me the Development theory and all other explanations of processes by which things came to be, produce a feeble impression compared with the mystery that lies under the processes. (GEL III, 227)

This mystery of nature is present, too, in Feuerbach's explanation of reason and will as powers in man through which he can lose his subjectivity and attain to a universal sense of the species. In short, while avowedly secular, Feuerbach's Essence of Christianity retained that hint of the unfathomable, in his idea of human divinity, which appealed to Eliot. Divine human powers are present in Seth, who, besides his capacity to love profoundly, has a deep capacity for meditation. As Adam puts it, "th' lad liked to sit full o' thoughts he could give no account of; they'd never come t' anything, but they made him happy" (VI, 50: 301).

Adam cannot plumb the depths of his less practical brother's nature, revealed in Seth's ungrudging

resignation to suffering after he has been rejected by Dinah. Seth is not resentful of his mother's plain preference for Adam; in fact, he has a constant tender, watchful concern for Lisbeth Bede's welfare. Neither is he jealous of Adam for dining with the major tenants at Arthur's twenty-first birthday feast, nor of his brother's success in business, in becoming Jonathan Burge's partner, nor even of his betrothal to Hetty not long after he himself has been less fortunate in love. And finally his resignation turns into complete acceptance of his brotherly role when Adam becomes betrothed to Dinah. Although Seth lacks Adam's magnetism, he has a genuine sympathy and wisdom: he accepts "necessity" with a rare grace. As we begin to appreciate Seth's good nature, we become increasingly aware of Adam's defects. Spiritually, if not otherwise, Seth is superior to his pragmatic brother who has more worldly success. To sum up, while both Dinah and Seth are by Feuerbach's standards under an illusion as to the nature of religion and therefore not fully self-conscious, they illustrate as well as is possible in such circumstances a human divinity. It is against this Feuerbachian standard of perfection that we should measure Adam Bede.

THE "OLD ADAM": A RELIGION OF LOVE AND WORK

Devout, though not orthodox, Adam exemplifies Irwine's ideas as to the vague form in which religion is

best understood by his parishioners. Adam goes to church not for the dogma, but to hear Irwine's sermons which elaborate "nothing but what was good, and what you'd be the wiser for remembering" (II, 17:276). Notably, Adam repeats Feuerbach's notion of the essence of Christianity (EC 140): "I look at it as if the doctrines was like finding names for your feelings . . ." (II, 17:275). His religion takes two particular forms, a religion of feeling and of work. In the former, Hetty Sorrel is his divine object. Here Feuerbach's concept that the religious projection divides man's nature is reflected in the fact that Adam's projection hinders him from realizing his natural powers of judgment in relation to Hetty's character, which does not resemble his imaginings. Feuerbach had defined the understanding as "that part of our nature which is neutral, impassible, not to [be] bribed, not subject to illusions" (EC 34). Moreover, Feuerbach's highest law of feeling lies in the immediate unity of will and deed, but such unities combining theoretical and practical activity (EC 64) have no place here since Hetty does not return Adam's love and could not live up to his unrealistic expectations.

However, Adam's emotions do reflect, in a certain sense, Feuerbach's "essence." Hetty's beauty has a transcendent effect which illuminates feelings deep within him, an effect which the narrator compares to that of

music, noting that beauty "has an expression beyond and far above the one woman's soul that it clothes" (IV, 33:98). There are some faces which nature charges with a special meaning, speaking the joys and sorrows of generations, "eyes that tell of deep love which doubtless has been and is somewhere, but not paired with these eyes" (III, 26:430), as exercise of his reasoning powers would have told Adam. Nevertheless, his feelings derive from a profound source. Sexuality, Feuerbach acknowledged, works wonders: "Man and woman are the complement of each other, and thus united they first present the species, the perfect man" (EC 156). To Feuerbach, the point was not trite, but one of supreme importance. In Adam's journey to Snowfield to fetch Hetty, who has already departed on the wanderings that will result in the birth of her child and infanticide, we see him blissfully but unconsciously happy in a religion which is indissolubly bound up with his love for Hetty, a religious illusion soon to be shattered. In fact, Adam is unperceptive; unlike Irwine and Dinah, he does not look below the surface of other people's characters and actions. This is partly because of an admirable simplicity and partly because of his own great need of an object to love and revere.

Adam's "religion of work" translates emotion into strength, providing a good outlet for passion and self-expression within the narrow bounds of his private

life. Since religion is manifested in him first and foremost as practical work, at the sound of tools "the strong fibres begin their accustomed thrill, and what was a moment before joy, vexation, or ambition, begins its change into energy" (II, 19:318). Work has always been part of Adam's religion; he sees good carpentry as God's will, or, significantly, "that form of God's will that most immediately concerned him" (VI, 50:303). The driving force behind his work ethic is his sense of duty. A Feuerbachian demythologizing is indicated when the practical Adam compares religion to mathematics, adding in typical fashion that

a man may be able to work problems straight off in's head as he sits by the fire and smokes his pipe; but if he has to make a machine or a building, he must have a will and a resolution, and love something else better than his own ease. (II, 17:272-73)

In his life and work, Adam incarnates morality that depends on the will, which Feuerbach expresses unequivocally:

I cannot conceive perfect will, the will which is in unison with law, which is itself law, without at the same time regarding it [as] an object of will, i.e., as an obligation for myself. (EC 47)

Adam, for instance, will work all night to complete a promised coffin, even when the task was not originally his own. However, according to Feuerbach the conception of

the morally perfect being is not a "merely theoretical, inert conception, but a practical one, calling me to action, throwing me into strife, into disunion with myself" (EC 47). The rigorous Adam is not in disunion with himself, but with other people who do not live up to his own high standards. Through Hetty's sin, Adam will experience the conflict inherent in the human situation which Feuerbach has pointed out. For the philosopher, the answer to such a moral dilemma lay in love: "The law condemns; the heart has compassion even on the sinner" (EC 47). Initially, Adam represents the law that condemns. There is in Adam, through his sheer single-mindedness, and despite his dim theories which reject egoism, more than a touch of egoism. Although he is no egoistic seeker after pleasure, his inordinate sense of his own moral superiority affords him considerable satisfaction.

However, Adam illustrates Feuerbach's view that man is a being who works with design toward certain ends (EC 37); the narrator notes that apparently ordinary, painstaking men like Adam contribute to society by building roads, improving farming practice, and reforming parish abuses. In saying that these are not negligible achievements, Eliot is in clear sympathy with Feuerbach's interpretation of God as creator, that the idea "of activity, of making, of creation" is itself a divine idea:

In activity, man feels himself free, unlimited, happy; in passivity, limited, oppressed, unhappy. Activity is the positive sense of one's personality. That is positive which is accompanied with joy; hence God is, as we have already said, the idea of pure, unlimited joy. We succeed only in what we do willingly; joyful effort conquers all things. But that is joyful activity which is in accordance with our nature, which we do not feel as a limitation, and consequently not as a constraint. And the happiest, the most blissful activity is that which is productive. (EC 217)

George Eliot pencilled this last sentence in her copy of The Essence of Christianity, also adding a marginal notation pointing up the passage (215-16). Moreover, she pencilled the sentences "Activity is the positive sense of one's personality" (215), and "Making is a genuine human idea. Nature gives birth to, brings forth; man makes" (218).¹⁵ (Eliot was struck by Feuerbach's example of creative activity: "To read is delightful, reading is passive activity; but to produce what is worthy to be read is more delightful still"; this sentence, so relevant to her authorial task, is also marked.)

In Adam's life, an idealistic love and a work ethic predominate, and several critics have remarked on his utilitarianism; at the outset, his practical nature does verge on it. Jerome Thale firmly associates Adam with it, but in fact notes that Adam believes in a "refined and sublimated form of self-interest--conscience."¹⁶ If conscience is the guide, then pain and pleasure are not the sole guides. In any case, Adam's pain avoidance stems

from his clear-sighted association of wrongdoing with sin and trouble, and thus it does not contradict Feuerbach's notion that morality is the means to happiness. Adam does not avoid the pain of labour, like many of his fellow workers. His strong sense of integrity prevents Adam from acting according to the doctrine of utility; he has another yardstick--moral principles. Indeed, these can be seen to form a part of his religion. In Adam good work proceeds from an essentially virtuous disposition, in accordance with Feuerbach's conception of love in which man, the basis of morality, is the motive that lies behind good works (EC 262). In fact, Adam's keen sense of integrity and his pride unite in his refusal to accept a lower price for the screen he made for Miss Lydia than the one he had asked. He would rather not sell it.

A less admirable side of Adam's nature is his intolerance of faults and weaknesses, the difficulty he has in forgiving his father for his irresponsible drunken behaviour, and his impatience with Seth for his occasional absent-mindedness (he is less tender than Seth toward their mother, who perversely spoils her older son). Nevertheless, Adam's religion of work and duty is superior to Arthur Donnithorne's easy belief that Providence will not treat him harshly. For Adam, religion is not an escape route from moral responsibility. However, in her depiction of Adam as morally perfect but flawed by the

"correlative hardness," the lack of sympathy that exists alongside his strength, Eliot suggests both the importance and the difficulty of living up to Feuerbach's joint ideal of morality and sympathy.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

Feuerbach's philosophy has rightly been called a dream of human development, for his acknowledged goal was the realization of the species, or the actualization of human predispositions, abilities, and vocations.¹⁷ Man needed to transcend an illusory religion and replace it with the purely human essence that depended on another human being. As he succinctly phrased it, to have no religion is to think only of oneself; to have religion is to think of another; and so long as we have just two, as man and wife, we still have a religion: "Two, difference, is the origin of religion--the Thou, the God of the I, for the I is not without the Thou. I am dependent on Thou. No Thou--no I."¹⁸ In short, the human must replace the divine; the contradictions inhering in the divine must be eradicated for the actualization that he mentions to take place. In Eliot's story, Adam is no biblical creation, but a peasant who represents archetypal man undergoing just such a progress.

Adam Bede has been seen as a complex and sceptical exploration of the idea of an earthly paradise, as represented by the pastoral setting. In the scene in

which Hetty churns butter and innocently flirts with Arthur, the earthly Eden (which however contains inherent contradictions) is endangered, but not yet shattered. Then the community code is broken by Arthur and Hetty, whereupon openness gives way to secrecy.¹⁹ Adherence to a utilitarian code exacerbates the problem of immorality, as its basis is not those powers of sensibility and understanding recommended by Feuerbach. The deficiencies in the natures of Hetty and Arthur are hidden by such outward characteristics as beauty, good looks, and wealth, and even by the virtue of generosity which in Arthur's case stems more from self-interest than a genuine concern for other people. In describing Hetty, Eliot again distinguishes between a self-seeking pleasure and a more fully self-satisfying happiness that can be achieved only by reaching beyond the individual self.

Hetty's philosophy is materialism. She cares for appearances and what people think of her appearance. She has never appropriated a single Christian idea or feeling (V, 37:144), and her transcendent beauty hides a heart that Mrs Poyser discerns to be as hard as a pebble or a dried pea and as vain as a peacock; she has "a luxurious and vain nature, not a passionate one" (IV, 31:70). Hetty cares for the chicks only because of the money they fetch and her love for Arthur is described as "girlish passion and vanity" (IV, 31:68), a "pleasant delirium" which

prevents her from feeling any sympathy for Adam on his father's death. Her behaviour falls into the most basic utilitarian pattern; thus, on her fateful journey, her small store of memories allows her to see "nothing in this wide world but the little history of her own pleasures and pains" (V, 36:121).

She has "the timidity of a luxurious pleasure-seeking nature, which shrinks from the hint of pain" (I, 15:240; italics added); Eliot suggests that the search for pleasure and avoidance of pain tends to be allied with physical weakness and lack of moral strength. By contrast, Adam Bede affirms that "you get into the wrong road i' this life if you run after this and that only for the sake o' making things easy and pleasant to yourself." Adam will never slip out of the yoke and leave the load to be drawn by the "weak uns" (I, 4:69); even Mr Tryan, who dreaded bodily hardship, was determined to face pain bravely. However, pretty, kitten-like Hetty, faced with pain, lacks strength to endure it.

Hetty's character is to blame for her weakness. George Eliot had described the girl, in the true story retailed by her aunt, as a poor ignorant creature; in this respect, Hetty differs from the intelligent Hetty Wesley. Hetty Sorrel has no love in her nature, no curiosity about other people, and no liking for reflection. Immersed in a sensual world which precludes rational deliberation, she

aspires to be a grand lady, and she persuades herself that Arthur will marry her. The description of the two bedchambers, with Hetty dressing up in shawl and earrings and Dinah pondering about her, provokes a vivid recognition of their different natures. Hetty does not have the autonomy that Feuerbach visualized as stemming from the power of rational thought. The author does not find her ambitions valid, saying that there is "not much room for her thoughts to travel in the narrow circle of her imagination" (IV, 31:70).

Hetty's calculations are always provoked by her avoidance of pain. Dread of shame prevents her from confessing that she is pregnant by Arthur, but she is confident of her influence over Adam: "she must go on seeming to encourage Adam" (IV, 30:45). Because love and understanding are limited in Hetty, the calculation of possible consequences natural to individuals with any foresight is distorted; her vision of consequences is "at no time more than a narrow fantastic calculation of her own probable pleasures and pains" (IV, 31:76).²⁰

After receiving Arthur's letter breaking off their relationship, she is distraught, and grasps the first solution that occurs to her: marrying Adam. This response (called in the novel a "convulsive, motiveless action") is a headlong leap from a temporary sorrow into a lifelong misery (IV, 31:76). The narrator comments that

the actions of a little trivial soul like Hetty's, struggling amidst the serious, sad destinies of a human being, are strange. So are the motion of a little vessel without ballast tossed about on a stormy sea. How pretty it looked with its parti-coloured sail in the sunlight, moored in the quiet bay! (IV, 31:77)

When Hetty's trial by suffering begins, the narratorial tone will change to a more genuine sympathy.

Whereas the earlier character of Janet Dempster was figured as a clinging vine and that of Tina Sarti as a delicate plant, unloving Hetty is compared to a rootless plant that may be torn from its native nook of rock or wall and blossom none the worse for it (I, 15:230). In her dreams, no memories linger; she has no feeling for her home or her uncle, no affection for older people, and she finds children tiresome. Already living "in an invisible world of brilliant costumes, shimmering gauze, soft satin, and velvet" (III, 22:377), her past life means little to her. Feuerbach's poetic analogy of feeling as the musical power in man (EC 63) is denied to Hetty in the comment that some human souls "have only a very limited range of music, and will not vibrate in the least under a touch that fills others with tremulous rapture or quivering agony" (I, 8:141). Hence, she believes that by disposing of her baby she will rid herself of pain.

Hetty is not the only character in this novel who places egoistic desires before conscience. Arthur

Donnithorne wants his future tenants to think him a good fellow, and cannot stand a blow to his self-esteem, and this leads to self-indulgence, deception, calculation, and perverted moral notions. Although he makes prudent resolutions founded on conscience, they scarcely last two months. The narrator stresses that no one can escape the effect of such wrongdoing on character. Morality is vital; it derives from man's own moral nature, his conscience, but it also depends on perfection of will, as Feuerbach says (EC 46-47). While Arthur has good intentions, he does not possess perfect will, and so his first wrong choice leads to others. He begins to pity himself for the "necessity" he is under of deceiving Adam. His lack of objectivity is manifest, for Arthur views himself as honest precisely when his conduct is not. But, it is said, he will never get beyond the borderland of sin and be a "courtier of Vice, and wear her orders in his button-hole" (I, 12:186), for his conscience, faulty though it is, and his desire for esteem will prevent sin from gaining a real foothold.

As pointed out in relation to Adam, the highest law of feeling is immediate unity of will and deed, of wishing and reality (EC 141). Two incidents will serve to exemplify the reason why Arthur's moral theories and his practice diverge. At the health-drinking, during Mrs Poyser's speech, Arthur experiences a twinge of conscience

too feeble to nullify the pleasure he feels in being praised; essentially, he subordinates morality to pleasure. However, he needs to feel self-satisfied, and quickly makes some good resolutions to appease his conscience, without paying it more attention. In itself trivial, this incident nonetheless is indicative of his nature.

More serious, because it relates to his closest family tie, is his state of mind at his grandfather's death. Pity and softened memory replace his old antagonism, and Arthur experiences

that sort of pathetic emotion which has more of pleasure than pain in it--which is perhaps one of the most delicious of all states to a good-natured man, conscious of the power to satisfy his good-nature. (V, 44:233)

Again, pleasure predominates over pain; as the new heir to the estate, Arthur's predominant feeling is joy and exultation. The new inheritance is more important to him than the man who nurtured him. Alone in his dressing-room, he is conscious of

that quiet wellbeing which perhaps you and I have felt on a sunny afternoon, when, in our brightest youth and health, life has opened a new vista for us, and long to-morrows of activity have stretched before us like a lovely plain which there was no need for hurrying to look at, because it was all our own. (V, 44:235)

Contrasting with this mental vista is the actuality. The

level rays of the low afternoon sun are entering directly at the window: Arthur's illusory happiness will soon be dimmed. Shortly, the news of Hetty's imprisonment is conveyed to him by Irwine, for pain, as Nemesis, cannot be avoided.

Fundamentally, Arthur's inability to act according to his intentions stems from his lack of self-awareness. He is a prey to conflicting emotions; feelings and reflections which had earlier been "decisive" with him are swept away by his desire to see Hetty, and he is amazed at the force with which this "trivial fancy" grasps him. He has subordinated this fundamental drive as unsuitable. Because Hetty is beneath his station, Arthur will not admit that anything could come of the affair (an unWordsworthian type of class judgment, but Arthur pronounces most of the poems in the Lyrical Ballads to be "twaddling stuff"). In contrast, "Love even, humorously enough," noted Feuerbach, "identifies the high noblesse with the people" (EC 48).

After easing his conscience in his usual manner, now by deciding to confess to Irwine, Arthur considers "there was no more need for him to think" (I, 13:207). The self-division, or alienation from himself, which Feuerbach described as the result of an unconscious projection is effectively illustrated by Arthur's behaviour. When Arthur later changes his mind about informing the rector

of his relationship with Hetty, he is afraid of falling in Irwine's esteem. Moreover, he has a secret fear that he may not be able to carry out his good resolutions and might regret having confessed: an unconscious calculation. As the narrator notes in this connection: "a great deal of hard work is done by agents who are not acknowledged" (I, 16:259). In fact, Arthur lets his subconscious decide the issue and, in so doing, does not live up to Feuerbach's criterion of conscious rationality. Like Godfrey Cass in Eliot's later story Silas Marner, Arthur has a loving nature and finds it hard to extricate himself from the situation of an open, generous man who has committed an error, and finds that deception appears to be a necessity. Thereupon the Feuerbachian concept of duty is replaced by calculation: "The native impulse to give truth in return for truth, to meet trust with frank confession, must be suppressed, and duty was become a question of tactics" (IV, 28:26).

In presenting Arthur as a beneficent utilitarian with a high self-esteem and a weak conscience, Eliot underlines questions of character and self-mastery that might easily be overlooked in the case of such a presentable, rich, and kindly young man. Irwine's advice to Arthur stresses the importance of nature: everyone carries within him the germ of his most exceptional action, but also perhaps a few grains of folly. The

rector's comment about not considering "elements of excuse" (as well as Eliot's own letters) indicates that Eliot did not hold to the view of an abdication of moral responsibility, as if one could not have acted otherwise.²¹ Some critics have seen this aspect as George Eliot's "determinism of character." For Eliot, however, a moral change could occur because each particular deed committed has an influence on subsequent deeds and on character: "Our deeds determine us, as much as we determine our deeds . . ." (IV, 37:37). The rector advocates the "smoked glass of objectivity" (the true outline of the loved one, like the sun during an eclipse, could be discerned through the glass).

The effect of character is prominent in the promise-making and -keeping episode, of central importance to the plot in its effect on Hetty. The sternly uncompromising Adam exacts a promise from Arthur to write to Hetty, breaking off his relationship with her. He wishes to keep the fruitless affair from moving to a more dangerous conclusion. Arthur reluctantly complies, though his conscience bothers him; yet it is easier for him to promise than to antagonize Adam further. This is not the first time that Arthur has allowed himself to be influenced by other people due to his love of ease. Subsequently, Arthur persuades himself that he is making a sacrifice, though the letter forwards his conscious

purpose (Feuerbach would not have regarded this as a sacrifice). The scene shows both men acting typically, Adam with his severe morality, and Arthur according to his love of ease.

In Adam Bede, Eliot's stress is on unpitying consequences. Arthur's promising life does not turn out according to his plans. Hetty commits a criminal act, and follows it with attempted suicide. She is imprisoned and sentenced to be hanged. As Rudolf Villgrader has noted, in her existential anguish Hetty acts out Feuerbach's assertion that aimlessness is the greatest unhappiness; for Feuerbach, this was equivalent to having no religion (EC 64).²² At this point, Mrs Poyser's brusqueness is shown to harbour an innate compassion, in contrast to her husband who was earlier more indulgent than she was toward Hetty. Again, the need to look below surface appearances is emphasized. In this novel, George Eliot has brought out the initial deficiency of several characters who are unconscious of their religious projections, or lack a religion in any meaningful sense with respect to the qualities of love, understanding, and morality that Feuerbach found to be conveyed in the pure essence of Christianity. Eliot pointedly relates how their affinity to utility (or for Adam, lack of understanding) leads them not to the pleasure or happiness aimed at, but to misery.

The succeeding development is based on a Feuerbachian natural movement from suffering to redemption. Clearly, aspects of Hetty's suffering are not redemptive. Yet a change takes place within her. Before leaving on her journey, she for the first time appreciates Adam as a "brave tender man." Lying down in a strange bed, she realizes that her home was a happy one. As she embarks hopefully on her lone journey, her former dislike of animals gives way to a feeling of fellowship with them. Later, on finding that she cannot drown herself, she kisses her arms, signalling joy in being still alive. Hetty loves life more than death, and in this she illustrates Feuerbach's most basic idea of happiness: "Not to exist is a deficiency; to exist is perfection, happiness, bliss" (EC 198).

The lack of love in Hetty's nature is somewhat amended with the birth of her baby. Although in thoughtless desperation she ignores her conscience and half-buries the baby with turf and wood-chips, she hopes someone will find it, and then is driven demented by cries that no longer have any actuality except in her own brain. Returning to the scene of her crime, she gives herself up to the authorities. Unfortunately, any biological bond was too weak to prevent her crime. But in hearkening to the cries, returning to the spot where she had left the child, and allowing herself to be seized, Hetty

unconsciously admits her guilt. As Christopher Herbert has argued, during her wanderings she returns to a state of primitive nature, and the piece of bread on her lap substitutes for the dead child (43). In prison, however, she can still react to her anguish only by ignoring it, by hardening her heart to prevent her feelings from overflowing.

Dinah's earlier sympathy was remembered by Hetty, and she had thought of going to Dinah in her trouble. Now Dinah's love, which is blended with divine compassion, breaks through the barrier erected as a defence against the outside world and Hetty's inner pain. As Feuerbach emphasized, only love can reconcile man with his own imperfection (EC 47). Where suffering is joined to love, a development can be initiated, a movement toward that feeling which is aligned with man's highest instincts. Hetty's spontaneous release of feelings in the prison at last reflects a Feuerbachian unity of thought and feeling, and in this climactic episode the author achieves a pathos somewhat resembling that which she achieved in certain episodes of her Scenes of Clerical Life.

The scathing earlier description of Hetty's triviality has mellowed to a sympathetic view in which Hetty's essential humanity is revealed. Through suffering, Hetty has been raised to deep and universal human feeling, and Dinah's judgment is that tribulation

has "opened her heart." The Christian Passion expressed for Feuerbach the nature of the human heart, and, significantly, in her prayer in the prison Dinah conjures up the agony of Jesus on the cross. Elsewhere, speaking of the sorrow that lies hidden, the narrator observes (and here Eliot surely had Feuerbach in mind): "No wonder man's religion has much sorrow in it: no wonder he needs a Suffering God" (IV, 35:112). Another crucial aspect is that ignorant Hetty now wants to be taught.

Dinah stresses that strength and peace will be gained by confession, as she sees Hetty "sinking into the dark gulf." The preacher's insistence on confession points to an important aspect of George Eliot's notion of "truth" as involving morality:

He can't bless you while you have one falsehood in your soul; his pardoning mercy can't reach you until you open your heart to him, and say, 'I have done this great wickedness. . . .' (V, 45:244)

Dinah knows that sin brings dread, darkness, and despair; opposed to these states are the "light and blessedness" that comes with casting off sin. There is a psychological truth hidden in Dinah's phrasing, which we may interpret, as Feuerbach would have done, in terms of human happiness rather than theological blessedness. Dinah's intervention paves the way, through Hetty's now pure heart, for a new beginning. Even though Hetty's nature is limited, she still contains the human qualities of affection, reason,

and will that Feuerbach specified. It took suffering to bring them out. Feuerbach had asserted that, while no being can deny its own nature, some natures are limited in their responses. However, every human being can have a sense of his or her own "divinity" (EC 7-8).

Arthur's dramatic arrival on horseback to deliver an important document averts the tragedy and redeems Arthur from the worst effect of his past affair with Hetty. Eliot passed quickly over this melodramatic episode which detracts from the realism. Hetty is not executed--and not imprisoned for life, as one critic maintains²³--but transported, and on the point of returning home she dies; what she does overseas remains a mystery. Adam's change of heart is more important to Eliot than Hetty's fate.

Adam's suffering on behalf of Hetty affects him profoundly. U. C. Knoepfelmacher, comparing Adam to Milton's more culpable Adam, notes that he, too, must overcome despair by recognizing the paradox of a fortunate fall.²⁴ Adam's rigid morality was first softened by the death of his father, which caused him to see that "there's more pride than love in my soul" (II, 18:303). Waiting for the trial is the hardest ordeal Adam will have to bear, for this mastering of his impatience and his pride goes against his nature. The breaking of Adam's illusions allows us to see the limits represented by Adam's love for Hetty as an individual. That love, we recall, was

actually the objectification of his own subjective power to love. Does it indeed correspond to Feuerbach's universal love?

Who has not experienced the power of love, or at least heard of it? Which is the stronger--love or the individual man? Is it man that possesses love, or is it not much rather love that possesses man? When love impels a man to suffer death even joyfully for the beloved one, is this death-conquering power his own individual power, or is it not rather the power of love? (EC 4)

Adam's love for Hetty does not at first reach these self-sacrificial depths; it receives a check when he realizes she is not "good." He cannot bring himself to visit Hetty in prison. At the same time, aware that he still loves Hetty, he exonerates her in his mind, and consequently suffers intensely on hearing the verdict that she is guilty.

Against his will, Adam's "heartstrings" have been tied to suffering humanity. Through Hetty's suffering, the sternly upright Adam will suffer as he never would have otherwise: "sympathy with suffering is itself suffering" (EC 229). The narrator's Feuerbachian view of the manner in which sorrow can change to sympathy is described in chapter 50, preceded by a passage which explains how sorrow can live on in man and alter him, passing from pain into sympathy, "the one poor word which includes all our best insight and our best love"--paralleling Feuerbach's love and understanding.

This is George Eliot's first clear outlining of her doctrine of sympathy. "It would be a poor result of all our anguish and our wrestling," comments the narrator, "if we won nothing but our old selves at the end of it" (VI, 50:302). The transformation has not completely taken place in Adam yet; he feels his pain will continue as long as Hetty's pain is not simply a memory, but a present fact. However, pain can be endured without loss of sensibility, as it becomes a habit of our lives. As the narrator notes, we cease to imagine a condition of perfect ease as possible for us. Desire is chastened into submission, and we bear our grief in silence. At such periods

the sense of our lives having visible and invisible relations beyond any of which either our present or prospective self is the centre, grows like a muscle that we are obliged to lean on and exert.
(VI, 50:302)

This growing unegoistic awareness of seen and unseen connections in the web of human relations and circumstances is redolent of Feuerbach's universal notion of the species.

Love and friendship provide a moral reinforcement. The schoolmaster, Bartle Massey, stays with Adam at Stoniton to await the trial, to be held on what would have been Adam's wedding day. Irwine acts as a mentor not only to Arthur and Adam, but to Mr Poyser, standing near him at

the trial. Feuerbach had noted that in love the reality of the species, which otherwise was only a rational conception, became a matter of feeling, "a truth of feeling" (EC 156). Friendship can provide similar results, and Feuerbach echoes Aristotle in noting that friendship is based on virtue but also on dissimilarity--requiring diversity, since it rests on "a desire for self-completion," one friend obtaining via the other what he does not possess (EC 156). Murray Krieger, though he regards Irwine as lax, has pointed out that, by his admonition to Adam not to harbour revenge against Arthur, he prevents another tragedy.²⁵ Moreover, Irwine shows an unprecedented generosity toward Arthur, who had been like a son to him, and had therefore inflicted a deep wound.

Adam cannot bring himself to attend the trial until, on the morning of the trial, Bartle Massey presses on him a loaf and some wine. They have been sent by Irwine. The analogy between the Christian symbolism of the Last Supper and this impromptu meal, and between Adam, the bearded son of a carpenter, who "stood upright again" after this ceremony, and Christ, is obvious;²⁶ it signals a Feuerbachian development within Adam. In his Stoniton room, Adam finally achieves the blending of heart and imagination that comes so easily to Dinah. Her sudden appearance, requesting that he go to Hetty, triggers him

to make the sacrifice that opens up his heart, a profound change which we may indeed categorize as Feuerbachian: "Deep, unspeakable suffering may well be called a baptism, a regeneration, the initiation into a new state" (V, 42:209).

On meeting Hetty, he cannot distinguish between the old Hetty whom he loved and the sad face of the alien Hetty confronting him. His loving memory retains a hold on his heart; thus, when Hetty asks his forgiveness, he complies spontaneously. Here, Eliot's analogy of Adam's love for Hetty to a mother's love conjures up Feuerbach's view of the latter's supremacy:

the mother's yearning, that completest type of
the life in another life which is the essence
of real human love, feels the presence of the
cherished child even in the debased, degraded
man. . . . (V, 43:216)

In turn, Hetty tries to forgive Arthur, as Dinah has told her she should. Adam's memories of Hetty will become a part of himself, not taking anything away from his different love for Dinah; they will also contribute to his new indulgence toward Seth: "It was part of that growing tenderness which came from the sorrow at work within him" (VI, 50:301).

Another compassionate reunification takes place when Arthur makes a full confession to Adam, in a scene reminiscent of the dual confession in "Janet's

Repentance." After the two men shake hands, there is a rush of the old boyish affection, and Adam admits that he is hard: "it's in my nature." It is not easy for Adam: "Facile natures, whose emotions have little permanence, can hardly understand how much inward resistance he overcame" (V, 48:273). Adam's difficult apology makes it possible for him to bear sorrow without feeling hatred, and he is the better for his suffering: without it, he would have remained proud, intransigent, and unforgiving.

For Arthur, suffering leads to atonement. He joins the army so that the Poysers will not feel bound to move and Adam can retain his job on the estate and not wind up his new business with Jonathan Burge. For eight years, Arthur leads a wandering life, then finally, stricken with fever, an Ancient Mariner figure, returns home, his self-inflicted banishment over.

Even Dinah is exposed to personal suffering when she falls in love with Adam. Her conflict between her cherished way of life and her love for him has already been mentioned. She is now experiencing a conflict between two strong desires: that love which, as Feuerbach understood it, is best exemplified in the relation between the sexes and in marriage, and her altruistic love, her work of preaching and tending the Snowfield mining families. Dinah epitomizes George Eliot's earlier perception that all self-sacrifice is to some extent

egoistic; Dinah wants to maintain her spiritual life. The problem is that, as Mrs Poyser points out more than once, in carrying out her ideals Dinah is neglecting her own kin. She is also denying herself the personal fulfilment of marriage.

She has yet to understand that loving Adam will not diminish the "light" which she considers to be the best part of her nature and which drives her to sacrifice herself on behalf of the poor. Feuerbach's universal love is not discriminating. As Knoepfelmacher has detected, George Eliot corrects Dinah's nunlike love and transforms it into the "essential" love of the species: "where there arises the consciousness of the species as a species, the idea of humanity as a whole, Christ disappears, without, however, his true nature disappearing" (EC 269).²⁷

Adam does not think that loving him could shut up her heart:

it's only adding to what you've been before,
not taking away from it; for it seems to me
it's the same with love and happiness as with
sorrow--the more we know of it the better
we can feel what other people's lives are or
might be, and so we shall only be more tender
to 'em, and wishful to help 'em. The more
knowledge a man has, the better he'll do's
work; and feeling's a sort o' knowledge.
(VI, 52:335-36)

Adam is virtually echoing Feuerbach's view that "feeling is alone real knowledge" (EC 228). As Feuerbach

explained, it is necessary to know the want of something in order to know it: we learn what justice is through experience of injustice, or happiness through experience of misery. It is through this experience of feeling that we learn true knowledge. This is, of course, a conception as old as Plato. (Generally, Feuerbach's alignment is Aristotelian, rather than Platonic, in line with Aristotle's eudaemonism.)²⁸

In this marriage, Dinah's religious ideals will conflate with Adam's practical notions in a union that will bring about an Aristotelian golden mean and a Feuerbachian unity. The narrator aligns Dinah's alliance to Adam with the soul's language--words such as light, sound, stars, or music, which are the signs of something "unspeakably great and beautiful" and which stir memories, enriching present with the "most precious past" (VI, 50:310). This union of a pragmatist who is impatient of religious language with a religious idealist places the emphasis on humanity, rather than religion. Both their views are liable to be softened, and will therefore more nearly verge on Feuerbach's unity of man's divided consciousness, the "true, self-satisfying identity of the divine and human being, the identity of the human being with itself" (EC 231). By believing in a metaphysical God, Dinah is dividing her own personality in two, and, having only heavenly roots, rather than those tied to the

earth, she has, one critic maintains, in a sense been as limited as her opposite, Hetty.²⁹

This marriage, as the ending indicates, is one of harmonious unity. Feuerbach had stressed that "to the strict idea of love two suffice" (EC 68). Uncle Seth's "earthly happiness" is to walk by Dinah's side as a brother,³⁰ and to be tyrannized over by Dinah's and Adam's two children, "Addy" and Lisbeth. Adam has just met Arthur, who has returned from his wanderings, sick with fever and "altered and yet not altered." Mr and Mrs Poyser are just arriving on a visit to the happy family. Having received notification of Hetty's death when she was on the point of returning home, Adam will no longer suffer in the same way for her pain. There will be nothing now to diminish his happiness with Dinah.

The ending of Adam Bede has warranted much discussion. To Ian Gregor, Eliot's treatment of Hetty and the marriage of Dinah and Adam is shocking and the elements of pastoral description and moral analysis appear unreconciled. He considers Eliot to be building up in her commentary what she destroys in her narrative.³¹ However, Hetty's story has illustrated an alternative mode of life to that advocated by Feuerbach, and it is one that does not lead to happiness. Indeed, the limitation of Hetty's nature can only be so far expurgated. George Eliot's feelings about Hetty after having written Adam Bede

are suggested by her commenting on having received a "really curious" letter from an "educated person" asking her for a sequel to Adam Bede expanding on Hetty's story (GEL III, 184). Eliot could not take more than a passing interest in Hetty who, except during her phase of suffering, expressed only minimally the human qualities that Feuerbach regarded as essential to man.³² She considered it appropriate that Hetty should not return to Hayslope, a community that has suffered and learned wisdom.

Further, Eliot's theme of human development has been consistently promoted. That theme turns on the discovery by characters in a particular society of the means to happiness. While the class relations in this society contribute to a meaningful and stable structure, they also contain contradictions, as illustrated when Hetty and Arthur break the social code, emphasizing the artificiality of such unwritten moral laws and the inequality inherent in such a society. Because of the personal affection between Adam and Arthur, only the violation of such a breach of trust as occurs could lead to changed assumptions and a closer, more honest relationship. Many individuals--not only Hetty, but Adam, Arthur, Irwine, Dinah, Bartle Massey, and the Poysers--are affected by the tragedy caused by egoism and a lack of self-awareness. Thus, in Adam Bede, the distinction drawn

in Eliot's Scenes between religion and immorality is repeated, but with a special emphasis on the self-divisive religious projection which must ultimately be dispelled. In marrying Adam, Dinah Morris, whom Michael Edwards has seen as binding together the story's diverse elements,³³ joins the central character to form a human family. In her new embodiment of Feuerbach's cult of nature and the senses, Dinah incarnates his concept of the species even better than she did in her former active religious engagement with the community.

Notes

¹[Wicksteed] 479.

²Feuerbach refuted this accusation; see his "The Essence of Christianity in Relation to The Ego and Its Own," trans. Frederick M. Gordon, Philosophical Forum 8 (1977): 81-91.

³Eliot's distinction between pleasure and happiness, which is generally non-utilitarian, was not unique; see Emily Shirreff, Intellectual Education, and Its Influence on the Character and Happiness of Women (London: John W. Parker & Son, 1858) 325.

⁴A. G. van den Broek considers that Eliot's depiction of peasantry, despite Wordsworth's influence, is not at all romanticized, and that Adam Bede renders in artistic terms Riehl's "Social-Political-Conservatism." See "Adam Bede and Riehl's 'Social-Political-Conservatism,'" George Eliot Fellowship Review 17 (1986): 42-61. The use of dialect and Dinah's Methodist speech pattern adds to the realism.

⁵See Alicia Carroll, "Tried by Earthly Fires: Hetty Wesley, Hetty Sorrel, and Adam Bede," Nineteenth-Century Literature 44 (1989): 218-24.

⁶See GEL I, 255 and 260.

⁷George Eliot is thus depicting a historical change in the religious consciousness; Murray Krieger relates Irwine to what he calls the "classical." See "Adam Bede and the Cushioned Fall: The Extenuation of Extremity," The Classic Vision (Baltimore: John Hopkins P, 1971) 197-220. Dinah's Methodist fervour, which recalls the attitude of the female Evangelists in "Janet's Repentance," points up Mr Irwine's more lackadaisical attitude toward religion, and the two clerical figures could be seen to illustrate attitudes common to their respective forms of Protestantism, orthodoxy and dissent.

⁸Krieger 199; van den Broek 57. Historically, van den Broek's remark is true enough; however, in Adam Bede it is shown that Irwine's sermons and advice to his parishioners bring them reassurance and comfort.

⁹Cross, Life I, App., 363. (The other rule was accuracy.) From October 1844, Mary Sibree took lessons with Mary Ann Evans for two years. At the time, Evans probably would have related the "maxims of benevolence" to utilitarianism. On the distinction between benevolence and utilitarianism, see my discussion of "Mr Gilfil's Love-Story" in the chapter on Scenes of Clerical Life and Noble 63-64.

¹⁰See Christopher Herbert, "Preachers and the Schemes of Nature in Adam Bede," Nineteenth-Century Fiction 29 (1975): 412-27.

¹¹Feuerbach notes that so long as love is not exalted into a substance, into an essence, "so long there lurks in the background of love a subject . . . a diabolical being, whose personality, separable and actually separated from love, delights in the blood of heretics and unbelievers" (EC 52-53). He calls this the "phantom of religious fanaticism." Nevertheless, he adds that the essential idea of the Incarnation, "though developed in the night of the religious consciousness," is love. Feuerbach's distinction is not consciously made by Dinah.

¹²George Eliot translates thus: "Man is nothing without an object. The great models of humanity, such men as reveal to us what man is capable of, have attested the truth of this proposition by their lives. They had only one dominant passion--the realisation of the aim which was the essential object of their activity. But the object to

which a subject essentially, necessarily relates, is nothing else than this subject's own, but objective nature" (EC 4). This aspect was less powerfully presented in "Mr Gilfil's Love-Story."

¹³Cf. Myers 49. For an extreme view of repression in George Eliot's fiction, see Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Imagination (New Haven: Yale UP, 1979) 478-535. John Kucich's definition of repression as an "interiority" which can enhance development is more pertinent to the Feuerbachian context (1-33, 114-200).

¹⁴Jay Clayton, "Visionary Power and Narrative Form: Wordsworth and Adam Bede," ELH 46 (1979): 645-72.

¹⁵In Dr Williams's Library (see ch. 1).

¹⁶The Novels of George Eliot (New York: Columbia UP, 1959) 24-26.

¹⁷Feuerbach, "The Essence of Christianity in Relation to The Ego and Its Own" 88.

¹⁸*Ibid.* 87.

¹⁹See Susan Morgan, "Paradise Reconsidered: Edens without Eve." Historical Studies and Literary Criticism, ed. Jerome J. McGann (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1985) 266-82; on aspects of openness and secrecy in Adam Bede, see Krieger 203-208.

²⁰The utilitarian philosophy advocated long-range planning (future pleasure over present pleasure), with which Eliot would have agreed (if we assume that pleasure and happiness are interchangeable), but here she shows that in practice people do not always make the right decisions, especially in the case of pain avoidance. Eliot finds it difficult to sympathize with Hetty, who falls short in Feuerbachian love and understanding.

²¹See her later letter to Mrs Henry Ponsonby of August 19, 1875, as follows: "I shall not be satisfied with your philosophy till you have conciliated necessitarianism--I hate the ugly word--with the practice of willing strongly, willing to will strongly, and so on, that being what you certainly can do and have done about a great many things in life . . ." (GEL VI, 166); see also GEL VI, 98.

²²Die Darstellung des Bösen in den Romanen George Eliots (Saarbrücken: Anglistisches Institut, Universität des Saarlandes, 1970) 89-90.

²³Krieger 213.

²⁴Knoepfmacher, Early Novels 111.

²⁵Krieger 216. He views Adam not simply as self-righteous, but as a character whose austerity leads him toward the tragic: "because he acts absolutely in behalf of the ethical, he is exposed to all the destructive risks of the demoniacal . . ." (209).

²⁶Knoepfmacher, Religious Humanism and the Victorian Novel: George Eliot, Walter Pater, and Samuel Butler (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1965) 56-59; hereafter cited as Religious Humanism.

²⁷Ibid. 54.

²⁸As Richard Jenkyns has pointed out, although Plato and Aristotle might more accurately be ranged in the same camp against the materialist philosophy of Epicurus, their names have become symbols for opposite tendencies between which men, ideas, even periods of history, are believed to oscillate; and in the nineteenth century many people felt that a "vast vague web" of Platonism encompassed them. The first utilitarians were hostile to Plato, but their criticisms did him a service by rousing his admirers to defend him. Bentham spoke of Socrates and Plato as talking nonsense under pretence of teaching wisdom and morality. However, the utilitarians later abandoned their attack on Plato; Macaulay declared himself Plato's disciple. The Victorians and Ancient Greece (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1980) 227-28, 231.

²⁹Barry Qualls, The Secular Pilgrims of Victorian Fiction: The Novel as Book of Life (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1982) 143.

³⁰Sylvie F. L. Richards regards the brother-sister syndrome as an aspect of the "double" in Eliot's works which consists of an attempt to expose various facets of the personality through the creation of archetypal characters who display certain traits; the exposition is necessary in order to divulge all aspects of a complex being in a realistic aesthetic whole. "The Two Georges: A

Psychoanalytic Study of the Double in Indiana and Adam Bede," Journal of Evolutionary Psychology 4 (1983): 78-88.

³¹"The Two Worlds of 'Adam Bede'" (1959), The Moral and the Story (London: Faber & Faber, 1962) 29.

³²U. C. Knoepfelmacher concludes that the motives for Eliot's inclemency are not to be found in any personal resentment against her creation's beauty, but that it reveals that, far from being reconciled, Eliot's moralism and the realism with which she beholds an amoral natural order are still in conflict. Early Novels 122.

³³"A Reading of Adam Bede," Critical Quarterly 14 (1972): 205.

CHAPTER 4

"THE LIFTED VEIL" AS EXTINGUISHED VOLCANO

. . . no matter how empty the adytum, so that
the veil be thick enough. (318)

All of George Eliot's short stories depict outsiders, but none presents such a devastatingly bleak and potent picture of human alienation as "The Lifted Veil."¹ As one critic has remarked, had "The Lifted Veil" been written by Hawthorne, Poe, Melville, or James, it would by now have attracted a sizable body of commentary.² In fact, a number of recent interpretations have testified to a new interest in this once neglected tale, and recently a new edition has been published, in which the editor views the real theme not as clairvoyance but as horror--Eliot's own horror--of alienation.³

The story may have been partly provoked by a decrease in intimacy that occurred between George Eliot and Sara Hennell. Eliot had been taken aback by the surprise of the Brays and Sara Hennell at her confession that she was the author of Adam Bede.⁴ In June 1859, George Eliot wrote to Sara Hennell that there was always an after-sadness belonging to brief and interrupted intercourse between friends, the feeling "that the blundering efforts we have made towards mutual

understanding have only made a new veil between us" (GEL III, 90). "We are unable to represent ourselves truly," she stated; "why should we complain that our friends see a false image?" She uses the word "veil" rather as Hennell does in his Inquiry, to convey an intangible wall or block to intimate knowledge--and also perhaps to sympathy. The veils that are lifted in her story are those of the future, of human personality, and even of death itself.⁵

The anguished Latimer, a poet but without particular powers of poetic expression, is fated to die from heart disease. During his last month he writes his autobiography in a curiously poetic style, leading to the onset of the death he has, through his visionary powers, long predicted. In the story, intimations of Feuerbach's perceptions about human nature emerge through Latimer's developing consciousness. Indeed, the motto which Eliot appended to the Cabinet Edition version stresses those human ideals of love and thought that Eliot had culled from Feuerbach:

Give me no light, great Heaven, but such as turns
To energy of human fellowship;
No powers beyond the growing heritage
That makes completer manhood. (276)

"The Lifted Veil" provides a powerful evocation of such human needs.

During Latimer's formative years, when "the curtain of the future" was still impenetrable, a potential for

well-being existed in the child's delight in the present hour, in his sense of hope in the future, and in his love of nature and of the mother whose love he recalls. She dies when he is seven or eight years of age, and his father is not fond of him. Latimer's awe and timidity in his presence develop into dislike. His banker father's practicality is opposed to his own poetic sensibility. The more favoured elder son, his half-brother Alfred, is educated at Eton and Oxford; Latimer is given the scientific education deemed appropriate for a younger son. Although Latimer's father has little appreciation of Greek or Latin, he realizes that a knowledge of those languages will help his elder son to attain an aristocratic position in society.

Latimer completes his education abroad; and in Geneva, after an illness, he develops his visionary powers. He also discovers that he can read other people's minds, although not that of Bertha Grant, a beautiful heiress and adopted orphan with whom he falls in love. In this first phase of his life, feeling predominates over knowledge, but this will change. Bertha is virtually engaged to Alfred; nonetheless she carries on a surreptitious flirtation with Latimer, arousing an intense passion in him that is not extinguished by a dreadful vision he has of her as his wife--a kind of Lucrezia Borgia. While subsequently Bertha becomes engaged to

Alfred, he unexpectedly dies after a riding accident, and eighteen months later, Latimer's prediction is realized when he himself marries her. His foreknowledge of her hatred of him will become actuality, in a gradual, embittering process alleviated only by the growth of a new affection for his father.

The story builds to a melodramatic conclusion, with the exposure of Bertha's plot to poison Latimer. In this dénouement, Latimer's Genevan friend, a brilliant scientist called Charles Meunier, briefly resuscitates Bertha's comatose maid--a Mrs Archer--by blood transfusion in a scientific tour de force. The maid, who is Bertha's accomplice, reveals her mistress's evil secret before succumbing. After this, the distraught Latimer takes to a wandering life, returning home only to die and write his story.

"The Lifted Veil" has been seen as an anti-intellectual tale belonging to the horror-story genre, and as a nihilistic vision which yet attempts to master the irrational and the anarchic, with a hero omniscient but powerless, capable of arousing intense sympathy in the reader. Richard Freadman has described it as a "Gothic nightmare of category collapse" in which Eliot was exploring an extra-rational or visionary "order" of experience.⁶ Through it she could pierce new frontiers of humanity, as Isaac Taylor had attempted in his

speculations about the "future life" beyond death which explored the utmost imaginable extent of human capabilities.⁷

Yet ultimately this gothic nightmare is a poetic exaggeration of ordinary human experience, demonstrating the extent of Eliot's own self-division. Through Latimer's "superadded consciousness," his visions, Eliot could dramatize the double consciousness she had experienced at the time of her father's illness. Latimer has an additional "double consciousness" (307), which is due to his conflicting sense of Bertha as both good and bad. We might view the story as a later eruption of one of those extinct volcanoes of Eliot's spiritual life where the intellect and passions scattered doubt and negation over her early faith. To her such eruptions were "only a glorious Himmalayan [sic] chain beneath which new vallies of undreamed richness and beauty will spread themselves" (GEL I, 282). Although Gillian Beer has seen Latimer's situation as hideously figuring forth and paralleling the trials of the novelist, with his visionary powers expressing the determinism and solipsism latent in the act of writing fiction--exploring the desolating realization that all creative sympathy and energy might be balked by the trivial⁸--we must see this as representing a temporary phenomenon. Latimer's story is concerned not only with the specific act of writing but with the possibility of

having faith in humanity and of moving from egoism to altruism. Indeed, U. C. Knoepfelmacher has explored the complex duality of the story in terms of a private allegory (the unveiling of horror) and also as a public parable (the denial of doubt).⁹ The story has also been seen to symbolize the mortal danger represented by nineteenth-century science to classical modes of thought, and to contain an exploration of the relations between bourgeois power and omniscience.¹⁰

Nonetheless, by carefully tracing the patterns in Latimer's history, the Feuerbachian framework can be discerned. Latimer's experience of mother love, his intimations of love in the universe, and (after some difficulties) his experience of a father's affection are followed by a reversal. Love and closeness are replaced by hatred and isolation, and the successive images become increasingly severe, devoid of any vestiges of tender feeling. We end with the artifact itself, the story, which is Latimer's confession. "The Lifted Veil" is a study of human error, an investigation of the reasons why gifted and peculiarly sensitive people may fail to find happiness. It raises questions about how to transcend egotism and the adverse effects of environment, and, especially, whether knowledge amounting to an ability to see through things is the key to a better life.

Latimer's isolation has three primary sources. One relates to his condition of omniscience, which makes him different from other people, as was Eliot in her early life. Another source of his isolation is society, and yet another his own character.

Latimer sees his life as being predetermined once his vision of Prague is realized in his encounter with the city. If that is true, then Latimer can have no moral responsibility for his actions: nothing he does could be changed. Such a problem of determinism and responsibility was brought home to Eliot by her reading of Charles Bray's Philosophy of Necessity, one more instance of her dramatization of certain situations that she saw herself facing as an artist and moral teacher.¹¹

Latimer's isolation is a direct result of the trivial, mechanistic, and utilitarian outlook of his society. In this story, too, Eliot elaborates an opposition between the Feuerbachian ideal--here only dimly realized--and existing conditions. This is apparent from the difference in outlook between Latimer and his father, and the type of education with which he is provided. Latimer's character is the other, most important, source of an isolation that, according to Feuerbach's theory of "tuism," cannot provide a meaningful existence. Latimer himself notes that his prevision of external scenes quickens into new life as the relation between him and his

fellow-men becomes more and more deadened (329). He projects his needs in imagination, and they are intense enough to create a dual visionary capacity that amounts to extra-sensory perception. In *Latimer*, Eliot explores the situation of a projection which arises from a deep need of human sympathy and which issues in other forms than the creation of a god with whom the isolated being can relate and from which he can gain solace. The story's chronology reflects the protagonist's psychological development; the sequence of events shows cause, not only as the pursuit of knowledge, religion, or happiness but as a sadistic sort of pleasure, leading logically to effect, in *Latimer's* failure to achieve happiness.

Latimer's confession--the story itself is one--is unique, unprecedented: never before has he fully "unbosomed" himself to any human being. Although Bertha's intent was murder and he was the innocent party, the potential victim, *Latimer* himself experiences guilt, and with death at hand he unburdens his soul. September 20, 1850, the day of his death, may be a significant date, one on which George Eliot felt her past self had died¹² (unlike her previous works, this story is nearly contemporary) and on which a new one with unknown possibilities emerged. Although *Latimer* has been seen as imprisoned in a world in which no creative action is possible because "everything is foreseen and nothing can

be altered,"¹³ ultimately the reason for his imprisonment lies not with his condition as a visionary, nor with society, but in the fact that he is not motivated by love of his fellow-men.

In February 1873 George Eliot asserted, much as she had said about her Scenes of Clerical Life, "There are many things in it which I would willingly say over again, and I shall never put them in any other form" (GEL V, 380). Yet the reiteration in her fiction is at least suggestive of ideas and themes that early took hold of her imagination and continued to haunt her. Thus, the eccentric Macarthy, in her first published fiction, "Poetry and Prose, From the Notebook of an Eccentric," and Gwendolen Grandcourt in her last novel both exemplify that special type of abnormally sensitive person whom Eliot describes in "The Lifted Veil."

Latimer's subjectivism, which is opposed to his omniscience but may partly be caused by it,¹⁴ becomes very obvious when we compare him with the sympathetic Macarthy of Eliot's earlier story, of whom the world has never made a true estimate. Macarthy's soul is compared with a lyre of exquisite structure and a bird with rich and varied notes, both maltreated by man: "the poor bird ceased to sing, save in the depths of the forest or the silence of the night" (Essays 14-15). On the other hand, Macarthy's shadowy ideal vision of beauty turns all reality to

mockery, and can indeed be seen in terms of the mysticism which Feuerbach spoke of as confusing the real and the unreal. Macarthy's ideal is "shadowy," Latimer's illusory. With his extreme sensitivity to beauty, Macarthy found the ignorance of ordinary people and the distorted ideas and way of life of the upper classes "sharp iron entering into his soul" (Essays 15).

However, Latimer's microscopic vision displays a totally repugnant image of human nature, resembling a "fermenting heap" from which human words and deeds emerge like mere leaflets to cover what is virtually a dung heap of the human mind (295). His mind-reading capacity is "like a preturnaturally heightened sense of hearing, making audible to one a roar of sound where others find perfect stillness" (301). This condition is premonitory of Middlemarch's roar on the other side of silence. Latimer is, horribly, on this "other side." However, Macarthy and Latimer both revel in nature's sublimity, travel in far countries and afterwards die, bequeathing their stories to humanity. Evidently Latimer is an egoistic version of Macarthy: a peculiarly gifted, isolated, exceptionally sensitive and extremely susceptible human being. As with Rousseau at the time of his paranoia (a condition not unlike Latimer's), both Macarthy and Latimer shrink from contact with other human beings.

Bertha, too, is prefigured in Eliot's first published fiction, in the story of the two Hamadryads. At significant times in Latimer's life, Bertha appears apparelled in white and green, colours which are associated with Gwendolen Harleth of Daniel Deronda, who also has serpentine associations.¹⁵ Bertha's nymphlike (inhuman) status is signalled by her peculiar predilection for wearing green leaves. She represents a study in pure egotism which, only lightly sketched in "The Lifted Veil," becomes thoroughly convincing in Middlemarch's mundane Rosamond Vincy.

The reason why all three types--Macarthy, Latimer, and Bertha--interested Eliot is suggested by her own life. Tentatively, it can be assumed that in Macarthy she was transposing into an imaginary ideal her own thwarted instinct of sympathy. Macarthy's horror of distorted human nature and ugliness in the world gives us perhaps the key to what Eliot at the time of her father's illness referred to as a "fit of sensitiveness" which she related to egoism (GEL I, 265). While in Latimer she was rewriting her life and relationship with her family with a conscious awareness of past egotism, in Bertha she was more harshly bestowing her consciousness of her own past egotistical feelings upon a figure devoid of sympathetic feeling, though pitiable. Of course, the story must not itself be regarded as autobiographical. As William Baker

has noted, Eliot's reaction to the Jewish synagogue and guide in Prague does not parallel Latimer's.¹⁶ Nonetheless, the correlation between the characters of Macarthy and Latimer and Eliot's own character indicates that in her "gothic horror story" Eliot was presenting a heightened version of what was for her a "normal" experience at certain times of her life when, as during her father's illness, life seemed to be a nightmare.¹⁷ Significantly, both tales describe writers who will live in the memories of others through their writing, and they feature a profound artistic sensibility. Latimer's love of nature, poetic sensitivity, intermittent despair, and abhorrence of worldliness are analogous to Eliot's own propensities. Her fictional character's happiest time is in Geneva where, after her father's death, Eliot had felt free of the petty restrictions of society. It becomes clear that in writing "The Lifted Veil" Eliot was expunging, imaginatively, some elements of her own past. Perhaps this was necessary before she could proceed to describe characters who were more closely attuned to Feuerbach's ideals of will, affection, and reason.

In the story, the veil is a significant image which relates to Latimer's illusions about Bertha's ideality; it is "lifted" when he discovers her true nature, in a movement that repeats the discovery of an illusory projection made, for instance, by Adam Bede, when the

reality of Hetty's beauty did not live up to the illusion. In most biblical references to the veil, it is rent, rather than "lifted," but the word "lifted" allows more flexibility for the veil to descend again, as it seems to when Latimer does not foresee Bertha's ultimate resource for ridding herself of him. In her journal, Eliot originally wrote "hidden," as Gordon Haight has noted (Biog. 295, n. 2). The famous instance of the veil being rent was at the Crucifixion: in the Temple, an inner veil separated the Ark of the Covenant from the priests and the people. In Jewish tradition, the veil separated the divine from the profane. In the New Testament, the veil is represented as a veil of ignorance, blindness, or hardness of heart which kept the Jews from understanding the scriptures of the Old Testament, the spiritual sense and meaning of the law. As U. C. Knoepfelmacher has observed in his Early Novels, some nineteenth-century English Romantics regarded the phenomenal world as a "veil" preventing man's highest fulfilment (152-54). Here the veil takes on a Platonic meaning; the real and the ideal (as Feuerbach saw them) are reversed. For Feuerbach, the phenomenal world, the present reality, was the one that called for appreciation. Veiling imagery is used platonically by Shelley in a sonnet that might have inspired Eliot to create Latimer in the image of the "Spirit that strove/For truth, and like the Preacher found

it not":

Lift not the painted veil which those who live
 Call Life: though unreal shapes be pictured there,
 And it but mimic all we would believe
 With colours idly spread,--behind, lurk Fear
 And Hope, twin Destinies; who ever weave
 Their shadows, o'er the chasm, sightless and drear.

The veil of the world must be stripped for Latimer to arrive at an inner truth or reality, but the titular veil which obscures his vision relating to Bertha is lifted to reveal only the paucity of reality and his own illusions.

Bertha is to Latimer an "oasis of mystery in the dreary desert of knowledge" (301), and his attraction to this young woman whose thoughts he cannot read stems from his desire to pierce the mystery. Latimer's striving for knowledge of Bertha is, in a sense, comparable to George Eliot's earlier grasping after the meaning of a religion which might turn out to be an empty revelation. Perhaps an acceptance of the results of knowledge is conducive to a moral development; perhaps such knowledge is better kept hidden. Latimer himself evokes the mystery in terms of human nature, with its simultaneous need for such mystery and yet ardent, and possibly irrational, desire for knowledge:

So absolute is our soul's need of something hidden
 and uncertain for the maintenance of that doubt
 and hope and effort which are the breath of life,
 that if the whole future were laid bare to us
 beyond to-day, the interest of all mankind would be
 bent on the hours that lie between. . . . (318)

Latimer's scientific education does not assuage his desire for "human deeds and human emotions" (283). Accordingly, Annie Escuret has interpreted the story as a dark embodiment of the mechanistic thesis, where the unregenerate or tainted Latimer ("le taré") interrupts the equilibrium.¹⁸ Eliot's portrayal is deeply ironic; assuredly, a mechanistic, utilitarian society is a major source of Latimer's tragedy.

In a metaphorically apt translation, Escuret renders the name of Latimer's first tutor, Letherall, a man with phrenological pretensions and a decisive manner, as "celui-qui-tue-tout" (23), emphasizing the Lethe (or lethal) aspect. The name also suggests "leather-all"--a more literal interpretation with a similar result--from the old English custom of beating with a leather strap, or "leathering." As Escuret puts it, Latimer's disastrous education ignores the fact that memory is not mechanical and passive, but "l'expression vivante de chacun de nous qui ne peut s'accomplir qu'avec la participation active du sujet" (25). Latimer's mind is crammed with the scientific facts that will constitute "the really useful training for a younger son" (282); his deficiencies are to be remedied. If this smacks of the Lockean idea of the mind as a blank slate, that concept is not specifically mentioned; however, the process is undoubtedly utilitarian. Latimer cannot respond well, and he sums up:

I have said enough to indicate that my nature was of the sensitive, unpractical order, and that it grew up in an uncongenial medium, which could never foster it into happy, healthy development. (283-84)

Although Richard Freadman considers that Eliot's logic breaks down because she invests her narrative with a burden of circumstances that invalidates her moral analysis (133), the subjectivity of the narrator himself must be taken into account. As an autobiography, the story reflects a subjective view of Latimer's experience and the reader must judge of its accuracy. Certainly Latimer will overcome his originally antagonistic attitude toward his father, evidence that change is possible for him. Moreover, his self-realization as he ends his confession will adumbrate a new vision of humanity, though not one that can be realized in his lifetime, as death is imminent when he writes his last words.

Geneva provides a release from educational restraints, a happy period where Latimer finds a friend who is similarly ostracized from the polite society that to him is abhorrent and trivial. Latimer sees himself following in Rousseau's wake as he glides out in his boat to watch the sunset over the lake and mountains; for Rousseau, of course, nature is innocent, civilization productive of disharmony. In "The Wisdom of the Child" (1847), with Rousseau--and perhaps also Feuerbach--in mind, Eliot had proposed that intellectual cultivation

should restore the wonder and interest which was habitual to the child. But she had emphasized that the child's wonder was merely the purity of ignorance. True wisdom implied moral as well as intellectual effects: its wonder, purity and simplicity were "the result of knowledge disclosing mystery, the simplicity and purity of . . . moral principles, the result of wide experience and self-conflict" (Essays 20). Opposed to this truth were such philosophies as mocked the realities of which she spoke;¹⁹ simple utility is represented by the father, society, and servants in "The Lifted Veil."

Latimer's spontaneous inspiration occasioned by natural beauty can also be seen as Wordsworthian;²⁰ for him, too, the glory will fade. For the genuine poet, nature leads to love of man; for Latimer, it appears to compensate for his isolation from man. However, Latimer's solitary enjoyment may also be seen as fundamentally Feuerbachian and containing the first glimmerings of a community spirit.

In his Essence of Religion, Feuerbach had explored man's relation to God as it arose out of nature, maintaining that man's feeling of dependence on nature was a source of religion. Latimer's feelings of sympathy with nature can be seen as as a primitive form of religion and genuine source of joy. Alone with nature, Latimer divines a transcendent harmony existing in the universe; through

nature, he senses a cherishing love, which reminds him of his mother's love.²¹ Although U. C. Knoepfelmacher sees "The Lifted Veil" as an important "mental phase" reflecting doubt in the efficacy of George Eliot's Feuerbachian prescription,²² at this point Latimer's memories lead to intimations of a universal love that relates to the species, linked with the memory of a particular person.

Feuerbach had further noted that man's sensations and imagination are to him directly and unconsciously the measure of truth and reality, hence nature appears to him just as he is himself.²³ Latimer's nature, then, contains in itself possibilities for happiness, since at such moments he divines the sublimity of what we might call a Feuerbachian universal love of the species; his disequilibrium is induced, as for Rousseau, by civilization and a return to nature is productive of harmony.

But this "essence" remains unrealized, because it is not inculcated into his nature through his subsequent feelings, thoughts, and actions; sympathy does not become habitual. In one of his aphorisms, Feuerbach had observed that the secret of virtue is habit.²⁴ He emphasizes that the powers which influence man's destiny are intellect and will, rather than momentary impressions and effects, and that the consequences of vice and folly are disease,

unhappiness, and death.²⁵ Latimer himself finds it impossible to act in such a rational way.

When his visionary gifts develop in Geneva after an illness, he thinks this may be a flowering of his poetic genius; then he becomes unsure whether he has acquired a faculty or a disease. Still later, he refers to his "diseased consciousness" (296). In Latimer's first incredibly distinct vision of the "thirsty" city of Prague with its blackened statues, the reader can also attempt to divine his future. In this vision, there is a small illuminated area, which Latimer subsequently remembers with special intensity. A patch of rainbow light on the pavement at Prague, transmitted through a coloured lamp in the shape of a star (288), relieves the darkness of the picture. This light imagery gains significance in view of Eliot's use of it in the Scenes and Adam Bede. In fact, Judith Wilt, who views "The Lifted Veil" as a Frankenstein story and a brilliantly self-revealing work, has noted that this star was an important and ancient icon for the Jews, as it was for certain English dissenters.²⁶ If we apply a Jungian interpretation to this image, it becomes particularly revealing as a mandala of the self, possibly even one containing a conflict between nature and culture.²⁷ Latimer's disturbingly black and arid vision of Prague paradoxically provides him with this small but crucial illumination, the whole indicating his inner

world. Through his ability to "reflect" other people's feelings--and not merely as dung-heap puerilities--happiness is possible for him. Such an experience will, in relation to his father, briefly illuminate his life and leave an afterglow. But the religious symbolism of the statues paints a bleak prospect. As Erich Fromm, a spiritual descendent of Feuerbach's, has put it in describing the Jewish halakhah, the Way, man must choose between the values of life and death, the principal affirmation of life being that of love.²⁸ Through Latimer's experience, Eliot examines not so much whether God is dead, but whether man is dead, in becoming a thing, in becoming more and more alienated, and in losing sight of human values.

Latimer's next vision might also be conceived as a prophetic warning by his unconscious mind. In this, he envisages Bertha as a pale, fatal-eyed water-nixie accompanied by their neighbour at home, a commonplace middle-aged woman in silk and cashmere named Mrs Filmore, whom he has not seen for five years (he soon discovers that she has adopted Bertha, her orphan niece).

Latimer's third vision, at Vienna, is the "Lucrezia Borgia" image which he later believes to be realized in Bertha's serpentine advance--holding a candle--to inform him of the arrival of a new servant, her confederate in the plot to poison him. This vision still more radically

signals Bertha's evil, an insight which directly contrasts with Eliot's concept of the most attainable version of truth as the highest inspiration of the purest, noblest human soul (GEL I, 282).

Latimer's increasingly dire visions reflect the growing disease of his already disturbed consciousness. While the fact that his visions "come true" points to a terrifying determinism, they may be, rather, dependent on his own response to life. If Latimer had proceeded from egoism to altruism, he would surely not have been subjected to his third, Borgia-like, vision of Bertha. However, he had intruded on his brother's love affair, privately competing for Bertha's love, despite his ambivalence about her nature. Unknown to Alfred, Latimer's feelings become venomous, presenting a very different picture from the guilty Maggie Tulliver who will interfere with her cousin Lucy's courtship by Stephen Guest in The Mill on the Floss. Latimer is scornful that the good of the world should fall to "ready dulness, healthy selfishness, good-tempered conceit"; he sees these unexceptional qualities to be the "keys to happiness" (312). The thought that his own selfishness is stronger than Alfred's occurs to him only to be quickly dismissed. Pride and envy harden his response when Alfred suggests that he should have a run with the hounds to improve his spirits: "This man needed no pity, no love" (312).

Latimer may be omniscient, but his subjectivity affects his interpretation of events.

In Latimer, suffering is shown respectively as solipsistic, sympathetic, existential (annihilating religious faith), and remorseful. The sympathetic and the remorseful forms are redemptive, in Feuerbach's sense, because they contain possibilities of future happiness. This is illustrated as his solipsism cedes to sympathy. Here, Latimer's mind-reading capability has a positive aspect which reiterates Eliot's view, expressed in her letters and earlier fiction, that wholeness does not come from avoiding suffering.

Although Latimer cannot learn from his own experience, through his extra-sensory perception he can learn from someone else. Vicariously, he experiences a new dimension of suffering when he participates in his father's sense of loss at Alfred's death. As we know, Latimer normally perceives people's trivial thoughts clearly, and seems untouched by other, kinder emotions. Now, he senses an anguish that differs radically from his own self-pitying sorrow relating to the drama of his emotions, "the lot of a being finely organised for pain, but with hardly any fibres that responded to pleasure" (311). The sorrow that strikes Latimer's father at the death of his elder son, Alfred, trained to succeed him, is profound; he experiences a tragedy of "disappointed age

and worldliness" which includes the crushing of his pride and earlier dreams. He suffers in proportion to the narrowness of his vision. Although hitherto Latimer had shunned his father, the "radical antipathy" between their natures making his insight into his father's soul a constant affliction to him, now he feels sorry for him. Indeed, it is the first tender emotion he has ever had for his father. The suffering is profound enough to shatter Latimer's narrow self-reflexivity and fosters an affection which grows and strengthens, despite the bitterness with which his father at first regards him. Latimer now is able to overlook the fact that he is a second-rate alternative to his brother in relation to inheritance of the estate.

Gradually, his pity, patience, and affection win their reward, the love of his father, who begins to consider Latimer's marriage to Bertha. Latimer's softened feeling toward his father is his happiest since childhood. But he remains completely under Bertha's power, even though she becomes more distant to him after Alfred's death. As Annie Escuret comments,

L'innommable se trouve donc pris ici dans un système de références symboliques familières, mythiques ou autres, telles que le serpent, la sorcière ou la Sphynge car le voile levé n'est que l'envers du voile (Veil/EVIL) associé au monstre Bertha. (27)

But, she adds, there is no real enigma; what is "dévoilé" corresponds only to one of multiple avatars of bad or evil: Bertha is veiling the fact that she is not virtuous.

Latimer's softening experience of love now combines with his growing disillusionment in a marriage which has all outward semblances of gratification, such as beauty, riches, and social pleasures. This marriage which begins in a whirl of gaiety leads to separateness, with Latimer still craving "the last rays of a bliss that would soon be gone forever" (321-22).

Yet a characteristically Feuerbachian revelation is contained in the story's symbolic centre, which occurs not long after. The episode might have stemmed from Eliot's own experience, or at least her imaginings, concerning her own father's death. (Eliot's father, who bore a resemblance to Latimer's,²⁹ had often seemed not to love or appreciate her as she did him; but one may recall the immense satisfaction Eliot had derived from tending him, which she seemed to relate to a diminution of egoism on her part.) Holding his hand at the moment of his father's death, Latimer becomes keenly conscious of his affection for his father, and of his father's new awareness of it; he senses the mutuality of relationship that makes love infinitely meaningful. Notably, on this same evening, the veil that shrouded Bertha's soul from his is suddenly withdrawn, and he sees her limitations--her selfishness,

scheming coquetry, artifice, and vanity.³⁰

Significantly, this is the first day that Latimer's infatuation with Bertha is completely neutralized by the presence of an absorbing feeling of another kind; that is, an unegoistic love. In this altered consciousness brought about by his father's death, Latimer's feelings have merged in "the great relation of a common nature and a common destiny" (322). Thus, he experiences a love that has at once a Feuerbachian immediacy and universality, with its implications for human commonality in a common destiny, death. In joining Bertha after this inward revelation, it is scarcely surprising that he sees her triviality.

The guilt and unhappiness of a marital relationship in "The Lifted Veil" is repeated in Eliot's last novel, Daniel Deronda. After writing "The Lifted Veil," Eliot's interest in Rousseau lay dormant until 1872-1876, the period in which she conceived and completed Daniel Deronda.³¹ The Rousseauesque moments, in her early story, where Latimer is inspired by water and subsequently submerged in conflict recur in her last work, where Deronda rows downstream to watch the sunset prior to rescuing Mirah Lapidoth from her attempted suicide. Although Latimer's sensitivity appears at the opposite pole to Grandcourt's love of power, both marriage relationships belie their face-saving appearances,

constituting a power struggle, with disillusion and hatred experienced by the wife. Latimer's unsatisfactory relationship with Bertha lies within the silence of their own hearts; they do not outwardly interfere with each other. The same is true of Gwendolen Grandcourt and her husband. In the earlier story, suspecting Latimer's abnormal powers of penetration, Bertha becomes haunted by fear of him, just as Gwendolen comes to fear and hate Grandcourt's ghostly omniscience. The suggestive imagery in Daniel Deronda intimates that Gwendolen also hates and fears Grandcourt's sexual advances. While "The Lifted Veil" contains no such allusions, Latimer experiences "the delights of a first passion" (321) and Bertha does not love him.

Not having understood Latimer's nature, Bertha had thought, like Gwendolen in relation to Grandcourt, that her suitor would continue to be her slave after marriage:

With the essential shallowness of a negative, unimaginative nature, she was unable to conceive the fact that sensibilities were anything else than weaknesses. She had thought my weaknesses would put me in her power, and she found them unimaginable forces. Our positions were reversed. (323-24)

The description is suggestive of Nina Auerbach's view that Victorian "female mystery" is an attempt to divert the male from sexual consummation, through self-mystification to assert her power over the male.³² Although earlier Bertha had deliberately provoked Latimer's desire, her

primary aim was to gain power over him; like Gwendolen, she does not consider love is necessary to marriage.

Bertha's later, murderous thoughts which Latimer can "overhear" resemble those unvoiced thoughts of Gwendolen, only palely hinted by her to Deronda but seemingly acted out in Grandcourt's death by drowning. In the later work, Eliot leaves her characters' thoughts to the imagination of the reader. However, in "The Lifted Veil" she is clumsily direct, although the voicing of her characters' thoughts is acceptable within the framework of Latimer's unique power to overhear the mind's utterances. Thus, Latimer hears Bertha meditating how the incubus (himself) could be shaken off her life, how she can be freed from a hateful bond to a being whom she despises as an imbecile, and yet dreads as an inquisitor (325).

Surprisingly, Latimer, the narrator, is able to feel pity for Bertha, just as the narrator in Daniel Deronda pities Gwendolen her plight. Because he can feel compassion in such a threatening situation, there is still hope for Latimer: it may be that he is not (as Escuret maintains) unredeemable. The redemptive influence of his love for his father, expressed in that epiphanic moment of his father's death, lingers in his soul. However, like Gwendolen, Latimer is intensely conscious of his guilt and feels that he is suffering the consequences of a deed which had been the act of his "intensest will" (326).

Latimer, Gwendolen, and Maggie of The Mill on the Floss all "steal" the implicit property of a close relation--the sweetheart of a brother, husband, or cousin.

However, Gwendolen's action had affected others, and it may be asked why Latimer should continue to feel guilt after Alfred's death, as his action of marrying Bertha had pleased his father, and can no longer hurt Alfred. The answer lies in the fact that his passion for Bertha originated in an earlier devious relationship that had sundered family ties. Since Alfred is dead, Latimer cannot be freed of his compulsive guilt, and therefore an existential type of anguish--one that cannot be resolved--affects him. Initially, his rapture on marrying Bertha had blunted his response, but now the sequence of life described as a slow, hideous "growth of hatred and sin" fills seven years with disappointment, dread, so-called "vain remorse," struggle, and despair. In Eliot's fiction, remorse is not usually vain, and, despite Latimer's feelings, it is not entirely vain in this case, since it motivates him to confess his wrongdoing.

In her description of the couple's lamentable relationship, Eliot could hardly have written more strongly to demonstrate the crucial need for love in marriage, which is Feuerbach's primary example of loving intimacy. Correspondingly, the ultimate weapon, poison, is a major theme and a metaphor for bad feeling in this

story, not only in relation to Bertha but to Latimer's earlier attitude toward Alfred. "The fear of poison is feeble against the sense of thirst," meditates Latimer, describing his enticement by Bertha (305). The threat becomes literal when Bertha plans to poison Latimer, at a time when he sees her truly, is aware of her loathing, and is temporarily losing his mind-reading powers. Bertha's new servant, Mrs Archer, is of course collaborating with her mistress to overthrow Latimer, while he is undergoing intense and prolonged solitary suffering.

Bertha's character deteriorates drastically after her marriage with Latimer. When Archer falls ill, Bertha nurses her servant in a fashion that parallels Bulstrode's solicitude toward the disreputable Raffles in Middlemarch; in each case, the ministering angel is anxious to prevent any leakage of information. Evidently, Archer attempts to blackmail her mistress; after a quarrel, Bertha does not dismiss her. The mythic overtones are crudely drawn. At Archer's apparent death, Bertha's expression--"she looked like a cruel immortal, finding her spiritual feast in the agonies of a dying race" (337)--betrays her inward excitement and hope that her own evil secret will be interred. Bertha's affiliation is with death, not life, and here she is portrayed as having lost her humanity.

Latimer thanks heaven for this veiling of what he concludes would be unwelcome, perhaps terrifying,

knowledge. The "dark veil," now that of death, appears to fall, and the fears of Bertha and Latimer are temporarily assuaged. Then modern science in the form of Meunier's blood transfusion--possibly suggested by the rejuvenating experiment in Hawthorne's "Dr Heidegger's Experiment"--revivifies the demonic servant, lusting for revenge.³³ Archer has the last word, by revealing that she purchased poison on behalf of Bertha.³⁴ Latimer has a horrified awareness of what it is to die and then live again with vengeance in our hearts, ready to act out half-committed sins. At Featherstone's dismal funeral in Middlemarch, Dorothea Casaubon will have a similar revelation of the futility and waste inherent in certain people's lives.

For Latimer, while the demonic dénouement is the reverse of his moving experience of his father's death and their mutual consciousness, it is a further revelation of the need for love in life. However, after Bertha's ghastly secret is revealed and husband and wife are separated, he leads a lone wandering existence abroad. Latimer cannot bring himself to engage in any close encounter with other human beings, since painful thoughts would predominate in such encounters and, as before, he shies away from pain. Although at times he feels the need for contact, his ego has not eradicated his negative feelings toward humanity. Feuerbach had himself seen that all individuals are limited; only through the abstracting

power of the understanding, in the idea of the species, can human nature be conceived of as without limits.

For Latimer the cherishing love experienced alone on the lake in Geneva had given way to "the presence of something unknown and pitiless" (329), and now, during his sojourn abroad, he again senses a solacing nature--"one Unknown Presence revealed and yet hidden by the moving curtain of the earth and sky" (340). Only his death will lift or part this veil. In romantic or Platonic vein, the "curtain" seems to refer to the phenomenal world as hiding a truer reality--but the reality is that his own being has changed. Subsequently, he returns to his home in Devonshire to die, exposed once again to the pitying thoughts of his servants.

Latimer's review of his life contains an assessment that achieves some kind of wisdom. As he says, "my visions were only like presentiments intensified to horror" (307). If they were warnings by his unconscious mind, then they were ineffective in altering his behaviour. This was true even of his first vision of Prague, with its blackened statues and tiny patch of reflected rainbow light anticipating better possibilities, such as his brief interrelatedness with his father achieved through "reflected" suffering. To Latimer, the future had "still no more than the force of an idea, compared with the force of present emotion" (306).

With hindsight, Latimer realizes that there is no short cut to wisdom, only "the difficult thorny wilderness of solitary experience":

It is an old story, that men sell themselves to
the tempter, and sign a bond with their blood,
because it is only to take effect at a distant
day; then rush on to snatch the cup their souls
thirst after with an impulse not the less savage
because there is a dark shadow beside them for
evermore. (306)

Obviously, this Faustian picture of human nature runs counter to Bentham's principle of utility, which insists on the need to balance distant good over present pleasure. Eliot here questions that such rational theories as Bentham's can be implemented. The conscience, which Bentham had virtually ignored and which Feuerbach considered vitally important, is uniquely, if somewhat nebulously, expressed in George Eliot's delineation of a guilt-ridden consciousness. In man's consciousness of "love as the highest, the absolute power and truth," Feuerbach provides an alternative to such a rationalistic and mechanistic thesis as is expressed in "The Lifted Veil" by other characters than Latimer, and also to the type of morality conveyed by Latimer himself. As Feuerbach asserted, the heart has the ability to judge compassionately; the law condemns, but the heart has compassion even on the sinner (EC 47).

Compassion is especially required in relation to Latimer's history. Lacking a meaningful aim in life, he

experiences Feuerbach's "greatest unhappiness" (EC 64). He himself realizes, with his autobiography begun and his life drawing to a close, that knowledge was not enough; only love could have changed his motivations:

In after days I thought with bitter regret that if I had foreseen something more or something different --if instead of that hideous vision which poisoned the passion it could not destroy, or if even along with it I could have had a foreshadowing of that moment when I looked on my brother's face for the last time, some softening influence would have been shed over my feeling for him: pride and hatred would have been subdued into pity, and the record of those hidden sins would have been shortened. (307)

Significantly, he admits to a redeeming, sympathetic memory of the dead Alfred as he confesses to "hidden sins," understanding his basic motivation:

We try to believe that the egoism within us would have easily been melted, and that it was only the narrowness of our knowledge which hemmed in our generosity, our awe, our human piety. . . . (Ibid.)

While in Latimer's confession there is ample evidence of his apathy or lack of will, the true "keys to happiness"--love and morality--have been unveiled to him and he sees the need for a balance between feeling and knowledge.

In his final hour Latimer longs for life. He implicitly recognizes the need for altruism, for the reciprocity of relationship that Feuerbach saw as integral to the human essence. Indeed, the writing of this

confession effects a change in his own consciousness. Unremitting suffering by itself was unredemptive, obliterating his religious faith. As Latimer vehemently phrased it, "to the utterly unloving and unloved--there is no religion possible, no worship but a worship of devils" (329-30). Yet suffering is also the element which finally brings Latimer, like Adam Bede, to the "completer manhood" of the story's motto.³⁵ It needs to find expression, and it does so in autobiography. When he began his confession, he was full of rage about other people's uncharitable treatment of him. By the time he finishes it and the darkness approaches, he has recognized his own lack of charity, his own sins of omission and commission.

In writing his confession, Latimer, significantly, gains the power of poetic expression earlier denied him and communicates with other minds, if only indirectly and post mortem. The burden of guilt which separated him from the remotest chance of fulfilment has been lifted from his soul before he lifts the final curtain or veil. Thus, his confession is an unveiling of truth, and the symbol relates not to an empty sanctuary but to the knowledge which Latimer attains in reviewing his life. This knowledge may, in turn, help others. In Latimer's final moments, in darkness but no pain (as anticipated at the beginning of the story), his thought stays in the darkness but the sense of moving onward leaves the reader with an

acceptance of travel into the void that replaces the religious mysteries which Feuerbach incisively unravelled. From it, we can believe that Latimer at last finds peace.

Notes

¹On the short story as the natural vehicle for presentation of the outsider, see Wendell V. Harris, British Short Fiction in the Nineteenth Century: A Literary and Bibliographic Guide (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1979) 109. Her only work in the first person, Eliot's "jeu de melancolie" [sic] was begun at Richmond and completed at Holly Lodge in Wandsworth on April 26, 1859. At that time she had good reason to feel depressed, since her sister, Chrissey, had recently died, reviving memories of her father's death. Moreover, after the success of Adam Bede, Eliot was unsure whether she would again be capable of writing anything worthwhile.

²Knoepfmacher, Early Novels 131, n. 13.

³Beryl Gray, Afterword, The Lifted Veil by George Eliot (London: Virago P, 1985) 89.

⁴Another close friend, Barbara Bodichon, was more astute; shortly after Eliot finished "The Lifted Veil," Bodichon confessed that she had instantly recognized the author of Adam Bede. The tenderness and wisdom that she found in the book were characteristic of Marian Evans.

⁵Jennifer Uglow, George Eliot (London: Virago P, 1987) 122.

⁶As mentioned earlier, the story has drawn considerable recent interest. See, respectively, Edward Hurley, "'The Lifted Veil': George Eliot as Anti-Intellectual," Studies in Short Fiction 5 (1968): 257-62; Elliot L. Rubinstein, "A Forgotten Tale by George Eliot," Nineteenth-Century Fiction 17 (1962-1963): 175-83 (183); U. C. Knoepfmacher, "Escape Through Fantasy: 'The Lifted Veil,'" Early Novels 128-61 (138); Charles Swann, "Déjà vu, déjà lu: 'The Lifted Veil' as an Experiment in Art," Literature and History 5 (1979): 40-86; Terry Eagleton, "Power and Knowledge in the 'The Lifted Veil,'" Literature and History 9 (1983): 52-61; Richard Freadman, Eliot, James and the Fictional Self: A Study in Character

and Narration (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1986) 26, 55. Freadman designates three competing ways of seeing reality in George Eliot's novels: as an intractable entity that is "descriptively, and it would seem, ontologically, prior to mind"; as a "creative precipitate of a set of innate categories in the mind"; and as "a kind of spiritualized process not properly understood in terms of subject and object since it is precisely such categories that it transcends."

⁷Possibly Eliot had his Physical Theory of Another Life in mind when she wrote about Latimer's extended powers of human communication. Taylor had admitted that for some people increased powers might not necessarily be good, and Eliot mainly delineates this negative aspect in her story.

⁸"Myth and the Single Consciousness: Middlemarch and The Lifted Veil," This Particular Web: Essays on Middlemarch, ed. Ian Adam (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1975) 96-97, 101.

⁹Op. cit.

¹⁰See Annie Escuret, "'The Lifted Veil' ou la scandale de la mémoire trouée," Cahiers victoriens et édouardiens: Studies in George Eliot, No. 26 (Oct. 1987): 21-35 (27-28); Eagleton, op. cit. Eagleton suggests that art is born as the neurasthenic child of bourgeois power, crushed by its own pointless parasitism, but having its revenge in a secret omniscience which can expose the father's inmost flaws, substituting esoteric knowledge for social dominance (56). The story has also been seen as a warning to those who try to cross interpersonal boundaries, with Latimer as a modern Oedipus. Other interpretations focus on Eliot's artistic vocation and a conflict she supposedly had in concealing her female visions behind an impersonation of masculinity. Terry Eagleton's Marxist interpretation sees the story as containing its own negation, becoming a form of paranoia. See, respectively, Escuret, Uglow, and Eagleton, op. cit. On Eliot's artistic vocation, see also Gillian Beer, Rubenstein, and Swann, op. cit.

¹¹See Swann 42.

¹²Knoepfmacher 138.

¹³Beer 92.

¹⁴See Eagleton 52.

¹⁵The relation between "The Lifted Veil" and Daniel Deronda has been remarked by several critics, e.g., Freadman, who notes that there are shades in "The Lifted Veil" of the derivative triviality of Rosamond and Lydgate and of the tragic, "unmapped" inner world of Gwendolen Harleth (130).

¹⁶Baker 81-82.

¹⁷In a letter to Mrs John Cash (Mary Sibree) of June 6, 1857, at a time when she was unusually happy in the knowledge of Lewes's love ("happy in the highest blessing love can give us, the perfect love and sympathy of a nature that stimulates my own to healthful activity"), she spoke of the terrible pain she had experienced in the past. This had arisen partly from outward things and partly from the defects of her own nature. However, she felt it had been a preparation for some special work that she would live to accomplish (GEL II, 343). She was just beginning to write fiction at this time.

¹⁸Here, the "taré" is the source of suffering and disequilibrium, to be assuaged only by Latimer's death, with the return to equilibrium presented as the only moral good to be wished for. Latimer is conceived of as accusing himself of his "manquements à la règle" and accepting his punishment on the day and time predicted as if to prove that he is really unredeemable ("irrécupérable"):

Cette entorse à la Loi, à l'Ordre, au Père, à l'Arbre [génétique], au Travail, à la Famille, au Corps Social, à la norme de la bonne santé ou du rendement, fait de lui le parasite inutile qui n'a rien plus qu'à disparaître. . . . Son don de "voyance" est une source de "lumière", ou d'énergie qui aurait dû être transformé en "oeuvre utile". . . . (28)

¹⁹See chapter 1.

²⁰Eliot had, of course, lived in Geneva and been inspired by Rousseau's Confessions (if not by his moral lapses). In his Confessions, Rousseau describes an experience comparable to Latimer's. Jennifer Uglow has found the "glowing mountain tops" to echo Wordsworth's Excursion (118).

²¹His sensation is comparable to Milly Barton's sense of being near a "fountain of love" in the Scenes; the water imagery, Genevan lake or fountain, has archetypal implications, which are more evident in Latimer's description of the effect the scenery has on him.

²²Op. cit.

²³Feuerbach, The Essence of Religion, trans. [and abridged] Alexander Loos (New York: Asa K. Butts, 1873) 43.

²⁴The Fiery Brook: Selected Writings of Ludwig Feuerbach, trans. Zawar Hanfi (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1972) 26.

²⁵Feuerbach, The Essence of Religion 43.

²⁶Ghosts of the Gothic: Austen, Eliot, and Lawrence (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1980) 186.

²⁷Jung 355-84 (esp. 373-74, 379). The four-pointed star symbolizes a conscious totality; that is, the ideal, spiritual man. The five-pointed star symbolizes the natural man; that is, the material and bodily man with its instinctual, chthonic, unconscious nature. According to Jung, mandalas generally have an intuitive, irrational content and exert a retroactive influence on the unconscious (361).

²⁸You Shall Be As Gods: A Radical Interpretation of the Old Testament and Its Tradition (New York: Fawcett Premier, 1966) 141-42.

²⁹A resemblance noted by Knoepfelmacher (138).

³⁰Here Annie Escuret pictures Latimer as necessarily recognizing his extended oedipal infraction against his half-brother:

OEdipe/Latimer cesse d'être fasciné par la
Sphinge car il est passé de l'autre côté du
'Voile'. En effet, en épousant Bertha (fiancée à
Alfred), il commet en quelque sorte un inceste.
Dès lors, il ne fait plus partie du monde des
vivants. . . . (27-28)

³¹Hugh Witemeyer, "George Eliot and Jean-Jacques Rousseau," Comparative Literature Studies 16 (1979): 121-30 (127).

³²The Woman and the Demon: The Life of a Victorian Myth (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1982) 7-8.

³³As Charles Swann has noted, in 1858 two articles by Lewes, which dealt briefly with transfusion, were published in Blackwood's; they were later incorporated into The Physiology of Common Life (1859, 1860). A passage which Lewes must have added when preparing his book for publication suggested that transfusion in all cases of disease was useless. Swann takes this as a clear signal that the meaning of "The Lifted Veil" is not to be arrived at by any reference to the tenets of realism. "Déjà vu: déjà lu," 41-42. The scientific experiment in "The Lifted Veil" has also been aligned with Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, works by M. E. Braddon, and Hawthorne's "The Minister's Black Veil," to name a few other comparisons.

³⁴She subsequently became vengeful, due to Bertha's dismissive treatment of her. While this part of the tale is rather sketchy, one presumes that Bertha was jealous of Mrs Archer's "bold, self-confident coquetry" so different from Bertha's own suppressed feelings of fear and dependence.

³⁵Cf. Knoepfelmacher 155.

CHAPTER 5

ERROR, RENUNCIATION, AND AFFIRMATION IN THE MILL ON THE FLOSS

No wonder, when there is this contrast between the outward and the inward, that painful collisions come of it. (III, 5:206)

So deeply inherent is it in this life of ours that men have to suffer for each other's sins, so inevitably diffusive is human suffering, that even justice makes its victims, and we can conceive no retribution that does not spread beyond its mark in pulsations of unmerited pain. (III, 7:212)

The Mill on the Floss reiterates the themes of suffering, egoism, incompleteness, fragmentation, and lack of self-fulfillment expressed in "The Lifted Veil." Like that story, it ends tragically with the protagonist's death; here, with the drowning of the miller's daughter, Maggie Tulliver, and her brother in the Floss.¹ On the moral plane, it goes beyond "The Lifted Veil" in exploration of Feuerbach's assertion that man's imperfection can be overcome by a generous, unegoistic love, as "the principle of reconciliation between the perfect and the imperfect" (EC 48). Indeed, a Feuerbachian affirmation is achieved symbolically. However, this autobiographical novel contains certain ambiguities which have led to a continuing critical debate. Interpretations have tended to become polarized,

with some critics maintaining that the story is a tragedy of repression; and others, one of egoism.²

Maggie's search for an "unlearned secret of existence" can be viewed as a Feuerbachian quest for selfhood. She can be seen as an amalgam of opposing elements, her life a chronicle of collisions,³ but she strains after something that will give life meaning and "give her soul a sense of home in it" (III, 5:205). Certainly Feuerbach's conception of mercy as the "justice of sensuous life" ["Das Rechtsgefühl der Sinnlichkeit"] (EC 49) is epitomized by Eliot's presentation of Maggie:

If the ethics of art do not admit the truthful presentation of a character essentially noble but liable to great error--error that is anguish to its own nobleness--then . . . the ethics of art are too narrow, and must be widened to correspond with a widening psychology. (GEL, III, 318)

When their childhood comes to an abrupt end with Mr Tulliver's death, Maggie and Tom move mentally and emotionally in different directions and find themselves at cross-purposes; Maggie's suffering reaches a point where she can find consolation only in the philosophy of renunciation of Thomas à Kempis. At various times, Maggie becomes torn between different loves: her deep love for her brother, a platonic love for Philip Wakem, and a passionate love for Stephen Guest, whose diamond ring, attar of roses, and air of nonchalant leisure are "the graceful and odiferous result of the largest oil-mill and

the most extensive wharf in St Ogg's" (VI, 1:319). Stephen has a steady and mutually suitable relationship with Maggie's cousin, Lucy, which is expected shortly to blossom into an offer for her hand in marriage, whereas Maggie is alone. The unassuaged craving for her brother's love is the basic cause of pain in Maggie's life, especially as Tom will force her to choose between himself and Philip. Tom has a large share in repressing Maggie's emotions and catapulting his sister into her affair with Stephen Guest.

The plot pivots on a fairly direct social complication when Maggie, in love with Stephen, steps aboard a boat and floats down the river with him. It becomes too late to turn back; they will spend the night together, and Maggie's reputation will be ruined. After refusing his offer of marriage, she spends an anguished night alone struggling with desire. Her brother's disgust and consequent rejection of her throws into relief the unexpectedly motherly behaviour of the feeble-minded Mrs Tulliver, who has always favoured Tom. (Even in such a character, Feuerbach's supremacy of mother love and Comte's insistence on family are attested, although previously suffering had merely reduced Mrs Tulliver's mind to confusion.) The firmness of Maggie's decision is confirmed when, on receipt of Stephen's letter, she has an opportunity to change her mind. She again refuses to

marry him, acting out what she understands to be the clue of life before she perishes in the flood.

However, Eliot's description of morality following upon error was not utterly convincing to many of Eliot's contemporaries, who simply condemned Maggie's "immoral" action. While conceding that there was "a want of proportionate fullness" in the treatment of the third volume which she would always regret, Eliot maintained that Maggie's attitude toward Stephen was vital to her conception of the heroine (GEL, III, 317).

To Eliot, the suffering of martyr or victim which belonged to every historical advance of mankind was represented by Maggie versus the Dodsons. Maggie and Tom represent the new generation that will mentally rise above the old while tied to that older generation by their affections. Maggie certainly finds the traditional values of the "emmet-like" Dodsons restrictive, though these values are often sound. George Eliot told Blackwood that she had fulfilled her intention very badly if she had made the Dodson honesty appear mean and uninteresting, or the payment of one's debts a contemptible virtue. However, in their unthinking adherence to tradition, the Dodsons provide a study in prosaic worldliness and materialism, a "worldliness without side dishes" (IV, 1:238). Indeed, the town of St Ogg's epitomizes traditional values, overlaid by the nineteenth-century laissez-faire

individualism that partly stemmed from eighteenth-century utilitarianism.⁴ Whereas the pastoral world of Adam Bede was harmonious, feudal, and static, the world of The Mill on the Floss is disrupted by acrimony and lawsuits, and "Old Leisure" is being undermined. In this society, the Dodsons and Tullivers manoeuvre less successfully than the businessman, Mr Deane, who married a Dodson; and the manufacturing Guest family heads the St Ogg's social and corporate hierarchy.

Despite her idealization of Maggie as a martyr and victim, Eliot stated that the characters in this novel generally represented a lower level of humanity than those of Adam Bede (GEL III, 133), a remark which points to characteristics such as egoism. F. R. Leavis sees Maggie's emotional and spiritual stresses as belonging to a stage of development where the capacity to make essential distinctions has not been arrived at,⁵ while, in George Levine's view, the St Oggs's citizens lack the clarity of vision Feuerbach desiderated, and therefore are determined, that is, unfree, not able to make choices. Levine maintains that Eliot has created a society which has not moved beyond the egoism of man's "animal" beginnings to the sympathy and benevolence advocated by Feuerbach and Comte.⁶ Nonetheless, the intensity of the quest for happiness in The Mill on the Floss remains unparalleled, suggesting perhaps that the yearning for

happiness is greatest when it is least fulfilled.

This conflict of generations and temperaments contains a dialectic that we have elsewhere identified as a clash between utilitarianism and those values intrinsic to the philosophy of Feuerbach. The duality of this novel has been categorized by John Hagan as one which appears in all of George Eliot's novels: it is that between two radically different kinds of characters, the "large-souled" and the "narrow-souled," where the latter remain permanently trapped in the confines of the egoistic self.⁷ This crucial division is profitably seen in the wider context of Eliot's confrontation with two irreconcilable philosophies, with Tom representing utilitarianism and Maggie, with her loving nature, striving, albeit imperfectly, toward Feuerbachian values. While Tom develops a sense of honour, and may be seen as acting unselfishly when he saves his earnings to rescue the family reputation, by Feuerbach's standards his approach to life is in many ways flawed. For example, Tom takes up his father's grudge against the lawyer, Wakem, extending it to Wakem's deformed son, Philip, who was his former schoolmate at Mr Stelling's. Tom is motivated by practical considerations but also, impractically, by hatred, as opposed to Feuerbachian compassion.

George Eliot's main concern is for individuals; she is, however, describing individuals widely separated by

different philosophies, and she is also describing a quest for unity. She may therefore be attempting to reconcile not only brother and sister, but the different philosophies which they represent, as she had once sought to reconcile the philosophies of Locke and Kant, and their similar disjunctions.⁸

The quest for unity, which Levine has identified as the predominant theme, viewing it as a Feuerbachian fusion of imagination and will which leads to sympathetic action (113), is initiated by Maggie through her devotion to Tom. The autobiographical parallel, Eliot's childhood devotion to Isaac Evans, provides an obvious motive for such a literary reconciliation of alternative philosophies. But, it has to be asked, to what extent is such a philosophical reconciliation feasible? In the novel, Tom is Maggie's real "religion"; he forms a part of her childhood, a link which will become a vital factor in her Feuerbachian "conversion." But he himself obstinately adheres to first impressions, especially about Maggie and Philip, as George Eliot here distinguishes between purely external perception and a more imaginative and flexible perception. The brother and sister are reconciled only for a brief moment prior to their symbolic reconciliation in death. Does Feuerbachian sympathy here bridge the disparity between the siblings? To attempt an answer to this question, the novel's closure will later be examined in

some detail.

In the earlier story "Janet's Repentance," Eliot had described the two faces of Milby in terms of religion and irreligion. Despite its unprepossessing surface appearance, Milby at times revealed an unexpected beauty and warmth. The town of St Ogg's contains this same duality, and again one needs to look below the surface. Feuerbachian values are affirmed notably by the low-born Bob Jakin and by the legend of St Ogg's, which expresses the humanitarianism implicit in the town's traditional values but not always practised. In the legend, a kindly ferryman ignores the passengers of his overloaded boat to take another woman on board, purely because the desire of her heart is great. On arrival at the other bank, she reveals herself to be the Virgin Mary, and blesses his boat, so that henceforth he will be protected from floods. The legend itself can be regarded as a Feuerbachian paradigm with some fairly heavy-handed symbolism.

Bob's name, Jakin, suggests his affinity to Christian values (akin to J[esus]), and hence aligns Bob with the boatman of the legend who steers the Virgin (Maggie) to safety. Bob's generosity and compassion are manifested when he buys back some of Maggie's auctioned books, including Thomas à Kempis's Imitation of Christ, thus initiating Maggie into a new period of her life.

Although a newly married man, he later chivalrously takes the outcast Maggie into his small home. This trader of material goods is puzzled by events, but expresses his understanding of her need for sympathy by asking her to hold his precious new commodity (his baby) and loaning her the company of his dog, Mumps. Earlier he had shown Tom the way to earn extra money, refusing to profit from the transactions.

Bob's role in the novel has been underestimated, probably because he is rather a comic character. Yet moral values as well as sympathy are fully embodied in the adult Bob after Maggie points out that he should stop cheating his customers by using his "big thumb" when measuring cloth; the uneducated Bob had not previously thought of this sleight of hand as wrong. (Some recognition of Bob's symbolic role has recently been accorded by the assertion that Bob's baby, named after Maggie, and whom Maggie fears "might slip from her mind and her fingers," represents her own emergent self, but a self still too fragile and unformed to endure.)⁹ Similar values to Bob's are more equivocally affirmed by Lucy Deane and Dr Kenn.

Feuerbachian values are also affirmed in Maggie's and Tom's childhood, which provides a touchstone for their responses as immature adults thrust out into the world. In many ways Maggie's childhood is a happy time when she

and her brother experience simple, affectionate, animal-like responses to each other, a time of irresponsibility when the trials of adult existence are virtually unknown. Understandably, it has been seen as heavily Wordsworthian.¹⁰ In retrospect, it seems an archetypal, Edenic world in which, like Adam and Eve, the children are innocent and protected from adult knowledge.

Most important, in childhood love is born and, as the narrator says, we could never have loved the earth so well if we had had no childhood in it:

Our delight in the sunshine on the deep-bladed
grass to-day, might be no more than the faint
perception of wearied souls, if it were not for
the sunshine and the grass in the far-off years
which still live in us, and transform our percep-
tion into love. (I, 5:36)

As the author observes, the thoughts and loves of these first years would always make part of their lives.

Maggie has little religion to guide her, and two alternative codes present themselves to her for imitation: morality and utilitarianism. The Dodsons are inescapably moral, and Maggie's ignorance of the universal natural laws of morality will hinder her progress. Her childhood frustrations are triggered by the discrepancy between her inner dreams and her outer environment--the Dodsons' traditional "common sense" morality is larded with less attractive features. As in Adam Bede, where pleasure is sought strictly from material objects, utilitarianism in

combination with materialism is not conducive to happiness. The Dodsons' desire to leave things neat and orderly after their deaths is excessive; it assimilates materialism into their traditional values. Mrs Tulliver's emotive materialism, manifested as affection for her linen and china, is no more attractive than the practical attitude of her Dodson sisters, who, after the Tulliver family has been ruined, refuse to buy back auctioned family items such as a teapot with a broken spout. They want only "useful, plain things," not useless objects, and will not pay "more than they will fetch." Then, too, Maggie's aunt Glegg pronounces that her niece must love her aunts "as have done so much for her, and saved their money to leave to their nephews and nieces" (III, 3:186). Mrs Glegg's admirable intentions actually represent a form of emotional blackmail which is at odds with Feuerbach's view that love should be spontaneous.

Even while Maggie's father loves and defends his daughter, he himself is motivated by utility. He frustrates her intellectual ambitions, thinking it wasteful to give a girl a good education, although he has educated his son above his station in life. As he puts it, "an over-'cute woman's no better nor a long-tailed sheep--she'll fetch none the bigger price for that" (I, 2:11). Tom, for his part, is very fond of his sister, with a fondness that includes an intention to make her

useful as his housekeeper and punish her when she does wrong. His childhood aptitude for punishing Maggie and other living creatures is evident, and his views on justice as punishment are suggestive of his utilitarianism. So is the abatement of his views when, after Maggie has behaved disgracefully at the pond, he perceives that punishment cannot be brought about without the "injustice" of some blame on his own conduct. Tom does not strictly apply Bentham's criterion that the amount of punishment should be carefully determined to produce the optimum effect. For him, punishment is a form of exercising power over others;¹¹ yet he is capable of detachment. Feeling his father was to blame, he doesn't experience Maggie's fierce resentment at their aunts' and uncles' lack of tenderness and generosity:

There were no impulses in Tom that led him to expect what did not present itself to him as a right to be demanded. Why should people give away their money plentifully to those who had not taken care of their own money? Tom saw some justice in severity. . . . (III, 5:197)

But he also has an aptitude for calculation. In bribing Mr Poulter to lend him his sword, the "young dog calculated the effect as well as if he had been a philosopher" (II, 4:153) (perhaps one of the school of Thomas Gradgrind in Dickens's Hard Times where Louisa's materialistic brother is also named Tom). However, as the author goes on to note, Tom Tulliver would not have been

capable of seeing his behaviour in a philosophic light. The boy's latent tendencies are reinforced when he goes to work for Mr Deane, who, not inaccurately, emphasizes the uselessness of Tom's education. (It was indeed useless, since Tom lacked Maggie's thirst for knowledge and power of imagination.) A self-made man, Mr Deane represents utilitarianism linked with worldly materialism under the name of self-betterment.¹²

Tom has something of Adam Bede in him, with the positive and negative qualities that create severity and foster prejudice: strength of will, conscious rectitude of purpose, narrowness of imagination and intellect, great power of self-control, and a disposition to exert control over others (VI, 12:400). But Tom lacks Adam's power of loving; he subordinates love to duty in a manner that points up Maggie's ideal duty which, like that of Feuerbach, arises out of love. In Tom, family feeling has lost the character of clanship which still exists in Mrs Glegg, who offers her ostracized niece the shelter of her home. With her strong sense of duty, family ties come foremost. Her willingness to oppose public opinion and convention has been seen as a dramatization of the way in which family unity, recognized by both Comte and Feuerbach as the source of morality, is the first step toward community, "the first means of transcending the 'I' for the 'Thou,' for breaking away from the narrow egoism which

governs the action of ordinary men."¹³ Tom's intolerant rejection of his sister following her condemnation by the St Ogg's community significantly resembles the behaviour of Eliot's brother Isaac, after his sister flouted convention by living with George Henry Lewes. But George Eliot did not intend to draw a harsh portrait; like Hetty, Tom cannot escape the limitations of his individual nature: "A being's understanding is its sphere of vision" (EC 8), as Feuerbach expressed it. Tom's understanding is limited by his lack of feeling and imagination.

Even Dr Kenn has a sense of utility; he instantly perceives that the sensible answer to Maggie's dilemma would be to marry Stephen, only his compassionate understanding allows him to give due weight to Maggie's conscience. Unwillingly, therefore, he bows to society's verdict when Maggie, as the daily governess to his children, endangers his reputation and clerical career. In relieving her of her duties, Dr Kenn's self-interest--however understandably--governs compassion, illustrative of the psychological hedonism which underlies Bentham's argument.

In this novel, the contrast between egoism and renunciation is heavily stressed by George Eliot. Her heroine's initial problem is egoism. Maggie is not calculating, being ardent and sensitive; but she is thoughtless and impulsive to the point of selfishness, as

shown when Tom's rabbits die because she forgets to feed them. The dangers of impulsiveness--that is, of a lack of rational thought--are also convincingly dramatized by Mr Tulliver's quarrel with his sister, Mrs Moss, his thrashing of Wakem, and his demand that Tom swear vengeance on Wakem in the family Bible, an oath that utterly belies the type of interpretation that Feuerbach accorded the Christian religion. In contrast to this is Maggie's plea to Tom, after Mr Tulliver's death, that they swear to love each other always.

Maggie's growth is cramped by her narrow environment, premature suffering, and penury, but she hungers for knowledge, beauty, and love. In her discovery of Thomas à Kempis's philosophy of renunciation, as set out in his Imitation of Christ, these needs are partially assuaged. Maggie finds it easier to "give up the hope of earthly happiness altogether" than be satisfied with a small portion (clearly an autobiographical parallel). To what extent does à Kempis's philosophy help her to achieve the indefinable goal she is seeking--Feuerbachian happiness? Philip thinks that she is placing unnecessary restrictions on herself and the virtues of renunciation in this novel have long been disputed by critics.

Maggie's philosophy of renunciation is indeed crucial in relation to her development of a Feuerbachian concept of humanity; her reaction to à Kempis's book

provides an indication of its importance. A strange thrill of awe passes through her, "as if she had been wakened in the night by a strain of solemn music . . ." (IV, 3:253). Music, as we know from her earlier fiction, has been associated by Eliot with Feuerbachian feeling, and this seems to be the case here. Maggie realizes that her soul has been "in stupor" rather than "astir," simultaneously becoming aware of her own egoism as she absorbs his views concerning the damaging effect of self-love on one's own self:

It flashed through her like the suddenly
apprehended solution of a problem, that all
the miseries of her young life had come from
fixing her heart on her own pleasure, as if
that were the central necessity of the universe
. (IV, 3:254)

The difference in their capacity to feel is so pronounced that Maggie is seldom likened to Hetty Sorrel, but in their pursuance of pleasure they are alike. Yet Maggie Tulliver's longings are presented more sympathetically than Hetty's. Susan Morgan has maintained that the question of feminine fulfilment, or the lack of it, becomes an explicit subject of The Mill on the Floss (274). In any case, Maggie is obviously superior to Hetty; on reading à Kempis, she becomes alive to her error and recognizes the possibility of shifting her viewpoint to one where her life appears only an "insignificant part of a divinely-guided whole." Hetty, as created, is

incapable of this realization. It is a vital shift in Maggie's philosophy of life, her first inkling of a Feuerbachian-like concept of the species.

This direct communication of a human soul's belief and experience is described as an "unquestioned message," a "secret of life." In the ardour of Maggie's first discovery, renunciation paradoxically seems to be what she has been searching for, because she has not perceived the inmost truth of the old monk's outpourings, that renunciation remains sorrow, though a sorrow borne willingly: "Maggie was still panting for happiness, and was in ecstasy because she had found the key to it" (IV, 3:254). George Eliot now becomes explicit about the broadly religious nature of Maggie's quest. Maggie, like many other human beings, needs a belief--some "enthusiasm," something that lies outside personal desires and includes "resignation for ourselves and active love for what is not ourselves" (IV, 3:255)--an elaboration suggestive of the Feuerbachian nature of the "religion" that Maggie needs. Essentially, à Kempis's philosophy accords with Feuerbach's notion of the suffering god, that is, the virtue of self-sacrifice and the giving up of egoism. Through it, Maggie divines that there is a greater satisfaction to be gained from life than mere personal enjoyment; she equates it with "sacredness" (VI, 13:402). Her adoption of à Kempis's philosophy of

renunciation is a significant step in her education.

Feuerbach himself emphasized not only the need to subordinate selfish desire to altruistic feeling, but human development, the need for human beings to fully realize their powers, and Maggie is excessive in her renunciation:

From what you know of her, you will not be surprised that she threw some exaggeration and wilfulness, some pride and impetuosity, even into her self-renunciation: her own life was still a drama for her, in which she demanded of herself that her part should be played with intensity. And so it came to pass that she often lost the spirit of humility by being excessive in the outward act; she often strove after too high a flight, and came down with her poor little half-fledged wings dabbled in the mud.
(IV, 3:255-56)

(J. W. Cross confirms the autobiographical nature of this description, for in his life of George Eliot he described her abandonment of egoism in similar terms. She chose "the path of martyrdom and endurance" rather than "the steep highway of tolerance, just allowance, and self-blame, where there are no leafy honours to be gathered and worn" [IV, 3:256; Life, I, 23-24].) Philip regards Maggie's behaviour as narrow asceticism, "narrow self-delusive fanaticism," and "a long suicide," seeing it only as a way of escaping pain by starving all the powers of her higher nature. He underestimates the value of renunciation, given Maggie's needs and conscience. Yet he makes a telling point when he warns her that it is

stupefaction to remain in ignorance, "to shut up all the avenues by which the life of your fellow-men might become known to you" (V, 3:288) such as music, reading, knowledge, and a wider life. Maggie, he believes, is indeed naive to believe that she can find happiness in renunciation itself; poetry, art, and knowledge are "sacred and pure." He correctly predicts that when Maggie is thrown into the world every rational satisfaction of her nature that she now denies will assault her like a savage appetite. When Lucy Deane takes pity on her cousin and invites her to stay, Maggie goes to the opposite extreme of her former behaviour. She is carried away by the awakening desires of her spiritual and imaginative nature and, as Leslie Stephen has noted, a need "for the play of the higher faculties" (102).

Thus, going from one extreme to another, Maggie is swept into a social whirl and becomes versed in the arts of worldly pleasure. In the seeking of pleasure, this new phase has an affinity with utilitarianism, although usefulness, beyond efforts in fund-raising, is not particularly noticeable in Lucy's or Stephen's lives. We do not witness Stephen considering his family business matters or anything of a serious nature beyond music, love, and marriage, though presumably he does concern himself with such things. However, Lucy exemplifies benevolent utilitarianism; her character might have been

drawn from Bentham's well-known statement: "the dictates of utility are neither more nor less than the dictates of the most extensive and enlightened (that is well-advised) benevolence" (IPML X, para. 4, s. 36). Maggie now becomes enmeshed in a love triangle; deformed Philip is a creature of mind, Stephen of body.¹⁴ Unlike Stephen, both Tom and Philip have shared her own past. The Comtian influence becomes tangible in Eliot's insistence on the contribution of past to present,¹⁵ and the Feuerbachian element of conscience now begins to manifest itself.

Feuerbach had pointed out that the consciousness of "moral law, of right, of propriety, of truth itself" was indissolubly united with man's consciousness of another than himself, so that his fellow-man could operate as an objective conscience, making his failings a reproach, and pointing him toward the right (EC 158). As her secret feeling for Stephen Guest becomes more compelling, Maggie begins to look on Philip as Feuerbach's "objective conscience"; Philip assumes a mentor's role similar to that of Daniel Deronda with respect to Gwendolen Grandcourt. Because Philip's appeal is not to Maggie's egoism but to her womanly devotion, it creates a "sanctuary" where she can find refuge from the alluring influence of Stephen which she should resist.

Philip considers Maggie's wish to make a world outside loving, "as men do," to be a new form of her old

desire to find a mode of renunciation that will be an escape from pain. In his own determination to accept pain, he represents the opposite pole to the pleasure-principle utilitarian, though he does join with Lucy in her benevolent calculations to bring him and Maggie together. His sense of honour, however, prevents him from alluding to former words of love. While in the past Philip has indulged in self-pity and bitterness, his love for Maggie provides another dimension, creates an "enlarged" life, and Feuerbachian compassion is finally manifested in his letter forgiving Maggie for having caused him pain. In it, he attests that caring for her joy and sorrow more than for his own has "transformed the spirit of rebellious murmuring into that willing endurance which is the birth of strong sympathy" (VII, 3:443). He sees this new life initiated by his intense love for Maggie even as "a new power." Philip has gained incomparably more than he has lost by love.

As for Maggie, her feeling for Philip does not completely meet her needs; her egoistic phase is not yet over. Only later does she realize how fulfilling a life with Philip could have been; this sacrifice of herself would have been infinitely worthwhile.

A primary motif in this novel is the complex nature of love, which is shown in its passionate, platonic, and filial aspects. Feuerbach's own pragmatic evocation of

love might be thought to evoke a greater passion than is evinced in Maggie's feeling for Philip:

What the old mystics said of God, that he is the highest and yet the commonest being, applies in truth to love, and that not a visionary, imaginary love--no! a real love, a love which has flesh and blood, which vibrates as an almighty force through all living. (EC 48)

This philosophy proposes that a truly "religious" marriage corresponds to the essence of marriage, that is, active love (EC 271). It could therefore be argued that Feuerbachian feeling is better manifested in Maggie's sexual desire for Stephen.

Significantly, the pleasures that most engage Maggie's attention in her new life are the sensuous ones of love and music, pleasures derived from feeling; music is for Maggie the "food of love" as she falls in love with Lucy's implicit fiancé. As John Hagan has observed, the two things with which Stephen is most frequently associated, music and the river, come to epitomize the irresistible force of the intoxication which she increasingly feels in his presence (60). When Maggie listens to Stephen singing, her soul is captured by an invisible influence, "the inexorable power of sound," and she is swept along as by a wave too strong for her (VI, 7:366-67).¹⁶ Water, drifting, and tidal imagery are, to the modern reader, evocative of the Jungian unconscious, of irresistible desire: a later chapter

heading is "Borne by the Tide." The element of unconscious emotion is also hinted in Philip's dream that Maggie is "slipping down a glistening, green, slimy channel of a waterfall, and he was looking on helpless" (VI, 8:375).¹⁷

This feeling accords with Feuerbach's criterion of spontaneity, but one might question whether Maggie's feeling for Stephen constitutes the sort of spontaneous feeling that can be called Feuerbachian. Maggie's responsiveness to music is "only one form of that passionate sensibility which belonged to her whole nature, and made her faults and virtues all merge in each other" (VI, 6:352). In Eliot's novels, musical performances can be as misleading as theatrical performances,¹⁸ and we could view Stephen's musical virtuosity as a superficial facility--opposed to the spiritual authenticity that Eliot gives such heroines as Dinah with her musical treble tones. The narrator underlines the unquestioning complicity of the two in succumbing to the power of music, of feeling. "Neither of them," we are told, "had begun to reflect on the matter, or silently to ask, 'To what does all this tend?'" (VI, 6:354).

Certain conditions must be met if love is to provide lasting happiness. According to Feuerbach, love, understanding, and morality are interconnected; "love with understanding and understanding with love is mind," he

noted, and mind is "the totality of man as such--the total man" (EC 67). In asking how man might blunt the "fatal sting of sin," Feuerbach had pointed to man's consciousness of love as the "highest, the absolute power and truth" (EC 47): man is not only a rational and moral but a sympathetic being. Love, in its truest sense, does not conflict with understanding or morality.

But, so far, morality is not the kernel of Maggie's "religion" as it is of Feuerbach's. Her joys are stolen ones, her actions underhand: seduced by the prospect of Stephen's love, she disregards Lucy's implicit claim. Maggie's egoism is carried over into her adult life, despite her growing awareness of it. She tells Lucy that, although she would not want to make anyone unhappy, she is sometimes envious of other people's happiness. Her affair with Stephen attests to this truth: her motivation is envy as well as a desire for fulfilment. Maggie's fragile cousin Lucy may be likened to the rabbits fatally injured by Maggie's thoughtlessness.

In contrast to Maggie, Lucy enjoys making people happy. Like Dinah Morris, she feels nothing but pleasure in her cousin's attractiveness. She has no suspicions that Maggie and Stephen are attracted to each other, and Maggie's confession about her relationship with Philip fosters Lucy's illusion.

Earlier, Lucy was the pretty, well-behaved child,

while Maggie was the naughty "ugly duckling," and the childhood scene in which the impassioned Maggie sullies Lucy's purity with cow dung epitomizes Maggie's deep resentment of Tom's preference of Lucy over herself. Maggie's resentment has not faded following this incident; it goes underground. Maggie herself recognizes this possibility when, the day after she had walked alone with Stephen in the garden, Philip's presence recalls to her mind a conversation she once had with him in the Red Deeps (VI, 7:363).

She had said that she was determined to read no more books in which the "blond-haired women" carried away all the happiness. Philip had predicted that she would avenge the dark women in her own person, carrying all the love away from her cousin Lucy, who was sure to have some handsome young man of St Ogg's at her feet. Maggie had only to shine upon him, Philip had added, and her fair cousin would be quite quenched in her beams (V, 4:292). Maggie's height, beauty, and regal presence are notably stressed in her budding maturity.

This prediction of Philip's corresponds surprisingly to the egoistic will vividly described by Feuerbach:

Whatever is looked at fetters by secret forces of attraction, overpowers by the spell which it forces upon the eye, the criminal arrogance of that Will which seeks only to subject all things to itself.
(EC 116)

Feuerbach had observed that whatever made an impression on

the theoretic sense, on the reason, "withdraws itself from the dominion of the egoistic Will: it reacts, it presents resistance" (EC 116). But since Maggie several times puts aside her unpleasant reflections, the author conveys the egoistic element inherent in Maggie's feelings about Stephen's attractiveness. Baldly stated, if Maggie were to gain Stephen's love, she would have conquered her past inferiority and "superior" cousin. Additionally, marriage with Stephen offers Maggie the opportunity of escaping from her penniless, confined circumstances into a world where higher things are seemingly possible. A similar temptation will confront Gwendolen Harleth, providing a false picture of greater freedom of action. It is interesting to speculate whether George Eliot's own childhood "besetments" included this type of temptation. In any event, if Maggie is to attain true happiness, more important motivations must prevail.

Maggie's feeling for Stephen must not be seen only as selfish, for it is a spontaneous projection of the deep feeling of which she is capable. It is natural in so far as it seeks to fulfil something deep within her own nature. The same was true of Adam in loving Hetty, even though he was under an illusion. While this "feeling" aspect is Feuerbachian, taken as a whole her feeling does not meet Feuerbach's criteria for love. According to Maggie's own principles, it should never have arisen in

the first place. Much later, she asks herself:

When was that first hateful moment in which she had been conscious of a feeling that clashed with her truth, affection, and gratitude, and had not shaken it from her with horror, as if it had been a loathsome thing? (VI, 13:403)

Restraint is a question of honour, of duty born of affection to the cousin whom she loves. The unconscious evil element in her desire is evinced not in the strength of her passion but in the fact that she succumbs to temptation instead of quenching the spark firmly at the outset. She realizes finally that if she had been better and nobler the claims of others would have been so strongly present that her feeling for Stephen would never have grown in her (VI, 14:417).¹⁹ She sees her feeling--or, to be precise, her act of communicating feeling, however subtly, with Stephen--as "wrong" because the circumstances call for integrity. Maggie's feeling is not "wrong" per se, but too distorted in its expression to represent Feuerbachian love.

However, after her personal success at the bazaar, the elated Maggie, Hetty-like, admires her beauty in the mirror, and realizes that Stephen Guest could offer her a life filled with luxuries, adoration, and the possibilities of culture. But she is motivated by

things in her stronger than vanity--passion, and affection, and long deep memories of early discipline and effort, of early claims on her love and pity; and the stream of vanity was soon swept along and mingled imperceptibly with that wider current which was at its highest force to-day. . . . (VI, 9:383)

Paradoxically, considering the strength of her attachment to Stephen, it is because feeling is strong in her that Maggie does not choose Stephen. She has experienced a broader passion than this present enslavement. It is uncertain whether Maggie's passion for Stephen would lie among Bentham's "self-regarding" as opposed to "extra-regarding" motives, but it indubitably constitutes Feuerbachian egoism. To grasp Stephen's love would be to ignore totally her earlier training in self-sacrificial renunciation. While she realizes this, her resolution is not as yet perfected, for after deciding to leave St Ogg's to avoid the temptation of his presence, her "egoistic will" leads her to act in opposition to this rational decision.

Although one critic sees Maggie's three vitally necessary quests for love as ending in failure,²⁰ ultimately Maggie triumphs morally, making a non-egoistic choice. After drifting downstream, she battles fiercely with Stephen for what she feels is right. He argues convincingly that since she has committed herself, she should marry him; faithfulness and constancy without love would be a hollow mockery and bring pain to others. But

Maggie contends that they mean "something else besides doing what is easiest and pleasantest to ourselves" (VI, 14:417).

In Maggie's belated refusal, we can sense George Eliot's special interpretation of Bentham's ethic, in which she differentiates pleasure from happiness by aligning the former with egoism. Maggie's new ethic is different. In telling Stephen that her heart will not let her do it, she is exemplifying Feuerbach's "suffering of love," for Feuerbach saw the Christian Passion as expressing the nature of the heart, and the essence of Christianity as springing "out of the heart, out of the inward impulse to do good, to live and die for man, out of the divine instinct of benevolence which desires to make all happy, and excludes none" (EC 59-60). The fact that by her choice she brings sorrow to Stephen makes it hard for her to reject his love. Unfortunately, Maggie's new ethic cannot obviate all the consequences of her thoughtless river-drifting with Stephen: Maggie herself, Stephen, Lucy, and Philip all suffer deeply from it.

John Hagan argues that the ultimate importance of her affair with Stephen is not so much that it brings to a climax Maggie's efforts to live by Thomas à Kempis's philosophy as that it brings to a climax Tom's failure to understand his sister's needs and reciprocate her love (61-62); but this critic grossly underestimates the importance of Maggie's choice. He is, however,

underlining the key concept of division and reconciliation, and the relation of Maggie and Tom which is fundamental to the plot. In this novel, memory rooted in childhood love is a vital tool of Eliot's Feuerbachian ethic.

Memory does not operate when thought is suspended. When Maggie and Stephen walk arm-in-arm in the garden or drift down the river, they do not talk; feeling is primordial:

for what could words have been but an inlet to thought? and thought did not belong to that enchanted haze in which they were enveloped-- it belonged to the past and the future that lay outside the haze. (VI, 13:407)

Their timeless dreamworld is unreal, because it has severed any connection with their past or future lives.

Notably, it is the memory of past thoughts, breaking across "that stealing influence," that finally brings to Maggie a horror lest "the moment of fatal intoxication was close upon her" (VI, 13:408). In arguing with Stephen, Maggie's memories of the past bring back self-renouncing pity and affection, faithfulness, and resolve. Maggie instinctively knows--her conscience tells her--that she cannot create her happiness out of Lucy's misery:

It seems right to me sometimes that we should follow our strongest feeling;--but then, such feelings continually come across the ties that all our former life has made for us . . . there

are things we must renounce in life; some of us must resign love. Many things are difficult and dark to me; but I see one thing quite clearly-- that I must not, cannot, seek my own happiness by sacrificing others. (VI, 11:395)

Love is natural, she admits, but pity, faithfulness, and memory are natural, too. These would live in her still, and punish her: she would be "haunted" by the suffering she had caused; their love would be "poisoned."

After reading Stephen's pleading letter, all less immediate motives are at first forgotten; she feels the struggle has been in vain, yet prays that the "light" that has forsaken her will return. Eventually, memories that no passion can prevent from surfacing come to her rescue, giving her the strength to reiterate her refusal.

Even Feuerbach's philosophy of love as self-sacrifice is a product of memory, voiced in Maggie's repetition of the words "marked by the quiet hand in the little old book that she had long ago learned by heart" (emphasis added). Like à Kempis and Dinah Morris, she imitates the suffering god: "I have received the Cross, I have received it from Thy hand; I will bear it, and bear it till death, as Thou hast laid it upon me" (VII, 5:453).

The other words that rise to her lips show her grasping at a Feuerbachian detachment which she dimly perceives through her pain: "Forgive me, Stephen! It will pass away. You will come back to her" (VII, 5:453). Maggie's depth of character is shown in her decision, her

self-sacrifice. She has been able to renounce Stephen's love, as Lucy will virtually admit she herself could not do for Maggie. However, Lucy in her suffering manifests truly Feuerbachian qualities of altruism, compassion, and the power of forgiveness, as she forgives Maggie her treachery in loving Stephen. Lucy's compassion is attested by her secret visit to Maggie, a scene which will be more vividly recreated in Dorothea Brooke's visit to Rosamond Lydgate in Middlemarch.

Maggie has learned the true meaning of renunciation. Philip had been right and she had been wrong. Renunciation does not constitute that "quiet ecstasy" she had thought it did in her youth. She confronts it now as "that sad patient loving strength which holds the clue of life," and recognizes its painfulness, which is truly a crucifixion to her (VI, 14:413). She sums up her past behaviour as breach of faith and cruel selfishness. Having sundered the bonds that had given meaning to duty, she views herself as an outlawed soul with no guide but "the wayward choice of her own passion" (VI, 14:413). For Feuerbach, love must accord with duty: as Maggie asks, "If the past is not to bind us, where does duty lie? We should have no law but the inclination of the moment" (VI, 14:417). In her rescue of Tom, she will follow this Feuerbachian call of duty.

Maggie's conscience has been benumbed, but she has

avoided that last base act, "the tasting of joys from crushed hearts." Avoidance of pain is crucial when it concerns others. She herself is learning a secret of human tenderness and long suffering that the less erring can hardly know, and her prayer expresses this new vision: "Oh God, if my life is to be long, let me live to bless and comfort--" (VII, 5:453).

The reader, however, may feel a certain ambivalence in relation to Maggie's trials. For instance, in the emotional agonizing of Maggie's last temptation, in the form of Stephen's letter, there is no sense that Maggie is aware that Stephen might not be the perfect mate. (The nearest she comes is to ask herself: "Was that existence which tempted her the full existence she dreamed?") No doubts about Stephen himself enter her consciousness, despite his lapse. Maggie has not yet acquired that impartiality which best characterizes Feuerbachian understanding. Is F. R. Leavis, then, right in equating Maggie's immaturity with George Eliot's?²¹ Certainly the author's changed attitude to Stephen, depicting him first as a dandy, then suggesting greater depths, is curious. The narrator stresses that he is not a hypocrite, not someone who is capable of deliberate doubleness for selfish purposes. Indeed, the conduct that issues from a moral conflict often bears so close a resemblance to vice "that the distinction escapes all outward judgments,

founded on a mere comparison of actions" (VI, 9:381). Significantly, Bentham was concerned only with "material" consequences (pleasure or pain), those substantial enough to be formulated in legal terms and thus useful for the application to justice (IPML, VII, s. 3). Eliot knows how difficult it can be to judge right and wrong from outer appearances; conclusions based on consequences, which ignore motivation, can be misleading. She makes here a far from negligible distinction in relation to modes of moral judgment. A sympathetic verdict is not made by the inhabitants of St Ogg's, who judge from externals.

However, as Henry Alley has noted, George Eliot maintains control of the reader's powers of sympathy and detachment and we can assess Maggie's errors impartially: "our sympathy is not pushed so far that we make Maggie's mistake of leaping indiscriminately into another world" (198). Indeed, the narrator's remark that we who look on think lightly of such premature despair as Maggie's, "as if our vision of the future lightened the blind sufferer's present" (III, 5:205), indicates an impartiality that is not available to Maggie.

In fact, Maggie's lack of detachment is vital to the plot, involving the fundamental problem of moral choice. It is precisely Maggie's almost overpowering feeling for Stephen that makes the right choice difficult; had she at this point sensed even for one moment that marriage with

Stephen might not be desirable, then her dilemma of choosing between love and duty would lose all its force. Her partiality for Stephen renders her definitive choice of renunciation a remarkable achievement. For more subtle permutations of moral choice we must await Romola, Middlemarch, and Daniel Deronda. The emphasis on Maggie's "autonomous, self-justifying judgment," similar to that in Janet Dempster's choice, has been seen by William Myers as one that is necessarily entailed in George Eliot's Feuerbachian convictions. He rightly emphasizes that Maggie's stance is fiercely individualistic, based on her own sense of the good (187).

An epiphanic ending reminiscent of the biblical deluge creates a real tragedy, obviating the "falling off" that might well have followed from Maggie's good resolutions. Maggie rescues Tom, but then, meeting with an accident, the brother and sister are unified in an embrace of death; their tombstone inscription will read "In their death they were not divided." From the beginning, the flood, which sweeps into Maggie's life and encompasses her and finally obliterates almost all memory of her, was part of Eliot's conception. It becomes an authorial metaphor of the human tendency to dramatize our lives rather than set them in the total perspective of other lives and other times; that is, in a Feuerbachian concept of the species, rather than an individual egoistic

context.

The realistic climax is not the drowning but Tom's brief insight prior to their deaths, when he utters again the childish nickname "Magsie" and glimpses for the first time the depths of his sister's nature and of life. Their roles are reversed as Maggie achieves heroism of action, Tom of thought.²² In this moment of almost Joycean epiphany, Maggie experiences a "mysterious wondrous happiness that is one with pain," a happiness notably inconsistent with a utilitarian interpretation of pleasure. It is apposite to the Feuerbachian context that Maggie should be overpowered by Nature after her visionary realization of the meaning of life, in this ending which recalls the desire to "cease upon the midnight with no pain" expressed in Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale." As George Levine has asserted, in Maggie's attempt to save Tom, she has spontaneously acted out those Feuerbachian precepts that she had had difficulty enacting before. But, as he notes, Maggie's newly earned nobility is once again exercised in the direction of her family, and will never be tested in that "infinitely more complicated social world which posed her moral dilemma (120); he believes, too, that in her use of determinism and ideas derived from Feuerbach, Eliot tries to escape the implications of her own most deeply-felt insights (a view that fits with Leavis's criticism of Eliot's immaturity).

However, thanks to Maggie's memories of childhood, her love for Tom has withstood the ravages of time. Circumstances had necessitated a choice between her three loves. In accordance with a concept of inner duty, she has put Tom first, for this love constituted the primal bond. Maggie is overpowered by Nature after her visionary realization of the meaning of life; but, in her heroic attempt to save Tom, she has gone further in her glimpse of Feuerbachian truth than Latimer of "The Lifted Veil."

Curiously, F. R. Leavis finds the flooded river to have no symbolic or metaphorical value. He views it as the perfect accident that provides the opportunity for the heroic act, the act that will vindicate Maggie against a harshly misjudging world, bring her emotional fulfilment and a change of heart in others; to him, too, the significance of this tragedy is "a revealed immaturity" (45-46). However, in symbolizing not only impartial Nature but the forces of human nature and human emotion, the flood provides a finale appropriate to Maggie's impassioned existence. Indeed, on a symbolical level, the flood may represent many things. Destiny, circumstance, chance, emotion, the mystery of life, unity, reunion of past and present, time, and the flow of history, as well as Nature itself, all come to mind. Many critics have commented on the metaphorical nature of the flood episode, Reva Stump, for example, noting the parallel with Bunyan's

"river of life." She sees the Floss as "Life": the name itself suggests the thread of life which the Fates spin and cut off at death. The river is paradoxically both life-giving and life-taking; and Stump notes that, in Christian terms, this river is not merely death but life through death. (A greater complexity is added by the fact that Eliot does not share Maggie's orthodoxy.)²³ Still another critic, Elizabeth Weed, discussing the etymology of "Floss," refers to the fibre/current tension as a symbolism of containment and restraint, observing that this is present in Eliot's first description of the river.²⁴ U. C. Knoepfelmacher envisages the river as a metaphor for the sweeping progress of history²⁵ (which again points to Comtian leanings in this novel).

Mixed feelings have been expressed as to the effectiveness of the conclusion, but the general feeling is one of dissatisfaction. Maggie's death has been seen as a pointless sacrifice intended to be inspiriting, as an arbitrary resolution meant to resolve her agony of youthful renunciation and the contradictions and misunderstandings that had kept Maggie and Tom apart, and as demonstrating an unfinality, only a sense of what might have been.²⁶ Alternatively, it has been viewed as an inevitable consequence of the fact that Maggie refuses to conform to worldly expectations and to narrow her aspirations.²⁷ William Myers, however, considers the

flood can be defended because it is illogical: integration of the dénouement with events preceding it was not possible. The flood preserves the crucial distinction between psychological and historical events on which the novel's integrity depends; it takes Tom and Maggie outside history, "deliberately and explicitly" leaving issues painfully open "since it was, and could only be, in death that Tom and Maggie were not divided" (68-69).

A Feuerbachian interpretation of the flood symbolism has a curious ambivalence. For Feuerbach, water represents the pure force of Nature and the annulment of mental activity; Feuerbach contrasts this to mind, to consciousness (EC 276). Paradoxically, however, Feuerbach also regards water as symbolic of consciousness, and we may therefore see Maggie's immersion in water as a cleansing or baptism which is the first step toward a regeneration (beyond the novel) (EC 276).²⁸ He regards water as having not merely physical, but also moral and intellectual effects, and, among the virtues of water, cites purification of body and mind, mental clarity and discipline, a feeling of freedom and, most significantly in relation to this novel, the extinguishing of "the fire of appetite" (EC 275). The reconciliation of Tom and Maggie symbolizes wholeness; as one critic dramatically has phrased it, "Paradoxically, their grave is the full self, in embryo."²⁹

Logically, the flood symbolism includes the unification of those apparently irreconcilable philosophies, utilitarianism and the Feuerbachian doctrine, epitomized in human form. Since the sibling reunification has been effected solely through Maggie's qualities of love and forgiveness, surely it is not stretching a point too far to visualize Eliot's Feuerbachian philosophy metaphorically as reaching out to that other philosophy, overcoming what Eliot regarded as its inadequacies. (This would not work in reverse, since Tom could not have reached out to Maggie.)

A realistic note is provided by the image of Stephen, accompanied by Lucy, visiting the tomb years later. Though their names are not specifically mentioned, we may presume they marry and find happiness together. Maggie's sacrifice is not in vain, her abnegation not "a return to zero."³⁰ Maggie will surely live in Stephen's memory as Hetty did in Adam Bede's, as an ineradicable part of his life experience, making him what he is.

On an artistic level, the event of the flood certainly appears abrupt, sweeping, and unrealistic. Moreover, there is no causal connection between Maggie's flight and the destiny assigned her;³¹ this is not Nemesis, but Chance. While Eliot had stressed that Maggie's destiny is composed of character and circumstances (VI, 6:352-53), in fact the ending is

ambushed by the very sentimentality of the incident. The final paragraph prior to the Conclusion reads "brother and sister had gone down in an embrace never to be parted: living through again in one supreme moment the days when they had clasped their little hands in love, and roamed the daisied fields together." The reality of their childhood was less idyllic, although John Hagan has pointed out that it is appropriate that the last thing Maggie remembers before she drowns is the time when her need to be loved by her brother was most fully satisfied (58). Some retrospective sentimentality is perhaps allowable.

Even so, the symbolism of the deathly entwinement does not seem apposite. After all that has gone before, we can hardly believe that, had Maggie and Tom not been drowned, their differences would have been easily mended. If we agree that Tom's moment of insight is a turning point in their relations, then the flood hastens their eventual reconciliation. But, surely, the story has to end arbitrarily in tragedy precisely because realistically that permanent reconciliation would not have been forthcoming. Notably, Isaac Evans became reunited with his sister only many years later, after she had married J. W. Cross and shortly before her death. Through the flood symbolism, George Eliot denies the possibility of lasting estrangement and satisfies her emotional need for

reconciliation. To expand on a psychological interpretation mentioned earlier, she drowns the old Tom and Maggie (Isaac and Mary Ann), obliterating them in her consciousness, so that she can proceed to more constructive solutions. In this respect, The Mill on the Floss and "The Lifted Veil" provide related solutions for the novelist.

However, this fast-moving and gripping sequence does not convey Eliot's Feuerbachian doctrine perfectly, for in death Maggie seems to be living through another unrealizable dream, echoing the pattern of her quest in life, after she had just discovered the hard, painful road to happiness. Maggie's newly-earned nobility is exercised in the direction of her family and will never be tested in the infinitely more complicated social world; thus Maggie's "escape" is a lapse on Eliot's part.³² On the other hand, the cathartic event does enable Maggie to achieve a self-crucifixion that is Christlike in its significance. Feuerbach's recapitulation of Christ's words, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me," may have been in George Eliot's mind in Maggie's conditional phrase, "if my life is to be long." It creates a resemblance between her heroine and the Christ whom Feuerbach viewed as representing purely human sensibility (EC 60-61).³³ In the end, Maggie Tulliver becomes a latter-day saint, even if not quite so effective a Virgin

of St Ogg's as in the original legend. Thomas L. Jeffers has noted Eliot's demythologization of religious stories and sacraments: the eucharist occurs when Tom and Maggie share their plumcake; the Virgin mediates in Maggie's ending. Jeffers finds "no Feuerbachian system here": "The Mill on the Floss is a projection of Christianity back onto man" (342); but the religious symbolism embodies archetypal elements, and as such it is, however paradoxically, utilized by George Eliot for artistic purposes in a clear Feuerbachian parallel.

The demise of Maggie and Tom also conveys the tragic, antipastoral qualities of this novel. There is a Hardy-esque irony in the fact that they are struck by fragments from wooden machinery that has given way on the wharves. It seems feasible that these fragments belonged to the "most extensive wharf" in St Ogg's, owned by the Guest family. Even if Maggie has achieved unity within herself and with Tom, she is incapable of surviving the assault from without, the "detritus" of the industrial environment that comprises the modern world that St Ogg's is becoming.

Due to circumstance, Maggie does not fully achieve self-realization, but she works out her Feuerbachian ethic, the "clue of life," and in the short span left to her finally acts out her precepts. The meaning of her life involves renunciation and sympathy, the qualities she

has been learning all along. Passionate love, depicted as egoism, has to be subordinated to duty and affection, according to Feuerbach's precept that "true human love" impels the sacrifice of self to another, and that "Love only is the heart of man" (EC 53, 57). Maggie's wider love of humanity overcomes her personal, egoistic love and saves her from sinning, giving her through her pain a possibility of happiness she would not otherwise have. It also makes her realize that through her egoism she has lost the golden opportunity of denying herself for Philip. This should have been her chosen path, although in Feuerbachian terms it can only be seen as a compromise based on necessity.

Above all, Feuerbach's view of conscience as an internal necessity is exemplified and its priority proclaimed. Dr Kenn, the representative of orthodox religion, saw that Maggie's heart and conscience had given her a "true light," and that the principle on which she had acted was a safer guide than any "balancing of consequences."

In this comparison of Maggie's new ethic, essentially Eliot's own, to the predominant ethic of her day, the author emphasizes the shifting relation between passion and duty. There is no master key to fit all cases, and there comes a point at which renunciation loses its efficacy. Therefore, moral judgments need to be continually checked and "enlightened" by reference to

individual circumstances.

The "man of maxims" will guide those whose moral judgments are influenced by general rules, as in traditionalism and utilitarianism, of which the Dodsons and Tom are the exemplars.³⁴ But the "mysterious complexity" of life is not to be embraced by maxims and formulas which fetter growing insight and spontaneous fellow-feeling. Justice proceeds from vivid, intense human experience, like Maggie's conducive to sympathy, and not from a "ready-made, patent method," the narrator affirms, in a statement that explicitly contrasts utilitarianism with a Feuerbachian ethic.

Notes

¹On incompleteness, see Henry Alley, "The Complete and Incomplete Educations of The Mill on the Floss," Rocky Mountain Review of Language and Literature 33 (1979): 183-201, and George Levine, "Intelligence as Deception: The Mill on the Floss," in George Eliot: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. George Creeger (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970) 107-23.

²See John Hagan, "A Reinterpretation of The Mill on the Floss," PMLA 87 (1972): 53-63; Thomas L. Jeffers, "Myth and Morals in The Mill on the Floss," The Midwest Quarterly 20 (1979): 332-46; John P. Bushnell, "Maggie Tulliver's 'Stored-Up Force': A Re-reading of The Mill on the Floss," Studies in the Novel 16 (1984): 378-95. Hagan has noted that William R. Steinhoff and Jerome Thale exemplify one kind of reading (the tragedy of repression and regression, viewing both Maggie's renunciation of Stephen Guest and her attachment to her brother, Tom, as mistaken), and Bernard J. Paris, Reva Stump, and George Levine the other (Maggie's flaw as egoism).

³Bushnell 388.

⁴As D. C. Somervell has noted, the doctrine of laissez-faire, which after Bentham became a term of abuse in the vocabulary of socialism, may be regarded as a specialized and technical application of the Benthamite principle of individualism or laissez-faire. Whereas for the early Benthamites laissez-faire was a "war-cry," a call to strenuous political action, it came to be equivalent in meaning to the policy of letting well alone. See English Thought in the Nineteenth Century (London: Methuen, 1929) 42-55. See also David Malcolm, "The Mill on the Floss and the Contemporary Social Values: Tom Tulliver and Samuel Smiles," Cahiers victoriens & édouardiens: Studies in George Eliot, No. 26 (Oct. 1987): 37-45. Malcolm cites other possible causes.

⁵The Great Tradition (London: Chatto & Windus, 1948) 41-42.

⁶See Levine 110 (in this context, he draws attention to Eliot's insect and animal imagery), 112-13, and 109 (on freewill/determinism).

⁷Hagan 58.

⁸Locke's philosophy may be seen as a forerunner of utilitarianism; Kant's as containing a priori categories, including such notions as quality, quantity, and causation. Kant saw the external world as a product of sensations conditioned by the forms of consciousness and linked by thought according to its own laws.

⁹Eva Fuchs, "The Pattern's All Missed: Separation/Individuation in The Mill on the Floss," Studies in the Novel 19 (1987): 422-34 (432). Fuchs sees the novel as a "myth of loss" permeated by Eliot's memories of infancy and of childhood. This critic finds Bob the most vital character in the story, the one most associated with Maggie's aspirations toward separateness; he is a foil for Tom.

¹⁰See, e.g., Jeffers 332-34. In relation to childhood love, see also Hagan 58.

¹¹Pleasure derived from power is a component of Bentham's descriptive ethics; see IPML, V, s. 8. Another version of justice is demonstrated by Mr Tulliver; this derives solely from vengeful feeling. When his long-smothered hate erupts in his flogging of Wakem, he says he never wanted anything but what was fair. Bentham

would have found this illustrative of a non-utilitarian way of acting.

¹²On Mr Deane's and Tom's utilitarianism, see also U. C. Knoepfelmacher, Early Novels 195, and Myers 186. David Malcolm sees Tom as a type of the "Smilesean" hero, after Samuel Smiles's famous Self-Help (1859); op. cit. Feuerbach concentrates on man's inner nature, and the many juxtapositions between outer and inner that we find in George Eliot's fiction point up the philosophical difference. On the duality of Dodsons/Tullivers, see Thale 41-48.

¹³Levine 118.

¹⁴Jeffers 337.

¹⁵See Thakur Guru Prasad, Comtism in the Novels of George Eliot (Lucknow: Hindustani Book Depot, 1968), for a summary of Comte's idea of history as "the rational study of social dynamics," 10-12. In Comte's view the object of science was to discover the laws which govern the continuity of history. He also considered that the study of any individual or society apart from the whole life of the race was impossible, and brought out the import of the idea that history is linear in time. George Levine has also noted that Maggie's desperate need to be admired and loved, one of the causes of her fall, corresponds closely to Comte's sense of "what makes people behave as they do" (115-16).

¹⁶On the role of sound in George Eliot's novels, see Karen B. Mann, "George Eliot and Wordsworth: The Power of Sound and the Power of Mind," Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900 20 (1980): 675-94. A recent article by Alison Byerly, "'The Language of the Soul': George Eliot and Music," Nineteenth-Century Literature 44 (1989): 1-17, discusses Adam Bede, Middlemarch, and Daniel Deronda. Noting that music represents "a pure, authentic expression of self," "the 'true' portrayal of a person's inner self" (2), Byerly distinguishes between "inner musicality" and a "superficial facility in music," and makes the point that it is only as a metaphor that music acquires its unique power.

¹⁷Prasad designates shallow or stagnant water as indicative of egoism in Eliot's novels (241-42), which suggests that in Maggie's case the water imagery does not encompass this self-interested aspect of feeling. See

also Reva Stump, Movement and Vision in George Eliot's Novels (Seattle: U of Washington P, 1959) 110-11, as well as Levine on Feuerbachian imagery (121-22) (to be discussed in more detail later).

¹⁸See Byerly 16.

¹⁹In view of Eliot's earlier incomprehension of this aspect of Benthamite philosophy, one wonders whether this "feeling" motivation of Maggie's is in line with Bentham's contention that motives in themselves are neither good nor bad, but neutral: "A motive is substantially nothing more than pleasure or pain, operating in a certain manner If they are good or bad, it is because of their effects" (IPML X, para. 2, s. 9-12).

²⁰Hagan 58.

²¹He has questioned whether the "play of the higher faculties" intimately associated with a passion for Stephen Guest can be as purely concerned with the "higher" as Maggie and George Eliot believe (43); he is quoting Leslie Stephen. He considers that Eliot's attitude to Maggie includes self-idealization, even self-pity, and that Eliot's attitude to her own immaturity as represented by Maggie is immature. Nina Auerbach has also noted that, following Leavis, many critics have condemned Eliot for a loss of moral balance arising through over-identification with her heroine. However, the interpretations have varied. Auerbach's, for instance, is that in Maggie Tulliver Eliot reveals a woman whose primordially feminine hunger for love is at one with her instinct to kill and die; "The Power of Hunger: Demonism and Maggie Tulliver," Nineteenth-Century Fiction 30 (1975): 150-71 (171). See also Elizabeth Weed, "The Mill on the Floss or the Liquidation of Maggie Tulliver," Genre 11 (1978): 427-444 (442).

²²Alley 197.

²³See Stump 127-28.

²⁴Weed 432-33.

²⁵Early Novels 180.

²⁶See Knoepfmacher 182, Jeffers 344-45, and Alley 196-97.

²⁷Bushnell 392.

²⁸See Levine 121-22.

²⁹Alley 197.

³⁰Cf. Weed 441 (she is stressing the Victorian woman's reaction). Weed sees the Feuerbachian ethic, which makes positive moral integration into the community dependent on a movement away from egoism toward selflessness, as placing excessive demands on the woman (441). She states that a deconstructive reading of the novel could see the "masses" and "huge fragments" that cause the death of the sister and brother as the dismantled pieces of the novel itself (442). However, she also notes that the most satisfactory reading is probably one that understands the ending not as a neat, closed synthesis, but rather as part of a permanent dialectic in which the author places some small hope in the possibility of the ethical advancement of society (436).

³¹Knoepfmacher 220.

³²Levine 120.

³³Reva Stump (125) has drawn attention to the time in Maggie's life, immediately prior to the flood, when she spends three rainy days in her lonely room, wrestling for patience. She notes the resemblance between this dark period in her life and Adam's vigil in a dark, viewless upper room: "Adam takes communion and undergoes the baptism of suffering. . . ." In both cases, she argues, the overtones of Christian symbolism merge with vision imagery: "Maggie has undergone temptation; she has been judged and surely in a sense crucified by 'the world's wife' and by her own kin. Now 'she must begin a new life. . . .' It is by accepting this new life and renouncing the old that she undergoes spiritual rebirth." Her interpretation here is similar to that of U. C. Knoepfmacher.

³⁴John Hagan has seen Tom as the "man of maxims" par excellence (61). It should be pointed out that Bentham himself would have considered that his theory made just allowance for circumstances, as elaborated in his Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation. Of course, the calculation of pleasure over pain might not be easy to make in practice. George Eliot's articles indicate that she associated utilitarianism with rules.

CHAPTER 6

SILAS MARNER: A MYTH OF FEUERBACHIAN LOVE

If there is an angel who records the sorrows of men as well as their sins, he knows how many and deep are the sorrows that spring from false ideas for which no man is culpable. (I:18)

In Silas Marner, after depicting the sorrows that spring from false ideas about religion, George Eliot creates a myth of Feuerbachian love, the story of a relationship between an innocent foundling and a poor weaver grown prematurely old through suffering. Eppie is born of a secret marriage between Squire Cass's elder son, Godfrey, and a barmaid--Molly Farren--who is addicted to opium. Godfrey's sweetheart, Nancy Lammeter, knows nothing of this marriage, which soon breaks up, and Godfrey chooses not to acknowledge that Eppie is his daughter. Through adopting her, Silas Marner's humanity is restored.

The anti-utilitarian, anti-evangelical and pro-Feuerbachian sentiments of Eliot's earlier articles are expressed through her description of several different mythologies or metasystems, in a story that is at once archetypal yet realistic.¹ Whereas Godfrey's rather desperate calculations about his future--he has got

himself into a fix--epitomize a utilitarian code, the Dissenters at Lantern Yard--the sect to which Silas originally belongs--cling to a supernatural theology, and Dolly Winthrop, who befriends Silas and helps him to raise Eppie, abides by a humanized Christian ethic. Eliot depicts the supernatural interpretation, or the point of view applied by the particular religion, sect, or character, then applies a natural interpretation, generally letting the facts speak for themselves.²

A Feuerbachian interpretation is also conveyed by magical and fairytale elements in Silas's story--"Silas Marner is unthinkable without taking into account George Eliot's translation of Das Wesen des Christenthums and her knowledge of fairy tales, legends, and superstitions," declares Joseph Wiesenfarth³--and by a dual structure. The separate stories of Godfrey and Silas interlock in the stealing of Silas's gold by Godfrey's brother, Dunstan, in Godfrey's denial of his child at the New Year's celebration, and in the later attempt by Godfrey and Nancy Cass to adopt Eppie.⁴ Silas Marner moves from dependence to independence, from a state of alienation to one of integration, from loss of faith to trust and hope in the future and a sense of purpose, from passivity to activity, from loneliness to love and community; from misery to happiness. In contrast, Godfrey's happiness will be muted because he has to accept the consequences of his own

negligence and deceit.

The religion of the Lantern Yard Brethren typifies the dogmatism, superstitious belief in the miraculous, and illogicality that Feuerbach derided, exhorting the reader to exchange his "mystical, perverted" theology for "real anthropology" (EC 107). Though less vehement, Eliot illustrates the need for Silas to gain such self-awareness. Silas's friend, William Dane, has total confidence in his own divine election, but Dane's actions and their consequences show the dangers inherent in such a belief. Becoming jealous of Marner's engagement to a young serving-woman, Dane calls his cataleptic fits satanic, though they had previously been looked upon by the brethren as a symbol of divine favour, then frames him in a theft, whereupon Silas is denounced by the Lantern Yard community after a drawing of lots. Silas loses his faith, but does not question the validity of such a method of appeal to divine judgment. His senses and thought alike are benumbed.

He moves to Raveloe (where he will rave alone before unravelling the tangled skein of his own existence, and find some meaning). Here, the weaver is a stranger in a lush village markedly different from the more northerly, industrial environment he has hailed from: another version of the Loamshire versus Stonyshire of Adam Bede. The villagers are insular, distrust "foreigners," and confront

their more relaxed existence not with a stern dissenting faith, but with reliance on the superstitions and traditions handed down by their forebears.

Silas has moved from a religion of arbitrary law to a Christian community. Significantly, Feuerbach saw the religion of a political community to contain the consciousness of law as the absolute divine power, whereas in Christianity the highest idea (the god of unpolitical, unworldly feeling) is love. Thus, Eliot's description of Silas's journey parallels Feuerbach's explanation of the historical process wherein the egoism of Judaism was spiritualized by Christianity into subjectivity (EC 121). Of course, he saw the Christian love to be limited by belief in Christ; the villagers of Raveloe still display superstition. However, Silas's move constitutes progress, for these villagers live in a close contact with nature; according to Feuerbach, such a contact with a reality outside themselves would lessen their subjectivity (EC 136).

Still, Raveloe is a primitive community, one of cultural poverty. In Feuerbach's view, an awareness of difference was the essential ground of thought, of reason. (Thus, he recognized the cosmogonic principle in God to be nothing other than the act of thought, in its simplest form, made objective.) While the villagers' fear of Silas therefore to some degree expresses thought, it clearly

does not indicate a preponderance of the reasoning faculty. For Feuerbach, acumen, wit, imagination, and feeling as distinct from sensation were powers of humanity, rather than of man as an individual; that is, products of culture. When the villagers meet among themselves, as in the pub, these qualities are kindled; but they are unable to express themselves clearly.

Feuerbach had interpreted the mystery of the Logos, the Word of God, in human terms as the power of the word, of language, as the root of culture. Saying that the word was divine, he explained that it was "the imaged, revealed, radiating, lustrous, enlightening thought" (EC 78). Words, as he saw it, were no less rich than music, for they have the power to redeem, to reconcile, to bless, and to make free. To words belongs the power of the imagination as well as the awakening of reason (EC 77, 83). Indeed, echoing Feuerbach's interest in the development of culture as an expression of humanity, Silas's story has been seen as one concerned not only with ways in which he is won back to fellowship and to a belief in the power of speech, but, in the very fact that it is being told, as an escape from the limitations of the "utterance" in such provincial stories.⁵ Notably, however, in Silas Marner, feeling, as love and sympathy, is shown to rise above limited forms of expression.

David R. Carroll links the attempt by individuals to find meaning in a mysterious but ordered universe to their recognition that the vital factor in any theology is love. Eliot, he says, demonstrates "that valid myths of order are a direct expression of love, while invalid myths of chance [arbitrary law] result from an absence of love"; she is suggesting that when the individual is not strengthened by love, then the combination of life's elements appears fortuitous, but with love appears "a pattern, a meaning, which is a mythical, but faithful expression" of one's own experience: "Love, in each case, determines the meaning of life. And here, as love turns into God, we have the ultimate reversal of the oracles of religion" (198-99). At the end of the story, we see George Eliot reestablishing the value of religion, but, as Carroll stresses, "it is a religion which has been carefully revalued and established as 'an exaltation of the human'" (184).

Eliot's rejection of her own religious past and other biographical materials relating to money, maternity, and her state of mind contribute to the themes of Silas Marner.⁶ Eliot was not surprised that Blackwood at first found her story sombre. A tone of despondency overshadows her response that it was intended to relate the remedial influence of pure, natural relations: ". . . I should not have believed that any one would have been interested in

it but myself (since William Wordsworth is dead) if Mr. Lewes had not been strongly arrested by it" (GEL III, 382). Yet she also notes the humorous aspect, and points out that the Nemesis is a very mild one. It had "come to her" as a legendary tale, but she had become inclined to a more realistic treatment.

Silas's inward life has been "a history and a metamorphosis, as that of every fervid nature must be when it has fled, or been condemned to solitude" (I:10). Previously, he was under the illusion that his dissenting faith supplied his needs. As Feuerbach realized, even a misguided faith can be a source of happiness. Although Silas was not then, in Feuerbachian terms, independent, since he was projecting his own nature into an arbitrary God, at least he had a belief. Now, he loses it, and this goes along with loss of faith in himself and his fellow-men. As a weaver, Silas is tied to the problems of industrialization,⁷ and Feuerbach would have seen Silas as alienated from himself in the very act of subscribing to his dissenting religion. From Feuerbach's point of view, there is now, therefore, a possibility of improvement, although Silas's prospects look bleak.

After fifteen years in Raveloe, he remains more than ever cut off from the society in which he lives. He had hoped that his special knowledge of herbs might help to establish some contact; however, he is too honest to

endorse their credulity in believing in his "miraculous" cures. The doubts which Silas had had at Lantern Yard about the lawfulness of applying his knowledge about herbs is suggestive of how closely George Eliot was working from her acknowledged mentor, Feuerbach. The relationship between medicine, prayer, and faith is discussed in one of the appendices to The Essence of Christianity, in which Feuerbach points out how religious faith transforms the natural into the miraculous, and, in doing so, eliminates it: "for faith there exists no limit, no law, no necessity, no Nature; there exists only the will of God, against which all things and powers are nothing" (EC 305-306).⁸

Silas's work somehow results in enough profit, we are told, to allow the hoarding of gold. This gives him a sense of rewarded effort "deep enough for the seeds of desire" (2:24), filling a spiritual gap and becoming an absorbing passion and eventually a habit. His life is narrowing and "hardening" (a word which in Eliot implies a diminishing of sympathy or love) as he carries on an automatic activity without contemplating any purpose to which his gold might be put, a contrast to the purposeful existence advocated by Feuerbach. A similar belittling process, the narrator suggests, has been undergone by wiser men when they have been cut off from faith and love: they immerse themselves in "some erudite research, some

ingenious project, or some well-knit theory" (2:28-29). Yet his solitary work recompensed in gold does provide a limited purpose to his existence and brings joy, which "is the best of wine"; as the narrator specifies, Silas's guineas are "a golden wine of that sort" (V, 63).

His love of money has no relation to utility, as suggested by his earlier tender action of sticking together the broken pieces of his old brown waterjug to keep as a memento. As with his gold, his jug was a substitute for human companionship. He valued his jug especially, because it provided him with fresh, clear water from the well. Indeed, his daily ritual of fetching water from the well was suggestive of Feuerbach's demythologizing of the sacraments (the essential meaning of baptism lay in the water itself). The act indicated that Silas retained an essential humanity in his appreciation of the bounty provided by nature; for Feuerbach, water was an element of natural equality and freedom, "the mirror of the golden age" (EC 276). In attributing to objects a life of their own, Silas could be seen as exemplifying a primitive level of religion described by Comte in terms of fetishism, even though in a notebook Eliot questioned Comte's interpretation of the relation between fetishism and theologism.⁹ In any event, Silas is utterly crushed by the theft of his gold:

Was it a thief who had taken the bags? or was
 it a cruel power that no hands could reach, which
 had delighted in making him a second time desolate?
 He shrank from this vaguer dread. . . . (5:65)

He has reached the nadir of his suffering, but it is a turning point. Silas had become a miser living alone with his gold, enjoying his isolation until the theft of his treasure. "Formerly," the narrator observes, "his heart had been as a locked casket with its treasure inside; but now the casket was empty, and the lock was broken" (10:124). The image conjures up the parable of the pearl of great price (Matt. 13:45-46) and such biblical precepts as "Lay not up for yourself treasures upon earth. . . . But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven . . ." (Matt. 6:19-20). The Feuerbachian parallel is "the treasure hid in man" (EC xlii).

In Silas, Feuerbach's treasure of man's heart had been replaced by a dead treasure, the gold, which could not lead to those human contacts necessary to a sane existence. But with the casket of his heart now empty through the theft of his gold, the despairing weaver has a sense that if any help comes to him it must be from without. Whereas before he felt only impatience and resentment of the villagers' intrusion, now there is a slight stirring of expectation at the sight of his fellow-men.

In fact, the theft has pushed Silas into activity,

since he had to report it. In his encounter with the villagers in the social milieu of the local pub, a change is registered in his mind. Sitting in the warmth of a hearth not his own, and feeling the presence of faces and voices which are his "nearest promise" of a help, he illustrates Feuerbach's point that man needs other men to gain a sense of his own identity. And after Mr Macey tells him not to accuse the innocent, Silas's memory of his own past trauma moves him to apologize to Jem Rodney for having accused him of stealing his gold.

Now that his neighbours have lost their superstitious fear of him--in losing his gold, he has been deserted by the devil--they look on him as a "poor mused creatur" (10:118), speak to him in the village, and even call at his cottage. While Silas's emotions are frozen and he feels distanced from these attempts at kindness, he recognizes the goodness that is disguised by their blunt and uncomplimentary language.

The parallel plots provide moral overtones to the story. Godfrey's secret history is not merely a memory but the source of present problems, since he loves the upright Nancy Lammeter. His suffering, unlike that of Silas, is of his own making, the result of an immoral choice and subsequent immoral behaviour; the narrator finds Silas's more primitive pain preferable to that which

is associated with a higher intellect and a higher culture (3:44). Blackmailed by his brother, Dunstan, Godfrey now owes money to his father, having handed Dunstan the rent money from a tenant. His irascible father will disinherit him if he learns the truth, so Godfrey desperately needs to replace the money.

Godfrey therefore calculates what might again be called the balance of pleasure over pain. If he tells the truth, he will lose his inheritance and risk losing Nancy's love. If he maintains his secrecy, he can hope for some deliverance from the consequences of his actions. As befits his name, Cass (Latin casus, Chance), he has introduced the element of chance; his calculation becomes a gamble. Philosophically, this course of action is equivalent to the Dissenters' lot-drawing at Lantern Yard, calling to mind Feuerbach's exhortation about religion as a lottery:

Religion denies, repudiates chance, making
everything dependent on God . . . but this
denial is only apparent; it merely gives
chance the name of divine sovereignty . . .
out of divine caprice, as it were, determines
or predestines some to evil and misery, others
to happiness. . . . (EC 188)¹⁰

Gambling brings embitterment. Godfrey is described rather overdramatically as being visited by "cruel wishes, that seemed to enter, and depart, and enter again, like demons who had found in him a ready-garnished home" (3:47).

Molly's death is the only solution to his problems.

Chance intervenes in the form of bad luck. First, his brother fails to raise money on Godfrey's horse, and then the horse is found dead, with Dunstan missing. Godfrey does not yet know that Dunstan has stolen Silas's gold. But he does know that he must confess to his father his inability to repay the rent. Initially, he decides to tell the Squire the whole story when his brother returns; he knows Dunstan will spitefully divulge the facts. He might win Dunstan's silence by telling his father that he himself has spent the money, yet he cannot stoop to this. While he would rather bear the painful consequences than tell a deliberate lie, and means to confess, when he awakes after midnight he fears the consequences of confession. Thus, again his decision rests on a calculation of the balance of pleasure:

Favourable Chance is the god of all men who follow their own devices instead of obeying a law they believe in. Let even a polished man of these days get into a position he is ashamed to avow, and his mind will be bent on all the possible issues that may deliver him from the calculable results of that position. . . . Let him betray a friend's confidence and he will adore that same cunning complexity called Chance, which gives him the hope that his friends will never know . . . The evil principle deprecated in that religion, is the orderly sequence by which the seed brings forth a crop after its own kind. (9:112-13)

He lies by omission when he tells his father "the whole story" without mentioning Molly; and when his father comes

close to guessing what happened to the money, he wards off disclosure, muttering something unintelligible about "young men's fooleries."

Events have turned out "so much better" than expected (Molly has died) that this seems a proof that his conduct has been less foolish and blameworthy than it might otherwise have appeared. What, he reasons, would be the point now of confessing to Nancy--throwing away his happiness, and hers? (13:183). But in the long term, his rationalization is detrimental to his happiness and that of Nancy, as his wife.

The necessary principle of truth or veracity is underlined by Eliot's manipulation of Nemesis in the discovery of Dunstan's body, with the gold. Godfrey realizes that, since things tend to come to light eventually, honesty is the best policy. His confession to Nancy that Eppie is his daughter will improve his relationship with Nancy; but, in his desire to adopt Eppie, it will be too late to amend all the consequences of his former secrecy, for in the meantime Eppie has grown to love Silas as her father. Godfrey's later decision to put the facts about Eppie's birth in his will, taking steps to prevent any injury to his daughter, will reflect his new recognition of the supreme importance of honesty. Hitherto, the difficulties of subscribing to a utilitarian code of behaviour, as opposed to following such basic

moral principles as love and truth, are explicit in the story of this "hero" who has Arthur Donnithorne's good intentions and moral weakness.

Godfrey's calculations are limited also in the sense that they are deficient in knowledge of feeling. He has not been honest with Nancy, underestimating both her sympathy and her principles in the matter of adopting his child, and it does not occur to him that Silas may not want to part with Eppie. Because Silas is a working man, Godfrey's imagination does not invest him with deep feelings; conventional upper class attitudes have restrained Godfrey's natural sympathy for humanity. (In Eliot's sensitive portrayal of this fact, we can see the Feuerbachian impulse that, in Marx, was later directed toward the abolition of the class structure of society.) The narrator points out that only want of adequate knowledge could have made it possible for Godfrey deliberately to entertain an unfeeling project. In this, we can detect a humanization of Feuerbach's "love versus faith": Godfrey's faith that things will turn out right for him is based on his own arrogant desires, rather than the universal love of the species which is present in Silas's feelings: "faith is essentially a spirit of partisanship . . . it is preoccupied only with itself" (EC 255). The analogy is applicable, more obviously, to Nancy, too. Her love of Godfrey had not altered her

earlier antagonistic reaction to adoption. Her rigid principles were stronger than her love. There is absent here that Feuerbachian compromise between love and reason that precludes a decision incompatible with love.

The theme of truth, or right reason, broached ironically in Godfrey's story, is introduced also in the talk in the public house of knowledge and "right." Mr Macey's desire to discover the truth about the irregular marriage ceremony of Nancy's parents demonstrates a creditable, and Feuerbachian, desire to pierce the reality that lies behind words (a fundamental aspect of Feuerbach's demystifying of the Logos).¹¹ Mr Macey assumes something of the role of a Jungian "wise old man" in the story; despite his wisdom, he retains more than a slight aura of the local superstition, for he believes in ghosts and sees the devil as the agent behind the theft of Marner's gold.

In this story, rationality emerges as closely bound up with truth (veracity), and opposed to the kind of irrationality illustrated both by Godfrey and by the majority of the villagers. Even in Nancy Lammeter, whose name, as noted, suggests her straightforward nature, irrationality and superstition are shown to be detrimental to happiness, though they contribute to that of Silas. Now married to Godfrey, Nancy has had a child who died, and has since remained childless; yet she feels that

adoption would defy Providence and be unlucky. Her "unwavering principles" are firm "not because of their basis, but because she held them with a tenacity inseparable from her mental action" (17:233-34). Her judgments have rooted themselves in her mind and grown there "as quietly as grass"; the narrator finds Nancy's way of thinking comparable to that inhering in a religious belief (17:235-36). Virtue in Nancy is vitiated by the adverse effects of superstitious beliefs: understanding is needed in addition to love and morality.

A primary attribute assigned to God by man is moral perfection, and Feuerbach had traced this to man's own need to act according to his conscience (EC 46). The conception of duty in Silas Marner is Feuerbachian in that it is based on both conscience and an unselfish love for a worthy object. Those characters who do not follow the path of duty will suffer the consequences. On the surface, all had appeared to be well with Godfrey Cass after Molly's death; "undivided in his aims," he sees himself as "a reformed man, delivered from temptation" (15:203). Initially, he is not in the least uneasy about denying his daughter her birthright, knowing she will be well looked after by Silas, and very likely happier than if she were brought up in luxury.

However, following the path of duty is ultimately conducive to happiness--when duty is conceived clearly and rationally. With the years, Godfrey's feelings change:

That famous ring that pricked its owner when he forgot duty and followed desire--I wonder if it pricked very hard when he set out on the chase, or whether it pricked but lightly then, and only pierced to the quick when the chase had long been ended, and hope, folding her wings, looked backward and became regret? (15:202-203)

At first, he had pictured himself as relatively happy, though he was living a lie. Now, it appears he was "never thoroughly easy about Eppie" (17:239). His past is catching up with him, if only through this effect on him of the internal nemesis of his own conscience. His wife has brought love and order into his life, but he feels dissatisfied and attributes this to his lack of a family; the source of his discontent is himself. At the time of Molly's death, busy with his calculations, he had ignored his conscience because listening to it would have painful consequences. Yet instinctively he had desired to do what was right:

Deeper down, and half-smothered by passionate desire and dread, there was the sense that he ought not to be waiting on these alternatives; that he ought to accept the consequences of his deeds, own the miserable wife, and fulfil the claims of the helpless child. But he had not moral courage enough to contemplate that active renunciation of Nancy as possible for him: he had only conscience and heart enough to make him for ever uneasy under the weakness that forbade the renunciation. And at this moment his mind leaped away from all restraint toward the sudden prospect of deliverance from his long bondage. (13:179)

When finally he confesses to Nancy, and discovers that in these new circumstances she wants to adopt his

daughter, it is too late. Eppie is approaching maturity; her years with Silas have irrevocably left their mark on her. In fact, speaking to Silas, Godfrey's words "I want to do my duty" have a decidedly weak ring. His former interpretation of his duty had been in terms of seeing that his daughter was well provided for, not that her parentage be acknowledged.

By contrast, Eppie's sense of duty is inextricably linked with love of her adoptive father and knowledge that his happiness depends on her. This love is stronger than her desire for worldly goods; although her imagination conjures up the implications of fatherhood by Godfrey Cass, she never for a moment contemplates deserting Silas Marner.

Nancy's own feelings about duty form part of her rigid code. This unquestioningly (and ironically, in light of her initial refusal to adopt Eppie) states that a natural father has a prior claim over an adoptive father. Unable to appreciate that happiness can be born of poverty, she takes it for granted that Eppie will welcome the privileges of respectability.¹² Hence, when Eppie refuses to be adopted, Nancy tells her outright that there's a duty she owes to her lawful father. However, Eppie cannot feel that she has any father but Silas; false appeals to duty are not admitted because duty is internalized in her feelings of love and compassion.

This episode contrasts a Feuerbachian sense of duty with other kinds, and recalls J. S. Mill's first criticism of Bentham in his "Remarks on Bentham's Philosophy" (1833). There, Mill berated Bentham for grossly ignoring conscience, or the feeling of duty. Mill's characterization is in line with Eliot's; he pointed out that persons with weak sympathies often have a strong feeling of justice, and that others in whom benevolence is strong have scarcely any consciousness of moral obligation (CW 10:13). Nancy and (initially) Adam Bede are of the former type, while Arthur Donnithorne and Godfrey incline to the latter. In his essay, Mill stated:

I regard any considerable increase of human happiness, through mere changes in outward circumstances, unaccompanied by changes in the state of the desires, as hopeless. . . . The balance can be turned in favour of virtuous exertion, only by the interest of feeling or by that of conscience--those "social interests," the necessary subordination of which to "self-regarding" is so lightly assumed. (CW 10:15)

The conflict over the adoption of Eppie cannot result in universal harmony: what is one party's happiness will to some degree be another's sorrow.

In Daniel Cottom's view, a fully realistic treatment of a weaver during the first half of the nineteenth century would not have depicted him as becoming rich through his work.¹³ However, Silas's work is in demand and he has few wants besides his gold. In any event,

realism is not the most important feature in relation to Silas's history. Indeed, most of the Feuerbachian insights of the story are given in a semi-mythical rendering of human love and sympathy, the aspect that has made the story generally popular. There is a hint of Eliot's demythological stance when the redemptive human child replaces the angelic figure of former times:

In old days there were angels who came and took men by the hand and led them away from the city of destruction. We see no white-winged angels now. But yet men are led away from threatening destruction: a hand is put into theirs, which leads them forth gently towards a calm and bright land, so that they look no more backward; and the hand may be a little child's.
(14:201; emphasis added)

The golden-haired child who replaces the gold in Silas Marner's heart thaws his numbed faculties:

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--that the gold had turned into the child.
(19:188)

It is symbolically apposite that he should experience a "chasm in his consciousness," literally, a cataleptic fit, at the time of this momentous change in his life, when he mistakes the child for his gold. Memories stir tenderness in him, together with reviving impressions of awe at the presentiment of some Power presiding over his life (12:170-71). To the poor weaver, Eppie's coming is

miraculous: "culture had not defined any channels for his sense of mystery, and so it spread itself over the proper pathway of inquiry and knowledge" (I:11).¹⁴ At the New Year's Eve celebration--a symbol of rebirth--the speech in which he decides to keep Eppie seems a "revelation" to him (13:177).

The title page carries a motto from Wordsworth's melancholy pastoral poem "Michael": "A child, more than all other gifts/That earth can offer to declining man,/Brings hope with it, and forward-looking thoughts." Ignoring the sadder aspect of his tale, Eliot adapts Wordsworth for her purpose of stressing the influence of the child in conferring happiness. In her story, the Wordsworthian themes of natural relations, of love, and of the intrinsic equality of man echo Feuerbach's themes of love and nature. For Feuerbach, nature is the reality which will make harmony possible. Confidence in nature, and knowledge that in it resides the powers of transformation, are the basis of the process of change. Feuerbach's principles of nature are coordination and coexistence, as opposed to the categories of succession and subordination of the critical philosophies of history (for instance, Hegel). For Feuerbach, nature relates to the connection of all individuals in a reciprocal interaction, where all is relative, all are at the same time cause and effect.¹⁵ In Silas Marner there is a

return to nature in accordance with these principles.

The Wordsworthian framework of spontaneous, natural, remedial relations is reiterated in a later allusion to a Lucy poem which helps to spiritualize and universalize the weaver's experience, as an individual who has undergone a transfiguration

as if a new fineness of ear for all spiritual voices
had sent wonder-working vibrations through the heavy
mortal frame--as if "beauty born of murmuring
sound" had passed into the face of the listener.
(19:247)

Silas's poor outward existence becomes a foil to his intense inward life. Eppie, too, is a natural being who communicates with nature, and the sympathy between her and Silas creates Wordsworth's "Grace that shall mould the Maiden's form" as she grows up. Silas's love will have a visible, spiritual effect on Eppie:

Perfect love has a breath of poetry which can
exact the relations of the least-instructed human
beings; and this breath of poetry had surrounded
Eppie from the time when she had followed the
bright gleam that beckoned her to Silas's hearth;
so that it is not surprising if, in other things
besides her delicate prettiness, she was not
quite a common village maiden, but had a touch
of refinement and fervour which came from
no other teaching than that of tenderly-nurtured
unvitiated feeling. (16:219)

As in "Michael," the protagonists are humble folk, who speak in dialect and whose wealth lies not in outward possessions but in an intimate relation with family and

nature.

The fairytale or mythical quality of the tale owes much to the biblical resonance in the plot concerning Eppie, if we consider Christianity as myth. In Joseph Wiesenfarth's view, Eppie's arrival during Silas's fifteenth Christmas at Raveloe is a "Christ event," an Incarnation of religion as feeling, as redemptive love. In the story's transition from darkness to brightness, he notes as meaningful the fact that in Lantern Yard, God is "Power," in Raveloe, Dolly's "Them," and that the new garden at the end of the tale is presided over by an "Unseen Love," to use the narrator's term. In his view, the pattern in Silas Marner is to return mystery to the human level where it originated.¹⁶ These different synonyms for God may be seen to express a Feuerbachian transition from belief in an arbitrary God to a rewarding belief in nature itself. The plot especially accords with Christ's teaching, specifically his injunction "Suffer the little children to come unto me . . . for of such is the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:14; Luke 18:16), as well as his precept "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:4). Just as Nancy Lammeter is regarded by Godfrey Cass as an "angel," Eppie is more than once referred to as an "angil" by Dolly Winthrop. Nonetheless, all the events in Silas's life can be interpreted

realistically, even though Silas himself does not always do so.

Although Blackwood felt the need of a character with whom he could truly identify, and had hoped that Eliot would introduce a clergyman to help Dolly Winthrop, the Feuerbachian "return to nature" is perfectly characterized by Dolly's attitude. She is a major influence on Silas, and the spokesperson for the Raveloe theology. Significantly, she becomes Eppie's godmother, though the precepts of Christianity are interpreted very broadly by her. Humanity, rather than superstition, underlies Dolly's religion, although she cherishes traditional lore.

Initially, she brings to Silas sympathy and compassion. Her vague remark "there's breaking o' limbs" refers probably to crucifixion in general, suggesting a special awareness of Feuerbach's "suffering god." (Hennell's Inquiry had referred to the breaking of limbs which was customarily carried out subsequent to crucifixion, although it was not done to Jesus.) The remark expresses Dolly's recognition of the existence of human suffering and evil in the world, and of "suffering humanity's need for love in a mysterious universe."¹⁷

One of Dolly's first kind actions is to offer Silas "lard cakes" (lardy cakes) with the letters I.H.S. impressed on them, passing on to him a remembrance of a Saviour who since early times had been responsible for

opening up men's hearts.¹⁸ These little pale, flat, hard, biscuitlike cakes, with some resemblance to the sacramental wafer, confer on Silas a spiritual comfort in Dolly's wish that they "bring good" to him. In relation to the Sacraments, which he called "the mystery of faith" (EC 242), Feuerbach had noted that he who brings nothing to the Sacrament, which exists in the imagination, takes nothing away. Similarly, Silas cannot respond properly to the spiritual comfort residing in the kind thought that led to Dolly's offering them to him:

The fountains of human love and of faith in a divine love had not yet been unlocked, and his soul was still the shrunken rivulet, with only this difference, that its little groove of sand was blocked up, and it wandered confusedly against dark obstruction. (10:132)

And yet Dolly's gesture and Silas's offering of the food to her son, Aaron, recalls the Feuerbachian implication in Adam Bede where Adam drinks wine and eats bread. It is no coincidence that Dolly exhorts Silas to go to church, telling him that if he took the sacrament and heard the anthem he would feel better. Moreover, Aaron sings a carol for Silas's benefit, an incident which Eliot specifically told Blackwood she desired to retain (GEL III, 389).

Thus, through Dolly, as well as Eppie, Silas reestablishes contact with society and regains his trust in humanity. Although she is limited in her understanding

of traditional religion, Dolly can nonetheless sense the essential meaning of Christianity, that which does not call for dogmatic refinements. Without knowing the meaning of the letters I.H.S., her trust in the established Church causes her to realize that they are good letters, and she has an instinctive knowledge of what is right, directing Marner to "do the right thing" and "do what's right by the orphin child" (14:189, 191). And what is right for Eppie is participation in the secular and traditional customs of the community of which she forms a part. Although her notion of the deity is vague, Dolly is a firm repository of traditional Christian lore.

A vital aspect of Feuerbachian faith is the need for hope and trust in the future, and Dolly Winthrop provides the supreme example. Her religion has to do with faith in the future, in herself, and in other people. While she finds the world confusing, she senses an order in the universe, and she brings the fruits of her intuitive wisdom to Silas. Dolly perceives that, because we can see some "good and rights," we may suspect there is a greater one than we can ever know. She tells Silas that if he had only gone on trusting and not given up hope, he would not have been so solitary (16:216-18).

Dolly's meanderings convey thought in a simple form and as such are adapted to convey a Feuerbachian interpretation of religion as feeling. Indeed, William

Myers, who regards Dolly as slightly ridiculous, has grasped that her very ignorance "enables her to be, in Feuerbachian terms, an instinctive polytheist--unlike the miracle-mongering fanatics of Lantern Yard." The fact that she always refers to God in the plural "is a technically specific sign of a religious constitution wholly free from religious egoism" (22-23).

Silas christens his adopted daughter Eppie, short for Hephzibah, the name of his mother and sister, and the name for Jerusalem restored (Isa. 62:4), a symbol of ultimate happiness.¹⁹ He simply knows it is a biblical name. Yet the change that comes over him is a process of self-realization owing little to outward forms of religion except those bound up with the values and traditions of the community. In going to church, Silas is participating in village life for Eppie's sake. Unlike the gold, Eppie is a living creature

of endless claims and ever-growing desires,
seeking and loving sunshine, and living sounds,
and living movements; making trial of everything,
with trust in new joy, and stirring the human
kindness in all eyes that looked on her. (14:192)

His soul trembles into "full consciousness" (14:193-94); Silas's development through Eppie is identical with Feuerbach's consciousness of the infinite and joyful self-affirmation (EC 2, 6).

The weaver's new sense of purpose is his new

"religion." He has an aim in life, which has created other aims and revived his old aim of gathering herbs, bringing back happy memories of the past. At first, he had turned away from his sad memories to take refuge in Eppie's little world "that lay lightly on his enfeebled spirit" (14:193), but finally he becomes strong enough to confront the past. This is one mystery which will not be solved except through hope and trust. When he seeks out his old home, all traces of it have disappeared, and a factory has been built in its place: Silas cannot go back in time. The past has been erased. However, life goes on, and faith as love, hope, and trust can operate in the face of limited knowledge. Silas will never know whether the truth about the robbery was discovered, or be enlightened about the drawing of lots; these things will be "dark to the last." Dolly Winthrop agrees, but emphasizes that this "doesn't hinder there being a rights . . ." (21:269). Faith in Feuerbach's sense, as faith in existence, in the future, not as dogmatic faith, is essential to give life meaning, since human knowledge has its boundaries. Significantly, it is only since Silas came to love Eppie as himself that he has had "light enough to trusten by" (21:269).

His new sense of confidence has given him a dim impression that some error had been responsible for his past misery. In this perception, Silas comes to a

recognition which is at once Feuerbachian and Spinozan. In this story, lack of knowledge is not an adequate reason for despairing. The love of some other human being besides oneself is a necessity: despite Dolly's admonition that he should have kept on hoping, Eppie was for Silas a necessary catalyst--a "not I" or "thou" is integral to Feuerbach's conception of humanity.

Eppie's happiness owes nothing to discipline, as such. At first, Silas is sorely puzzled by the incompatible demands of love. Then he ignores Dolly Winthrop's well-meant advice: Dolly has accepted the tradition of reward and punishment in child-rearing. The failure of the coal-hole punishment leads Silas to rear Eppie by love alone, unselfishly bearing himself the burden of her misdeeds. As Jerome Thale has noted, the story's criticism of utilitarianism is a good deal more subtle than in Dickens's Hard Times (59).

Although Silas's humanity is restored by Eppie, he must overcome his possessiveness in order to attain to Feuerbach's self-sacrificing love--that is, to accept her marriage to Aaron and face losing her through adoption. Struggling for self-mastery, he tremulously utters to Godfrey: "Speak to the child. I'll hinder nothing" (19:257). He wants to be sure that Eppie will not regret her decision if she chooses to stay with him. His unselfish act is in fine contrast to his earlier jealous

desire for her to be his "little un" and nobody else's (14:189). Hence, when Eppie chooses Silas, her love is given freely.

Feuerbach enters, too, into Eppie's natural love for the mother she does not remember; it is expressed in her wish to take into the garden the furze bush against which Molly died, bringing her mother in a mythical sense into her home. We can understand why this tribute to her dead mother is necessary to Eppie's happiness if we recall Feuerbach's views on mother love; snowdrops and crocuses will be planted underneath, which will not die out but increase, conferring a kind of immortality on Molly. Appropriately, when Eppie is married, it is with her mother's wedding ring.

Ultimately, Silas is described as having the "mild passive happiness of love-crowned age" (16:210); he is overjoyed at the discovery of his gold. The transfiguration that has taken place in Silas is due to Eppie's influence. The raising of a child has not only thawed his frozen faculties but balanced the male and female within him. In his parental task, he moves toward a freer order than that of predominance and subordination, antithetical to the spirit of Feuerbachian autonomy.²⁰

The inward change in Silas is outwardly revealed in his cottage, with its new animal life and a garden which conjures up the mythical "garden of love" (i.e., paradise)

imagery.²¹ A traditional happy ending is provided by the wedding of Eppie and Aaron, for which the Casses supply the wedding dress of Eppie's dreams. But the unhappy Godfrey absents himself from the wedding. This demythologized utopia is balanced by its intricate connection with the fate, and ultimate resignation, of the outwardly rich Godfrey and Nancy.

Eppie's final words to Silas, "O father, what a pretty home ours is! I think nobody could be happier than we are," points up the fundamental theme of a happiness achieved through unselfish love, made possible by Silas's innate fervour and morality.

Notes

¹Edward de Bono defines a metasystem as a higher system outside the immediate system in which one happens to be operating: "It provides a reason for doing something which does not lie within the immediate situation itself." The Happiness Purpose (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977) 18. "Mythology" and "theology" are here comparable terms.

²Several critics have noticed Eliot's demythologizing, David R. Carroll, for instance, seeing it in terms of Feuerbach's inversion of the oracles of religion, Jerome Thale of her reduction of theology to psychology. In relation to the "oracles of religion," the relevant passage in Feuerbach has to do with what is best in Christianity, its essence purified from theological dogmas and contradictions, and reads: "that which in religion is the predicate we must make the subject, and that which in religion is a subject we must make a predicate, thus inverting the oracles of religion; and by this means we arrive at the truth. God suffers--suffering is the predicate--but for men, for others, not for himself. What does that mean in plain speech? Nothing else than this: to suffer for others is divine; he who suffers for others, who lays down his life for them, acts divinely, is a God

to men" (EC 60). See Carroll, "Silas Marner: Reversing the Oracles of Religion," Literary Monographs 1, ed. Eric Rothstein and Thomas K. Dunseath (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1967) 165-200, 312-14 (172). In speaking of George Eliot's "reduction of theology to psychology," Thale inevitably brings to mind Feuerbach's demythologizing rather than, say, that of Hennell or Strauss. The Novels of George Eliot (New York: Columbia UP, 1959) 60-61.

³George Eliot's Mythmaking (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1977) 234. He notes that one of George Eliot's notebooks destroyed during the 1940 bombing of Coventry contained, according to Sotheby's catalogue, "Fables, miscellaneous notes, accounts of the Origin of Oriental and Mediaeval legends." On the tale as myth, see Wiesenfarth, "Demythologizing Silas Marner," ELN 37 (1970): 226-44.

⁴Carroll's essay, op. cit., is of particular interest in relation to his Feuerbachian interpretation of the interlocking stories.

⁵See John Preston, "The Community of the Novel: Silas Marner," Comparative Criticism: A Yearbook 2, ed. Elinor Shaffer (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1980) 109-130.

⁶See Jay Dessner, "The Autobiographical Matrix of Silas Marner," Studies in the Novel 11 (1979): 251-83 (255-65). He cites Eliot's growing miserliness and her hope of being accepted as an adoptive parent. Her despondent attitude had led to her writing "Brother Jacob." (The Brays' adoption of Charles Bray's child Nelly [Elinor], a name not unlike Eppie, may also have inclined Eliot to consider the subject of adoption.) On the story as autobiography, see also Knoepfmacher, Early Novels 223-24.

⁷See also Fred C. Thomson, "The Theme of Alienation in Silas Marner," Nineteenth-Century Fiction 20 (1965): 74. He sees tragedy occurring when the well-intentioned individual acts in ignorance or defiance of the intricate web that binds his moral behaviour to that of collective society. The tragic experience consists in the feeling of disconnection from the roots of one's beliefs and assumptions about what the world is like. Silas (an egoistic spider figure) moves from individual discontinuity to the web of society--social continuity

(79, 83-84). Thomson's definition of alienation evidently bears an affinity to Feuerbach's. Sally Shuttleworth considers alienation in relation to Lewes's physical theory which explains Marner's growing subjection to the numbing activity of weaving; George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Science: The Make-Believe of a Beginning (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984) 89.

⁸Carroll 170-71. Lantern Yard "can quickly dispose of the real significance of Silas' catalepsy by seeing it as a 'concealed miracle,'" whereas for George Eliot, life consists in coming to terms with "these inescapable realities of law, necessity, and Nature" (171).

⁹See James McLaverty, "Comtean Fetishism in Silas Marner," Nineteenth-Century Fiction 36 (1981): 318-36, esp. 330, 322, n. 13. McLaverty notes that Nancy Lammeter is fetishistic in her irrational rituals, as are the villagers in their superstition. In weaving "like the spider, from pure impulse, without reflection" (2:23), Silas Marner has been understood as turning from a belief in the miraculous to a belief in utilitarianism. Carroll notes that the "simplifications of the otherworldly have been replaced by the simplifications of the utilitarian" (182). However, it is Godfrey's self-interested calculations, rather than Silas's automatic activity of weaving, that better fits the description. Cf. Angus Easson, "Statesman, Dwarf and Weaver: Wordsworth and Nineteenth-Century Narrative," The Nineteenth-Century British Novel, ed. Jeremy Hawthorn (London: Edward Arnold, 1986) 26.

¹⁰See Wiesenfarth, "Demythologizing Silas Marner" 234; Carroll 175. Carroll has suggested that the last part of Nancy's surname, [Lam]meter, draws attention to the fixed rules by which she runs her life. The names of the two principal families, Cass and Lammeter, underline the contrast between their approaches to life (187, n.).

¹¹See also Silas Marner, The Weaver of Raveloe by George Eliot, ed. Q. D. Leavis (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967) 254, n. 5, and David Carroll on the relation of the conversation to the grounds of moral choice (190-93).

¹²When the narrator refers to "the pleasures which early nurture and habit connect with all the little aims and efforts of the poor who are born poor" (19:257), Eliot is describing natural pleasures, as opposed to ones that are worldly or sought after. (A Benthamite interpretation

of Eppie's renunciation would, of course, see her "duty" as being aligned with pleasure.)

¹³Cottom 193-94. In fact, he sees Eliot's description as the perverse transformation of a labourer starved by capitalism into the symbolic figure of a psychologically wounded capitalist.

¹⁴The plot may be regarded in the light of a realistic miracle, comparable to the biblical miracles which Hennell in his Inquiry, as well as Strauss, described as having a factual or rational basis. Since the time those events had taken place, the facts had been embroidered, and came to be seen as miraculous. Hennell considered that ignorant peasants and artisans would give credence to the purported miracles. The Raveloe villagers are of this type. For Feuerbach, miracles were purely products of the imagination. The biblical notion of Providence expressed the value of man, in distinction from other natural beings and things, exempting him from a connection with the universe. Thus faith in Providence exemplified self-love (or the idea of self-worth) deified (as with Arthur Donnithorne). By contrast, we have seen that Eppie's arrival is fully accounted for.

¹⁵On the return to nature in Feuerbach's philosophy (dealt with by Feuerbach in his Wesen der Religion, published in 1846, rather than The Essence of Christianity, as earlier noted), see Gabriel Amengual, "L. Feuerbach en la Crítica Marxista hacia una Reconsideración de su Lugar en la Discusión Marxista actual," Pensamiento 41 (1985): 201-216 (210-11). On the story's relation to Wordsworth and Scott, see Easson 17-30. Carroll has pointed to similarities between Silas Marner and The Winter's Tale (313, n. 22).

¹⁶The narrator "stands outside these two societies--'in which form and feeling have never been separated by an act of reflection'" and sets up a new society and a new myth; Wiesenfarth 242; 243-44, n. 43.

¹⁷Carroll 185.

¹⁸10:125-26. IHC or IHS, for the Greek capitals IHC (C a form of sigma), an MS. abbreviation of the word Jesus, also used as a symbolical or ornamental monogram of the sacred name; often misread as a Latin contraction of Jesus Hominum Salvator, Jesus Saviour of Men. See, e.g., The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary

(Oxford: Oxford UP, 1971) 1: 1372.

¹⁹"Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married." See also Wiesenfarth 238. According to Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, Hephzibah is also Hebrew for "my delight is in her."

²⁰See Henry Alley, "Silas Marner and the Balance of Male and Female," Victorians Institute Journal 16 (1988): 65-73. He sees the rainbow at the conclusion of the novel as spanning the polarity of male and female as it unites symbolically the other crucial opposites that Eliot has dramatized (71).

²¹Eppie requested a garden, which is dug by her future husband, a gardener, and subsidized by Godfrey Cass, thus uniting the families. Note that the garden is fenced in on two sides with stones, but has an open fence in front through which the flowers can be seen from outside, signalling the pleasurable contact of the inmates with the outside world and suggesting the spreading of this influence by creating beauty in the eye of the beholder. George Eliot's comparisons of human growth to growth in nature are also conspicuous, as when she says that our consciousness "rarely registers the beginning of a growth within us any more than without us: there have been many circulations of the sap before we detect the smallest sign of the bud" (SM VII, 86). On archetypal garden imagery, see Jennifer M. Bradshaw, "Three Phases of an Archetypal Image: The Garden in Marvell, Dickens, and Milton." Diss. Carleton U, 1980.

CHAPTER 7

A PROVING GROUND FOR ANTITHETICAL PHILOSOPHIES: "BROTHER JACOB" AND ROMOLA

Although Henry James believed Romola to be the most important of George Eliot's works, and it was acclaimed by other discriminating Victorians, on the whole it met with a disappointing response. Jerome Thale calls Romola a "significant" failure, feeling that the narratorial didacticism of her early novels becomes more obtrusive in Romola, but he notes Eliot's advance in maintaining objectivity in describing Tito Melema. He sees Romola as "a crisis" in Eliot's development as an artist and interprets George Eliot's words that she began it a young woman and finished it an old woman as an indication of her unsureness in writing Romola. Indeed, this novel has vied with Daniel Deronda and Felix Holt as Eliot's most unpopular major work of fiction and been regarded as a remarkable failure.¹ However, some recent critics have provided important new insights.²

Eliot's painstaking research on the background for Romola began not long after she had written The Mill on the Floss; however, "Brother Jacob" (written in August 1860) and Silas Marner (written between September 1860 and March 1861) intervened. George Henry Lewes first

suggested a Florentine novel during a visit to Florence in May 1860, after he had been reading Savonarola. He considered that the Dominican friar's life and times afforded fine material for a historical romance (GEL IV, 295). Eliot received the idea with enthusiasm, visiting Florence again with Lewes in May and June 1861 and in July gaining inspiration from the fifth volume of Comte's Philosophie positive. By November she was despondent and almost ready to give up, but she began work on January 1, 1862 and completed the novel on May 16, 1863.³

Eliot's predominant feeling about Romola was that "great great facts" had struggled to find a voice through her (GEL IV, 97). This was to be her most ambitious novel, portraying through a complex mythological structure not only the private lives of individuals and the lives of men and women in society, but the history of Western civilization, as envisaged in Comte's concept of polytheistic, monotheistic, and positivist stages of human historical development.⁴ While also epitomizing Comte's three stages of faith of Western man, Eliot's first secular heroine, Romola de' Bardi, will move from rational secularity to Roman Catholicism to what is essentially a Feuerbachian religion of humanity.⁵ Through Christianity, Romola will learn a deeper moral truth; then, in accordance with Feuerbach's ideas, she will raise herself above religion (EC 270). It is, however, her confrontation with a hedonistic philosophy that initiates

her development toward the world of sensuous experience and a wider truth. In Eliot's description of Romola's chronological development, the epochs of her existence and their meaning in relation to her ultimate happiness are clarified through the use of pictorial symbolism.

At the time she wrote Romola, Eliot believed that no philosophy would expel from the world "Caritas, the highest love or fellowship" (GEL IV, 72), echoing Feuerbach's view that love is the subjective reality of the species, as reason is its objective reality (EC 268). This work in which Eliot tests her heroine to the limits is not her most artistic, but it conveys Eliot's philosophy consistently, rigorously, and clearly. The Feuerbachian ethic presented in the earlier fiction is powerfully expanded in Romola; and, although this novel is ostensibly about Renaissance society, Eliot's view of utilitarianism is more clearly stated in its relationship with a Feuerbachian ethic than in any of her other novels. For this reason, Romola's progression toward a Feuerbachian consciousness merits special attention.

Romola has, in any event, been regarded as unique in Eliot's corpus, and for several different reasons. It has been called "perhaps the most interesting synthesis of her positivist and feminist philosophy," as well as "the grossest example in George Eliot's work of 'purely passive, automatic reflexive' forces" and the most

painstaking exploration of "the relation between social duty and egoism, submission and rebellion, historical change and continuity."⁶ To George Levine, the virtue of Romola lies in its "sporadically brilliant, architecturally stunning exploration of large moral issues" (96). J. B. Bullen has interpreted the novel as a positivist allegory of Comte's progressive view of history, arguing that Eliot attempted in Romola to convey some aspects of Comte's positivist philosophy.⁷ Certainly the theories of Comte and Feuerbach have much in common, especially in relation to Comte's basic notions of a "religion of humanity" and progression from egoism to altruism.⁸

Eliot's positivist friend Frederic Harrison had asked her to write an explicit Comtian utopia; however, while Eliot half admitted incorporating some Comtian elements in Romola, she would not promise him this. She simply agreed to "at least keep the great possibility (or impossibility) perpetually in [her] mind." She felt that "Avowed Utopias," which had a scientific and expository character, could not work on the emotions; she needed "to get breathing, individual forms, and group them in needful relations, so that the present [would] lay hold on the emotions as human experience" (GEL IV, 300-301). This is why Feuerbach's pragmatism had appealed to her. In direct opposition to the Hegelian philosophy of idealism, he

attached himself "only to realism, to materialism" (EC xxxiv). Eliot had to test Comte's ideas against her own experience. Although Eliot had been copying out passages from Comte in her notebooks for years, she later proved no more willing to compose a positivist liturgy or critique of Comte than she had the utopia Harrison had earlier sketched.⁹

While for Comte "true happiness is above all the result of a worthy submission, the only sure basis of a large and noble activity," for Feuerbach man's ultimate felicity derives from self-development. Thus, Comte's concept of submission, which will lead to altruism but also conflict with Romola's true development, is supported but also questioned in Romola.¹⁰ Sally Shuttleworth, who sees the novel as a dystopia rather than a Comtian utopia, has observed that in Romola Eliot seems to be engaging in a dialogue with Comte, questioning his ideas, particularly his ideal of unquestioning submission. Shuttleworth envisages Savonarola's role in the novel as an embodiment of Comte's Priest of Humanity when he preaches to Romola her duty to the social organism of which she forms a part, but she also considers that Eliot dramatizes the dangers of a Comtian priesthood.¹¹

On the other hand, Felicia Bonaparte frequently finds Eliot's views specifically non-Comtian; Romola's

relation to Tito does not illustrate well the love for another individual which should be expressed in marriage, and Eliot's vision, as Bonaparte sees it, is "a warning against the purely scientific and secular world Comte urged" (106, 117). On measure, certainly, Feuerbach's dual rejection and adoption of Christianity was more apposite to Eliot's way of thinking, which includes the need to "rise into religion" (III, 61:323).

It is not easy to define which philosophy placed most emphasis on religion, since Feuerbach insisted on atheism yet retained the fundamental Christian truths, while Comte urged a scientific secularism, yet ensconced a "Great Being" at the head of a Religion of Humanity that was ritualized to the extent that it almost constituted an actual new religion. Still, it is noteworthy that Eliot's stress lies more on the rise into than the rise above religion emphasized by Harriet Martineau in the Preface to her translation and abridgment of Comte's Positive Philosophy, a volume which Eliot read. There Martineau speaks of "those who have passed through theology and metaphysics, and, finding what they are now worth, have risen above them."¹² While Romola does finally rise above religion, she first has to absorb the moral truths inherent in religion, as Feuerbach so clearly pointed out.

As a person, not a symbol, Romola eventually rises also above the submissive Comtian view of femininity, and

has in our century been seen as a feminist.¹³ Although Feuerbach, like Comte, exalts the mother, he focuses on the essential quality of love, rather than the womanly role. While acknowledging sexual difference, Feuerbach stresses the essential humanity that is germane to Eliot's wider purpose, encompassing mankind, not a subordinating sexism.

By contrast, in his Catéchisme Comte had proclaimed that women should be the object of men's worship. Sally Shuttleworth notes that Eliot, in the margin of her own copy of the book, in answer to the question "What shall women worship?" had written, "Mother, Son, Husband." But Romola is a different being. She has known no mother, will bear no son, and is blessed with a husband who would hardly inspire worship (105-106). It is curious that Eliot did not write "Father." Romola, of course, worships her father, who is important not only as a father but in replacing for her other relationships including her absent brother. Feuerbach's ideal of happiness was more accessible than Comte's theoretic ideal of "Humanity."

The Proem contrasts change with the unchanging in human lives. For Eliot, the principles that underlie change relate to Feuerbach's "essence": the "broad sameness of the human lot" not only relates to the search for hidden knowledge (taken up in the theme of scholarship), but to the basic needs of human life

described evocatively in the Proem's closure:

The sunlight and shadows bring their old beauty and
waken the old heart-strings at morning, noon, and
eventide; the little children are still the symbol
of the eternal marriage between love and duty;
and men still yearn for the reign of peace and
righteousness--still own that life to be the
highest which is conscious voluntary sacrifice. (12)

The "eternal marriage between love and duty" will be a state reached by Romola only after conflicts between love and duty.

Responding to R. H. Hutton's sympathetic review, Eliot admitted that "the great problem of [Romola's] life, which essentially coincides with a chief problem in Savonarola's, is one that readers need helping to understand."¹⁴ Reduced to its simplest terms, this problem is the struggle between egoism and altruism. In her conflict between love and duty, Romola must improve her understanding, enlarge her life, and, above all, avoid succumbing to her husband's philosophy of life, one which will not lead to felicity. The theme of love versus duty of The Mill on the Floss is now replayed on a larger scale, in a private setting but also one that is social and political. Romola believes in the value of submission through love, while the husband who is so different in character tries to influence her and control her actions. It is no uncertain narrator, but George Eliot the sage who

speaks in Romola and is ready to draw "the speculative line of demarcation" where obedience ends and resistance begins.¹⁵ This time, certain limits are reached. Comte's ideal of wifely obedience must ultimately be rejected because it conflicts with Feuerbachian human nature. Eliot's interest in this problem of the limits of obedience could have been aroused by her reading of Feuerbach, as will become apparent in the later discussion.

The Proem also locates the historical period of the novel through the contrivance of a Shade, who had died in Lent of 1492 and might almost be a double of the great but undemocratic ruler of Florence, Lorenzo de' Medici. In fact, the novel opens with Lorenzo's funeral. It is a time when the heavens "were fair and smiling above; and below there were no signs of earthquake" (II, 21:319). With the succession of Lorenzo's son in the spring of 1492, Florence will become split between rival factions and move toward anarchy. The famous city whose scholarly legacy has been bequeathed by a corrupt Lorenzo exemplifies the historical processes which undermine questionable authority.¹⁶ This Renaissance society provides dramatic contrasts in good and evil which fit Eliot's moral purpose. She idealizes her heroine, but not Florence; and the prevalent philosophy in that world which surrounds Bardo the blind scholar and his daughter Romola

is brilliantly depicted through the heroine's relationship with the young Greek adventurer, Tito Melema. In this love which deteriorates into a silent battleground, the opposition between philosophies is played out more effectively than in the intense brother and sister relationship of The Mill and the Floss.

The crux of Romola is the philosophical antithesis between Tito and Romola. Eliot attacks the fundamental assumptions of utilitarianism in the antagonism between Tito's philosophy and that toward which Romola is striving. The stoicism of Bardo provides another philosophy antagonistic to Tito's (that of her godfather, Bernardo del Nero, is shown however to be more self-sacrificing). While Romola moves beyond her father's and Tito's different ethics to self-fulfilment, Tito regresses. This is not due to vanity, arrogance, or maliciousness; he is, as Felicia Bonaparte has observed, a villain "only in the consequences of his choices, as is only too appropriate in a character in whom the utilitarian ethics of consequences is embodied" (143). Eliot describes Tito's search for pleasure and avoidance of pain, and his use of a "felicific calculus." Submission to Tito by Romola would entail her acceptance of his premises: "What, looked at closely, was the end of all life, but to extract the utmost sum of pleasure?" (I, 11:175).

Initially, Tito's easy-going hedonism is made to appear normal enough, but he rationalizes that his own promising life is more valuable than the "withered wintry life" of his foster father, Baldassarre, whom he is in a position to ransom from slavery. In the novel, this hedonistic attitude is linked through mythology to pagan times. In conjunction with certain unfavourable characteristics and circumstances, an egoistic utilitarianism insidiously leads to evil in the strange and conflicting world of Renaissance Florence; a mix of superstitious beliefs and pedantry combine with a "self-indulgent paganism." In Romola, then, George Eliot's deconstruction of utilitarianism points up Feuerbach's ethic. The critic Peter Allan Dale, noticing the similarity between David Faux of "Brother Jacob" and Tito Melema, has argued in relation to the short story that its object is to undermine an intellectual tradition that had offered itself as "the definitive scientific interpretation of the course of Western civilization."¹⁷

The world Tito moves in is described as a "handsome establishment for the few who were lucky or wise enough to reap the advantages of human folly. . . ." Lust and obscenity, lying and treachery, oppression and murder are "pleasant, useful, and when properly managed, not dangerous" (II, 21:319). As Felicia Bonaparte has observed, for the majority of Florentines, as for Tito,

"the only criteria of judgment are the Bacchic and utilitarian criteria of pleasure and utility" (137). More clearly than most critics, she recognizes that in Romola "the choice of pleasure that Bacchus promises, lovely and desirable though it is, leads in this hard and indifferent universe, paradoxically, only to pain" (120). Tito fits the establishment with his ambition, good looks, capacity for enjoyment, and a charm of manner which can, if necessary, mask flattery and deception.

Not long before writing Romola, Eliot had created the anticipatory figure of David Faux, alias Freely, of "Brother Jacob." This minor work depicting a Thackerayean "antihero" may be taken as either comic or ironic, but actually presents Eliot's most depressed vision of human life and has been taken seriously in some recent criticism.¹⁸

David steals his mother's gold and engages in blackmail, while in Romola Tito refuses to ransom his foster father with the money received for his jewels, preferring the profits of usury. Certainly David's ambition, his bent to calculation and deception, and his desire to be admired rather than loved are qualities reflected in Tito. In both cases, a degree of worldly success precedes nemesis. Peter Allan Dale's views accord with my own at this point:

The faith in which David communes is not one of his own invention but one which was increasingly established in his generation. He is . . . a "type" or representation of the gospel according to utilitarianism and the laissez-faire economics that derive from it. Every aspect of his personality, every tenet of his practical belief, illustrates the views of his contemporaries Jeremy Bentham and Adam Smith. When we see him pursuing self-interest and pleasure at the expense of all other concerns, and utterly complacent in "other people's pain" . . . we are seeing a version (debased, to be sure) of Bentham's great principle of utility.

Dale selects the following paragraph from Bentham's Introduction to illustrate the similarity:

As to ethics in general, a man's happiness will depend, in the first place, upon such parts of his behaviour as none but himself are interested in. . . . Ethics then, in as far as it is the art of directing a man's action . . . may be termed the art of discharging one's duty to oneself. . . . (17-18)

He notes that the word "calculate" is used constantly to describe David's mental activity and sees this, together with the fact that David's notion of virtue is founded on the calculation of consequences, as suggestive of Bentham's "felicific calculus" (2, 20-21). In Romola, it is no anachronism to classify Renaissance Tito's behaviour as utilitarian; George Eliot has clearly transposed contemporary issues and attitudes to her Florentine background.¹⁹ Although Bentham coined the term in the eighteenth century to describe his special philosophy, the attitude of mind existed long before then, in the pagan

world; recording the history of his "Greatest Happiness Principle," Bentham noted that its earliest known mention was in the third satire of Horace.²⁰

While Tito is made to appear more agreeable than David Faux, our initial picture of Tito conniving to gain entrance into high society is reminiscent of David when he returns from abroad. Each is a stranger with a small capital in gold or jewels; each knows how to make himself indispensable and looks for wealth, success, and power as a means to pleasure, luxury, and ease. George Eliot had perceived a connection that does not seem to be usually made, the essential link of utilitarianism with the "worldliness" which she disliked intensely.²¹ Obviously, Bentham's philosophy did not focus, like Christianity or Feuerbachian morality, on "inner," essential qualities so much as "external" facts, which for George Eliot were always secondary to the inner life.

The idiot Brother Jacob frustrates David's attempts to rise in the world; an idiot is perfectly designed to act unpredictably, as Jacob does, illustrating Eliot's (and Lewes's) ideas about the unpredictability of forecasting consequences.²² Brother Jacob also, as Peter Allan Dale suggests (28), represents "everyman's" human nature: "All men are our brothers and idiots particular[ly] so" (BJ 402; sic). Dale proposes that Eliot uses an idiot to undercut the theoretical basis of a

"so-called scientific philosophy of morals and of history" (utilitarianism and commercialism); as he says, that philosophy is defeated by "the 'hidden form' of its nemesis in the form of the animal that underlies the rational self" (28). Through loss of memory and obsession with revenge the former scholar Baldassarre also illustrates man's animal nature. Tito's reflection that Baldassarre may indeed be mad even takes on a certain ambiguity; the reader is inclined to condemn Tito for a thought that may not be far from the truth. Brother Jacob's idiocy and Baldassarre's vengeful feelings, coupled with loss of memory, could be seen to represent extreme examples of instinctive action, whereas Tito's instincts are designed to illustrate a normal human response given particular circumstances and character in conjunction with a certain philosophy.

Dale's conclusions are based on Eliot's and Lewes's expressed dislike of that philosophy, which was in opposition to the "physiological psychology" pursued by Lewes around the time George Eliot wrote "Brother Jacob." This psychology marked a radical departure from the rationalist tradition, and "nowhere more so than in the understanding that man is motivated ultimately by subrational impulses or instincts that unite him with the animals."²³ This psychological stance sheds a further light on such characters in Eliot's fiction as Hetty

Sorrel who does not have a higher consciousness and is frequently described in animal imagery.

David's lack of a conscience necessitates an external nemesis, Jacob, while in Romola nemesis operates through Tito's conscience, which creates fear in him. Romola becomes his Feuerbachian "objective conscience," "[making his] failings a reproach to [himself]"; thus Romola becomes Tito's "personified feeling of shame" (EC 158), causing him to feel alienated from her. (As an external conscience, in contrast, Philip Wakem had an elevating effect on Maggie.) Despite this apparent distinction between external and internal forms of conscience, essentially David and Tito both fall prey to an "internal" nemesis. (The idiot brother in "Brother Jacob" not only exemplifies that incalculability which frustrates David's most devious plans but, as noted, he becomes a metaphorical rendition of the animal that underlies the rational self.) Tito is no idiot, but he is dissimulating, and like David "Faux" (faux, false), he succumbs to the consequences of his own instinctual nature. This is shown in his first, premeditated, moral choice and in his instinctive rejection of Baldassarre when the latter clutches him on the steps of the Duomo. He does not love Baldassarre, and long premeditation and instinct come to the same conclusion.

Since in Tito feeling is diminished, that is, predominantly egoistic, there is an absence of religious

(or moral) awe.²⁴ Lacking this kind of "religious" fear, sophisticated Tito resembles the animal which Feuerbach saw as unable by nature to have a religion or higher consciousness (EC 1-2). Typically, Tito deals with his negative emotion not by renovating his inner self but by relying on defensive armour, ingenuity, and dissimulation (II, 23:341). Yet, even after Tito has rejected Baldassarre outside the Duomo, the narrator suggests that a possibility of reform through confession theoretically exists.

In relation to man and brute, Feuerbach compares man's consciousness of the infinite (which is consciousness of his own infinite nature, that of the species) with the narrow consciousness of the caterpillar, confined to a species of plant, whose consciousness is very limited but, on account of that very limitation, so infallible that we call it instinct (EC 2). Yet despite the fact that Feuerbach, in his conception of consciousness, distinguishes between man and brute in a manner that seems to follow Descartes, Feuerbach's views outlined above (admittedly, he is not always consistent) reflect a difference in degree between instinct and intelligence rather than a sharp differentiation, though he does emphasize the qualitative distinction (EC 3, n.). Comte is much more explicit on this question in his

Positive Philosophy. He writes that this separation of instinct and intelligence in relation to brutes and man cannot rationally be made, and that the "gratuitous supposition" that man is a reasonable animal is meaningless, "a remnant of the automatic hypothesis of Descartes" (1:385-86). He is, of course, referring to the dualism inherent in Descartes's radical separation of spirit and matter.

Romola's quest for happiness is foretold by the author through another artist, the painter Piero di Cosimo. No figure is more curiously and continuously implicated in Romola's history than the artist Piero, who forecasts her destiny in his first sketch. The final scene, however, pays tribute not only to Savonarola's essential nobility but to the character who has formed, all along, "a second moral centre." Indeed, Piero's sketch of the Three Masks (Satyr, Magdalen, and Stoic) has been looked on as a self-portrait, epitomizing three important aspects of Piero himself: the sensual, the ascetic, and the stoic.²⁵ The original brutishness of the real-life Piero becomes in Eliot's hands "intimate contact with elementary humanity"; as William Sullivan has noted, Eliot adapted Vasari's Lives of the Painters and Piero's character to her own needs.²⁶ Hugh Witemeyer has described Eliot's use of the theory of ut pictura poesis,

the description of characters and scenes as if they were visual compositions (chap. 4); he also describes how Hawthorne taught Eliot how to use ecphrasis, or the verbal imitation of works of visual art, as a technique of psychological revelation and prophecy (55). Her use of the mask is such a device.²⁷

Piero acts as an important contrast to or corrective of Florentine effeteness:

Against the factionalism around him, Piero opposes the universality and emotional validity of his own work, not at all as a refuge in the 'purity' of aesthetics, but as a higher standard for the conduct of life.²⁸

All the sketches and paintings by this realist with a penetrative power of the imagination have a symbolic, even a religious, significance, for they are "an appendix which Messer Domeneddio [God] has been pleased to make to the universe, and if any man is in doubt what they mean, he had better inquire of Holy Church" (I, 3:52). Eliot uses Piero's pictorial symbolism to express what she herself calls "that force of outward symbols by which our active life is knit together so as to make an inexorable external identity for us" (II, 36:46). Piero's pictures, committed to truthful representation,²⁹ are also prophetic.

The sketch by Piero in Nello's barber shop is of three masks: "one a drunken laughing Satyr, another a sorrowing Magdalen, and the third, which lay between them, the rigid cold face of a Stoic" These masks rest

obliquely on the lap of a little child "whose cherub features rose above them with something of the supernal promise in the gaze which painters had by that time learned to give to the Divine Infant" (I, 3:51-52). Tito interprets the child according to his inclinations (the child's features rising above the masks suggest that it is a supreme symbol which encompasses their meaning) as "the Golden Age, wanting neither worship nor philosophy" or "the wise philosophy of Epicurus, removed alike from the gross, the sad, and the severe" (I, 3:52).

George Eliot admitted that in Romola there was scarcely a phrase, incident, or allusion that did not gather its value from its "supposed subservience" to her main artistic objects (GEL, IV, 97), and consequently Piero's curious and symbolic sketch has received some consideration. Witemeyer reads the masks from left to right as "a progression from an animalistic paganism that takes pleasure in this world, to a philosophical stoicism that endures this world, to a metaphysical sorrow that yearns to transcend this world" (198). Thus, for him, the progression is itself the progress of Western civilization. Witemeyer speaks of Feuerbach's didactic and affective rationale for literary symbolism given in the definition of imagination as the "type-creating" (bildliche), emotional, and sensuous part of the human

mind, and links it to Feuerbach's argument that man, both emotional and sensuous, "is governed and made happy only by images, by sensible representations" (75; EC 75).

The satyr obviously bears some relation to Tito, and the Stoic to Romola's father, Bardo, and possibly to her godfather Bernardo, the truer stoic. The sorrowing Magdalen is a more difficult symbol to interpret. Felicia Bonaparte has viewed it as an ambiguous image, bearing a relation to both Romola and Savonarola (36). William J. Sullivan points to the comprehensive nature of the symbolism; the sketch of the Three Masks is not a simplistic allegory. The most valid interpretation that he recognizes is that the masks of the satyr and the Magdalen represent two extreme responses to existence, irrespective of the categories "pagan" and "Christian." With certain differences, "the antithesis between them is repeated in Romola's perception of "the satisfied strength and beauty" of Tito and the "worn anguish" of her brother Dino's face: Romola questions whether "any thought" could reconcile those extremes of "clashing deities . . . mad joy and . . . wailing."³⁰ The distinction, then, is not simply between pagan and Christian but pleasure and pain.

During her life, Romola will first endure, then seek pleasure and a sensual life, then, under Savonarola's influence, she will become aware of suffering and so be

able to move to a higher plane of existence. She will, like Mary Magdalen, be healed by a Christ figure (Savonarola) of her "evil spirits"--which surely represent her narrow secularity. William Sullivan correctly assumes that the picture represents stages of human development leading beyond Christianity to the higher possibilities that can be reached by doing "without opium" and by "living through all our pain with conscious clear-eyed endurance" (11; GEL III, 366). Whether we interpret the Magdalen as Savonarola or Romola, or as descriptive of a philosophy, the figures are suggestive of stages in Romola's life before she attains the kind of happiness Feuerbach considered the ultimate meaning of religion (EC 185), the "supernal" bliss suggested by the (Christ) child in the picture.

Romola's development proceeds through three phases--stoicism, pagan pleasure, and Feuerbachian suffering--in accordance with the vision expressed in Piero's picture of the Three Masks. Given the central position of the Stoic in Piero's picture, stoicism is, however, of continuing importance. Romola's early inheritance of stoicism through her life and affection for Bardo is augmented as she continues to be devoted to and then desperately clings to her memories of her father. While Bardo's stoic influence is progressively undermined by Tito's actions in her married life, it remains

important to her, and she soon evinces a more profound stoicism than that of her earlier life with Bardo. Romola's progression may, then, be seen as Witemeyer views it, as a movement from paganism through stoicism to sorrow. However, if we start, as in the novel, with her life before she meets Tito, her progression may be visualized as a development from stoicism to hedonism through to a Feuerbachian suffering inseparably integrated with, yet far more meaningful than, the basically noble (yet in Bardo, egoistic) stoicism represented by Bardo and Bernardo del Nero. The differences in the order of interpretation between the present study and that of Witemeyer are not of major significance, since to Eliot stoicism was a means to higher development. Romola's phase of Feuerbachian suffering incorporates elements of the earlier stoicism which, however, needed to be implemented by feeling.

Bardo is a Stoic who has resisted worldly blandishments in his pursuit of knowledge. The Stoic school, founded at Athens c. 308 B.C. by Zeno, made virtue the highest good and consequently inculcated control of the passions and indifference to pleasure and pain. Despite its ascetic virtue, for George Eliot stoicism did not provide the right philosophical solution to life, and the Stoic in Piero's sketch is "cold and rigid." In following his intellectual obsession, this "moneyless, blind old scholar" (I, 5:70) has let sympathetic feeling

take a back seat. He derides Romola's "feminine" mental capacity, and regards his son, Dino, the monk, as dead to him. Originally, Bardo's desire for knowledge was a flame that burned within; now, living on memory, his scholastic pursuits are reminiscent of Casaubon's. Romola's aid to Bardo is comparable to Dorothea's assistance to her pedantic husband; in neither case will the task lead to self-fulfilment. Nevertheless, Romola's instinctive sympathy with her father makes "all the passion and religion of her young years" (I, 27:372).

Piero's depiction of the Stoic is illustrative, then, of the first, secular stage of Romola's quest, in which she endures uncomplainingly and is not actively unhappy; this stage lays the groundwork for her induction into a deeper morality. She sees her future, much as Dorothea does, in terms of marriage to "some great scholar" who will be to Bardo in place of a son: "he will like to come and live with you, and he will be to you in place of my brother . . . and you will not be sorry that I was a daughter" (I, 5:82). Eliot's rendition of eighteen-year-old Romola is one in which what is called the "doubtful attractiveness" of pride and passion is "quivering in the balance with native refinement and intelligence" (I, 5:75). Feuerbach's powers of feeling and understanding are present in her, but the former is still underdeveloped and it is not certain which qualities will gain ascendancy. The narrator notes that

her deepest feeling "only found its outlet through her eyes" (I, 5:75). Although already versed in personal altruism, Romola, we are told, is "in a state of girlish simplicity and ignorance concerning the world outside her father's books" (I, 5:88). Lacking knowledge of the world, self-knowledge, and a wider altruism, she is what Janet Gezari has called a "vibrating sensibility" rather than a more realized consciousness at this point (100).

From stoicism, Romola will be initiated into "pagan" pleasure, the second phase of her life. As noted, Piero's mask of the drunken, laughing satyr bears a relation to Tito, who is explicitly identified with Bacchus and appears in Dino's vision as "the Great Tempter" (I, 15:242). Bacchus is, as Bonaparte puts it, "the mythic symbol of the sensory, material world in which the only intelligible criteria are pleasure and its sister, utility" (142). Baldassarre sees the ready speech of this foster son who has disowned him, publicly calling him a madman, as the mockery of a "glib, defying demon" (II, 30:419); and the treacherous Dolfo Spini in all seriousness calls Tito "a good little demon" (III, 63:348). The satyr is prophetic of the change Tito Melema will bring into the lives of Romola, her father, and godfather, also signalling Tito's prospective degeneration and its cause--pleasure and pain avoidance. In a chapter entitled "Dawning Hopes," the twenty-three-year-old Tito insinuates himself into

Romola's tediously studious life and at once brings youth and hope to her and Bardo. Significantly, Romola's main anxiety is that Tito should not feel impatient with her father, whose face has lighted up with "visions of co-operation" in his researches:

But no! [Tito] looked so bright and gentle: he must feel, as she did, that in this eagerness of blind age there was piteousness enough to call forth inexhaustible patience. (I, 6:103-104)

Initially, Tito's potential response to the situation is suggested figuratively--and it seems rather ironically, for Will Ladislaw will be described in similar images of brightness. Moreover, we are told that Tito is not by nature impatient and has been "bred up in [the laborious erudition of scholarship]" (I, 12:181); he is apparently well suited to serve as an amanuensis and researcher for Bardo. Tito's capacity for pleasure and his avoidance of pain at first seem innocuous enough. Cultured and sceptical, Tito has been nurtured with

contempt for the tales of priests whose impudent lives were a proverb, and in erudite familiarity with disputes concerning the Chief Good, which had after all, he considered, left it a matter of taste. (I, 11:177-78)

These are important facts: Tito has no sense of religion; and Aristotle's "Chief Good"--that end which we desire for its own sake, which for Aristotle is happiness--is relegated to a matter of taste. Tito is not impressed by

Aristotle's eudaemonism, which has much in common with Feuerbach's philosophy;³¹ his irreligion and dislike of Aristotle together implicitly provide an indication that Eliot's central concern is happiness. As noted, for Feuerbach the meaning of religion lay in human well-being.

What is happiness, what are its conditions? This question is what the novel is about. This is a time of promise for Romola, when the informal plighting of the couple's troth contains an implicit promise by Tito to do all he can to ensure Bardo's happiness. When the young pair have a moment's privacy in a cabinet adjoining the library where they have gone to fetch a manuscript, Romola says to Tito, "I hope he will not weary you; this work makes him so happy," and he responds, "And me too, Romola--if you will only let me say, I love you. . . ." Straightforward in her innocence, unable to distinguish between his outer beauty and his shallow soul, she tells him that she loves him and says, "I know now what it is to be happy" (I: 12:183-84). This phase of illusory happiness is destined to be short-lived.

In the third phase of Romola's life, foreshadowed by Piero's mask of the sorrowing Magdalen, she experiences what Feuerbach understood by his expression "the suffering God." It is a necessary phase, entailing the breaking of her illusions about love. She becomes a Roman Catholic, and then, acquiring a wider sympathy, a visible Madonna.

The presence of death first creates suffering in Romola.³² Dino, the monk, has seen in visions "the meaning of the Crucifix" and, in his desire for Romola to have his crucifix, wishes to bequeath her a life of perfect love and purity; to him this kind of life is vitally important. His father, narrowly mining his gems of scholarly wisdom, has been unconscious of the "world dying of plague above him" (I, 15:236). Romola, too, has been isolated from suffering. (In fact, Dino has also isolated himself from suffering by becoming a monk and living a life of perfect love in God.) Now, Dino relates his terrible vision of her future marriage--the symbolism includes the library episode--in which Romola will be left alone in a bare and stony plain. Although Dino's inner world exemplifies Feuerbach's ideal subjective love, according to Feuerbach's theory of alienation Dino has divided his consciousness: his monkhood has divorced him from the real world of human affections, especially given Bardo's attitude toward it. Dino could have exposed Tito's falsity, because he has some personal knowledge of Tito in relation to the pawning of Baldassarre's ring. But Dino is unable to link Tito with his sister; appropriately, Tito's face is a blank in Dino's vision. Ordinary love and communication between brother and sister would have effectively filled this blank.

In the powerfully emotive presence of Fra Girolamo Savonarola, Romola sees her brother die and is handed

Dino's crucifix by Savonarola to be a "beacon" to her in the darkness (I, 15:244). This crucifix, the emblem of Christian suffering, denotes a faith more noble than Romola's secularity. Despite her scepticism, Romola is struck by a strange awe:

it was the first time she had witnessed the struggle with approaching death: her young life had been sombre, but she had known nothing of the utmost human needs; no acute suffering--no heart-cutting sorrow; and this brother, come back to her in his hour of supreme agony, was like a sudden awful apparition from an invisible world. (I, 15:243)

Nevertheless, Romola tries to subdue the "questionings" aroused by this new acquaintance with sorrow.

In the next significant event in Romola's life, George Eliot again utilizes Piero's artistry. But the symbolic picture is commissioned by Tito as a betrothal gift, and epitomizes his "philosophy." The triptych and the cross, supreme symbols in the book, illustrate the antithesis between pleasure and suffering; that is, between Tito's philosophy of pleasure and Romola's new awareness. Tito's intention is to divert Romola from her new affinity to sorrow. The triptych's "pretty symbols of our life together" (I, 20:306), with Tito as Bacchus and Romola as Ariadne, reinforce Tito's connection with pleasure and the quelling of troubles. The image of sadness, Romola's crucifix, is to be buried in a "shrine" which is "a tomb of joy" (I, 20:304). Noting that Tito's

interpretation of the picture perfectly expresses his hedonistic code, Hugh Witemeyer observes that "like Hawthorne's latter-day faun, Tito-Bacchus brings pagan and epicurean values into a Christian world that has learned a deeper moral truth."³³ The rationale of Tito's action of locking the crucifix within the casket and removing the key becomes evident in light of Tito's Benthamite precepts of pursuing pleasure and avoiding pain. Similar casket imagery was presented in Silas Marner, where Silas had no key to the gold, which represented a sort of Feuerbachian "treasure within" since all the feeling he had left in him was associated with the gold.³⁴

Romola's uncertainty is shown when Tito places the crucifix in the shrine devoted to pleasure. A quiver passes through her; thought and feeling conflict. But she makes no attempt to prevent Tito's action. Still under a misconception about happiness, Romola is trying to suppress her memories relating to her new exposure to sorrow.

Eighteen months later, as Tito's wife, she is disillusioned but, when Bardo dies, she thinks, "Perhaps my life with Tito will be more perfect now" (II, 27:371). This irrepressible thought consumes her with guilt, but her dream of happiness has not been fulfilled. Tito had neglected Bardo to pursue his social pleasures and career; and, as a submissive wife, she tells herself that he is

the kinder and better partner (an interesting parallel with Nancy Cass, who excuses Godfrey's behaviour on the grounds that infertility is worse for a man than for a woman; however, in Romola, Eliot's pursuance of the theme of male deception in marriage is more detailed and forceful than in Silas Marner). Tito was invariably good-tempered; he merely escaped as best he could from any unpleasantness. Although Romola will not admit he has acted unworthily, her guilt relating to Bardo has made her anxious to fulfil her father's supreme wish to bequeath his library to the people of Florence; it becomes a "sacramental obligation" (II, 27:375).

The new sensibilities and thoughts half awakened by her acquaintance with sorrow have been stilled by a certain subjection seemingly implicit in love; she loves Tito with "passionate devotedness and full reliance" (II, 27:377). Romola is trying to subdue her nature to her husband's, but, as the author later notes, "Marriage must be a relation either of sympathy or of conquest" (III, 48:188). Underneath Tito's "blandness and beseechingness" lies an intention to be master which will rise "permanently to the surface" of his features (III, 48:184).

Romola's Comtian labour of love undoubtedly has a note of obsession in it, for she is ready to make any sacrifice rather than cease to be loved, regardless of how

hurtful this may be, paradoxically, to herself. She is afraid of being disillusioned, of discovering that Tito does not love her. Though Romola's self-doubt is a sign of her generosity, her submission to Tito denies her that state of independence which, for Feuerbach, derives from mind. "We are come into the world," he asserts, "that knowledge and will may exist"; for, as we have noted, he considers reason, as well as feeling, to be "the profoundest and most essential necessity" (EC 43).

One of Romola's primary questions, supremely relevant to her Comtian subordination, had already been posed by Feuerbach when he asked, "how can I worship or serve an object, how can I subject myself to it, if it does not hold a high place in my mind?" The question evokes John Stuart Mill's famous adaptation of Bentham's system, creating a distinction between lower and higher pleasures. (With the publication of his Utilitarianism in 1861, Mill had become the spokesman for what has been called a new and nobler utilitarianism.)³⁵ Feuerbach recognized the dire effects of being forced to devote one's time and faculties to a despised activity (EC 171). In her "profession" as a wife, Romola suppresses any knowledge that might destroy her love for Tito in order to prevent herself from acceding to sorrow. She subdues her understanding, and so the larger possibilities of her

nature still lie "folded and crushed like embryonic wings" (II, 27:376). She needs contact with a mind that can stir the larger possibilities of her nature, such as Savonarola's.

More interested now in public events through her involvement with her father's cause, Romola goes to hear Savonarola preach. His invocation of martyrdom introduces her to the "suffering god" that figures in Feuerbach's theorizing, and she feels herself "penetrated with a new sensation, a strange sympathy with something apart from all the definable interests of her life":

It was not altogether unlike the thrill which had accompanied certain rare heroic touches in history and poetry; but the resemblance was as that between the memory of music, and the sense of being possessed by actual vibrating harmonies. (II, 27:378)

The music metaphor is an attempt to convey Romola's wider experience of feeling, bound up with an intimation of the truth of Feuerbach's dictum that "to suffer for others is divine" (EC 60). Once she can recognize that suffering may be a form of nobility, this knowledge will prepare her to accept sorrow into her own life.

Inevitably, then, sorrow comes with the breaking of her illusions. Tito's sale of Bardo's library irrevocably desecrates the "sanctity" of the marriage. While Romola's godfather, Bernardo del Nero, has always thought it folly in Bardo to keep his library as a separate collection, he

does his utmost to have Bardo's desire realized, and Romola finds it "very great and noble" in him to respect a feeling which he does not share or understand (I, 17:276). Romola's own desire is synonymous with Feuerbach's definition of sympathy: "It was a yearning of his heart, and therefore it is a yearning of mine," she tells Tito (II, 32:437).

How can we distinguish between Romola's blind obedience to her husband's wishes and her recognition of Bardo's need, which in Tito's view can be seen as obedience to a dead past? Feuerbach's and Comte's philosophies provide the answer. Bardo's aim of scholarship, if not his egoistic desire for "immortality" in having the library named after him, was an aim that went deep enough to be a "religion" in Feuerbach's sense; it is Romola's loving choice to comply with it. We are bound to the past through love and, as Comte emphasizes time and time again, the past contributes to present order and future knowledge and progress. Tito's view contradicts Comte's principle of continuity, where the past should be treated reverently as providing necessary and valuable contributions to human development.³⁶ This is especially valid in the bequeathing of a library to a city.

By the time Tito sells Bardo's library for short-term profit, he sees nothing wrong in his "useful"

action, and he cannot understand Romola's point of view, that to fulfil her father's lifelong ambition was a duty, a sacred "trust" (II, 32:435). Here, the question of promises is bound up with George Eliot's notions of truth as honesty, and of the eternal marriage of love and duty mentioned in the Proem; the implicit promise becomes a critical issue in the marriage. In first neglecting Bardo, Tito had already broken the betrothal promise; his sale of Bardo's books and antiquities continues the desecration. Promises made to be kept are easily dismissed as non-utilitarian;³⁷ certainly, for Tito, they come second to material considerations. While his arguments appear reasonable enough, his real motive (and Romola is not deceived) is to continue living in luxury:

Success had given him a growing appetite for all the pleasures that depend on an advantageous social position, and at no moment could it look like a temptation to him, but only like a hideous alternative, to decamp under dishonour, even with a bag of diamonds, and incur the life of an adventurer. (II, 31:424)

If he has to leave Florence, he will take Romola with him: she belongs to that "furniture of life" which he shrinks from parting with. The material image, one that will be used also by Esther Lyon of Felix Holt, is telling. Romola has been criticized for her intractability--Jerome Thale finds her "a very difficult wife" who makes no effort to understand and help Tito (68). But the

situation is irrevocably slanted with respect to values. In his interview with Romola, Tito is "not tormented by sentimental scruples which . . . had no relation to solid utility" (II, 31:423); here, the narrator's comment clearly underlines Tito's relation to external, material objects, in direct opposition to such inner ones as the implicit promise. He has "enlisted" self-interest "on the side of falsity" (I, 9:153), and such spurious argument, at first foreign to him, is fast becoming a habit as he adjusts his desires.

It is worth noting that the estimable Piero takes care never to promise to finish a painting: "'Chi promette e non mantiene/L'anima sua non va mai bene'" (II, 28:390). "Is it no good," Romola says to Tito, "that we should keep our silent promises on which others build because they believe in our love and truth?" (*italics added*):

Is it no good that a just life should be justly
honoured? Or, is it good that we should harden
our hearts against all the wants and hopes of
those who have depended on us? (II, 32:436)

The centrality, to Romola's personal ethic, of faithfulness, honesty, duty, sympathy, and love, linked with memory, is shown in her scornful speech to Tito. Now, Romola determines not to submit her judgment to Tito's; for Bardo's sake, she is at last prepared to face pain. But her efforts are in vain, because Tito had already sold Bardo's possessions.

The tragedy is reinforced by the spectral presence of Bardo in a picture recently arrived and propped on a chair. Speaking to Romola concerning this picture, Piero had prophetically called her "Madonna Antigone" (II, 28:303) and, in the picture, Bardo is Oedipus.³⁸ Romola is now no longer associated with pleasure, but with suffering. The scene ends with Romola on her knees, sobbing before this portrait, commissioned from Piero, ironically enough, to strengthen her loving memories of her father because love--the concept is Feuerbachian--"aims at its own completeness" (II, 28:389). Tito's action will erase all memory of Bardo as a member of the "great republic of letters," but in being forced to suffer on Bardo's behalf, Romola now acknowledges painful reality.

The Comtian law of wifely submission has now been breached by Romola, but, it might appear, wrongfully. Although she sees Tito's action as treachery, when Savonarola accosts her as she flees from her home, carrying the crucifix, Romola has a new presentiment "of the strength there might be in submission" if the friar has some valid law to show her (II, 40:102). His power over her is a human one, paralleling Mr Tryan's influence over Janet in the earlier story: "It was the first time she had encountered a gaze in which simple human fellowship expressed itself as a strongly-felt bond." He

has already told her the law she seeks, but she did not recognize it for one: obedience to truth (II, 40:101-102). The friar then reminds her that she was forewarned, chose to marry, and is now breaking a pledge: "the simplest law that lies at the foundation of the trust which binds man to man--faithfulness to the spoken word" (II, 40:103). To an outsider, Romola's breach of her marriage vows could certainly appear analogous to, or even worse than, Tito's own breaking of an implicit trust. In emphasizing that man cannot choose his duties or their accompanying sorrows, Savonarola reinforces the message that avoidance of pain is not a meaningful approach to life. While his advice contains important Feuerbachian truths in their broad outline, it does not contain those particular discriminations applicable to Romola's case. Submission must be to a greater good, and Romola's submission to Tito's ideas is not equivalent to that submission on behalf of a noble cause of which Savonarola speaks. However, Romola has not yet reached the limits of obedience, and she will return to Tito in a meaningless marriage; her trust in Tito has evaporated, but the limits of her obedience have not yet been reached. Further, Savonarola's stress on duty, at the opposite pole to Tito's hedonism, is meaningful to her.

The relevance of the crucifix is now explained by Savonarola. He calls it "the image of a Supreme Offering,

made by Supreme Love, because the need of man was great" (II, 40:106). As Feuerbach noted, in a passage interpreting the mystery of the Incarnation and part of which was marked by George Eliot in her copy of The Essence of Christianity in the Eliot/Lewes library, "God loves man--i.e. God suffers from man [sic]. Love does not exist without sympathy, sympathy does not exist without suffering in common." God's sympathy comes from sympathy with man's suffering; as Feuerbach emphasizes, sympathy presupposes a like nature (EC 54); one must therefore feel the suffering man's pain. Savonarola distinguishes between the yearning for "fleshly love" (materialism, in one form) and another kind of love, which has nothing to do with "the good of a freedom which is lawlessness" (II, 40:107). This type of lawless freedom is illustrated both by Tito and by David "Freely" in "Brother Jacob," whose pseudonym may stand not only for the generosity he wishes to be known for, but this type of lawless freedom as well.

Besides symbolizing love and suffering, the cross is also (it may seem paradoxically) a "portal of wisdom, and freedom, and blessedness" which comes through renunciation of our own will before a "Divine law" (II, 40:108). When demythologized, Savonarola's statement suggests not only the human bliss which Feuerbach saw to be a supreme end for man, but that freedom from the bondage of the passions which was endorsed by Spinoza. Above all, it reinforces

the Feuerbachian, Spinozan, and Comtian positivist concept of submission to the laws relating to nature and human existence, which for Feuerbach, particularly, included the "law" of human conscience. Romola has duties as a wife and as a Florentine woman, Savonarola points out. Romola's incoherent question, which evidently appertains to her future intimate relationship with Tito, is answered uncompromisingly by the friar:

Make your marriage-sorrows an offering too, my daughter: an offering to the great work by which sin and sorrow are being made to cease. The end is sure, and is already beginning. Here in Florence it is beginning. . . . And it may be our blessedness to die for it: to die daily by the crucifixion of our selfish will--to die at last by laying our bodies on the altar.
(II, 40:110-11)

Savonarola's answer reinforces the message of duty as citizen and individual, but it again seems to be inapposite to Romola's situation. His words imply that the wife should be sacrificed on the crucifix of her body, willingly accepting loveless sex as an offering to a greater good, presumably in this case a bettering of the marriage relationship. While George Eliot is not explicit on the question of the couple's later marital intimacy, Romola herself will have doubts as her submissive efforts to bridge the gap between her and Tito are unsuccessful. They now lead almost separate lives as, inspired by Savonarola, she leads an altruistic public life and Tito

comes increasingly to rely on Tessa for his private needs, as is later shown retrospectively by the birth of her two children.

However irrelevant to Romola's own situation, Savonarola's criticism opens up to her a new perspective in which she turns Roman Catholic and lives for others. It also introduces a new conflict (apart from her private one), for she is unable to respect her appointed mentor as she does Savonarola, and she has even less credence in Fra Luca's visions than in Savonarola's. The fact that Savonarola's visions become contaminated by a certain utility in his interpretations can be seen to demonstrate Feuerbach's point that man can be divided from his essential nature by religion; later on, Savonarola is consciously torn by conflict. The author certainly stresses Romola's own impressionability. Romola is so deeply moved by Savonarola's noble energies that she finds herself listening patiently to dogmas and prophecies which become acceptable only because they are uttered by him; she recoils in disgust when similar visions and allegories are repeated by others. Savonarola's intrinsic greatness creates a meaning in them for her. Hence, through Savonarola's influence, Romola becomes a "visible" Madonna (in strong human contrast to the veiled image of the "unseen" Madonna carried in the procession), helping the poor, the suffering, and the dying. Through her work, she gains independence from Tito, a life of her own.

Initially, despite some resemblance in character and person to Janet Dempster (in pride and imperious will), Romola had never aspired to good works such as Janet carried out to the poor people living near to her. Romola has taken a Comtian step from the world of domestic relations to the larger community of her native city. Although still intensely isolated in her private life, her new duties create human bonds as she is looked up to by the common people; she is putting into effect Feuerbach's "I-Thou" relationship and gaining a wider humanity.

Andrew Sanders has emphasized that she is "a humanised, familiarised Virgin Mary": "Her message is unspoken, but its implications are present and Feuerbachian, not doctrinal and transcendent" (190). Yet her contradiction, as the scholar's daughter supporting the Pyramid of Vanities, indicates that Romola's understanding is still imperfect. In The Essence of Christianity, Feuerbach had pointed out that religion could be detrimental to culture, and Piero fiercely points out that the religious enthusiasts are ruining the cultural heritage of the city of Florence:

And I should like to know what the excellent Messer Bardo would have said to the burning of the divine poets by these Frati, who are no better an imitation of men than if they were onions with the bulbs uppermost. (III, 49:200)

Piero was also the means by which Romola had learned of

Tito's "crime toward Baldassare." In Comtian mode, Tito's abandonment of ties because they had ceased to be pleasant is seen by Romola as "the uprooting of social and personal virtue" and "the most hideous extreme of falsity and ingratitude" (III, 56:272).

The "sorrowing Magdalen" stage of Romola's life depicted by Piero is not over. Our original conception of Romola as a woman who learns through suffering is renewed when she discovers her husband's infidelity through a chance meeting and Tessa's description of her husband's beautiful coat of chains. Now she is again caught between conflicting claims, "the demands of an outward law, which she recognised as a widely-ramifying obligation, and the demands of inner moral facts which were becoming more and more peremptory" (III, 56:272):

The law was sacred. Yes, but rebellion might be sacred too. It flashed upon her mind that the problem before her was essentially the same as that which had lain before Savonarola--the problem where the sacredness of obedience ended, and where the sacredness of rebellion began. To her, as to him, there had come one of those moments in life when the soul must dare to act on its own warrant. . . . (III, 56:273)

Like Maggie in giving up Stephen, Romola comes to a decision on the sole authority of her own thoughts and feelings, despite her recognition of social mores. Yet her decision to leave Tito is postponed because, when he returns, she learns that her godfather, Bernardo del Nero,

is imprisoned for treason. She suspects Tito has had a hand in this.

For Tito, now a triple agent, it has been a time of "flattering success" since the "principle of duplicity" admitted by the Mediceans has ironically deprived them of any standard by which they can measure the trustworthiness of a person such as he. "Maximal utility," to quote Bonaparte, is Tito's standard in making use of every party; he "practices already what Machiavelli will later preach" (167). As Tito puts it to himself, his acute mind, discerning the equal hollowness of all parties, is taking "the only rational course in making them subservient to his own interest." Bluntly translated by the narrator, this means that whichever party comes uppermost, "he was secure of favour and money" (III, 46:170). It is a perverse rationality, incompatible with moral feeling. Romola's horror of Tito's conduct toward Baldassarre now projects itself over Tito's acts as if she had seen him committing a murder (III, 58:289-90). The time of obedience is finally over. Her suspicions about his political and personal treachery confirmed in her own mind, she tells him that their union is a pretence, "as if a perpetual lie could be a sacred marriage" (III, 58:294).

Her next action constitutes a hopeless attempt to save the life of Bernardo, who will die stoically for his

convictions. Romola hopes Savonarola will intervene, but he will not uphold the legal right of appeal which he had previously approved. He is now, like Tito, caught up in a search for power, uses expediency to gain his ends, and is enmeshed in the tragic struggle of

a mind possessed by a never-silent hunger after purity and simplicity, yet caught in a tangle of egoistic demands, false ideas, and difficult outward conditions, that made simplicity impossible. (III, 59:306)

The way Eliot introduces this disillusioning episode conveys her wider comprehension of the difficulties of implementing a noble aim in a worldly society. First, a commentary on justice is provided in Romola's encounter with Bratti, whose price of the "Justice" and "Law" handbills is dictated by expediency, setting the tone for the conversation that follows. Then we have an explicit statement by Savonarola:

The end I seek is one to which minor respects must be sacrificed. The death of five men--were they less guilty than these--is a light matter weighed against the withstanding of the vicious tyrannies which stifle the life of Italy, and foster the corruption of the Church; a light matter weighed against the furthering of God's kingdom upon earth, the end for which I live and am willing myself to die. (III, 59:308-309)

Savonarola's conclusion is identical to the universalistic

utilitarianism of the Florentine crowd that, during the feast of St John the Baptist, was ready to sacrifice "a stray individual to the greater happiness of the greater number" (I, 10:156).

Here, Felicia Bonaparte sees Savonarola as fulfilling the Magdalen prophecy in Piero's sketch, his position being "translated into the image of the pure prostitute, pure in heart but not in deed" (119-20). The view is feasible, if we see the Magdalen symbol as being applicable both to Savonarola and Romola. As noted, Eliot had spoken of the chief problem of Romola's life as essentially coinciding with a chief problem in Savonarola's, that problem surely being the struggle between utilitarianism and an altruistic ethic. This conflict, which is obvious in Savonarola's life at this point, was unavoidably encountered by Romola in her marriage with Tito. However, Romola passionately proclaims that for her God's kingdom is "something wider" than the cause of Savonarola's party, "else, let me stand outside it with the beings that I love" (III, 59:309). She endures a complete mental separation from the Friar whom she has loved and revered; but her disillusionment had begun earlier. What we have here is a fatal opposition between thought (Savonarola) and feeling (Romola), dramatizing the conflict that can exist between what Feuerbach viewed as man's subjective and objective

modes of expression. Tensions rise; the need for unity is paramount. However, the objective narrator emphasizes that it is inevitable that Romola should judge Savonarola severely on a question of individual suffering which she looks at with "personal tenderness" and he with "theoretic conviction." Romola hears only the egoism in his utterance:

Perhaps such words have rarely been uttered without that meaner ring in them; yet they are the implicit formula of all energetic belief. And if such energetic belief, pursuing a grand and remote end, is often in danger of becoming a demon-worship, in which the votary lets his son and daughter pass through the fire with a readiness that hardly looks like sacrifice; tender fellow-feeling for the nearest has its danger too, and is apt to be timid and sceptical towards the larger aims without which life cannot rise into religion.
(III, 61:322-23; italics added)

Savonarola's noble end has been corrupted by ignoble means. As in Adam Bede, Eliot is describing mixed human nature; but in itself Savonarola's inner vision of humanity has validity, as Romola later realizes. He has, indeed, sought his own glory, but by striving for the highest end, the moral welfare of men; and he has sought it not by vague exhortations but by endeavouring "to turn beliefs into energies that would work in all the details of life" (III, 71:430-31). Still, Savonarola reflects the fanaticism that Feuerbach deplored, and that sense of utility which in the sophisticated Florentine society often counteracts such ideals. His greatness is

prostituted by his personal ambition, which generates a departure from "truth." Savonarola's refusal to change his view leads to Bernardo del Nero's execution; for her part, Romola will remember the stoical Bernardo who dies for his convictions, and he will help her always. Now, mentally separated from the friar and from Tito, and without her godfather, Romola is, as Dino had forecast, truly alone in a bare and stony plain.

In her separation from Savonarola, she has risen above religion, as the supernal child of Piero's earlier symbolic sketch rose above the masks. In the last phase of Romola's transformation, the Christ child becomes a human child. Romola's suffering has reached its most extreme expression in her suicidal wish, as she casts off to drift naiad-like upon the water. However, in leaving her future to fate (aptly symbolized by the craft), she frees herself--a pale reflection of Maggie Tulliver--from conflict, the burden of choice, immersing herself in pure sensation and relaxation of the will. The episode which Eliot called the "Drifting away" and Romola's encounter with the plague-ridden villagers belonged to Eliot's earliest vision of the story; the author regarded them as "by deliberate forecast adopted as romantic and symbolical elements" (GEL IV, 104). As in The Mill on the Floss, the water imagery has profound archetypal connotations; here, it is symbolic of death and rebirth. In her suicidal

wish, Romola cannot be accused of deserting people who depend on her (for Lewes, this was a moral crime);³⁹ but in her disillusionment she has lost her vision of a great altruistic purpose in life and has fallen into selfish complaining. In Feuerbach's words, "with the [loss of the] beloved object" she has lost her heart, "the activity of [her] affections, the principle of life" (EC 57-58). She may be seen as going through a dark night of the soul. With her trust in Savonarola gone, she now sees his version of political utility overshadowing his essential nobility.

In choosing to alleviate the plight of survivors in the plague-ridden village where the boat lands, Romola resumes her responsibilities to humanity, even more Madonna-like than before as she now cares for a young "Christ" child, a Jewish refugee. Although isolated from Florentine society, she is able to reach out, first to make a personal commitment to a child, and then to relieve the plight of the other villagers in an unidentified Mediterranean village that represents the world in microcosm. Her duty as a citizen is a long-standing pattern of obligation, as Savonarola decreed.

The theme of truth is reiterated when Romola returns to Florence and reads Savonarola's confession, which bears the stamp of "bungling fabrication" untypical of his character (III, 71, 430). She can now look beyond that

arrogance of faith exemplified in the friar and described by Feuerbach (EC 250) to recognize that the friar's essential, active aim was his love of humanity. He has risen to Feuerbach's universal love of the species: "He therefore who loves man for the sake of man, who rises to the love of the species, to universal love . . . is Christ himself" (EC 269). In practice, he is a flawed Christ, but Savonarola does become Christlike when--though the idea of martyrdom has been a passion to him--he ends his life, like Mr Tryan, not as a martyr but in a Comtian resignation "which he called by no glorifying name" (III, 71:434). Attending his execution, Romola hopes that when "there is no dread hanging over him but the dread of falsehood" he will speak "a last decisive word" (III, 72:437). As has happened time and again, she is destined to be disappointed.

After Tito's dramatic death (Eliot killed him "in great excitement"), Romola finds personal fulfilment through the initiatives that are impelled by her sense of duty. She seeks out Tessa, and accepts into her home her husband's former mistress and Tito's two illegitimate children. Savonarola had indicated that widows should not marry, in line with Comte's idea of a "perpetual widowhood," and we might see Romola as carrying out this role. But, again, her position is scarcely descriptive of what Comte had in mind. In her final independence, Romola is supreme among Eliot's major heroines. Yet, like

Eliot's more conventional heroines, she is motivated by ideals of love and duty.

Henry Alley aptly describes the Epilogue as a kind of private shrine which "carries forward the Bardo legacy of scholarship and familial devotion and the Savonarolan tradition of service to the world at large."⁴⁰ As mentioned, it also pays homage to Piero in his role as a moral support for Romola. William Sullivan considers that Piero must be brought into the Epilogue because he is the novel's best example of the broad humanity, freed from conventional religion, which is embodied in the narrator herself (30). Just as in Adam Bede, Feuerbachian elements are disguised in the character of an unlikely person--the lackadaisical Mr Irwine, or Mr Farebrother of Middlemarch, or the "crusty" Piero. It is interesting to compare their attitude to dogma (although he is a clergyman, Mr Farebrother does not care about it) and their essential helpfulness to others. Eliot now pointedly, and rather inartistically through such things as monologue, draws her moral and ties it to the theme of happiness.

Tito's son has inherited his father's ambition and love of pleasure and ease, and there is clearly a potential for the same vicious circle being repeated in the next generation.⁴¹ The sort of life Lillo dreams of is "something that would make me a great man, and very happy beside--something that would not hinder me from

having a good deal of pleasure" (444). Romola has to reprimand him gently, pointing out the incompatibility of his desires:

It is only a poor sort of happiness that could ever come by caring very much about our own narrow pleasures. We can only have the highest happiness, such as goes along with being a great man, by having wide thoughts, and much feeling for the rest of the world as well as ourselves; and this sort of happiness often brings so much pain with it, that we can only tell it from pain by its being what we would choose before everything else, because our souls see it is good. (445)

She emphasizes that no man can be great, "he can hardly keep himself from wickedness," unless he "gives up thinking much about pleasure or rewards, and gets strength to endure what is hard and painful" (445). And she explains that Bardo and Savonarola exemplify greatness, because Bardo chose poverty and obscurity rather than falsehood, and Savonarola spent his life "struggling against powerful wrong" and trying to raise men "to the highest deeds they are capable of." Her teaching concludes:

And so, my Lillo, if you mean to act nobly and seek to know the best things God has put within reach of men, you must learn to fix your mind on that end, and not on what will happen to you because of it [i.e., as an Aristotelian end in itself, as opposed to expediency]. And remember, if you were to choose something lower, and make it the rule of your life to seek pleasure and escape from what is disagreeable, calamity might come just the same; and it would be calamity falling on a base mind, which is the one form of sorrow that has no balm in it

. . . .

(445-46)

One day she will relate Tito's story, which will no doubt have an impact on Lillo; but now she simply brings out the distinction between a worldly, egoistic philosophy and a "higher" one, between an external and an internal philosophy, between one directed toward pleasure and one willing to endure suffering for a noble end.

One wonders whether a similar story to Tito's will be played out in the next generation; it is possible, but unlikely. Lillo from an early stage has been surrounded by love, and his "Mamma Romola," well acquainted with pain herself, will probably not be over-protective and thus prevent him from benefiting from the natural effects of suffering. Moreover, Romola's advice with regard to happiness should implant in him a sense of values.

The novel ends with a commentary by this natural child of Tessa as he looks over Florence and sees Piero in the distance, coming with flowers on the anniversary of the death of Fra Girolamo Savonarola. "How queer old Piero is!" says Lillo, "He abuses you for dressing the altar, and thinking so much of Fra Girolamo, and yet he brings you the flowers" (Epilogue, 446-47). Piero's action is comparable to Bernardo del Nero's response in relation to Bardo's library; his lack of agreement does not rule out sympathy. Piero's flowers are, first, for Romola and, second, to dress Savonarola's altar, above which hangs his portrait of the friar. The flowers and

portrait pay Comtian tribute to the past, as do Romola's last words conveying her devotion to Savonarola, who helped her in her great need. Sally Shuttleworth finds Romola at this point to be a true positivist, maintaining her altar for a Saint of Humanity, but feels the ritual to be sterile and sees in Tito's scorn for such symbols a disturbing validity (104-105). In Piero's attitude there is perhaps a hint of such scorn from a more responsible basis than that of Tito.

The secular Piero has never ambitiously striven for power; he is a crusty yet tender-hearted genius and sceptic whose impoverished diet of hard-boiled eggs was long ago relieved by Romola when she regaled him with sweetmeats. In his "queerness" Piero remains an ideal companion to the thirty-five-year-old Romola and a mentor and father figure for Lillo. With Romola's help, Piero will guide the boy to true happiness, as he did Romola. After despair and death comes not only resignation but sweetness and light, a reconciliation with the next generation that is suggestive of Shakespeare's dark comedies. However, Romola's present happiness is deeply imbued with the tragic associations of the past, and with memories of her own special saviour, the friar Savonarola.

Notes

¹Henry James, "The Novels of George Eliot," The Atlantic Monthly 18 (October 1866): 479-92; rpt. A Century of George Eliot Criticism, ed. Gordon S. Haight (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1965) 52; Thale 73-75, 77-79; but

see Andrew Sanders, The Victorian Historical Novel 1840-1880 (London: Macmillan, 1978) 195. Carole Robinson cautions that it is "easy to misread Romola, and if we do we shall not understand why it is so remarkable a failure"; "Romola: A Reading of the Novel," Victorian Studies 6 (1962): 29-42 (31). Janet Gezari proposes some reasons why Romola has failed to engage the sympathies of many readers in "Romola and the Myth of Apocalypse," in George Eliot: Centenary Essays and an Unpublished Fragment, ed. Anne Smith (London: Vision P, 1980) 77-102 (99-100). Other critics while disliking the work have felt bound to describe its merits; Leavis found much to admire as well as to criticize. More recently, Levine has seen the "initial and inescapable fact" about Romola to be its failure, but views it as a far more interesting book than the conventional placing of it would suggest. Like Thale and other critics, he regards it as most clearly marking the transition between the "early" and the "late" George Eliot; "'Romola' as Fable," Critical Essays on George Eliot, ed. Barbara Hardy (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970) 78-79. Myers has thought it George Eliot's least successful and least enjoyable novel yet a work of major intellectual significance "as possibly the most complex formalization of the problems of varying and uncertain perspective in the whole of nineteenth-century fiction" (166).

²Two key works of criticism are Felicia Bonaparte's The Triptych and the Cross: The Central Myths of George Eliot's Poetic Imagination (New York: New York UP, 1979), and Hugh Witemeyer's George Eliot and the Visual Arts (New Haven: Yale UP, 1979). Future references in this chapter to The Triptych and the Cross will be given in the text.

³The first instalment appeared in the Cornhill Magazine in July 1862, the last in August 1863.

⁴See, e.g., J. B. Bullen, "George Eliot's Romola as a Positivist Allegory," Review of English Studies N.S. 26 (1975): 425-35 (428-30). Comte's tripartite view of evolution as polytheistic, monotheistic, and positivist, corresponds broadly to ancient polytheism, medieval Catholicism, and modern positivism; a woman represents the "soul" of humanity. See, e.g., Bonaparte 13, 19-20. George Levine sees Romola as fable, sustaining her purity by remaining in the world of romance. When Romola has to confront the real world, there is an unsatisfactory reconciliation of the two worlds; "'Romola' as Fable," Critical Essays on George Eliot, ed. Barbara Hardy (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970) 78-98 (93). Other critics have found it hard to reconcile Eliot's realism

with Romola's epic role; see Thale, 82; cf. Sanders 194.

⁵See also Thale, 79-80, and Henry Alley, who in his article "Romola and the Preservation of Household Gods," Cithara, 23 (May 1984): No. 2, 25-35, succinctly describes different stages of Romola's journey. Sanders, op. cit., 177, sees a disquieting anachronism in the presentation of a "Feuerbachian, even Positivist, spiritual journey of a Renaissance woman, and its resolution in a world which appears effectively godless."

⁶See Nancy L. Paxton, "George Eliot and the City: The Imprisonment of Culture," in Women Writers and the City: Essays in Feminist Literary Criticism, ed. Susan Merrill Squier (Knoxville: U of Tennessee P, 1984) 73, and "Feminism and Positivism in George Eliot's Romola, in Nineteenth-Century Women Writers of the English-Speaking World, ed. Rhoda B. Nathan, prepared under the auspices of Hofstra U (New York: Greenwood P, 1986) 143-50 (146); Myers, The Teaching of George Eliot 130; and Sally Shuttleworth, George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Science 96.

⁷To give "some out of the normal relations" was the way in which George Eliot expressed it (GEL IV, 301); the italics are notably Eliot's. Bullen, op. cit.; see also Sanders 257, n. 10. For an exposition of the Comtian influence in George Eliot's novels, see Prasad, Bonaparte, The Triptych and the Cross, Bullen, op. cit., and Myers, who acknowledges Comte as "a persistent and major presence in her work" fused with Associationist psychology (op. cit. 11).

⁸See Sanders 257, n. 10; Myers 8; Feuerbach, EC 20. Many similar assumptions to those of Comte are presented less systematically in Feuerbach's philosophy; see Myers's comparison of Comte's and Feuerbach's philosophies, idem. Cf. Feuerbach's idea of the species with Comte's "Humanity"; Feuerbach's notion comprises "the whole of human beings, past, present, and future"; Comte's more exclusively comprises only those who are "really assimilable, in virtue of a real co-operation towards the common existence," The Catechism of Positive Religion, trans. Richard Congreve, rev. 1858; 3rd ed., rev. (1891; rpt. Clifton, N.J.: Augustus M. Kelley Publishers, 1973) 53. Comte writes, "Of the two fundamental conditions of religion, love and faith, the first should certainly take the first place" (51), which accords with Feuerbach's opposition between faith and love. A brief summary of Comte's position is recorded by Myers, p. 2, and given more comprehensively by J. S. Mill in his 1865 essay

"Auguste Comte and Positivism," C.W., Vol. 10: Essays on Ethics, Religion and Society, ed. J. M. Robson (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1969) 261-368.

⁹She merely mentioned a "poetic dialogue" on the "contest of ideas" she had by this time already written, "A College Breakfast-Party." When Harrison reiterated his plea for a "direct estimate" of Comte's religion, the most she would do was to recommend certain passages from her beloved Wordsworth and to remind him of the rich tradition of the French *pensée*. Vogeler also reiterates Eliot's often repeated words, "I will not submit to [Comte] my heart and my intellect." However, Eliot's poem "O may I join the Choir Invisible" about the dead living again in minds made better by their presence would be cited by Congreve in his annual address in 1877 at the Positivist Centre in Bloomsbury. "George Eliot and the Positivists," Nineteenth-Century Fiction 35 (1980): 406-31 (418-19, 423); "A College Breakfast-Party," Macmillan's Magazine 38 (1878): 161-79.

¹⁰See Auguste Comte, The Catechism of Positive Religion, op. cit. 216. In many ways, of course, Feuerbach's and Comte's concepts of happiness coincide. George Eliot's adherence to a Positivist conception of happiness (in which we may include both Comte and Feuerbach) is touched on by John Lucas in his article "Tilting at the Moderns: W. H. Mallock's Criticisms of the Positivist Spirit," Renaissance and Modern Studies 10 (1966): 88-143. Harrison's ideal of "knowledge" coupled with "Love" is relevant to Feuerbach's notions and, as in Feuerbach, the "harmonizing principle of life" is found primarily in altruism and affection; see Lucas 114-15.

¹¹Shuttleworth 96-114 (99-100). Myers, however, describes Savonarola as a "God-intoxicated man" (42). The visionary tendencies of the seer Camilla Rucellai provide a more extreme and harmful example of the danger of excessive imagination than Savonarola who, however, begins to "embroider" his visions. See Gezari on visionary imagination in the novel (91-96). Although Shuttleworth finds "the repetitive pattern of doubt, flight and affirmation" in the novel reflects George Eliot's uncertain relation to Comtian philosophy (100-101), in the "Drifting away" she sees George Eliot as overruling her doubts regarding Comtian philosophy.

¹²See also the narrator's comments in relation to Romola's final confrontation with Savonarola, discussed later, where this expression is used. The Positive

Philosophy of Auguste Comte, freely translated and condensed by Harriet Martineau, 2 vols. (New York: Calvin Blanchard, 1858) 1:10. Unless otherwise specified, future references in the text will be to this edition. (The other edition used is the 1853 translation by Harriet Martineau, 2 vols., published by John Chapman.)

¹³See "Feminism and Positivism in George Eliot's Romola," 149. Paxton (143) is disagreeing with the views expressed in Prasad's Comtism in the Novels of George Eliot (172).

¹⁴See Carroll, The Critical Heritage 207.

¹⁵The problem of recognition of the limits of obedience was raised by Burke in his Reflections on the Revolution in France. In a passage recorded by Eliot in her Commonplace Book, Burke remarks: "The speculative line of demarcation, where obedience ought to end, and resistance must begin, is faint, obscure, not easily definable." See Shuttleworth 97-98, who argues that the fundamental problem is how far man should be bound by the culture of the past.

¹⁶See Jan R. Gordon, who notes that virtually every activity in the first half of the novel is measured against its proximity to scholarship. "Affiliation as (Dis)semination: Gossip and Family in George Eliot's European Novel," Journal of European Studies 15 (1985): 165.

¹⁷"George Eliot's 'Brother Jacob': Fables and the Physiology of Common Life," Philological Quarterly 64 (1985): 17-34 (31). J. S. Szirotny, in "Two Confectioners the Reverse of Sweet: The Role of Metaphor in Determining George Eliot's Use of Experience," Studies in Short Fiction 21 (1984): 127-44, describes George Eliot's ironical use of the sweet metaphor to underline David Faux's unscrupulousness, and finds Eliot's use of the sweet metaphor to have its origin in the evangelical Christianity that profoundly shaped her thinking. James Diedrick, who notes that "Brother Jacob" is the only one of Eliot's narratives that withholds sympathy for the characters, considers the story not an anomaly but an important experiment for Eliot; "George Eliot's Experiments in Fiction: 'Brother Jacob' and the German Novelle," ibid. 22 (1985): 461-68 (464, 468).

¹⁸Many critics, e.g., Thale, have cursorily dismissed the story as negligible. However, see Peter Allan Dale. He believes George Eliot's probable source to be the eighteenth-century popular story of Inkle and Yarico, noting the ideological confrontation between the ethic of capitalistic self-assertion and traditional Christian charity that the source epitomizes. (Unlike "Brother Jacob," Inkle and Yarico, with which it has noted affinities, ended on a moral note.) Szirotny believes the source to be a confectioner named Munderloh, the brother of George Eliot's landlady in Weimar (127-28). George Eliot might well have been influenced by both these examples of a rogue. Yet another possible source is the German Novelle and especially Gottfried Keller's Clothes Make the Man, with its unmasking plot (though the hero, unlike David, is a noble, deserving spirit). See Diedrick, op. cit.

¹⁹R. H. Hutton, in his review of July 18, 1863 in the Spectator, early remarked on the "many points of resemblance" of "that strange era" with the present. Carroll, The Critical Heritage 200.

²⁰According to Bentham, Horace contrasts the opinions of the Stoics that all misdeeds stand on the same level in the scale of ill-desert, or rather should be visited with the same amount of blame, and declares that men's feelings, customs, and utility itself are in hostility with the Stoic theory; Deontology, ed. Bowring, 290. Bentham's contrasting of stoicism with utilitarianism is interesting in light of George Eliot's treatment of stoicism in the novel as another antithesis (and alternative) to utilitarianism.

²¹Cf. Barbara Charlesworth Gelpi who, noting Deirdre David's contention that Eliot was a "traditional" intellectual deliberately affiliating herself with the values of an entrenched land-owning class (certainly, Felix Holt shows Eliot to some extent supporting traditional values for fear of the consequences if they are overthrown), observes that Eliot was herself ostracized by that establishment. Review of Intellectual Women and Victorian Patriarchy: Harriet Martineau, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, George Eliot by Deirdre David (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1987), in Nineteenth Century Literature 43 (1988): 396-99. Eliot's dislike of worldliness actually sprang from her early evangelicalism which had made her unusually conscious of the discrepancy between "worldliness" and Christian values.

²²See G. H. Lewes, "Suicide in Life and Literature," Westminster Review, 68 o.s., 12 n.s. (July 1857): 52-78, 64.

²³Dale emphasizes that this shift of Lewes's in the understanding of human nature represented the principal development in psychological theory in the nineteenth century, one which needed only Darwin to complete its revolution. It seemed now that there was no clear demarcation between human and animal intelligence; one had evolved from the other (26). In relation to the opposition between this way of thinking and that of utilitarianism, it is only fair to add that Bentham's attitude toward animals was amazingly sympathetic and typically in advance of his time. He considered that avoidance of suffering was an important factor for animals as well as for man.

²⁴The fear that grips Tito is quite distinct from "that awe of the Divine Nemesis which was felt by religious pagans" (that is, the sort of fear that Gwendolen Harleth experiences), the "initial recognition of a moral law restraining desire" which "checks the hard bold scrutiny of imperfect thought into obligations which can never be proved to have any sanctity in the absence of feeling" (I, 11:177).

²⁵In relation to Piero, see Alley, "Romola and the Preservation of Household Gods" 30. He notes that, in being part of a larger context, Piero must be brought into the Epilogue as a living being, because he is the novel's "consistently best example of the broad humanity, freed from conventional religion, which is embodied in the narrator herself."

²⁶See Sullivan, "Piero di Cosimo and the Higher Primitivism," 390-92, 396-98. Sullivan correctly sees Romola's progress as "not merely from pagan to Christian, but from pagan to Christian to a glimpse of 'higher possibilities' in a kind of purified naturalness" (400), though he does not recognize the relation between Romola's "purified naturalness" and Feuerbach's essential nature. He rightly perceives that Piero is a standard toward which Romola is evolving (ibid.). Piero's vision of reality is opposed to the visions of various Christians in the novel.

²⁷Masks, as a cover or partial cover for the face or head, have long been used as a disguise or protection,

e.g., by primitive peoples to impersonate supernatural beings or animals in religious and magical ceremonies. In mythology, they may hide mysterious transformations. Metamorphoses must be hidden from view, hence the need for a mask, which is equivalent to the chrysalis. The mask can also express the solar and energetic aspects of the life process. In Greek drama, masks represented a fixed emotion such as grief or rage. See J. E. Cirlot, trans. Jack Sage, A Dictionary of Symbols, 2nd ed. (New York: Philosophical Library, 1971); The New Columbia Encyclopedia, ed. William H. Harris and Judith S. Levey (New York: Columbia UP, 1975). Witemeyer has noted that Piero's picture of the masks, discussed below, resembles no known work by Piero di Cosimo (198).

²⁸William J. Sullivan, "Piero di Cosimo and the Higher Primitivism in Romola," Nineteenth-Century Fiction 26 (1972): 390-405 (396).

²⁹Ibid. 393.

³⁰W. J. Sullivan, "The Sketch of the Three Masks in Romola," The Victorian Newsletter No. 41 (Spring, 1972): 9-13 (9, 11).

³¹Aristotle establishes happiness to be the "chief good" because it "is something final and self-sufficient, and is the end of action." He attempts to give a clearer account through ascertaining the function of man, finding this to be "activity of soul in accordance with virtue" or "the best and most complete virtue" in "a complete life." Nicomachean Ethics, Bk. I, ch. 7. The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941) 942-43. Eliot had read this work by Aristotle (see chapter 1), in which the view of pleasure is not dissimilar to her own, though Aristotle is more neutral. Cf. Bonaparte 142; although Hume is concerned with the same subject, he may be regarded as a forerunner of utilitarianism, which would align him, rather, with Tito. However, as Eugene Kamenka has pointed out, Feuerbach's general position in relation to the connection between happiness and morality has much similarity to Hume's (134). Indeed, there are some similarities here between Feuerbach's position and Bentham's except that, as Kamenka emphasizes, for Feuerbach morality issued out of the nature of man (133).

³²As Bonaparte has observed, it is an experience of pain which arouses her imagination, a necessary condition for sympathy; and she notes that in expounding the mystery

of the crucifixion Eliot was far more indebted to Feuerbach than to Comte (152-53).

³³Witemeyer 57. He is drawing on Wiesenfarth's "George Eliot's Mythmaking" 152-55. On Eliot's ironic conflation in the picture of two different episodes from Ovid's Metamorphoses, hinting at "the dark truth which the pastoral portrait conceals," see Witemeyer 57-58.

³⁴Casket imagery, of course, has archetypal connotations, as expressed in a picture from a series depicting the hero myth; see C. G. Jung, Alchemical Studies, Bollingen Series 20, trans. R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1967) fig. 14. The casket imagery in Eliot's fiction relates to the same archetypal theme as is frequently expressed in light, water, and garden imagery--the notion of harmony, perfection, or happiness of the inner world.

³⁵Eugene August, John Stuart Mill: A Mind at Large (New York: Scribner's, 1975) 170.

³⁶Neil Roberts, George Eliot: Her Beliefs and Her Art (London: Paul Elek, 1975) 29.

³⁷The notion of minimum commitment is an important element in the rationale of utilitarianism; see J. J. C. Smart and Bernard Williams, Utilitarianism: For and Against (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1973) 136-37.

³⁸See Alley, "Romola and the Preservation of Household Gods" 31. In wanting her father to be depicted as Oedipus, Romola has drawn on Piero's original vision in Book I of them as the mythic father and daughter at Colonus. The important suggestion, as Alley notes, is that Romola's perception is approaching Piero's: "she sees into people, into their strengths and faults, and forms, in her mind, a balanced and universal image" (31).

³⁹Lewes, "Suicide in Life and Literature," Westminster Review 68 o.s., 12 n.s. (July 1857): 68.

⁴⁰Alley, "Romola and the Preservation of Household Gods" 33.

⁴¹See Shuttleworth 114.

CHAPTER 8

FELIX HOLT: A CRITIQUE OF WORLDLINESS AND A ROLE MODEL

Prior to writing Felix Holt, the Radical, George Eliot conceived a drama, The Spanish Gypsy, inspired by Titian's Anunciation and Greek tragedy. This work, resumed as a dramatic poem after she finished Felix Holt in 1866, involved the struggle of the Moors at the time of the Spanish Inquisition. Fedalma discovers through a meeting with her dying father, Zarca, that she is a princess, mother to the gypsy race, and she renounces her love for Don Silva, her betrothed. Here, Eliot required the opposition of race as a foundation for renouncing a personal love (Life III, 31). The question of an inherited misfortune recurs in Felix Holt, although Eliot's treatment of it is rather different. Fedalma's choice of duty over personal love and her resignation to her inherited destiny may be seen as Comtian.¹ In Felix Holt, too, the influence of Comte is apparent, while the idea of an inherited destiny will recur in Daniel Deronda.

In some ways an English version of Romola, Felix Holt presents English society at a critical moment of transition from aristocratic and agrarian values to middle class and industrial values. These are epitomized in the

novel, respectively, by Mrs Transome and her son, Harold. It has been argued that the genesis of Felix Holt lay in Mrs Transome's tragic plight, rather than in the political interests of the author. However, the Reform Bill of 1832 was an important phase of a transition still in process at the time Eliot was writing Felix Holt--the beginning of the end of an old order which in France had ended with the Revolution.²

Ostensibly about reform, this novel certainly indicates a need for reform, since abuses continued to grow alongside the shaping of institutions, social traditions, and political affairs, for instance in electoral procedures and laws of inheritance. The natural law has been distorted through human machinations, and this novel perhaps more than any other of George Eliot's indicates the need for a Feuerbachian return to nature, visibly embodied here in terms of trees, landscapes, and scenic vistas. The mechanisms of law convey corruption, but, also, as Norman Vance has pointed out, there is an important distinction between them and the underlying moral law, which provides a source of continuity (115).

It is reform of human nature that most concerns Eliot here, and David Carroll has characterized the central and most recurrent theme as belief in the necessity to embrace a particular concept of "religion."³ Through religious terminology and metaphor, Eliot conveys her distaste for corruption and convoluted laws, but also

conveys the essential characteristics of religion as those of Feuerbach's affection, will, and understanding, as well as a Comtian religion of humanity. Carroll has also noted that the themes of politics, religion, and love are used here to demonstrate that, properly, reform or modification of the social organism must pay due regard to the individual. In this novel, in short, Eliot is "grappling with the complications and contradictions inherent in the very conception of the social organism" (252).

In Felix Holt, Eliot once again probes the moral limits of egoism. Comte, as well as Bentham, Feuerbach, and Spencer, had described self-interest as natural to man, and Comte particularly considered that it required a difficult moral effort to overcome self-interest. The utopia set out in Comte's Positive Philosophy had resembled Feuerbach's in that reason and sympathy were brought into active cooperation. Although Comte considered that, separately, their influence in an imperfect society was feeble, he considered their combined influence to be indefinitely extensive. While recognizing that practical life must, to a large extent, be regulated by interested motives, he considered that this active principle of joint reason and sympathy could ameliorate the preponderance of self-love in society. Positivism, in his opinion, introduced a standard of morality inconceivably higher than any that had previously

existed.⁴

Felix Holt, then, incorporates not only Feuerbach's concept of humanity but a Comtian one that has fundamental elements in common with it. The epigraph to Comte's introductory remarks in the General View of Positivism--"We tire of thinking and even of acting; we never tire of loving"--reflects Feuerbach's fundamental theme.

We know that Eliot continued to read Comte, while there is no record that she was familiar with all of Feuerbach's later works, so it is understandable that a Comtian morality interacted in her fiction with a Feuerbachian one by the time she came to write Felix Holt. The tension between the two--in the conflict between feeling and submission--was resolved in Romola, rather drastically, by the deaths of most of the persons Romola had loved. Her final stance comprised a unique blending of Feuerbachian self-determination with Comtian submission.

Yet there are various reasons why Eliot might disagree with Comte. For Comte, the individual is secondary to the social body.⁵ Although she sometimes wavered, Eliot often considers the individual as primary, as suggested in Felix Holt and certain other novels, as well as in some of her letters. Further, for Comte, as we have seen, the married woman should be subordinate to her

husband; indeed, in Felix Holt, Esther Lyon comes to epitomize Comte's theories as to woman's special powers of love, sympathy, and altruism. Initially, Esther may appear to incarnate a womanly "subjection" to man that contrasts oddly with the description of woman's struggle for power and equality, as depicted in Mrs Transome's relationship with her son, Harold. Esther herself is presented as a female whose "'fulness of perfection'" must be in marriage (III, 44:360). By contrast, Mrs Transome's despair and negative outlook have been seen as an implied questioning of patterns of hierarchical dominance, both social and sexual.⁶ While Esther's submissive stance is ratified by the author and Mrs Transome's is shown to be starkly egoistic, the description of the older woman raises questions about the role and status of women in society.

Eliot's portrayal of the convoluted laws of inheritance in Felix Holt could also be seen as a criticism of Comte's views. Inheritance was a concept Comte approved, one that is opposed to the notion of equal rights for rich and poor alike in so far as it has tended to perpetuate wealth in a particular class.⁷ However, the inheritance intricacies may have derived mainly from Frederic Harrison's legal advice, requested by Eliot, on how to transfer her heroine from a poor and humble situation to a wealthy, aristocratic one.⁸

Nonetheless, eight months after finishing Felix Holt, Eliot wrote about her gratitude for the illumination that Comte had contributed to her life, in words that clearly showed she regarded him reverentially (GEL IV, 333). In the application of philosophical theory to social conditions which Eliot attempts in Felix Holt, the attitudes and views of Comte are particularly prevalent. Also, Eliot here turns to Wordsworth to convey ideas which echo Feuerbach's with more poetic resonance. Two years later, while working on "The Spanish Gypsy," she would record in her "Notes on Form in Art" that "Poetry begins when passion weds thought by finding expression in image" (Essays 435). Felix Holt is conceived in terms of an opposition between Byronic and Wordsworthian romanticism, with the aristocratic world of Transome Court contrasted to Felix Holt's educational endeavours "in the spirit of Wordsworth's Excursion."⁹

Eliot's long-standing dislike of Benthamite philosophical radicalism is apparent in the novel. But despite this distaste for a philosophy stemming from eighteenth-century progressivist rationalism, there is, Peter Coveney has observed, no suggestion in the "political mind" of Felix Holt or in his Address to Working Men of any opposition to rationality, or any inherent friction between rationality and the "living body" of society.¹⁰ Eliot rejected philosophical

radicalism because it did not lay enough emphasis on feeling; she did not, of course, reject rationality per se, as long as it did not extend to calculation or other supposed excesses.

While not regarded by many readers as her greatest art, Felix Holt provides the clearest illustration in Eliot's novels of three phases which occur in all of George Eliot's fiction. Characteristically, these are: (Phase I) a search for pleasure that may be a product of self-interest, ignorance, or a calculating utilitarian morality desirous of the acquisition of wealth or social position; (Phase II) suffering; and (Phase III) the personal fulfilment and happiness that is a product of combined love and reason according to Feuerbach's definitions. It should be noted that ideal characters such as Dinah Morris, Romola, and Dorothea Brooke avoid excessive egoism, but tend toward a stoical or pre-sensory stage, where they do not relate properly to the world or to the opposite sex.

In the egoistic first phase, dissociations and inadequacies of thought and feeling, shaped by religious metaphor, continually emerge. In Felix Holt, the Debarrys, as lords of the manor, come next to Providence and have taken the place of saints, as the narrator ironically notes in the third chapter. In fact, the upper class, with the exception of Philip Debarry, is described

as outdated, even prehistoric. The aptly-named Sir Maximus neglects nothing useful to his position, exhorting his wife to set aside gossiping niceties and "bring the right people together" (I, 7:85). His sense of duty aims to perpetuate the standards of Toryism, a political affinity which has organically become equated with wealth and position. It does not extend to keeping a promise to Rufus Lyon, the Dissenting minister, who wants to debate on religious matters; this episode, which fizzles out in a comic anticlimax, is suggestive of the incapacity of the different classes to communicate satisfactorily.

The Debarrys' servants are parasites who take advantage of the conveniences and pleasures offered by the household; these include revelry, gambling, tippling at their master's expense, indulgence of their love of finery, and flirtation. Sir Maximus's servant Christian, who does not live up to his religious cognomen, has early exhausted the more impulsive delights of life to become a sober calculator (I, 25:211), and hopes to profit by his secret knowledge about Esther's birthright. With the exception of Felix Holt, low-bred people are generally depicted as no more moral than the high-bred. The election practices of the working people are self-interested and sometimes stupid; the mob is composed of "men whose mental state was a mere medley of appetites and confused impressions" (II, 33:268). As in Eliot's

article on Riehl, the closely observed picture is not necessarily disarming.¹¹ In Felix Holt, the reason for Eliot's conservative tendencies in relation to working-class reform is apparent.

Mrs Holt and the dissenting minister, Rufus Lyon, may be seen as representatives, respectively, of the lower and lower middle classes. Mrs Holt falls short with respect to Feuerbach's reason, as she tries to induce her son, Felix, to become a doctor who will sell his father's quack medicines. She finds biblical "proof" to justify the use of these "receipts":

there's texts upon texts about ointments and medicines, and there's one as might have been made for a receipt of my husbands's--it's just as if it was a riddle, and Holt's Elixir was the answer. (I, 4:51)

Because he associates high principles with sectarian phraseology, Rufus Lyon is less sympathetic to the plain-spoken Felix Holt than he would otherwise have been (I, 5:55), a clear illustration of the way in which alienation through religious dogmatism can detract from human qualities, a point integral to Feuerbach's concept of alienation. Lyon is a strangely comic figure who, like Gilfil, has an unexpectedly romantic, even Byronic, past. Here, his situation perfectly illustrates Feuerbach's principle that where the religious imagination takes precedence reality loses its value. Lyon looked on his

"mad wishes" for Annette, Esther's mother, as a spiritual defection irreconcilable with his role as a Christian minister, and had for a while resigned his ministry.

Such a conflict dividing men's spiritual and sensuous natures had been forecast by Feuerbach. "The unworldly, supernatural life," Feuerbach had stated, "is essentially also an unmarried life" (EC 164). Heaven becomes the supreme object of faith and hope, and the true Christian not only feels no need of culture, because this is a worldly principle, he has no need of natural love, for God supplies his wants. The need of sexual love which he inevitably experiences is felt to be a contradiction to his heavenly destination, and it is depreciated. Heaven is his "treasure-casket," and from it he excludes his true nature (EC 164-68). Lyon loves Annette despite himself, deprecating his own feelings, but his real spiritual defection is in failing to make every attempt to discover Esther's parentage and in delaying to tell his adopted daughter that he is not her father.

Jerome Thale has drawn attention to the balance in Eliot's judgment of Esther and the difficulty of making a distinction between snobbery and a natural desire for refinement (98); however, Esther does have pretensions to gentility and she places too much emphasis on outward, superficial things. She has a horror of appearing ridiculous, even in the eyes of "vulgar Trebians" and,

fancying she would have loved her mother better than she can love her eccentric father, fails to appreciate his good qualities or see that there is anything worthwhile in his religion. Like Gwendolen Harleth, she can be caustically witty. When Felix wishes to sit in the kitchen but does not want to "be a bore," she retaliates, "I always give you credit for not meaning it" (I, 10:106-107). She could become a harlot, harpy, or harridan: her "changing face" is the "perfect symbol of her mixed susceptible nature, in which battle was inevitable, and the side of victory uncertain" (III, 37:301).

Numerous other characters are depicted in their "Phase I" limitations. Even Felix Holt has not always been a paragon of virtue; six weeks of debauchery had converted him. His desire to turn his life into "easy pleasure" was altered by his awareness of the moral consequences, by "what else it could be turned into" (I, 5:56). We can almost see Felix's case as a Nietzschean progress, necessarily beginning with egoism. Felix separates thought from feeling in segregating his public task of reform from his private life. He has determined to remain single so as not to be distracted from his aim by a frivolous woman. But, as the author muses, "there is no private life which has not been determined by a wider public life" (I, 3:45). The same laws operate for Felix Holt as for the town of Treby

Magna.¹²

The two lawyers, Matthew Jermyn and his former protégé, the London lawyer John Johnson, epitomize double-dealing and the low morality of electioneering. As Harold Transome's agent, Johnson plies the Sproxton workers with alcohol to induce them to support Harold in his bid for election as a Radical. These working-men cannot vote, but they will raise a riot. With his quick legal mind, Johnson seizes on the facts of Esther's inheritance and uses them to discredit the Transomes for whom Jermyn acts.

Men's actions here are compared to a game of chess in which all the chessmen have passions and intellects:

You might be the longest-headed of deductive reasoners, and yet you might be beaten by your own pawns. You would be especially likely to be beaten, if you depended arrogantly on your mathematical imagination, and regarded your passionate pieces with contempt.

Yet this imaginary game is easy compared with the game a man has to play against his fellow-men with other fellow-men for his instruments. He thinks himself sagacious, perhaps, because he trusts no bond except that of self-interest; but the only self-interest he can safely rely on is what seems to be such to the mind he would use or govern. Can he ever be sure of knowing this?
(II, 29:237)

Johnson's "fealty" to Jermyn is a case in point. Over years of obligation and subjection, his dislike of Jermyn had imperceptibly increased to the point that "it had become an actuating motive disposed to use an opportunity,

if not to watch for one" (II, 29:238). Johnson initiates a disclosure about the Transome estate to discomfort Jermyn; he is

capable of remembering anything for his own pleasure and benefit. To act with doubleness towards a man whose own conduct was double, was so near an approach to virtue that it deserved to be called by no meaner name than Diplomacy.
(II, 29:239)

The similarity to the earlier Tito Melema is unmistakable. Johnson's assurance to Harold that he will not exceed "the necessary measures that a rational judgment would dictate" (II, 17:164) in relation to the "treating" of the Sproxton men provides an indication of the utility that rationality means in the context of this election: if bribery is necessary, so be it.

By his legal advice, Jermyn has profited from the Transome lawsuits after his love for Mrs Transome turned into calculation. His energetic, aspiring, and illegitimate offspring, Harold, will seek to expose him, and in return Jermyn will subtly try to blackmail Harold. The nemesis shatteringly falls on Harold when he learns that the man he despises is his father. In this novel, the consequences of egoism extend to the next generation.

Mrs Transome hovers uncertainly on the fringe of the upper classes, not a Transome but a Durfey; only legal "niceties" gave her a claim to the estate.¹³ In her, W. F. T. Myers has noted the decaying conservative spirit,

representing the destruction of a whole way of life and the forces of social history sloughing off the reactionary social and political forces. He also points to the relation between Tory politics and a larger complex of moral and religious perceptions and experiences. As he has noted, her religious feelings are a perfect example of Feuerbach's central thesis that a man's religion is an unconscious projection of his ideas about, and hopes for, humanity.¹⁴ While Mrs Transome may delight in ridicule of biblical characters and is interested in stories of illicit passion, she believes that truth and safety lie in due attendance on prayers and sermons, in the admirable doctrine and ritual of the Church of England, free of Puritanism and Popery. Such a view of this world and the next "would preserve the existing arrangements of English society quite unshaken, keeping down the obtrusiveness of the vulgar and the discontent of the poor" (I, 1:27). The portrait of her as a girl throws into relief her present dried-up aspect, and the portraiture imagery used for her expresses her lack of insight, imagination, and understanding of the laws of human nature, together with her acerbity:

She had never seen behind the canvass with which her life was hung. In the dim background there was the burning mount and the tables of the law; in the foreground there was Lady Debarry privately gossiping about her, and Lady Wyvern finally deciding not to send her invitations to dinner.

(III, 40:320)¹⁵

There is a suggestion here of a lost Old Testament heritage--"the history of the Jews, she knew, ought to be preferred to any profane history" (I, 1:27). It is noteworthy that when Esther Lyon, named after the biblical heroine from the Book of Esther, comes into Mrs Transome's life, she will change it. (The biblical Esther, who married the King of Persia, persuaded him to free the Jews.) At present Mrs Transome lives in the midst of "desecrated sanctities," and her first conversations with Esther will relate to matters of importance to the reactionary aristocrat, the genealogy of the Lingon and Transome families. Social distinctions have become her religion, social niceties her dogma. Her self-division is manifest; longing for love, she exercises power, enjoying the subordination of her tenants and the husband who finds solace with his collection of dead insects. At the beginning of the novel, she nurses an illusion that Harold's return after many years abroad will bring the happiness she craves; yet he had only recently informed her that he had a son and heir, and had also kept quiet about his marriage, estimating his mother's stereotyped reaction to his marrying a "dark-skinned" foreigner.

Mrs Transome's indomitable thirst for power, which seems to be a substitute for love, is limited to her private territory of the estate and her family; she has no

public function. The author, moreover, compares her to music out of tune: she has not the ability to interact sympathetically with other people, and even her private life is unsatisfactory. She does not love Harold for what he is; rather like Baldassarre with Tito, she mainly wants him to be devoted to her. Outwardly tyrannical, inwardly fearful, she is a stately woman and a proud one, but not a clever one. Her earlier girlish foolishness was caused by her acceptance of fashionable standards which saw morality as dull and stupid. Hence, she and Jermyn, her lover, had indulged their desires, while her husband was fully and unhappily cognizant of the affair.¹⁶ The consequences are worse for the sensitive woman than for the conceited middle-aged man, who has married and had a family of daughters, and almost forgotten the past intimacy. Paradoxically, her only hope of happiness is provided by Esther, the new heiress to the Transome estate.

In Harold Transome, the most original character in the novel as Mrs Transome is the most dramatically powerful, Eliot combines an egoistic, calculating utilitarianism with a far-sighted morality and consequently the ability to make a key decision correctly even when it will affect him adversely in losing his estate and Esther. In minor matters of morality, Harold is less strict.

Harold cannot be considered as part of the effete aristocracy. He represents the world of commerce, where

he made his fortune. He is a new broom who sweeps clean; he wants to become rich, have an estate, and become a Radical:

This determined aiming at something not easy but clearly possible, marked the direction in which Harold's nature was strong; he had the energetic will and muscle, the self-confidence, the quick perception, and the narrow imagination which make what is admirably called the practical mind.
(I, 8:97)

We are told that his character has been ripened with experience and by much knowledge which he had set himself deliberately to gain. Harold's mixture of innovation and conservatism is rooted in his shrewd awareness that an extreme position might rob power of its triumph. He is not a thorough utilitarian, for his standards are defined not by theory but by disposition and association. The author describes him as "a clever, frank, good-natured egoist" who is

not stringently consistent, but without any disposition to falsity; proud, but with a pride that was moulded in an individual rather than an hereditary form; unspeculative, unsentimental, unsympathetic; fond of sensual pleasures, but disinclined to all vice, and attached as a healthy, clear-sighted person, to all conventional morality, construed with a certain freedom, like doctrinal articles to which the public order may require subscription.
(I, 8:98)

Harold's "premises" may seem indifferent; however, Eliot points out that

if . . . you had observed his qualities through the medium of his agreeable person, bright smile, and a certain easy charm which accompanies sensuousness when unsullied by coarseness--through the medium also of the many opportunities in which he would have made himself useful or pleasant to you--you would have thought him a good fellow, highly acceptable as a guest, a colleague, or a brother-in-law. Whether all mothers would have liked him as a son, is another question. (I, 8:98)

Eliot's fiction frequently contains such ironic nuances; here we have one in Harold's posited useful and pleasant services to the reader. It is the reader she subtly presents as egoistic, and stupid, or verging on the utilitarian; the intention is to modulate the reader's response into a fully discriminating judgment.

Harold Transome and Felix Holt have a good deal in common, in their double roles of politician and lover, and their self-reliance.¹⁷ But this apparent similarity serves to accentuate their differences, as with Mrs Transome and Esther. There is a mutual repulsion which for Felix proceeds from his feeling that the "spirit of innovation," as in Radicalism, has rotten mouthpieces, and from his conflation of the innovative spirit with religion. Harold, for his part, dislikes impracticable notions of loftiness and purity, dislikes all "enthusiasm": "he thought he saw a very troublesome, vigorous incorporation of that nonsense in Felix" (I, 16:160).

The first chapter superbly establishes Harold's predisposition toward utility over sympathy, describing his homecoming in terms of a power struggle between him and his mother, with Harold gaining an easy ascendancy. He tells his mother that he never forgets places and people--"how they look and what can be done with them" (I, 1:21). His uncle, the Rev. John Lingon, is emphatic that his nephew should not quarrel with Jermyn until the election is over: he should "wink hard" until he is returned as a Radical, and Harold sees the sense in this. Despite his personal antipathy toward Jermyn--a Shakespearian irony in the circumstances--he makes a "calm and clear-sighted resolve not to quarrel with the man while he could be of use" (I, 8:96). When Harold supports Felix in prison, "he was solicitous that his behaviour with regard to this young man should be such as to enhance his own merit in Esther's eyes" (III, 43:350).

Esther herself perceives his habit of measuring the value of things according to the contribution they make to his own pleasure. She sees his very good-nature to be unsympathetic because it does not come from any thorough understanding or deep respect for what is in the mind of the person he obliges or indulges: "it was like his kindness to his mother--an arrangement of his for the happiness of others, which, if they were sensible, ought to succeed" (III, 43:344).

Thus, Harold is reminiscent of Lady Wybrow of "Mr Gilfil's Love-Story," whose benevolence is not truly sympathetic. The same underlying motive of pleasure invests his political views:

the utmost enjoyment of his own advantages was the solvent that blended pride in his family and position, with the adhesion to changes that were to obliterate tradition and melt down enchased gold heirlooms into plating for the egg-spoons of "the people." (III, 43: 344-45)

He means to be a commoner, but "a peerage might present itself under acceptable circumstances" (II, 43:352). Esther is stunned by Harold's revelation that his wife, Harry's mother, had been a slave and "was bought, in fact" (III, 43:353). Her Byronic dreams are becoming a reality, and the reality is a commercial transaction, possibly one of utility rather than emotion. In fact, to marry Esther would solve the Transomes' problems in relation to the loss of their estate; in this sense, it would be a marriage of convenience for Harold, although he is genuinely attracted to Esther.

In sum, his "narrow imagination," which is a product of what some people but not Eliot "admiringly [call] the practical mind," and innate lack of sympathy and understanding are basic defects in Harold's nature. Will suffering change Harold as it does many of Eliot's protagonists? Perhaps; but the characters who most concern us in the suffering phase that leads to higher

possibilities are women, for in Felix Holt, in line with Comte's theories, it is women who have the major share in feeling.

The best happiness Mrs Transome hopes for is to escape the worst misery. Not a typically loving mother, her dearest wish at one point is that her son had never been born. As she sees it, she has not had an hour's happiness for over twenty years. Apparently Mrs Transome's grief is more profound than Esther's Byronic nostalgia for her unknown mother and her feeling that she is fit for better things. But soon Esther begins to suffer genuinely because of Felix, and we learn that the habitual sublime discontent of the severe aristocrat is also Byronic, self-centered and self-induced.¹⁸ Mrs Transome's habitual inner bitterness is actually exacerbated by Harold's presence because he terminates her rule over the estate. Harold wants to indulge his mother, but not at his own expense. When these equally egoistic individuals clash, the woman submits. Yet she is not contented to be a "grandmamma" living uselessly in luxury. This need to be useful and genuinely understood rather than pampered is an authentic cause of grief, but a more solipsistic aspect is expressed by her restless pacing among the rose-coloured satin furnishings

the great story of this world reduced for her to the little tale of her own existence--dull obscurity everywhere, except where the keen light fell on the narrow track of her own lot, wide only for a woman's anguish. (III, 34:280)

Her experience with Jermyn colours her views on love in relation to Esther's future:

A woman's love is always freezing into fear. She wants everything, she is secure of nothing. This girl has a fine spirit--plenty of fire and pride and wit. Men like such captives, as they like horses that champ the bit and paw the ground: they feel more triumph in their mastery. What is the use of a woman's will?--if she tries, she doesn't get it, and she ceases to be loved. God was cruel when he made women. (III, 39:316)

Again, the author provides a silent commentary in Mr Transome whose fear, caused by his wife's actions, leads him to seek escape in senility. Mrs Transome stands over him to prevent his obtaining pleasure from the rearrangement of his specimens; if she experiences remorse, it is not on his behalf. Devoid of Feuerbach's affection and reason, she is concerned only with power, with getting her own way, and her impotence causes added despair.

However, in this masterful rendition of inner suffering, the author shows that Mrs Transome's "spring of suffering" (EC 63) is, as Feuerbach says it can be, a means to redemption because it constitutes feeling. The way to regeneration for Mrs Transome is through Esther's

sympathy; after (literally) opening the door to her, when wakened by her anguished midnight pacing, Esther hears a confession that might be a prelude to a new beginning. However, the aspect of Mrs Transome's suffering that is most stressed is not its potentiality for a new and better life, but Esther's sympathetic vicarious suffering and consequent disenchantment. She learns that riches may not bring happiness.

Esther's own suffering is first induced by Felix, when she comes to love him. Even before that, he initiates a change in her consciousness. He wants her to see the difference between taste and opinions:

the creature who has the sensibilities that
you call taste, and not the sensibilities
that you call opinions, is simply a lower,
pettier sort of being--an insect that
notices the shaking of the table, but never
notices the thunder. (I, 10:107)

Felix believes that Esther is discontented with the world because she is seeking her own small pleasures, not because "it's a world where myriads of men and women are ground by wrong and misery, and tainted with pollution" (I, 10:109). A physical image of pain expresses Felix's identification with the suffering of others. He has "got into [his] mind like a splinter" the fact of suffering, "the spawning life of vice and hunger" (II, 27:222), and he aims to help those people who are miserable. He cannot bear to see Esther becoming one of the foolish women who

spoil men's lives, and so becomes her mentor. In dialogues between the pair, Eliot's emphasis is once more on the contrast between pleasure and pain.

Although Esther henceforth feels herself in a Comtian "new kind of subjection to him," her feeling for Felix is inseparable from her respect for his high moral stance. His words shake her complacency, in making her aware that to him she appears trivial, narrow, and selfish. Through Felix, she experiences a new set of values; her previous one of commodities was akin to Harold's, for Esther, with her search for pleasure and emphasis on the "furniture" of existence, inclines to the utilitarian, though she is not calculating.

The "motto" to chapter 18 is from Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey"--"The little, nameless, unremembered acts/Of kindness and of love"--and it heralds a change in Esther's habits. She behaves with a new tenderness to her father that was initially part of an error to prove that Felix was wrong in thinking that she could not be generous, and which, once begun, kindled the basic affectionateness of her nature. Indeed, the self-questioning that Felix's criticism provoked is described as the first religious experience of her life: "the first voluntary subjection, the first longing to acquire the strength of greater motives and obey the strenuous rule" (II, 27:227). Her progress from egoism to altruism may be seen as Comtian in that Esther feels a

demand on her to see things in a light that is not easy or soothing.

Felix hurts her even more than he did by his initial criticism when he gazes at her in admiration and wonders dispassionately

whether the subtle measuring of forces will
ever come to measuring the force there would
be in a beautiful woman whose mind was as
noble as her face was beautiful--who made a
man's passion for her rush in one current with
all the great aims of his life. (II, 27:223)

For Felix this is the dawning of a new insight, but Esther correctly perceives that she does not measure up to his ideal woman. Pain from his saying that he will never marry leads to her own private confession that she wishes it were otherwise, that "he had entreated her to share his difficult life" of poverty and aiding the poor (II, 27:227). Through her experience of sorrow, she moves beyond triviality. Felix suffers too; not to marry Esther is a sacrifice; but he cannot be distracted from his important aim in life. The situation so far rests with their recognition of their feelings for each other; their mutual feeling will lead to a happy union only after Esther proves her worth. Esther's suffering through Felix and her subsequent experience at Transome Court will alter her attitude.

For his part, Felix does not seem to suffer much through being misunderstood and cast into prison; even his

remorse for having inadvertently killed a police officer seems subsidiary to his knowledge of his own high purpose. His development is passed over very summarily. With Felix, it is less a case of development through suffering than one of innate nobility revealed to Esther, though there is also the mutual effect of one personality on another. Eventually Felix will reach a proper notion of woman's sympathy, not as an unattainable ideal but as realized in Esther, and his harshness will be softened. Felix's development is primarily due to love; but, consistent with Feuerbach's thesis, without morality and rationality backing up his passion he will not allow himself to succumb and so subvert his noble purpose.

Felix's personal fulfilment and happiness (Phase III) is given a greater emphasis than his suffering phase. For Felix the best life, the sort of life he has chosen, constitutes happiness. This life is one devoted to educating the poor and not concerned with material welfare. Esther will choose this life when she chooses Felix (felix, happiness), who is the vehicle for Feuerbachian and Comtian idealism, this massive figure with grey eyes and full lips betokening the unusual combination of cool rationality with an ardent nature. A John the Baptist figure (III, 43:352), as Carroll observes, Felix persistently envisages his political task in religious terms (242). Appropriately, Felix is patient

with his mother, who is enough to try the patience of a saint; while he does his best to avoid circumstances that arouse his wrath, he can scarcely ignore her. Applying to Felix the epigraph from Coriolanus which heads chapter 30, "His nature is too noble for the world," we learn that his nobility is a direct contrast to the corruption of the society in which he lives. (By phrenological standards, he has a "large Ideality," which prevents him from finding anything perfect enough to be venerated (I, 5:60).)

He is said to have a sense of humour, but his primary characteristics are honesty and openness, expressed in a singularly brash way. Through Felix, Eliot draws the same moral point about honesty as she did in Silas Marner and Romola. His abrupt, blunt speech signals his refusal to "kowitz" to the hypocritical standards of society, to "lie and filch" (I, 5:56). It follows that he refuses to sell quack medicines, although this upsets his mother. The dishonest Jermyn sees Felix as a young man

with so little of the ordinary Christian motives as to making an appearance and getting on in the world, that he presented no handle to any judicious and respectable person who might be willing to make use of him. (I, 17:162)

In line with Comte's notion that perfection should be aimed at but is impossible to achieve, Felix is, indeed, imperfect; still, he does incarnate Feuerbach's highest degree of the understanding, reason, in his

"unbribability," his independence, freedom, and self-knowledge. Felix's bluntness, which verges on boorishness, is nonetheless preferable to Tito's smooth deceptiveness.

His almost visionary striving to foresee consequences reflects the facet of utilitarianism that Eliot accepted and depicts as admirable in Felix. Educated above his station (his father was a weaver), Felix has decided to "stick to" his class, "people who don't follow the fashion" (I, 5:57). In his General View of Positivism, Comte had seen the working classes, which were preserved by their position from schemes of aggrandisement, as able to recognize the supremacy of social feeling. By "sticking to" them Felix will be able to exert his influence on this class.¹⁹ In his General View of Positivism, Comte had concluded that the working classes, with their personal experience of misery, had a strong incentive to social feeling and solidarity, and that their occupations, which allowed time for thought, were more conducive to philosophical views than those of the middle classes (chapter 3).

It is because Felix is uniquely ambitious, with hungry passions that have a worthy object, that he has given up worldly goods (II, 27:222). He has withdrawn from the "push and scramble for money and position" because he has cast his lot with the lower classes for

whom he can do most good. Contemptuous of those men who "put their inward honour in pawn by seeking the prizes of the world" (II, 30:244), he refuses to aspire to clerical respectability despite his mother's prompting. His appointed task is to wed poverty because this will enable him to make life less bitter for a few within his reach (II, 27:225). He will not be laying down laws for humanity, but like a Comtian priest of humanity, he will act in an advisory role.

Chapter 30 portrays Felix's ideals in relation to the social and political aspirations of the working man, and it is here that George Eliot has been much criticized for her representation of Felix dissuading the working men from attaining the vote.²⁰ Again, this aspect is best understood in relation to Comtian positivism. Felix is disgusted with electioneering chicanery. It is useless to purify the proceedings when three-quarters of the men in the country, as he puts it, value nothing in an election but self-interest, and nothing in self-interest but some form of greed (I, 13:128). As a Radical, Felix wants to alter "roots a good deal lower down than the franchise" (II, 27:44). Listening to a working-man urging the crowd to demand universal suffrage, annual Parliaments, vote by ballot, and electoral districts, Felix asserts, "No!--something else before all that" (II, 30:248). He shares the view of Comte that reform through education is

a prerequisite to reform of the "political economy."

Because of his idealist position, Felix has been inevitably misunderstood by some critics; and he has been regarded as not a true radical. By comparison, Harold Transome's radicalism takes on a conservative tinge of utility. He believes that nothing is left to men of sense and good family but to retard the national ruin by declaring themselves Radicals; thus, they can take the inevitable process of changing everything "out of the hands of beggarly demagogues and purse-proud tradesmen" (I, 2:31). Felix's position, as the "Address" shows, is close to George Eliot's own; that is, essentially conservative. With no more wish than either Felix or Harold that valuable traditions be suddenly or arbitrarily overthrown, Eliot cannot embrace revolution with the fervour of her youth. Behind her radical figures lies a conservative fear of change, especially of that anarchy which destroys the past, and which for Comte was symptomatic of the revolutionary phase in the critical period antecedent to positivism.

Esther cannot help remarking the essential difference between Felix and Harold. In relation to Harold's willingness to accept a peerage if it presented itself, she retorts that there is no sum in proportion to be done there: "As you are to a peerage, so is not Felix Holt to any offer of advantage that you could imagine for

him" (III, 43:352). While Felix genuinely wants to help the working man toward gradual change, Harold wishes to retain the status quo. In this sense, Felix is a true, but Comtian, radical. However, Harold is a more effective politician than Felix; his speech at the trial is far more effective than Felix's honesty. Even if his egoism is of the type that can be accommodated in a Comtian utopia,²¹ Harold does not represent Feuerbachian values.

Felix has made no attempt to become a candidate; and if the reader understands George Eliot's "political" message aright, Felix's stance will not be seen as ineffective beside Harold's. Felix wants to change public opinion, the greatest power under heaven, "the ruling belief in society about what is right and what is wrong"; this to him is the emotive steam that drives the engines of society (II, 30:250). Thus, in chapter 30, going to the roots of change, Felix calls for a reformation of public opinion as the primary tool for gradualistic reform; in the present climate of opinion, reform of the electoral system will not present any practical relief of working men's problems.

Inevitably, George Eliot has been criticized for underestimating the role of the franchise. Indeed, reform of the franchise need not be exclusive of "Feuerbachian" feeling or ideas. In his conservative "Address," Felix simply speaks of the "outside" wisdom which lies in the

"supreme unalterable nature of things":

Wisdom stands outside of man and urges itself upon him . . . before it finds a home within him, directs his actions, and from the precious effects of obedience begets a corresponding love. . . .

The endowed classes hold precious material inherited from the past with which a worthy, noble future can be moulded (App. C, 421). We may well inquire, then, whether Harold Transome, had he been elected as a Radical, would not despite his "Tory" purpose have been more effective than Felix with his private radicalism. Harold, with his conservative approach to radicalism, would scarcely have urged working men not to have the vote, though he would have tried to steer them to Tory ends.

However, in Comte's "Positive" world of Philosophers, Intellectuals, and the People, Felix would be the Philosopher who plays a valuable role in guiding the People.²² He determines to be a "demagogue of a new sort" who will "tell the people they are blind and foolish, and neither flatter them nor fatten on them" (II, 27:224). Felix's "divine" role of Philosopher-Priest is augured by his face as he stands up before the crowd. It has

the look of habitual meditative abstraction from objects of mere personal vanity or desire, which is the peculiar stamp of culture, and makes a very roughly-cut face worthy to be called "the human face divine." (II, 30:248; my italics)

His voice draws people at a distance, unlike that of the

previous speaker, and Felix's last words are applauded by a new, mainly Tory audience, for Eliot was well aware of Felix's essential conservatism (and it is the good Conservative, Philip Debarry, who wins the election). In fact, and this is Feuerbachian rather than Comtian, Felix's concern with the social system is secondary to his concern for the happiness of individuals:

If there's anything our people want convincing of, it is, that there's some dignity and happiness for a man other [than] changing his station. That's one of the beliefs I choose to consecrate my life to. (III, 45:364; *italics added*)

Again, and in a non-Marxist context that seeks to stabilize the class system, rather than to abolish it, such religious language essentially indicates man's divinity, an aspect that was earlier most noticeable in "Janet's Repentance."

It is appropriate that, as a kind of "religious" leader, Felix is presented as a realistic visionary.²³ Esther wishes she could have visions, and Felix wants her to visualize the future in such a way that she may never lose her best self. She knows that if Felix were to love her, her life would be exalted into a sort of difficult blessedness as she went through the painful process of acquiring higher powers. This acquisition of a higher Feuerbachian consciousness through Felix is equated with a wider life and opposed to her former self-satisfied

pettiness.

Another important revelation for Esther comes from her father's confession that she is not his daughter. This, too, has affected Esther profoundly with its "vision of passion and struggle, of delight and renunciation" (II, 26:216). Following this, she realizes that her fortune, the inheritance, can be somebody else's misfortune. This realization of the relativity of happiness is important in her Feuerbachian progression. In this idea of vision as an inner seeing, Eliot's concept of the imagination is profoundly Wordsworthian; Comte, for his part, considered that the general, like the individual mind, was governed by imagination first, and then more and more by reason (Positive Philosophy 2:531).

Referring to Esther's taste for high society, Felix divines that some attar-of-rose fascinations might intervene and nothing but a good strong terrible vision would save her:

And if it did save you, you might be that woman
I was thinking of a little while ago when I
looked at your face: the woman whose beauty
makes a great task easier to men instead of
turning them away from it. (II, 27:224)

Felix's prognostication materializes. When Esther's birthright is discovered, she goes to stay at Transome Court, in the unspoken hope that all problems will be resolved by her marrying Harold. What confronts Esther

now is a crucial choice that will determine her happiness. She is wooed with pleasurable devices, ornaments and a white cashmere dress, as well as a good-looking suitor, and offered all she had ever dreamed of until she met Felix: a life of luxury, with Mrs Transome as her role model. Soon, Esther perceives that she herself has brought some pleasure into Mrs Transome's lonely life. Circumstances combine to make it easier for Esther to choose Harold than to refuse him for the sort of poverty-stricken life she knows from experience that she finds less pleasant. Her eventual choice of Felix will be no material utopia.

However, this pleasurable existence is not enough to satisfy her. Life at Transome Court

was not the life of her day-dreams: there was dulness already in its ease, and in the absence of high demand; and there was the vague consciousness that the love of this not unfascinating man who hovered about her gave an air of moral mediocrity to all her prospects. (III, 43:341)

Living in luxury, life now to her seems "cheapened." And to choose Harold would be to "abandon her own past," not a destructive past like Mrs Transome's but a creative past nourishing the present with memory, and harmonizing past and present in the sensibility through the continuities and affections of the heart.²⁴ Esther's choice reflects the high level of thought that for Spinoza meant freedom

and blessedness, and it combines the Feuerbachian and Comtian rationality that takes account of feeling. Opposed to this choice is the "padded yoke" of a life with Harold.

Esther's change of heart was first shown by her spontaneous speech at Felix's trial. There, her ardour possessed her to such an extent that she no longer had any fear of looking ridiculous:

Some of that ardour which has flashed out and illuminated all poetry and history was burning to-day in the bosom of sweet Esther Lyon. In this, at least, her woman's lot was perfect: that the man she loved was her hero; that her woman's passion and her reverence for rarest goodness rushed together in an undivided current. . . . Her feelings were growing into a necessity for action, rather than a resolve to act. (II, 41:313)

The last sentence illustrates particularly the Feuerbachian spontaneity of Esther's action: thought and feeling are one, urging to ardent, altruistic action. Here we may well see the effect of the "repression" referred to by John Kucich in terms of an internalization of fusional impulses leading toward altruism.²⁵ In Esther's case, it is indeed an internalization of romantic desire, triggered by her feelings for Felix. Certainly Esther exemplifies that aspect of Feuerbach's will that spontaneously leads to right action, having "divested herself of all personal considerations, whether of vanity or shyness"; her clear voice sounds "as it might have

done if she had been making a confession of faith" (III, 46:376).

In fact, this courtroom scene demonstrates the positive contribution that a woman can make to the public sphere, while emphasizing her womanly status; in it, "right and truth" are presented as an imaginative sympathy which transcends the mundane processes of the law.²⁶ Unfortunately, this important episode is rather spoiled by sentimentality over Esther's new goodness; but we may view Esther as the model woman whom Comte saw as aiding man in his moral and political endeavours, and perhaps even making some headway toward a greater Feuerbachian autonomy.

Esther's decision is a choice of poverty and self-sacrifice as well as of love. But, in accordance with Feuerbach's interpretation of religion, Esther, though strongly tempted, will not defy reason and sacrifice her happiness for Mrs Transome's. This is the essential and necessary egoism that Comte and Feuerbach recognized to exist in human nature; it constitutes a fidelity to higher truth, rather than self-indulgence legitimized.

In short, this novel stresses the need for a Feuerbachian return to nature, and in this connection Mrs Holt and Rufus Lyon, with his curious attire and quaint mannerisms, partially express a disguised Feuerbachian

ethic. The essential goodness of these simple people lies hidden by external appearances, once again raising the importance of "inner" versus "outer." Of course, Mrs Holt is ignorant, tedious, and cannot understand Felix's ideals; as we have seen, she is at the opposite pole to Felix in relation to Feuerbach's "reason." An ironic biblical parallel well illustrates her "mystical" understanding:

She, regarding all her trouble about Felix in the light of a fulfilment of her own prophecies, treated the sad history with a preference for edification above accuracy, and for mystery above relevance, worthy of a commentator on the Apocalypse. (III, 37:297)

But, though she grumbles about boys' dirty feet, she genuinely cares about little Job Tudge, and we see Feuerbach's "will" comically exemplified when she overcomes her inhibitions (much as Esther does during the trial) and faces "the gentry," that is, Harold, in her urgent desire to get Felix out of prison. She makes Esther's feeling for Felix plain to Harold, whom she motivates to act for the imprisoned Felix, although it is Esther's speech which is most effective--ironically, because she beguiles Sir Maximus, who exerts his influence on Felix's behalf.

George Eliot's presentation of Rufus Lyon has been seen as ambivalent; however, his desire for "supreme facts [to] become again supreme in his soul" (I, 6:77) obliquely

expresses Eliot's own morality.²⁷ He has learned much from experience, and the narrator notes that, while he may seem a simple person with pitifully narrow theories,

none of our theories are quite large enough for all the disclosures of time, and to the end of men's struggles a penalty will remain for those who sink from the ranks of the heroes into the crowd for whom the heroes fight and die. (I, 6:77)

Rufus's past crisis, when he fell in his own esteem, has taught him to make the right decision, though not immediately, when he learns the facts of Esther's parentage. In this new, equally hard struggle, in which he fears losing his daughter's affection, he achieves self-renunciation by confessing the truth to Esther, only to find she loves him the more because of her new knowledge of him.

Rufus Lyon reinforces the Comtian law of submission and Feuerbach's moral law when he declares to Felix that the right to rebellion is the right to seek a higher rule, and not to wander in "mere lawlessness." The concept of a harmonious law in nature is embodied in his example of a law of harmony in music. While Eliot presents Lyon as a figure of fun, mistaken in his orthodoxy--alienated by Feuerbach's standards--she looks through his illusory religion to the Feuerbachian truths that lie concealed in it:

. . . I never smiled at Mr Lyon's trustful energy without falling to penitance and veneration immediately after. For what we call illusions are often, in truth, a wider vision of past and present realities--a willing movement of a man's soul with the larger sweep of the world's forces--a movement towards a more assured end than the chances of a single life. (II, 16:161)

We may certainly see the "larger sweep of the world's forces" as "Positive" ones. The narrator's vision, which does not conjure up any sense of the religious ritual with which Comte clothed his "Religion of Humanity," is fully redolent of a Feuerbachian universality of understanding, inclusive of a Comtian vision of history and of the future.

Above all, Rufus Lyon epitomizes Feuerbachian notions of strength and self-sacrifice. He is opposed to a "might is right" philosophy which thinks it weakness to exercise "the sublime power of resolved renunciation":

There is a sort of subjection which is the peculiar heritage of largeness and of love; and strength is often only another name for willing bondage to irremediable weakness. (I, 6:69)

Rufus's subjection through love of Esther's mother may, then, be seen not as a weakness, but as a strength.²⁸

Is Harold's sacrifice of his estate to retain his moral integrity comparable? He differs from Tito in recognizing the need for honesty, looking beyond the very painful business of losing his heritage. But Eliot's description of Harold's "conventional morality" suggests

that Harold provides merely an example of far-sighted utilitarianism. Feuerbach's criterion was that good works or morality should proceed from "essentially virtuous dispositions," man being the basis of all morality (EC 262), but we have been told Harold is not sympathetic. Will the revelation that he is the son of the man he despises overturn Harold's assumptions about himself and his world, and lead to higher development? One would like to think so, especially given the scene in which Harold goes to comfort his mother at Esther's bidding. But George Eliot is as starkly silent about Harold's future as she was about Hetty's: "After a while the family came back, and Mrs Transome died there. Sir Maximus was at her funeral, and throughout the neighbourhood there was silence about the past" (Epilogue). However, Jerome Thale has suggested that finally Esther and Harold know who they are, and their lives can be conducted on this basis, free from guilty secrets or old claims. Things are now in the open, and this is the foundation of change to come, of real reform for both the nation and the individuals involved (104).

The final emphasis is on unity, on happiness. Esther, a "pilgrim," gives up her inheritance, in an ending that like Silas Marner defies nineteenth-century novelistic expectations, and Felix proposes to her in the last chapter. By her choice (in a novel that might, as

Vance suggests, more appropriately be named Esther's Choice), Esther is liberated from empty class-consciousness to achieve true "consciousness" in Feuerbach's sense of the word (119-20). They will force each other to be better, in a relationship that points unequivocally to equality of virtue, rather than male/female authority and subordination, as in the marriage of Romola de' Bardi. In Eliot's positivistic vision, the child Felix is described in the Epilogue as having more science than his father, emblematic of the new world which Comte had considered it would take more than a single generation to achieve.

In Felix Holt, comedy and tragedy alike contribute to Eliot's purpose. The tragic element in the description of Mrs Transome is powerful and convincing, as is Eliot's description of a corrupt society; this we may see as being set against J. S. Mill's Liberty, which Eliot was reading in November 1865. However, her characterization of Esther and Felix is flawed, first, by a sentimentalism over Esther's new goodness--though the submission to Felix illustrates the power of love--and, second, by the characterization of Felix himself. Yet he has perhaps been over criticized for not seeming a large enough figure to embody his or Eliot's ideals. In fact, his apparent ordinariness is quite in keeping with Eliot's usual stance that unremarkable persons may be the vehicles for a

Feuerbachian morality. However, W. F. T. Myers believes that Eliot never really convinces us that Felix Holt can make any deep impression on the miners at Sproxtton. Myers has, moreover, drawn attention to the fact that Felix is isolated from the society, especially at the end of the novel when, with some money from the Transome estate and a pension for his mother, he settles down to a life freed from the practical difficulties faced by the workers whom he is educating. And there is some truth in his view that Felix is "imposed on the novel from outside--the embodiment of an ideal for society, not a product of it"--not "an organic part in the life of the society in which those problems exist in a specific, individual, local form." Myers further considers that Eliot's presentation of Felix Holt reveals the same logical weaknesses in her philosophical system as Marx diagnosed in the thought of Feuerbach, an excessive abstraction. On the other hand, as this same critic suggests, if Felix Holt is to be a truly positivist teacher, then he has to be apart from his environment, and as a result cannot be fitted into an aesthetic structure of the kind to which Mrs Transome belongs (31-33).

However, if we see Felix Holt as Eliot's embodiment of a Comtian novel that is modified by Feuerbachian values, then Eliot's comment to Frederic Harrison about the possibility or impossibility of making incarnate

Comte's conceptions in fiction gains more point. It is finally through the Feuerbachian development of consciousness in Esther and Felix individually, and in their union--with their happiness underlined by Mrs Transome's tragedy and the harsh fate of the well-meaning, practical, but unsympathetic Harold--that the novel is successful. The "internal" Feuerbachian aspect is convincingly portrayed. The newly harmonious relations of the individual with society are less fully realized; indeed, given such a harsh portrait as Eliot has drawn, we may imagine this integration could take some time to achieve, as Comte believed it would. At least one critic has found that Eliot's melioristic vision jars against her own pessimistic one; to him, the novel comes across as an accumulation of negatives.²⁹ If Felix himself is not utterly convincing and Esther is somewhat too cloying in her new goodness, this is because Eliot had not yet found the right formula with which to convey her ideal conceptions. She would miraculously achieve this in her next novel.

Notes

¹But see Haight, Biog. 405.

²See Norman Vance, "Law, Religion and the Unity of Felix Holt," in George Eliot: Centenary Essays and an Unpublished Fragment, ed. Anne Smith (London: Vision P, 1980), 103, 106; also Fred C. Thomson, "The Genesis of Felix Holt," PMLA 74 (1959): 576-84 for the suggestion that

the genesis of Felix Holt is non-political. "While there is no documentary proof that Felix did not belong to the original idea, his tardy and clumsy introduction lead one to suspect that he was to have been a secondary figure at best" (584). Cf. Thale, who considers that Felix Holt is "a story of what Reform really means"; Arnold Kettle also considers this is a novel "about Radicalism" in "'Felix Holt the Radical,'" Critical Essays on George Eliot, ed. Barbara Hardy, op. cit. 99-115.

³See "Society as Protagonist," Nineteenth Century Fiction 17 (1962-1963): 243-44. Indeed, Carroll considers Eliot's use of religious imagery one of the "most striking and pervasive features" of Felix Holt. Future references to Carroll in this chapter will refer to the above article. On the archetypal dimension, see his article "An Image of Disenchantment in the Novels of George Eliot," The Review of English Studies n.s. 11 (1960): 29-41 (34-35). On organicism, see Sally Shuttleworth, George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Science, op. cit. 115-41. See also Introduction, Felix Holt, the Radical by George Eliot, ed. Peter Coveney (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972) 7-65; Jerome Thale, The Novels of George Eliot 87-105; and Gillian Beer, George Eliot (Brighton: The Harvester P, 1986) 133-46. For some of the works George Eliot was reading while writing Felix Holt, see GEL IV, 208.

⁴On the influence of Spencer and, especially, of Comte, see W. F. T. Myers, "Politics and Personality in Felix Holt," Renaissance and Modern Studies 10 (1966): 5-33.

⁵See, e.g., Positive Philosophy 2:456, 517.

⁶Shuttleworth 133.

⁷See Norman Vance on Eliot's criticism of primogeniture (107). Note, too, Felix Holt's assertion that he would rather be Paley's fat pigeon than a certain kind of demagogue. Paley's pigeon, i.e., a property owner, is not the goal he sets before himself; he wants to remain a poor man; see Coveney 654-56, n. 4.

⁸See GEL IV, 222-32, 237-40, 249-50, 253-57, 259-62, and 264.

⁹See Vance 108. For George Eliot's reading of Wordsworth, see ch. 1 of Thomas Clive Pinney, Wordsworth's Influence on George Eliot, diss., Yale U., 1960 (Ann

Arbor: UMI, 1984, 8418275). For the eight years following Lewes's and Eliot's reading of The Excursion, there are no records of their reading of Wordsworth, but in 1867 they read The Prelude aloud (22).

¹⁰Felix Holt, ed. Coveney, App. A, 608.

¹¹"The Natural History of German Life," op. cit. (e.g., Essays 269-70).

¹²See Vance, op. cit., on the distinction between mechanisms of law and underlying (moral) law (105, 108-12).

¹³Corrupt legal practices were common in the nineteenth century. On the legal intricacies of the Durfey-Transomes, see Felix Holt, ed. Coveney, App. B, 629-37.

¹⁴Myers, "Politics and Personality in Felix Holt" 10.

¹⁵The burning mount perhaps refers to the "mountain of God," the site of the burning bush, in Exodus.

¹⁶Coveney 673, n. 5.

¹⁷Carroll 246-47.

¹⁸The present Feuerbachian study focuses on Mrs Transome's egoism, in an interpretation that echoes Thale, but for another view more suggestive of redeeming features, see Gillian Beer, George Eliot 142-45.

¹⁹W. F. T. Myers, however, regards Eliot's views about the proletariat as reflecting Spencer's lesser faith, rather than Comte's ideals; *ibid.* 15.

²⁰See, e.g., Kettle, op. cit., and David Craig, "Fiction and the Rising Industrial Classes," Essays in Criticism 17 (1967): 64-74. Craig finds Eliot's treatment of Felix unrealistic and her assumption that electoral reform will not improve working class conditions at that time, as expressed by Felix, basically unsound. The

meeting of specific needs of a practical kind is not, he says, to subordinate feelings and relationships to some brute process but rather to see more exactly why the course of our lives--including feelings, thoughts, and relationships--is as it is (73).

²¹Prasad, op. cit. 195. Cf. Myers, who considers that the kind of political radicalism Harold ostensibly supports is strongly opposed to Comte's social philosophy as an inevitable, but dangerous, product of the "Negative Philosophy" which had developed out of Protestantism and was essentially "metaphysical." According to Comte, doctrines of freedom of opinion and inquiry must operate in those who have the ability and knowledge to understand them; otherwise, metaphysical doctrines about rights could lead to anarchy and reaction. "Politics and Personality in Felix Holt" 20-21.

²²Shuttleworth 121. (Myers, op. cit., has brought out the Comtian approach to history.)

²³See also Carroll 251.

²⁴Coveney, Introduction, Felix Holt 9-10.

²⁵Op. cit. 166.

²⁶Anthea Trodd, Domestic Crime in the Victorian Novel (London: Macmillan P, 1989) 139.

²⁷On Eliot's attitude to Dissent, see Martin J. Svaglic, "Religion in the Novels of George Eliot," Journal of English and Germanic Philology 53 (1954): 145-59 (150). See also Vance, 114-15, on Rufus Lyon as harking back to Scott's seventeenth-century Puritanism.

²⁸Bernhard Reitz has pointed out that, in this sense of willing bondage, the relationship--which becomes a holy and binding memory--has a historical parallel in Comte's cult of Clothilde de Vaux. For both of them, a sublimated sexual relationship will illumine their lives and strengthen a wider social commitment. Das Problem des historischen Romans bei George Eliot (Frankfurt/M: Peter Lang, 1975) 111, n. 2.

²⁹Michael Edwards, "George Eliot and Negative Form," Critical Quarterly 17 (1975): 171-79.

CHAPTER 9

THE INTRICATE RELATION TO THE WHOLE IN MIDDLEMARCH: ASPIRATION AND SELF-LIMITATION

As Eugene Kamenka has pointed out, Feuerbach's influence produced no systematic school in the history of ideas; he was primarily an exciter of thought,¹ a revolutionary presence whose works liberated the minds of his day. He had excited George Eliot's imagination, his ideas meshing with her own experience and consciousness and imbuing her fiction. So far, in her interpretations, she has remained more faithful to them than some other original minds who carried Feuerbach's ideas forward in diverse directions. Despite the fourteen years that had elapsed from her translation of Das Wesen des Christenthums in 1854 to when she began to ponder Middlemarch--presumably she was no longer invoking her mentor consciously--Feuerbach's influence remained indelible. He had explained "eternal" truths in a way that she found comprehensible and infinitely satisfying. Middlemarch has certainly been seen as the most worldly of George Eliot's novels and the one in which her secularization of religion is most apparent.²

As ambitious as Romola, Middlemarch projects an extremely complex vision of unity within disparity and

individuality within plurality.³ Eliot's "Notes on Form in Art" (1868) indicate that by this time she had modified her earlier mimetic theory. She concluded that, fundamentally, form is unlikeness, and every difference is form. Here, she was echoing Feuerbach's view that we distinguish and unify things through our understanding on the basis of certain signs of difference and unity given to our senses.⁴ In her view, form now related to perception of wholes and parts. The highest form, she asserted, is "the highest organism" or "most varied group of relations bound together in a wholeness which again has the most varied relations with all other phenomena" (Essays 433). She spoke of having made Middlemarch "a complete organism": her ideal was to make matter and form "an inseparable truthfulness" (GEL V, 324, 374). With this structural consciousness, we might expect Eliot in this novel to incarnate Feuerbach's ideas more comprehensively and concretely than in her previous fiction.

In Middlemarch, the author contends with an actuality that, while far from ideal, aspires toward a higher path than vague mysticism or a utilitarian code of ethics. There is a prevalent sense of diverging human paths. Janet Gezari maintains that the metaphorical dialectic reveals a double moral code which does not move toward synthesis: "What it articulates is the continuing

struggle between alternative attitudes towards the world, or alternative ways of being in the world."⁵ On the other hand, allusions to social, religious, and scientific reforms of the period, and to past events, discoveries, tradition, and myth have been seen as linking the Middlemarchers' progress to national advancement and the history of Western civilization; in its vastest sense, the theme is human progress.⁶ Eliot's growing knowledge of science, a product of her partnership with Lewes, had shown her that reality was infinitely more complex and varied in its manifestations and our comprehension of them than she had formerly thought. Indeed, the editors of George Eliot's Middlemarch Notebooks have discerned in Eliot's notes for Middlemarch the shaping of an intricate relationship between the historical categories of myth, religion, medicine, the concepts of the heroic, cause and effect, and even progress itself, as aspects of one whole, each category representing an attempt to define the meaning of life itself. Also significant is Eliot's interest in Lucretius's discussion of man-made laws as essential for physical and moral progress; in her Berg notebook, she noted that not all progress was positive. Pratt and Neufeldt see her reading of Lucretius as helping to formulate in Middlemarch an ironic exploration of the impact of "noble natures" on individuals and on society.⁷

The novel explores "the future life" as Feuerbach understood the term. Although George Eliot's study The Idea of a Future Life was never finished, some of her insights on the subject appear in this novel, her greatest work. While Gillian Beer has remarked on Eliot's use of the concept of a "future life" in her last novel,⁸ it is fundamental to most of her fiction and most obvious in Middlemarch.

Feuerbach's own concept refers to this life, not a metaphysical "hereafter"; it describes the manifestation of man's inward nature as it is developed over time and through significant experience.⁹ To Feuerbach, the "future life" means simply the unknown future existence which in time will become known, "not an image [of an unknown yet certain thing, immortality], but the thing itself" (EC 177). He clarifies his interpretation of the Christian idea of the future life, which for most Victorians was synonymous with immortality, as "nothing else than life in unison with the feeling, with the idea, which the present life contradicts" (EC 178). ("Das andere Leben ist nichts anderes als das Leben im Einklang mit dem Gefühl, mit der Idee, welcher dieses Leben widerspricht" [GW 5:305].)

This apparently simple statement (which we shall see exemplified in one character in relation to immortality) contains an important idea, that of a conflict which

demands resolution; indeed, Feuerbach's statement is suggestive of the conflict with self that was later seen by C. G. Jung to characterize an archetypal process of human development. It may also be seen as reflective of the Hegelian concept of alienation, which has both negative and positive aspects. Writing of religious "alienation," Feuerbach emphasizes that where life is not in contradiction with a feeling, an imagination, or an idea, and where this feeling or idea is not held authoritative and absolute, the belief in a heavenly life does not arise:

The whole import of the future life is the abolition of this discordance, and the realization of a state which corresponds to the feelings, in which man is in unison with himself. (EC 178)

Noting the "inward" quality of religion, Feuerbach further underlines that a man's faith is

the consciousness of that which is holy to him; but that alone is holy to man which lies deepest within him, which is most peculiarly his own, the basis, the essence of his individuality.
(EC 63; emphasis added)

As Feuerbach himself notes, the sum of the idea of the future life is happiness, "the everlasting bliss of personality, which is here limited and circumscribed by Nature" (EC 184). While man is inevitably bounded, he strives to overcome his limits, and Feuerbach recognizes the deeply-rooted nature of this striving within man's

unconscious mind. While the concept of heaven, for instance, harnesses in imagination the need to rise above individual limitations, man's real need is to bring the unconscious elements of the personality to consciousness. The implications of Feuerbach's statements are, in fact, enormous, for they sketch the psychological development which man, sensing in himself a lack of unity, is implicitly, and through religion mistakenly, seeking to attain. For Feuerbach, such a state of harmony can be achieved only through collapsing the self-division induced by religion. Feuerbach's characterization of religion as an archetypal process of man's development bears a striking resemblance to the subsequent theory of C. G. Jung.

The similar development toward self-fulfilment presented by Jung is called a process of individuation. For Jung, the process may be facilitated by the assimilation of unconscious elements into consciousness, and this happens with the help of mental images which, in their symbolism, relate to self. The image of the Trinity might be such an image. Feuerbach himself noted that the image became "the thing itself, the archetype, the original" (emphasis added), and that the Trinity had thus been made comprehensible in terms of mind, understanding, memory, will, and love (EC 65). Jung, too, recognizes that the symbolism of the Trinity, the Mass, and the figure of Christ expresses essential aspects of human

nature. Both Jung and Feuerbach assert, in different terms, that religion is a supreme, archetypal experience. Thus, Feuerbach emphasizes that religion stands for essential values: "That which has essential value for man, which he esteems the perfect life, the excellent, in which he has true delight,--that alone is God to him" (EC 63). The end result of the development of personality, for Jung and for Feuerbach, is a resolution of conflict, allowing a state of unity and harmony to be realized by the individual.

In short, implicit in both Feuerbach's psychology and moral philosophy, as well as in his interpretation of religion, is what we may typify as an archetypal experience of human development, one that seeks to bring unconscious elements of the personality to consciousness. In his view, man strives to fill his needs and his ideals and realize his species being, the infinity of the human consciousness, the infinity of his own nature. In a thinking, loving, willing existence, man realizes his own powers as a unified reason, love, and will. "Consciousness" of this kind is the "self-verification, self-affirmation, self-love, joy in one's own perfection" that exists in a self-sufficing, complete human being (EC 6). Thus, Feuerbach goes beyond Jung, for whom the collective unconscious is unknowable. To Feuerbach these

notions are not abstract; they are powers that relate specifically to man's being as the processes of loving, thinking, or willing.

Two characteristics in particular that denote a Feuerbachian archetypal process of development are a sense of conflict or uneasiness in the experiencer and, in relation to the objects fascinating the mind, a certain mysteriousness (Jung's pneuma). Correspondingly, we shall see Dorothea Brooke's imagination swayed by certain objects or images which have a strange power over her mind during the course of her development toward a unified consciousness. In The Essence of Christianity, Feuerbach referred in many of his chapter headings to various religious "mysteries," such as the "mystery" of the suffering God. Such mysteries needed to be explored and understood in human terms. This was the route to human autonomy, for the imaginative notion of God, Feuerbach insisted, entailed contradictions in relation to reason and love, and, while paradoxically representing "the luxury of egoism," could even deny man's ego (EC 27).

It seems obvious that Eliot absorbed Feuerbach's archetypal theory of human development. The narrator of Middlemarch (though often not the characters) is markedly aware of the unconscious processes that govern their actions, and the inner drives that determine their lives. While the extent to which they will achieve happiness may

be limited by external conditions, in Middlemarch Eliot is most concerned with another kind of limitation. Feuerbach had pointed out that some individuals made their own limitations those of the species, an error he identified with "love of ease, sloth, vanity, and egoism" (EC 7). By nature, such individuals would not attain to the universality that was intrinsic in his notion of the species.

Eliot expounds this idea of aspiration versus self-limitation through the metaphor of the spiritual journey, as well as actual journeys that often end in disappointment. Thus, Janet K. Gezari sees Dorothea Brooke's "New Jerusalem" quest as offset by its demonic antitype in Rosamond Vincy's actual journey to London after her husband, the formerly ambitious young doctor Tertius Lydgate, has renounced his dream of making a major scientific discovery.¹⁰ Similarly, Dorothea Brooke's honeymoon with Casaubon leads to separateness, not communion. The famous web metaphor works to show the fundamental interconnectedness of all human beings: the web is associated not only with the social fabric but with thought. However, the image can be predatory or obfuscatory, as in the picture of the powerful banker, Bulstrode, perpetually "spinning arguments" that his religious and business lives are compatible and "like masses of spider-web, padding the moral sensibility" (VI, 61:603).¹¹

Eliot often utilizes archetypal images, particularly light or garden (nature) images, to describe human nature or "essence." These images, as opposed to the irony that is the other weapon wielded by Eliot to manipulate the reader, appeal to the emotions, rather than to the intellect. Thus, in Middlemarch, she often draws on images of imprisonment or freedom to express an inner or psychic development, or repression of it. Particularly notable are the chain metaphor of Lydgate's tie to Rosamond, and the anterooms, winding stairs, or labyrinth, as opposed to images of outdoors, such as fresh air, in relation to Dorothea and Casaubon. Garden imagery, with its connotations of peace, harmony, and perfection,¹² is contrasted with images of imprisonment. Eliot's religious images have a similar archetypal function, being metaphors for the human condition, as Feuerbach, and biblical interpreters before him, had shown. Metaphors are preeminently the mode in which one speaks of God, or of whatever is obscure and intuitive; they are especially suitable to convey those intimate feelings which in ordinary life we can know only intuitively.¹³ In the images of bondage and freedom of Felix Holt and Middlemarch, we can sense the complementary influence of Spinoza. In Spinoza's Ethics, man cannot be free until he has his passions under control, and in this, knowledge is an important factor.¹⁴ Feuerbachian love, too, rises above erratic passions in its reasoned voluntary

submission to others, and Eliot illustrates such a development in her heroine Dorothea Brooke.

Earlier, in "The Lifted Veil," Eliot had described an ardent, and possibly futile, search for knowledge; in Middlemarch she explores in more depth the role of knowledge in the attempt to find meaning in life. The theme is elaborated primarily in relation to Dorothea's quest for moral truth, Lydgate's for scientific truth, and Casaubon's for religious/mythical truth. The quest for knowledge is further pursued, according to Henry Alley, by various "subterranean intellectuals" who all (with the possible exception of Casaubon) take part in the growing good of the world; for these characters, to fail to achieve universal acclaim is not to fail in human terms.¹⁵

Dorothea's main aim relates to scholarship, but she is deficient both in that practical "Intelligence" which Aristotle regarded as an important aspect of everyday life,¹⁶ and in her underestimation of the crucial role of the emotions in relation to her future. Comte had definitively stated that knowledge should relate to feeling, and Dorothea must learn this truth. She desires the fulfilment of her own ideals without taking account of the desires of other people. She will learn the "differences" between herself and them and this will help her to see the "wholes," finding some form in life in the same way that the author conceived of form in art.

The acquisition of self-consciousness is elaborated in such a way that genuine happiness can be seen to stem from Feuerbach's human nature or essence. It is in Dorothea Brooke that the overcoming of a religion-induced alienation is most thoroughly developed, and underlined by the subtext of the Garth family which espouses Feuerbachian values. However, in Middlemarch Eliot is describing self-limited individuals; it is in the histories of Tertius Lydgate, the aspiring young doctor, and Nicholas Bulstrode, the banker, as well as in Dorothea's middle-aged scholastic husband, Edward Casaubon, that the opposite process, self-alienation, is realistically and subtly demonstrated.

Lydgate has experienced an "intellectual passion" (II, 15:141) and is fired with the idea of forging a major link in the chain of discovery. His search for the primitive tissue may be susceptible to scientific proofs; we might see it today in terms of the genetic code and its implications. His imagination longs to track microscopic actions "through long pathways of necessary sequence by the inward light which is the last refinement of Energy, capable of bathing even the ethereal atoms in its ideally illuminated space" (II, 16:162). He sees these microscopic forms of life as originating "human misery and joy . . . anguish, mania, and crime"; as determining "the growth of happy or unhappy consciousness" (II, 16:162).

In its direct relation to human well-being, his ideal quest is profoundly Feuerbachian, for it distinctly engages the sensory aspect of man: physical man in nature. From this may be construed a relationship between Lydgate's scientific aims and the ultimate Feuerbachian "essence" in terms of human aspiration toward a unified consciousness. What deters Lydgate from achieving his aim professionally and individually are "spots of commonness," defined by Eliot as personal pride and unreflecting egoism (IV, 36:340).

Despite his praiseworthy scientific aim of reaching far beneath surface appearances, he cannot apply such an approach to the ordinary facts of life, since he is readily seduced by outer appearances. Thus, blind to Rosamond Vincy's flaws, Lydgate spins the "gossamer web" of young love in accordance with his Arabian nights dream of ideal happiness, "a paradise where everything is given to you and nothing claimed" (IV, 36:337-38). He is taken in first by the dramatic actress Laure, who murders her husband on stage, and then by the attractive but shallow Rosamond, who becomes a "basil plant" that nourishes itself on his brains. He envisages a harmonious union, independent of other people's lives and influences. There is a discrepancy between his notions and Feuerbach's bliss which relates more widely to the species. Engaged to Rosamond, Lydgate believes that he foresees the

consequences of their marriage with the utmost clarity. His inability to do so and his imprisonment in a web of circumstances might be seen as another illustration by Eliot of the pretensions of utilitarian practicality. After his marriage to Rosamond, Lydgate separates thought from feeling, keeping separate his work and his private life. When this is unsuccessful, his work deteriorates, so that Farebrother--a vicar with a noble, honest soul, who harbours an abiding interest in entomology--comments: "Eros has degenerated; he began by introducing order and harmony, and now he brings back chaos" (IV, 36:341).

Lydgate's selectively practical bent is shown by his voting for the influential Bulstrode's preferred candidate, rather than for Farebrother, whom he himself prefers. Because he does not invariably act on principle, Lydgate sometimes finds it difficult to know how to act. His rashness in ordinary matters is shown by his inward debate about the consequences of the engagement which turns on the paucity of time rather than of funds. Yet it is his mishandling of his finances which leads to dependence on Bulstrode and generates his major problem, debt, with its ensuing deadening of Lydgate's morality and loss of autonomy. Lydgate declares Raffles' death to be accidental after accepting Bulstrode's cheque; but he would logically have set up an inquiry had he not accepted the money. Thus, violating Feuerbachian morality and

rationality, Lydgate compromises his own ideal of empirical truth.

Ardour in Lydgate sometimes lends itself to rashness, but in the spasmodic yet important relationship between Dorothea and Lydgate, we can see Dorothea's Feuerbachian spontaneity interacting positively with another ardent nature. While Lydgate's own nature is, as we have seen, at times lubricated by a certain base practicality and a distorted sense of values, his friendship with Dorothea provides the sympathy he has needed. Dorothea has herself disliked Mr Farebrother's cautious weighing of consequences following the untimely death of Lydgate's patient, Raffles. She has, we are told, an "ardent faith in efforts of justice and mercy, which would conquer by their emotional force" (VIII, 72: 723). Her faith in Lydgate when nobody else believes in him springs naturally from her love of humanity. Lydgate considers that she has a heart large enough for the Virgin Mary. She represents to him a fountain of friendship toward men. Here, Feuerbach's and Aristotle's notions of love and friendship fuse; significantly, it occurs to Lydgate that her love might help a man more than her money.

This insight, together with his confession to Dorothea about his actions in the death of Raffles, paves the way for Lydgate to start afresh. But he has lost

faith in himself; Rosamond has drained the life out of him, entailing an enormous waste of human talent and initiative (we understand better now why Felix Holt would not marry Esther until she reformed; this was not priggishness but astuteness). Lydgate's lack of energy confirms the necessity of a certain basic egoism, enough to initiate and persevere in the aim that for Feuerbach expressed man's soul--the aim through which man is "something not only for himself, but the species." As Feuerbach put it, such an aim lives in the consciousness of the species as a reality, and consequently is at one with man's own essence (EC 171). Lydgate's dream of discovery has been accorded second place; appropriately, he will end up writing a treatise on gout, a rich man's disease. In the terrifying sequence of this marriage, egoism (Rosamond's) undermines "religious" enthusiasm (Lydgate's scientific search for absolute knowledge). The subtle interweavings of cause and effect explain how departure from Feuerbach's code of a necessary relationship of the individual with mankind can lead to a sad failure like Lydgate's. Of course, even to call his life a failure is itself to judge by Feuerbach's standards, for by worldly standards Lydgate appears successful. His is a private tragedy; he knows himself to be a failure.

When the separate stories of Lydgate and Dorothea, "Middlemarch" and "Miss Brooke," were united by Eliot early in 1871, she altered Rosamond's character for the worse. Stanton Millet has noted that Eliot's primary thematic emphasis then shifted from the search for vocation to a more complex, more rewarding theme: the interrelationship of high aspiration and "domestic reality," whereupon Fred Vincy became a subordinate character and Lydgate emerged as a major character moving in tandem with Dorothea Brooke.¹⁷ A Feuerbachian hypothesis might focus on the idea of Dorothea's act of faith in Lydgate as a central feature uniting the two parts. It is also a supremely important manifestation of Dorothea's sympathy for others; this would have been inspirational for Eliot. Following on from this, chapter 81, the scene with Dorothea and Rosamond, might also have been a unifying element. Rosamond Vincy could be thought to present a provocative case in the present context of Feuerbachian criticism, since in her second marriage--poor Lydgate now interred--she ends up believing that her happiness is a reward for virtue. In a sense, this parodies Feuerbachian happiness, for Rosamond's devious soul operates only in connection with her own pleasure, rather than the feelings of others; her pleasure increases with her status. F. R. Leavis, in The Great Tradition, has described her as "simple ego" with the concentrated

subtlety at her command unembarrassed by any inner complexity (67). We could see her case as an ironic illustration by Eliot of Bentham's much-quoted remark that pushpin is as good as poetry; evidently in Eliot's opinion it was not. Rosamond seeks pleasure through social climbing in a way that is not only thoroughly convincing, but characteristic of many human beings; moreover, she sees herself as acting well. Her powerful ego has reasserted itself even though Will Ladislav's criticism and Dorothea's sympathy temporarily shook her composure. However, she is happily unaware of her limitations; Feuerbach would have said that she had made her limitations those of the species.

The banker, Nicholas Bulstrode, is another self-limiting human being. As we know, for Feuerbach the contradiction between the divine and the human was illusory, representing the distinction between essential humanity and the individual (EC 13-14). Man's self-alienation, through the objectification of his essential nature into a God, was to Feuerbach an intellectual error. This type of alienation is given its most explicit and powerful expression by Eliot in Bulstrode, who, in the guise of religion, commits acts harmful to himself and society.

Originally, Bulstrode was a Calvinistic dissenter, "having had striking experience in conviction of sin and

sense of pardon" (VI, 61:602). As Robert Scholes has pointed out, Protestantism unites in Bulstrode with the capitalist ethic, while with Caleb Garth it does not. Garth loves business but has no "keenness of imagination" for monetary results in the shape of profit and loss.¹⁸ For Bulstrode the banker (godlike himself), profitable investments "became sanctified by a right application of the profits in the hands of God's servant." The narrator notes, however, that such reasoning and such hypocrisy are not exceptional; there is no general doctrine which is not capable of "eating out our morality if unchecked by the deep-seated habit of direct fellow-feeling with individual man" (VI, 61:606).

The "alienation" of Bulstrode's religious consciousness as a split in his personality--his "two distinct lives"--is manifest, though Bulstrode himself identifies God's cause and his own conduct. The banker's end justifies his means, enforcing a "discrimination of God's enemies, who were to be used merely as instruments," and whom he seeks to prevent from gaining influence by restricting their monetary resources. However, Bulstrode sees himself as a divine instrument, and believes in the "peculiar work of grace within him" (VI, 61:602). Such an attitude is, of course, wholly opposed to Feuerbach's idea of love: that man is an end in himself, not a means to an end. Bulstrode manifestly illustrates Feuerbach's

opposition between such faith and love.

Bulstrode's fervent Christianity disguises his lust for power, which is eminently satisfied by his knowledge of other people's affairs; it does not prevent him from swindling even his wife and dependents. Nor will it stop him from conniving at murder--the death of the blackmailer, Raffles, who threatens to disclose his highly dubious past. Although this threat induces Bulstrode to recognize his guilt, stored deep in his memory, his past evil deeds have told on his character, and will lead to his complicity in murder. Enmeshed in a deep inner conflict, Bulstrode omits to pass on to Mrs Arby instructions that the sick Raffles should not be given alcohol, or to tell her when the opium should cease to be administered (an omission that would have been regarded by Bentham as a criminal negative act). Following this omission, Bulstrode spends some time in prayer, and the narrator notes that private prayer is not necessarily candid, echoing Feuerbach in saying that prayer is inaudible speech--and speech is representative of character. In the novel, Bulstrode's guilt cannot be established, and his "Nemesis," as the author noted, arises purely from public opinion (Bentham's "popular" or moral sanction). The disgraced banker fears to reveal the truth to his wife, the upright Harriet. He can only confess it silently, and she dares not question him.

Consequently, he cannot expunge his guilt. However, Mrs Bulstrode's utter forgiveness of her husband, betokened by her symbolic assumption of mourning apparel, provides a touching exemplification of Feuerbachian love and forgiveness. Bulstrode's self-alienation through religion finally leads to his complete separation from Middlemarch. In light of Feuerbach's views on man's essential connection with others, this physical alienation dramatizes--and could be seen as the strictly logical result of--his alienation from himself.

A case more "sublimely tragic" (IV, 42:413) is the alienation of the scholar, Casaubon, who is presented with the dilemma of renouncing his life's work, his all-encompassing "Key to All Mythologies." This is another aiming at the universal, and thus comparable to Lydgate's efforts or Dorothea's desire for boundless knowledge; but aridity is a primary correlative of his emotional and intellectual lives. Casaubon's desire for knowledge as an end has been adulterated by a concern for reputation and unwillingness to admit the falsity of his original hypothesis that all the mythical systems in the world are corruptions of a tradition "originally revealed" (his is a religious undertaking, too). Yet his worldly failure is irrelevant. What is important is that scholarship has brought no internal reward, only friction and a morbid consciousness that others do not give him the

credit he deserves.

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Sensing the failure of his life's ambition, Casaubon has sought happiness from an alternative source. He hoped to "annex" it with a lovely, virtuous, and submissive bride. The calculation was that, in return for marriage settlements, he would make practical arrangements for her happiness, receive family pleasures, and leave a copy of himself behind, possibly in lieu of his uncompleted key. Dorothea would admire his mind, assuage his loneliness, and perhaps enable him to dispense with a hired secretary. However, ironically, Dorothea comes to represent the unappreciative world brought nearer. Her loving ministrations do not content his uneasy, distrustful mind, and he finds that he preferred his old, easier, secluded bachelor existence.

Eliot's distinction between "inner" and "outer" is prominent in Casaubon's personality. His allowance to his young second cousin, Will Ladislav, springs from his exacting sense of correctness and obligation, rather than sympathy. We could see the Jungian idea of a persona, or mask, as prominent here; his main concern is to act with propriety, and marriage, like religion and erudition, is fated to become "an outward requirement." Having a lovely, loving, and faithful wife, his jealousy of other scholars is supplemented by jealousy of Ladislav. Neither before nor after marriage does he display a Feuerbachian sympathy, and again the basic cause is egoism. The author

admits to being very sorry for Casaubon:

It is an uneasy lot at best, to be what we call highly taught and yet not to enjoy: to be present at this great spectacle of life and never to be liberated from a small hungry shivering self--never to be fully possessed by the glory we behold, never to have our consciousness rapturously transformed into the vividness of a thought, the ardour of a passion, the energy of an action.
(III, 29:273-74; italics added)

Feuerbach's reason, love, and will (the "energy of character" cited here as the energy of an action) are lacking in him. (Eliot's use of the word "passion" can refer to a positive sort of enthusiasm, or it can refer to uncontrolled Spinozan-type passions that detract from happiness; evidently the former is evoked at this time, with overtones of Feuerbach's enthusiastic rhetoric.)¹⁹

Eliot's concern with the meaning of the "future life" in Middlemarch was attested to by her notetaking. "Future life a puerile, pernicious illusion," she wrote in her Folger notebook.²⁰ On the next page, she noted Spinoza's remark, "life, not death!--how to live--not how to die," from the fourth book of his Ethics. In these words, Spinoza anticipated Feuerbach's own concern in relation to the concept of immortality. In fact, Lydgate has revealed that Casaubon may soon die; and, in a sombre passage, Eliot accords with Feuerbach that the concept of the "future life" is thoroughly dependent on the human essence, on what we are, and how different knowledge is when it arises from feeling:

Here was a man who now for the first time found himself looking into the eyes of death-- was passing through one of those rare moments of experience when we feel the truth of a commonplace, which is as different from what we call knowing it, as the vision of waters upon the earth is different from the delirious vision of the water which cannot be had to cool the burning tongue. (IV, 42:415)

In the doctrine of immortality, wherein he saw the religious soul as openly concerning itself with its own existence, Feuerbach noted that a man's concerns in the future life would be true of his present life (EC 172-73, 181-83). This is the case when Casaubon finds himself, as the narrator puts it, on the dark river brink expecting the summons: "In such an hour the mind does not change its lifelong bias, but carries it onward in imagination to the other side of death . . ." (IV, 42:415). The point echoes Feuerbach's interpretation of the future life as present in the mirroring imagination (EC 182).

Casaubon considers himself to be a believing Christian "as to estimates of the present and hopes of the future"; but, though his dream of heaven may represent Feuerbach's truth as unity of being and consciousness (EC 172-73), it is in sharp distinction to the quality of his present life. Therefore, and again in line with Feuerbach's views, he seeks to implement his happiness by abolishing that discordance of which he is aware. But the author points out, still with Feuerbach, that what we strive to gratify is an immediate desire; the future state

exists already in imagination and love. Casaubon's longings cling "low and mist-like in very shady places"--a description that to modern readers summons up Jung's "shadow" featuring the less attractive side of the unconscious. Casaubon's over-sensitive imagination and his jealous love inspire him to attach a codicil to his will, in an attempt to prevent Dorothea from marrying Ladislaw.

While Casaubon is contemplating immortality in this inauspicious present and material light, Dorothea steps into the garden: "a heaven-sent angel coming with a promise that the short hours remaining should yet be filled with that faithful love which clings the closer to a comprehended grief" (IV, 42:415-16). Yet he coldly repulses Dorothea, and the narrator again ponders on the effects of "knowledge" that is unlinked to feeling:

It is in these acts called trivialities that
the seeds of joy are for ever wasted, until
men and women look round with haggard faces
at the devastation their own waste has made,
and say, the earth bears no sweetness--
calling their denial knowledge. (IV, 42:416)

The unrecognized significance of "trivial" acts is, perhaps, Eliot's most crucial message in Middlemarch. "Knowledge," as this passage emphasizes, is not an abstract entity, but linked to a shaping sensation, as Feuerbach and especially Comte would have it. Casaubon's attempted manipulation of the submissive Dorothea

describes Feuerbach's errant will. In contrast, Will Ladislaw becomes the shining star rising in Dorothea's horizon. Mr Brooke envisages him as a kind of Shelley (needing some discipline), and he has been seen as a version of Shelley's "unacknowledged legislator of the world." In Middlemarch, power is not supernatural but, as for Spinoza and Feuerbach, a product of the human will.²¹

Dorothea is also self-limiting, but as a contrast to Lydgate, Bulstrode, and Casaubon, a Feuerbachian morality and happiness are generated within her. In July 1871, Eliot explained to John Blackwood that her design was "to show the gradual action of ordinary causes rather than exceptional, and to show this in some directions which have not been from time immemorial the beaten path" (GEL V, 168). The Prelude to the novel tells of Saint Theresa's search for a "rapturous consciousness of life beyond self," an epos which she found in the reform of a religious order, and compares her to Dorothea whose life has no epic grandeur but is, rather, "a life of mistakes, the offspring of a certain spiritual grandeur ill-matched with the meanness of opportunity." Dorothea's aspiration toward goodness will be offset by hindrances, and will not result in any particular great deed by which she will be remembered.

Dorothea's tragedy lies in her choice of Casaubon, whose personal limitations proved to be so consequential.

Whereas the grand finale of Eliot's previous novel was Esther Lyon's considered and right decision to marry Felix Holt, Dorothea begins her painful search for truth with an impulsive decision, a self-limiting choice, intended to further her ideal of knowledge. That Dorothea is granted a second chance, in a love-match to Will Ladislav, is significant, for Eliot allows such a harmonious union to take place only after the individuals concerned have achieved an appropriate balance of feeling with understanding reflective of Feuerbach's humanity. Few of her characters attain this state of married bliss. As with Esther Lyon, Dorothea's final situation is based not on a worldly prescription, power, wealth, or status, but on self-actualization, as a product of love and reason activated by Feuerbach's "will" which is an implementing moral energy.

Prior to her marriage, the forms of religion had been less important to Dorothea than "that submergence of self in communion with Divine perfection which seemed to her to be expressed in the best Christian books of widely-distant ages" (I, 3:24). Eliot's own loss of religious faith and her relationship with Dr Brabant (the father of Rufa who married Charles Hennell) are here reflected in Dorothea's history.²² Initially, Dorothea likens Casaubon to the portrait of Locke (which was a frontispiece in the Lewes copy of the Essay Concerning

Human Understanding).²³ Locke, whom George Eliot admired and whose Essay she reread after writing Daniel Deronda, had published an essay on the Reasonableness of Christianity, maintaining that as our knowledge is not commensurate with reality, knowledge must be supplemented by religious faith.²⁴ She also admiringly compares him to Bossuet and St Augustine, two of the greatest expounders of providence, that is, of God's will acting through human time and human history,²⁵ as well as to Pascal, whose Pensées, issued posthumously, were fragments of an uncompleted defence of the Christian religion. In Middlemarch, Ladislav's artist friend Naumann sketches Casaubon as Aquinas, a renowned commentator on Aristotle, and this comparison--taken up again by Mrs Cadwallader--recalls the Saint's mystification of Aristotle's theories.

The fundamental and in itself admirable reason for Dorothea's "faith" is her ardent nature:

Signs are small measurable things, but interpretations are illimitable, and in girls of sweet, ardent nature, every sign is apt to conjure up wonder, hope, belief, vast as a sky, and coloured by a diffused thimbleful of matter in the shape of knowledge. (I, 3:24)

Still, the fact that her response is coloured by her emotions and imagination is typical of Spinoza's first (lowest) level of knowledge, cognitio primi generis, that of "inadequate ideas," as she miscasts Casaubon in the

role of a god, a means to her real end, knowledge. This basic error violates the Feuerbachian unity of love and reason:

How could it occur to her to examine the letter, to look at it critically as a profession of love? Her whole soul was possessed by the fact that a fuller life was opening before her: she was a neophyte about to enter on a higher grade of initiation. She was going to have room for the energies which stirred uneasily under the dimness and pressure of her own ignorance and the petty peremptoriness of the world's habits.
(I, 5:44)

Dorothea's ideal will eventually be realized, though not through Casaubon's tarnished intellectual conceptions. In working out her theme of the acquisition of knowledge that leads to wisdom, Eliot appears to draw further on Spinoza's hierarchy of knowledge, as described in his Ethics.²⁶ His "low level" knowledge that we have already seen evinced in Dorothea is wholly derived from sense perception; it is marked by emotion, confused and inadequate ideas, and a passive association of ideas that can be distinguished from logical thinking. The second level, "adequate ideas," is somewhat comparable to Feuerbachian reason and consists of genuine scientific knowledge and notions common to all men. For Spinoza, these provided the foundations of genuine reason.

Spinoza's "intuitive" or highest level knowledge harmonizes with Feuerbach's and Comte's concept of a unity of love and reason, and relates to universal notions.

Scientia intuitiva can be seen as an immediate and comprehensive grasp of knowledge of the universe; this is equated by Spinoza with "blessedness." In giving thought an active role (within his "adequate ideas") as well as a passive one (in the lower, sensory level of knowledge), Spinoza's theory allowed for the possibility of active human participation in change, as opposed to a thoroughgoing determinism. Spinoza entitled Part V of his Ethics, with a significant juxtaposition of terms, "Concerning the Power of the Intellect or Human Freedom." In Spinoza, it must be remembered that mental life (at the lower level) is a succession of logically unrelated ideas which reflect the successive interactions of the body with other bodies, and sense perception alone cannot yield genuine knowledge. Eliot had translated Spinoza's Ethics shortly after her translation of Feuerbach, and her insistence, in several different passages, on Dorothea's confused emotion in her progression toward knowledge suggests a parallelism with one of Spinoza's major themes.

Perception itself is an important factor in the novel. John Halperin has noted that many passages of Eliot's novels relate to vision, to the way people see or avoid seeing.²⁷ In similar fashion, other passages utilize the metaphor of reading as interpretation (a device also noticeable in Daniel Deronda). Dorothea "reads into" Casaubon's character a degree of learning and

sanctity that scarcely exists, uniting in him the glories of doctor and saint, whereas Dorothea's sister, Celia, reads "between the lines." The innocent-looking Celia is sceptical, worldly-wise, and far more realistic than Dorothea. And yet Celia's moral vision is narrower than Dorothea's. The narrator specifically tells us to see more in Dorothea than the deficiencies provoked by narrow teaching and shallow social conventions:

The intensity of her religious disposition, the coercion it exercised over her life, was but one aspect of a nature altogether ardent, theoretic, and intellectually consequent: and with such a nature, struggling in the bonds of a narrow teaching, hemmed in by a social life which seemed nothing but a labyrinth of petty courses, a walled-in maze of small paths that led no whither, the outcome was sure to strike others as at once exaggeration and inconsistency.
(I, 3:28)

Significantly, Dorothea's aim is not to "deck herself" with knowledge, but to fill her life with "action at once rational and ardent" (I, 10:85); as such, her aim in life is truly Feuerbachian, combining her subjective nature, as feeling, with her objective nature, as reason. Her sorrowful experience in marriage will be conducive to her entering Spinoza's second level, cognitio secundi generis, consisting of adequate ideas, wherein common notions, ideas which are common to all men, become the foundations of genuine reasoning and of scientific knowledge. The mark of "adequate ideas," as Spinoza noted, is that they

convey certainty to the thinker.

After marriage to Casaubon, Dorothea's religious fervour gradually diminishes as she becomes disillusioned about his "Key." This process of secularization coincides with a growing awareness of the true meaning of religion in terms of Feuerbach's essential nature--of the wider humanity or self-consciousness that Feuerbach refers to as "species being." At the same time, she begins to acquire a cultural awareness. As in the case of Mr Tryan of Eliot's Scenes of Clerical Life, who lacked a wide "intellectual culture," Dorothea's self-absorbing religious orientation has detracted from her knowledge of such things as art and society. One may recall here that, in Feuerbach's view, religion was distinctly anti-cultural; consequently, he considered that religious mysticism should be dissipated in favour of moral action. Dorothea's later, more secular position is expressed as follows:

That by desiring what is perfectly good, even
when we don't quite know what it is and cannot
do what we would, we are part of the divine power
against evil--widening the skirts of light
and making the struggle with darkness narrower.
(IV, 39:382)

Her motivation resembles Ladislav's more simply phrased philosophy, "To love what is good and beautiful when I see it" (IV, 39:383), which in turn recalls Eliot's definition of piety in her review of Carlyle's Life of John Sterling.

Richard Jenkins sees the conversation about prayer as an example of the way in which Christianity is rejected but not the aura that accompanies it, concluding that the Platonist language helps to paper over the virtual meaninglessness to which the word "religion" is reduced (242). However, a Feuerbachian interpretation of religion as human nature suggests, rather, the infinitely meaningful nature of Dorothea's striving toward virtue. For his part, Thomas Vargish maintains that there are signs in Middlemarch that George Eliot was coming to the conclusion that the mystery that lies behind the universe might not be reconcileable with a simplified atheism. Although the novel attacks providential paradigms, religious, social, and psychological, there exists a faith or optimism that arrests the tendency toward nihilism or anarchy (228).

Mr Brooke, Dorothea's uncle (in whom Charles Bray seemed to recognize himself), helps us to put Dorothea's vague ambitions into perspective, for he is a seeker of knowledge who has forgotten most of what he claims once to have known. Despite Mr Brooke's general scholarly muddle, eccentricity, unpredictable conclusions, and even miserliness in relation to his tenants (this last, the author criticizes in the comic episode where the tenants get the last laugh), he is a kindly soul whose remarks are often surprisingly apt. Gillian Beer is right in saying that one should always pay attention to Mr Brooke.²⁸ He

regards enthusiasm for liberty, freedom, emancipation as a fine thing "under guidance." Moreover, he has some reservations about the "deep" religious symbolism in the picture of Casaubon as Aquinas, reminiscent of the paintings by Overbeck which Eliot had seen with Lewes in Germany:

There you are to the very life: a deep subtle sort of thinker with his forefinger on the page, while Saint Bonaventure or somebody else, rather fat and florid, is looking up at the Trinity. Everything is symbolical, you know. . . . I like that up to a certain point, but not too far. . . . (IV, 34:225-26)

Significantly, Mr Brooke questions whether Dorothea has thought enough about marrying Casaubon. Dorothea, who accepts Casaubon's proposal on the same day that she receives his letter, responds that there was no need to think long. Her passion is transfused "through a mind struggling towards an ideal life" and falls on the first object that comes "within its level." Through Mr Brooke's questioning of Dorothea's impulsive action, with his tolerant yet insistent emphasis on a moderated reason, a Feuerbachian notion of the practical operation of reason is conveyed; moreover, his own forays into the difficult territory of esoteric knowledge have been notably unsuccessful. Thus, he provides a foil to Dorothea in her quest for an ideal, absolute knowledge. A certain wisdom penetrates even his vaguest assertions.

For Eliot the movement from inadequate ideas to adequate ones is always a question of experience. In this, the imagination is a factor, and here Eliot follows Feuerbach and Wordsworth, rather than Comte or Spinoza; the latter, however, did not deny the usefulness of the imagination and his low level of knowledge included vaguely universal notions.

The force of imagination here is frequently embodied in images which contain projected associations of the self. The first of the mysterious images that enable Dorothea to assimilate unconscious elements of her personality into consciousness is given priority in the opening scene of the novel, where the two sisters, Dorothea and Celia, are looking at the jewels left to them by their mother. Although Dorothea scorns female finery, she is struck by the beauty of the emerald ring and bracelet as the light flashes on them,²⁹ and, somewhat arbitrarily, decides to keep these "fragments of heaven." Her analytical tendency tries, paradoxically, to justify her delight by "merging them in her mystic religious joy" (I, 1:14). The emeralds have an important and indefinable meaning that she cannot fathom.

The episode suggests that for the fulfilment of her nature Dorothea needs to take account not only of theoretic matters, but of sensation. She has pictured Casaubon as a Lockean figure, certainly therefore connected in her mind with sensation, given Locke's

philosophical emphasis. However, Feuerbach distinguished between sensation and feeling, and Dorothea has not considered the implications of marriage in sufficient depth. Casaubon has, in fact, a "shallow rill" of feeling. She has "looked deep into the ungauged reservoir of Mr Casaubon's mind, seeing reflected there in vague labyrinthine extension every quality she herself brought" (I, 3:23), an ironic passage not only reminiscent of the Feuerbachian projection but curiously descriptive of a psychic phenomenon which C. G. Jung would later label the "anima." Indeed, her reaction to the gems and to Casaubon imply her need to attain the state of being that Feuerbach thought all human beings unconsciously sought.

Another image evidently affects Dorothea's unconscious mind, for it disturbs her even when she is not thinking about it:

in certain states of dull forlornness Dorothea all her life continued to see the vastness of St Peter's, the huge bronze canopy, the excited intention in the mosaics above, and the red drapery which was being hung for Christmas spreading itself everywhere like a disease of the retina. (II, 20:188)

Appropriately, in the Feuerbachian context, traditional religion (St Peter's) forms a metaphor for her condition. The narrator refers to such images as representing "epochs" of Dorothea's existence which present new and significant experience. Ignorant of art and architecture, Dorothea sees in Rome's art forms an appallingly

irreverent superstition. In fact, the striking image of a diseased retina reflects her own faulty vision of the marital state and her disillusionment.³⁰ The image of a disease marring perception combines both "mind" and "heart," and a similar mind-body image relating to the heart occurs in connection with Casaubon. As his mind turns to jealousy and hatred, he will have a heart attack and then die of his disease of the "heart," a word Feuerbach used interchangeably for "feeling." Indeed, U. C. Knoepfelmacher has suggested such a metaphoric use of mind and heart imagery.³¹

Dorothea's bitter sobs arise out of what is described as confused thought and passion, and she senses "that ache belonging to a glut of confused ideas which check the flow of emotion" (II, 20:188; emphasis added). In relation to her state, the narrator suggests that the tragic element in commonly occurring situations has not yet wrought itself into the coarse emotion of mankind:

If we had a keen vision and feeling of all
ordinary human life, it would be like hearing
the grass grow and the squirrel's heart beat,
and we should die of that roar which lies
on the other side of silence.
(II, 20:189; emphasis added)

The limits of knowledge are evoked, and human limits. However, not to achieve a certain degree of sensitivity is "moral stupidity, taking the world as an udder to feed our supreme selves" (II, 21:205), a setting of ourselves at

the centre of the universe.³² This need for perceptive sympathy is also indicated in a passage that is reflective of Feuerbach's majestic conjuring trick in situating Hegel's metaphysical reason back where it truly belonged, in men's senses, making man not God the subject:

Dorothea had early begun to emerge from that stupidity, but yet it had been easier to her to imagine how she would devote herself to Mr Casaubon, and become wise and strong in his strength and wisdom, than to conceive with that distinctness which is no longer reflection but feeling--an idea wrought back to the directness of sense, like the solidity of objects--that he had an equivalent centre of self, whence the lights and shadows must always fall with a certain difference.
(II, 21:205; emphasis added)

Dorothea is learning to love in Feuerbach's sense, suggested in the above passage, that "he who loves, gives up his egoistical independence" (EC 264). For Feuerbach, love is non-judgmental and accepting, and intricately bound to reason, which is man's objective reality; love is the realization of the species through moral sentiment (EC 266). Ultimately, the tragic dismantling of Dorothea's illusions will lead toward an assumption of fuller powers of sympathy and the willingness to sacrifice her own happiness to her husband's. Even at this early stage in Rome, the result of her anguish is a renovating sense of her own spiritual poverty.

Slowly and confusedly, she begins to adjust to reality, as her imagined "large vistas and wide fresh air"

are replaced by "anterooms and winding passages which seemed to lead nowhither" (II, 20:190). However, Dorothea's continuing insensitivity is manifested when she urges her husband to start writing his book from his vast store of notes. She has "not yet listened patiently to his heart-beats, but only felt that her own was beating violently" (II, 20:194): the pace of actual heartbeats is symptomatic of disordered feeling.

The unconscious is invoked not only in Dorothea's mental images but in Casaubon's own "muffled suggestions of consciousness," his suspicion that he, too, is lost, as the narrator puts it, among small closets and winding stairs. Naturally, Dorothea's voicing of his negative feelings is unpleasant to him. He will come to see her as a cruel accuser in the shape of a wife, a spy. The disillusion is mutual. Nevertheless, in her mind there is a constant striving toward "the fullest truth, the least partial good" (II, 21:197); here Eliot uses the metaphor of the current to describe the unification of thought and feeling within Dorothea, effectively opposing it to an earlier image of a shock-producing electric current to denote Dorothea's disillusionment.

The significant image of the diseased retina had expressed an early stage in Dorothea's development, a disillusionment that was nevertheless vital to her progress. Subsequently, a further image impresses itself

on Dorothea's consciousness. This one is even more deeply depressing, yet it, too, contributes to a new kind of knowledge. A lasting image of sadness is created in her by Peter Featherstone's funeral. As the author adds, although scenes which affect our neighbours vitally are only the background of our own lives, through association they may form a part of our own history and thus "make a part of that unity which lies in the selection of our keenest consciousness." This is the way Feuerbachian theory partly works in this novel, through imagery which evokes an unconscious drive or need, bringing that which was formerly unconscious into consciousness. Dorothea's occasional discussions with a mentor (Ladislaw) will help her to verbalize and clarify felt impressions. The recurring nature of the image of the funeral suggests its archetypal nature.

The funeral is impressive by its very divergence from Feuerbach's code of unegoistic love. The persons who take part in the funeral procession are "Christian carnivora," human vultures motivated by self-interest. They hope to benefit from Featherstone's wealth, and they squabble intermittently among themselves. In his life, old Mr Featherstone was a miser, and, in a belated bid for atonement or personal immortality, the major share of his legacy has gone to build Featherstone's Almshouses "in order to please God Almighty." Just as with Casaubon, the

testamentary will is an instrument for establishing that harmony not noticeably apparent in the individual's own life. Thus, Featherstone had not only reconciled himself with God but thoroughly enjoyed the thought of his future life in terms of gratification from inside his coffin at having thwarted his relations (another demonic parody of Feuerbach's "will"). Witnessing the funeral, Dorothea experiences an association of something alien with the deepest secrets of her experience. The funeral seems to mirror a sense of loneliness that, it is stated, derives from the very ardour of her nature. She sees it as a blot on the morning: "I cannot bear to think that any one should die and leave no love behind" (IV, 34:320). Such a loveless condition at death she conceives to be the ultimate tragedy; it is her Feuerbachian realization of the tremendous relevance of love and community to human beings. The perception she has is still a confused one, dreamlike and ill-understood, but, from this low Spinozan level of knowledge as imagination and sense perception, she will move toward rational "adequate ideas" in relation to feeling.

From this point on, Dorothea's development in Feuerbachian sympathy and love is rendered through a dual action, her confrontations with Casaubon and her growing love for his second cousin. Significantly, Eliot employs religious metaphor to describe Will Ladislav's feeling

for Dorothea. She becomes his object of worship, so that he sees his friend Naumann's adjustment of her stance as a desecration and her loveliness as divineness (II, 22:211-12). The narrator speaks of his remote worship of a woman throned out of his reach (II, 22:213), and, for Ladislav, Dorothea's wifely anxiety for Casaubon is part of her halo. It is the end of Ladislav's dilettante phase, the beginning of a severer discipleship to Dorothea, his "religion." Now, he decides to return to England and work for his living instead of accepting Casaubon's allowance.

Correspondingly, through Ladislav's influence, Dorothea begins to connect art with life. Formerly, she had seen art as lying outside life; now she compares life to pictures, saying to Will: "I have often felt since I have been in Rome that most of our lives would look much uglier and more bungling than the pictures, if they could be put on the wall" (II, 22:214). Dorothea's experience of sorrow has increased her cultural awareness. In her earlier Puritanism and ignorance of art, she had resembled the young, evangelical George Eliot. Ladislav's own more hedonistic attitude provides an antidote for Dorothea's seriousness. He says that the best piety is to enjoy when you can: that enjoyment radiates; and he suspects that Dorothea has some false belief in the virtues of misery and wants to make her life a martyrdom (II, 22:214-15).

Thus, he helps Dorothea to rearrange her perceptions, as she helps him. (The conversation even suggests a mellowing toward hedonism by Eliot.) When, at Lowick, he criticizes Casaubon's work, Dorothea is strangely quiet because she is "no longer struggling against the perception of facts, but adjusting herself to their clearer perception" (IV, 37:356). In a further episode relating to art, Dorothea's dislike of the "simpering pictures" in the drawing room motivates her to urge Mr Brooke to charitable action on behalf of his tenants. In her world, art now contributes to life, whereas her former attitude well illustrated Feuerbach's point that religion has a damping effect on culture.

The interplay of subconscious forces suggested in relation to other characters, such as Dorothea, Casaubon, and Bulstrode, is repeated amusingly in relation to Mr Brooke's pen, which rambles with its owner's mind, leading him to invite Ladislav to stay with him, in defiance of orders. To Dorothea, the opportunity of seeing Will Ladislav is comparable to a breach of her imprisonment, a glimpse of sunny air (IV, 37:352). When Will manages to speak to her alone at Lowick, they gaze at each other joyfully and innocently. As Feuerbach remarked, "Happiness lies in the mere sight of the beloved one. The glance is the certainty of love" (EC 56-57). Love is both spiritual and sensuous, according to his description.

Reminiscent of Feuerbach, the narrator thinks that, in worshipping Dorothea, Ladislaw's feelings are perfect: "we mortals have our divine moments, when love is satisfied in the completeness of the beloved object" (IV, 37:354). A comparable development takes place in Celia, whose love for her baby transforms her offspring into a religious icon, centering her life (though perhaps rather narrowly, Dorothea feels).

Even though readers have not always felt the relation to be ideal, in Ladislaw and Dorothea the author is describing a demythologized perfect love. In fact, the novel shows Ladislaw to have the essential qualities that Lydgate lacks, as is convincingly demonstrated by Ladislaw's refusal of Bulstrode's interference in his private affairs, in marked contrast to Lydgate's dependence on the banker, and, indeed, to Ladislaw's own earlier dependence on Casaubon. Ladislaw will not accept Bulstrode's money because he wants to remain worthy of his ideal object, Dorothea, even though she is separated from him by circumstances. To maintain the perfection of their relationship, it must--according to a Feuerbachian morality--remain innocent. Potentially, it could be a difficult situation, with Dorothea as a young woman married to a possessive husband. Dorothea's innocence is the saving factor: no impure or irreverent thoughts sully the pity which is now her main feeling for her husband.

Dorothea and Will Ladislaw are kept apart by Casaubon's jealousy and Dorothea's growing awareness of it. Still, in her desire for justice and equality, she has no conception that she is rubbing salt in the festering wound by speaking of her wish to give Will some of his rightful inheritance. With his external morality, Casaubon looks on Dorothea as his property, and this attitude exacerbates his problem.

In this novel, Eliot finally arrives at an incarnation of love as both spiritual and sensuous, according to Feuerbach's description. Eliot's more open secularism and her new suggestiveness in relation to marital relations and to morality exemplify the greater "truthfulness" of her art in Middlemarch. Ladislaw's artist friend, Naumann, had seen Dorothea as a Christian Antigone, a sensuous force controlled by spiritual passion, and Ladislaw privately castigates Dorothea's marriage as "the most horrible of virgin sacrifices" (IV, 37:351). He is irritable, after guessing why Dorothea married Casaubon, thinking of beautiful lips kissing holy skulls "and other emptinesses ecclesiastically enshrined" (IV, 37:355). (In fact, Casaubon's own fear of feeling in his marital relations with Dorothea is well implied by Eliot.) In relation to Will and Dorothea, we have a combination of innocence with eroticism that, in comparison with the egoistic passions

of The Mill on the Floss, becomes a more truly Feuerbachian incarnation of love; their marriage will correspond to Feuerbach's "religious marriage" which is spontaneously willed and self-sufficing, and therefore truly moral, like all moral relations which are sacred in and by themselves (EC 271). Joseph Wiesenfarth, who has observed the tension in Eliot's earlier novels between eros (passionate love) and philia (filial love)--we could see this as stemming from Eliot's own record of erotic involvement--believes that in her last four novels Eliot gradually comes to terms with the greatest of Victorian taboos, erotic love. As he notes, she uses mythic models, such as Narcissus, Ariadne, and Bacchus, to embody her perceptions in this regard.³³

Intervals of meditative isolation afford Dorothea the opportunity to come to terms with her sense of angry rebellion and to energize her will toward her wholehearted unegoistic ideal; that is, to actualize her mental images. The enormous reserve of energy summoned up by her during one of her night vigils is, we are told, no less than that which would trigger a crime (IV, 42:418). Here we can see Feuerbach's will, as intellectual energy, coming into operation. While Dorothea's submission is a "resolved" one, she has to wait for her noble feelings spontaneously to reassert themselves for this submission to come about. We may conclude that Dorothea's action, though in line

with the Comtian idea of wifely submission, is Feuerbachian in its recognition of conscience, duty, and the role of reason. For Comte, reason is the heart's servant, and possibly this notion is involved here. Later, however, Dorothea's reason (her sense of what is right, an aspect of Feuerbach's understanding) rules her "unruly" heart, or errant will. Feuerbach does not restrict the operations of reason to the same degree as Comte, since to him reason is an end in itself.

When Casaubon requests Dorothea to carry out his unspecified wishes after his death, her rationality begins to assert itself. Therefore, she requests time to think it over. To continue his work, which now seems to her "shattered mummies, and fragments of a tradition which was itself a mosaic wrought from crushed ruins," a theory withered at birth (V, 48:469), would be anathema to her. However, she has no inkling that that this might be only a part of the power he wishes to retain over her actions. Typically, Dorothea strives to act lovingly, and now she forces herself into submission to her husband's will, knowing that her decision will affect her future life, and ruin her happiness. She has a better understanding than hitherto of his own sensitivity. In providing this example of supreme self-sacrifice, Eliot may appear to be carrying Feuerbach's ideas beyond their logical extreme. However, as for Romola, submission through sympathy is

called for, because of the marriage tie:

[Dorothea] foresaw that she must bind herself to a fellowship from which she shrank. Neither law nor the world's opinion compelled her to this--only her husband's nature and her own compassion, only the ideal and not the real yoke of marriage. She saw clearly enough the whole situation, yet she was fettered: she could not smite the stricken soul that entreated hers.
(V, 48:472)

She had brought this on herself by marrying Casaubon. Her past choice has restricted her future choices. Carrying submissive sympathy to an extreme, Dorothea's satisfaction in keeping her promise would lie in the knowledge that her sacrifice had pleased her husband and the feeling that she had done the right thing. As a dutiful wife, she is ready to relay her acceptance to her husband.

Dorothea specifically acts according to a Feuerbachian self-sacrificing morality. She cannot refuse Casaubon's request because she does not want to crush his bruised heart. This is her main reason, although there are other implicit reasons. Lydgate has warned her of the danger to Casaubon's health of any excitement; to avoid making the promise would anger him, and aggravate his condition, even fatally. Therefore, she must accede to Casaubon's request, although keeping such a promise would scarcely lead to self-fulfilment, to a Feuerbachian consciousness as self-perfection and unity.

This seems paradoxical, but the importance of

promises was shown in Romola, and Eliot would have balked at her ideal heroine calculating that she might break the promise after Casaubon's death as a possible utilitarian solution to her dilemma. Dorothea's motivation is sympathetic feeling, with no elements of selfish calculation.

Casaubon's fatal heart attack is a providential coincidence which allows Eliot to salvage Dorothea's happiness as a reward for virtue: the alternative was life imprisonment. However, Dorothea had asked herself: "Was it right, even to soothe his grief--would it be possible, even if she promised--to work as in a treadmill fruitlessly?" (V, 48:470).³⁴ Eliot resolved the matter so as to leave Dorothea's purity unspotted and her potential for happiness intact, having saved Dorothea from actually making the promise (as Dorothea's words imply, she would have had to break it). Dorothea thus fully abides by a Feuerbachian compassionate ethics consisting of conscience, trustworthiness, and self-sacrifice. (Thomas Pinney has found some inconsistency in the development of Eliot's concept of duty, which moves from personal claims and affections to public ones; however, in The Spanish Gypsy, which he cites, Fedalma's dutiful Comtian sacrifice of her personal love was made on behalf of the gypsy race, which she felt had a prior claim.)³⁵

After her husband's death, Dorothea concludes that her happiness (which is bound up with her aims, the desire to do good) is important, and must be allied to reason. Taking the Synoptical Tabulation, for the use of Mrs Casaubon, she writes: "I could not use it. Do you not see now that I could not submit my soul to yours, by working hopelessly at what I have no belief in?" (VI, 54:526-27). Signing her name, Dorothea seals the envelope and deposits it in her desk. This final commentary on the subject of submission expresses a Feuerbachian view of happiness as tied to primary human aims. Eliot depicts the necessity of self-sacrifice, but shows its limits, which are set by Feuerbach's non-egoistic love, reason, and will, which in turn should lead to individual happiness. However, it is up to the individual to make the difficult particular discriminations. Clear in her own conscience, Dorothea has no sense of guilt in finally marrying Ladislaw, despite Casaubon's attempts to prevent this from happening by restricting her monetary resources in that eventuality, and despite the general social condemnation of her act.

Dorothea's severest trial arises from her mistaken impression that Ladislaw loves Rosamond. Her suffering, which is significantly compared to that of a mother whose child is taken away, brings Dorothea to a realization of the depth of her feelings. Her night-long struggle ends in victory as she forces herself into an impartial

sympathy that corresponds to Feuerbach's "reason." Previously, she had represented Lydgate's difficult situation to herself with "active thought," and this sympathetic experience included the hidden troubles of his new marriage. The active quality of her thought suggests that she has reached Spinoza's second stage of knowledge. Now, the powerful memory returns to her, making her realize that her own irremediable grief should not drive her back from effort:

She yearned towards the perfect Right, that
it might make a throne within her, and rule her
errant will. "What should I do--how should
I act now, this very day, if I could clutch my
own pain, and compel it to silence, and think
of those three?" (VIII, 80:777)

According to Feuerbach's idea of "willing," Dorothea needs to implement her decision not to put herself first. Significantly, the motto of chapter 80, from Wordsworth's "Ode to Duty," reinforces this idea. The morning scene is described in Wordsworthian terms. Pearly light floods the room as Dorothea draws back the curtains, senses the largeness of the world, sees peasants going about their business, and feels herself "a part of that "involuntary, palpitating life." Unable to live an isolated, selfish existence, she dresses in lighter mourning, symbolic of her resolution to lead an active life, regardless of her "buried joy." The whole scene is powerfully indicative of action. Hence, despite Dorothea's painful, misplaced

jealousy of Rosamond, she returns and generously fulfils her original purpose, to help the young couple. She has finally reached Feuerbach's reason allied with love, and Spinoza's intuitive reason, both of which have universal implications. Spinoza equated this state with blessedness, but for Eliot such happiness, as was stressed in Romola, cannot be devoid of pain. However, Dorothea's effort at community is rewarded: during her visit, she joyfully discovers that she was under an illusion about Ladislav's character.

Eventually, Dorothea will be reunited with him. Although this union is sometimes viewed as a compromise, it creates a final image of harmony comparable to Dinah's marriage to Adam Bede and is consonant with Feuerbach's fusion of reason and love, as has been noted. Certainly it also creates a greater sense of Dorothea's and Ladislav's social and political involvement in the community, thus providing an extension of Feuerbach's truism typical of Eliot's later novels. In a socio-political context, Graham Martin, in discussing Eliot's application of Feuerbachian theory, views both Middlemarch and Felix Holt as adopting a distinction between social and political reform: "idealistic energies find their expression, not in political terms, but in another, morally superior, realm of activity." The difference lies in the fact that in Middlemarch even social reformers find their efforts minutely circumscribed

by the habitual self-interest embedded in their own present society.³⁶ While Ladislav's political role possibly typifies George Eliot's more accepting attitude in this novel toward utilitarianism--as a reformer, Ladislav is aligned with philosophical radicalism--this may simply constitute part of an acceptable compromise. As a politician, Ladislav would be lower in the Comtian hierarchy than the "philosopher" Felix Holt. Still, Ladislav has outgrown his dilettantism.

Although Will Ladislav seemed unpromising to begin with, his development was in line with Feuerbach's will, affection, and reason, and he was aided by thoughts of Dorothea. On the other hand, Lydgate, with all his great potential, had allowed himself, in an ironic reversal of Lydgate's own opinion of the gander and the goose, to be sapped by his submission to the quietly power-loving Rosamond. The sub-plot reinforces the moral commentary implicit in the story of Dorothea and Ladislav. Fred Vincy reforms, guided by the caustic but witty and honest Mary Garth, who does not make Dorothea's mistake. It would have been tempting to have married Farebrother, who loves her; but her love and fealty derive from her shared childhood associations with Fred. At the end of the novel, Fred and Mary are depicted as an old couple living at Stone Court, Featherstone's former residence. As with Will and Dorothea, they are reasonably well off but not rich in a significantly happy union.

Dorothea herself is, we are told, bound to Will Ladislaw by a love stronger than any impulses which could have marred it. In her Folger notebook, Eliot quoted Zeno: "All men are by nature equal, & virtue alone establishes a difference between them."³⁷ The marriage of Ladislaw and Dorothea is more one of Feuerbachian equality than of Comtian submission. Although it is based on a principle of submission that means putting the other person before oneself, this altruism must itself be subject to a reasoned self-determination.

Dorothea's life is also filled with a beneficent activity, in her case not only social but political, which she has not the "doubtful pains" of discovering and marking out for herself. She finds fulfilment in aiding her husband to become "an ardent public man" and be elected to Parliament. Moreover, Dorothea gives birth to a son, an event which provides continuity and leads to the reconciliation of the two sisters who had become separated by the dislike of Ladislaw by Celia's husband. As a wife and mother, Dorothea's life has become "absorbed into the life of another" (VIII, Finale: 822).

Dorothea might have made more of herself, perhaps made a great work in her own name, but she has fulfilled her nature and achieved a happiness that is perfect in its way. The Finale emphasizes the importance of daily words and acts:

Her finely-touched spirit had still its fine issues, though they were not widely visible. Her full nature, like that river of which Cyrus broke the strength, spent itself in channels which had no great name on the earth. But the effect of her being on those around her was incalculably diffusive: for the growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts; and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been, is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs. (VIII, finale: 825)

Many have discerned a sad resonance, and even a sort of tragedy, in this picture of noble anonymity. While in Middlemarch we are shown man's capacity for happiness, a deep impression is made by the unenlightenment that retards fulfilment of this potential. The novel shows how limits imposed by education, environment, and heredity can hinder the realization of one's aims. In the Finale, Eliot toned down the narratorial criticism of social attitudes and "modes of education which make a woman's knowledge another name for motley ignorance" (VIII, Finale: 824, n. 9). She merely stated that the determining acts of Dorothea's life were the mixed result of young and noble impulse struggling against the conditions of an imperfect social state, in which "great feelings will often take the aspect of error, and great faith the aspect of illusion."

Even more strongly than the circumstantial limits, the novel demonstrates the self-imposed limits. Accordingly, the work has been viewed as one that pursues a "dark and complex vision of middle age" and creates a

sense of despair and melancholy in the reader. Janice Sokoloff notes that Dorothea, in her middle years, fails to fulfil her youthful dreams--she considers that both of Dorothea's marriages end in failure--and that Farebrother, a man of mature years who is keenly perceptive of human weakness, becomes a witness to Lydgate's sad decline.³⁸ Assuredly, the noble-hearted clergyman in this novel has, in what seems almost a waste, sacrificed himself on behalf of Fred Vincy, illustrating once again, however, that the willingness to make a personal self-sacrifice is important to self-integrity.

In fact, Middlemarch simply implements a Feuerbachian ethic more subtly than Eliot's other novels, though with greater pessimism. Here there is certainly no sweeping determinism (which some critics have seen in certain of her novels), but, as the author herself had noted, gradual movements of cause and effect; the realistic causal sequence only serves to emphasize the necessity of following the essential laws of human nature. Clearly, Dorothea's youthful fervour, her egoistic religious intensity, and her impracticable dreams were destined to interact with a wider reality before she could attain a unified self. Lydgate's egoism detracted from his efforts at realizing a noble ideal. Bulstrode's case has darkly pointed to the danger inherent in the self-divisive religious projection. But the saddest situation was that of Casaubon, who during his honeymoon

had spent most of his time entombed in the Vatican library. Unable to link knowledge to emotion, he could not recognize the happiness that, with a certain degree of compromise, was readily available to him. Dorothea, at least, has learned from her mistakes and attained a fair degree of self-fulfilment through her marriage and active altruism. Like Rosamond, she is happy, but there is a world of difference between the two women whose lives have touched briefly. Yet even in Rosamond there is a lingering memory of gratitude induced in her single moment of vulnerability.

Notes

¹The Philosophy of Ludwig Feuerbach 149.

²Thomas Vargish summarizes (from David Carroll's The Critical Heritage) some of the reactions of George Eliot's contemporaries to the worldliness or apparent lack of a spiritual dimension in Middlemarch society. They found a cosmic loneliness in the narrator's openly secularized view. The Providential Aesthetic in Victorian Fiction (Charlottesville: The UP of Virginia, 1985) 216-17.

³See Suzanne Graver on J. Hillis Miller, 201-203. Disagreeing with Hillis Miller, Graver finds Middlemarch to be organically an aesthetic whole, unified precisely because it self-consciously questions the idea of organic community. She finds in Eliot's synecdoches "a self-questioning that makes for a comprehensiveness beyond the kind [Hillis Miller] describes" (203).

⁴See Frederick M. Gordon, "The Contradictory Nature of Feuerbachian Humanism," Philosophical Forum 8 (1977): 31-47 (38); Feuerbach, SW2: 322.

⁵"The Metaphorical Imagination of George Eliot," ELH 45 (1978): 98-99.

⁶Knoepflmacher, Religious Humanism 73.

⁷See John Clark Pratt and Victor A. Neufeldt, eds., Introduction, Middlemarch Notebooks xxvi, xxxiii. Eliot read various biographical and historical works which presented her with the conventional attitude toward historical change, although this was not her own approach (xxv). Another source, probably mainly for "Timoleon," the long poem she planned but never wrote, was George Grote's History of Greece. Grote argued that myth was neither history nor allegory but a special product of the imagination and feelings, radically distinct from history and philosophy, an interpretation that parallels Feuerbach's psychological view of religion (xxxiv).

⁸See Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Fiction (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983) ch. 6. Gillian Beer has found Daniel Deronda to be Eliot's novel most haunted by the future. George Eliot's earlier proposed work The Idea of a Future Life was advertised by Chapman in The Leader on June 18, 1857. My own concept of "the future life" in this chapter is purely Feuerbachian.

⁹While he is primarily concerned with what he sees as the contradictions of Feuerbach's philosophy, Frederick M. Gordon has recognized the unconscious teleological element in Feuerbach's humanism; op. cit. If Feuerbach is viewed as a forerunner of Jung, Feuerbach's notions of sense-perception and universality as they relate to the human striving for happiness are not necessarily contradictory.

¹⁰Gezari 101-102.

¹¹Gillian Beer has suggested that for Victorians the web imagery would relate predominantly to woven fabric, rather than the spider's web that we would think of today; Darwin's Plots 168. However, as noted, some metaphors explicitly relate to the spider. As has sometimes been observed, in relation to Silas Marner also, the spider's web can be seen as a predatory image. On the "web of affinities" generally in Middlemarch, see Beer, *ibid.* 167-80.

¹²See especially "Janet's Repentance" and the chapter on Silas Marner, esp. Bradshaw, n. 18, for examples of such archetypal imagery. They are numerous, but I have been obliged to restrict mention of them to a few examples.

¹³Gezari 98-99.

¹⁴See also Atkins 159 and 161.

¹⁵"The Subterranean Intellectual of Middlemarch," The Midwest Quarterly 20 (1979): 347-61 (360).

¹⁶Aristotle's Ethics was one of the works George Eliot read preparatory to writing Middlemarch. For a fairly comprehensive list of her reading from January 1868 to December 1871, see the Appendix to George Eliot's Middlemarch Notebooks, ed. Pratt and Neufeldt 279-88.

¹⁷"The Union of 'Miss Brooke' and 'Middlemarch': A Study of the Manuscript," Journal of English and Germanic Philology 79 (1980): 57. George Eliot's Quarry for "Middlemarch" reveals that she considered several possible occasions for the scene between Dorothea and Rosamond; see Jerome Beaty, Middlemarch From Notebook to Novel: A Study of George Eliot's Creative Method, Illinois Studies in Lang. & Lit. 47 (Urbana: Board of Trustees of the U of Illinois, 1960) 122. There was an abrupt change in the entries of the Folger Notebook when early in 1871 Eliot decided to fuse the stories, i.e., a return to medical subjects, which had not been noted for over a year; see Pratt and Neufeldt, eds., Middlemarch Notebooks 1. David Carroll suggests that the two marriages were involved: three possible permutations are the similarities (and differences) between the researches of Casaubon and Lydgate, one looking for the origin of myth, the other for the original tissue; the contrast between Dorothea and Rosamond; and the similarities between the frustrated idealism in the careers of Dorothea and Lydgate. See his Introduction to the Clarendon edition of Middlemarch edited by him (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986) xxii-xxiii. There also exists the possibility that the suggestion to join the two parts was made by Lewes. Carroll has shown the important role Lewes played in the production of Middlemarch; see again his Introduction to the Clarendon edition of Middlemarch.

¹⁸"The Novel as Ethical Paradigm?" Novel: A Forum on Fiction 21 (1988): 188-96 (194-95).

¹⁹See Appendix B on Spinoza.

²⁰Beside the quotation, Eliot wrote "vid. Pliny. Hist. Nat. vii. 50." However, these words, which might so easily have been uttered by Feuerbach, have not been traced in Pliny by the editors of Eliot's Middlemarch Notebooks (30, 112).

²¹See Knoepfmacher, Religious Humanism 100, 110-12. He sees actual (testamentary) wills as an expression of various characters' provisions of and willing of "alternative futures."

²²See Haight, George Eliot and John Chapman 186.

²³The 26th edition (London, 1828) of An Essay Concerning Human Understanding contains this portrait showing Locke with the "deep eye sockets"; in Dr Williams's Library.

²⁴As is generally known, Locke's renown stemmed from his basic tabula rasa theory in which the human mind is likened to a blank slate before it receives outside impressions. In this empirical theory, the mind is furnished with ideas by experience alone, either as sensation or as the operations of the mind itself. The comparison gives us a clear idea of Casaubon's physical type and the admiration with which Dorothea at that time regarded him.

²⁵Vargish 219.

²⁶In his Treatise on the Correction of the Understanding, unfinished, begun before his Ethics and intended as a guide to the attainment of true knowledge, Spinoza distinguished four levels of knowledge, of which the first (lowest) level is hearsay, the testimony of others. This accords with Eliot's treatment of Dorothea: her initial opinion of Casaubon's knowledge is formed by hearsay: his opinion of himself.

²⁷Egoism and Self-Discovery in the Victorian Novel: Studies in the Ordeal of Knowledge in the Nineteenth Century (New York: Burt Franklin, 1974) 125-26. See also Gezari, "The Metaphorical Imagination of George Eliot" 94.

²⁸"Myth and the Single Consciousness: Middlemarch and The Lifted Veil" 94.

²⁹Sophia Andres has suggested that this "essential unifying image" became a germinal image allowing George Eliot to link the story of "Miss Brooke" to "Middlemarch" (Andres has found in the novel transmutations of this germinal image in images of water, mirror, fire, and light); "The Germ and the Picture in Middlemarch," ELH 55 (1988): 853-68. While the image is important and the

suggestion feasible, such images are not unique to Middlemarch and appeared in Eliot's earliest fiction.

³⁰It is, incidentally, one of the numerous examples in Middlemarch of Eliot's interest in science, an alternative means of exploring the human condition. The mind-body imagery here is reminiscent not only of Spinoza and the later Feuerbach (who affirmed that we are what we eat), but of Lewes's pioneer study of psychology, Problems of Life and Mind, which he had begun in 1867. Lewes joked that it was his "Key to All Mythologies," but Eliot completed it after his death, as Dorothea would not do for Casaubon. (It may be that Eliot, too, had tried to find a key to all mythologies when writing Romola.)

³¹Knoepfmacher, Religious Humanism 75-84 (esp. 79-80).

³²On knowledge in Middlemarch, see Alexander Welsh, George Eliot and Blackmail (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1985) 216-58; Freadman 134-211; and Halperin on egoism 151-52.

³³George Eliot's Mythmaking 231-32.

³⁴In J. S. Mill's Utilitarianism, which Eliot reread in preparation for Middlemarch, Mill discusses the possibility, or the obligation, of learning to do without happiness; see Essays on Ethics, Religion and Society, CW 10:210.

³⁵See Thomas Pinney, "The Authority of the Past in George Eliot's Novels," Nineteenth-Century Fiction 41 (1966-67) 144-45.

³⁶"'Daniel Deronda': George Eliot and Political Change," Critical Essays on George Eliot, ed. Barbara Hardy (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1970) 139, 141.

³⁷See Pratt and Neufeldt, eds., Middlemarch Notebooks 33 (Folger 54).

³⁸The Margin That Remains: A Study of Aging in Literature (New York: Peter Lang, 1987) 69; see also Patricia Lorimer Lundberg, "George Eliot: Mary Ann Evans's Subversive Tool in Middlemarch?" Studies in the Novel 18 (1986) 274.

CHAPTER 10

THE DRIVE TO HAPPINESS AS ALIENATION IN DANIEL DERONDA

" . . . Do you think a woman who cried, and
prayed, and struggled to be saved from herself,
could be a murderess?" (VII, 56:642)

George Eliot immersed herself in Judaic lore to write Daniel Deronda, for she wished to "rouse the imagination of men and women to a vision in those races of their fellow-men who most differ from them in customs and beliefs" (GEL VI, 301). She does more than this; through her titular hero she presents an alternative code of behaviour and an ethic.¹ Judaism is linked with a Feuerbachian ethic in this last novel which, like Felix Holt and Middlemarch, is at once utopian and dystopian. Through Deronda she presents a world view even more extensive than in Romola and Middlemarch; and through Gwendolen Harleth she provides a detailed psychological study of self-alienation with a descent to the murky depths of the unconscious mind, illustrating the disastrous effect of utilitarianism on a sensitive human being.

Eliot's task as narrator is suggested by her motto to chapter 16: it is to trace the invisible history as well as the visible one, the hidden and external causes of

the Promethean anguish of both hero and heroine. Accordingly, Eliot penetrates Gwendolen's faulty conception of happiness, exposing her delusions about pleasure, and demonstrates the consequences of Gwendolen's practical choice of Henleigh Mallinger Grandcourt. As Deronda discovers his own destiny as a Jew, Gwendolen, with his help, undergoes a dramatic conversion from hedonistic utilitarianism to a wider philosophy of life. As in the earlier story "The Lifted Veil," Eliot describes how conscience can bring on a suffering that is ultimately redemptive.

The main exemplar of utilitarianism is the confident Gwendolen. Other adherents are the two beneficent father figures, Gwendolen's uncle, the Rector Mr Gascoigne, and Deronda's uncle and adoptive father, Sir Hugo Mallinger, as well as Grandcourt and a Jewish family, the Cohens. Gwendolen is depicted as that worst kind of utilitarian, a hedonistic one; as Bentham would have put it, not merely self-regarding but selfish. Thus, she can cleverly persuade her uncle to buy a horse, an extravagance they can ill afford. His agreement is typically based on a calculation that this may perhaps lead to an eligible match. This early incident exemplifies not only Gwendolen's potent charm but her "inborn energy of egoistic desire" (I, 4:36). In their assessment of consequences, such calculating people are frequently

motivated from without in relation to pleasure and the avoidance of pain. Wealth and social status are important to them in their marriages and careers. A contrasting set of characters is motivated from within, by sympathy and a sense of duty. Daniel Deronda is the prime exemplar, his compassionate nature eventually extending itself to other individuals in as full a moral commitment as possible.

While the utilitarians here tend to be mainly families in fashionable society whose values the author (as with Latimer in "The Lifted Veil") tends to find superficial and irrelevant, the "Feuerbachians" include people from various backgrounds. Besides the poor Jewish girl, Mirah, there is the heiress, Miss Arrowpoint, who is likeable, intelligent, and sympathetic toward Gwendolen. Miss Arrowpoint defies her conventional parents in marrying the musician Herr Klesmer; in this instance, money is no insuperable handicap to the right choice in marriage. Although not a major character, Miss Arrowpoint is far more convincingly portrayed than the gifted singer Mirah, who, in the sweet purity that clothes her "as with a consecrating garment" (III, 19:191), epitomizes the ideal moral qualities that Gwendolen lacks. Mirah presents a solution other than suicide to the problem of despair when she loses her faith and finds it in Deronda, through man, not God; this "I-Thou" relationship has been characterized with reference to Feuerbach's historical

descendent, Martin Buber.² Her simplicity provides a contrast to the dubious sophistication of Gwendolen, whose dramatic pretensions are undermined when Klesmer frankly informs her that she has only a minor artistic talent. As Albert Cirillo has observed, Eliot uses music as the external manifestation of Gwendolen's failure to communicate properly:

Music exists in time while it transcends time; it is a species of art which transcends all barriers, including the void outside of the self, and communicates feeling, merging subjective and objective into the common lot.

He finds that Feuerbach's conception of melody as audible feeling, feeling communicating itself, is central to the function of music in Daniel Deronda.³

Other sympathetic characters include the impoverished Meyrick family, who welcome Mirah into their tiny home after her river rescue by Deronda. And while Gwendolen's widowed mother is influenced by conventional social attitudes in relation to marrying off her five daughters, she loves her eldest daughter and wants her to be happy not only in material advantages but in herself. This sympathetic relationship prevents Gwendolen's superficiality from becoming hardened and habitual.

In Eliot's opening disquisition upon utilitarianism as the pursuit of pleasure and material advantage, the reader first views the early Gwendolen, on holiday at

Leubronn. She is seen through Daniel Deronda's fascinated but uncertain view:

Was she beautiful or not beautiful? and what was the secret of form or expression which gave the dynamic quality to her glance? Was the good or the evil genius dominant in those beams? Probably the evil; else why was the effect that of unrest rather than of undisturbed charm? Why was the wish to look again felt as coercion and not as a longing in which the whole being consents? (I, 1:3)

Gwendolen is pleasurably engaged in gambling, an occupation that brings together from all walks of life certain people whose expressions reflect their "dull, gas-poisoned absorption" in monotonous action (I, 1:5). In these surroundings, pleasure bears no relation to happiness.⁴ Gambling, as a form of pleasure, metaphorically represents moral decision-making based on random assumptions. Hence, Gwendolen's win followed by her loss at Leubronn foreshadows her major gamble not long after. She wins Grandcourt, the object of pleasure, and loses her happiness.

The beginning of the novel thus illustrates the meeting of two minds and two opposed moralities. Gwendolen's eyes meet Deronda's in her crucial introduction to a different morality. As Graham Martin has observed, the contrast provides the key to the novel in terms of the juxtaposition of two social images, one actual in the life of Gwendolen, the other potential in the aspirations of Deronda; he sees them as mutually

exclusive images,⁵ although at the point where Gwendolen and Deronda are ultimately separated the images have come closer. The epigraph with its overtones of Goethe's Faust ("No retrospect will take us to a true beginning; and whether our prologue be in heaven or earth, it is but a fraction of that all presupposing fact with which our story sets out") provides a wider temporal and spatial application and scale of values--to temptation, damnation, and redemption.⁶ Hence, the "retrospect" sets the stage for the rendition of Gwendolen's ambivalent, possibly even demonic, character and the instilling of Deronda's morality into Gwendolen, vital to her future well-being.

The pleasure-happiness confusion has particular applicability to Gwendolen. For example, despite Gwendolen's desire for pleasure, in a conversation with her mother shortly after arrival at their new home, Offendene, she describes her preoccupation with happiness. Mrs Davilow married badly, and the reaction of her daughter to widowed resignation is: "It spoils all my pleasure, and everything may be so happy now" (I, 3:24). The words bring together Gwendolen's pursuit of pleasure and the "drive to happiness" described by Feuerbach in a passage on ethics which Eliot could have read: "Der Glückseligkeitstrieb ist der Ur- und Grundtrieb alles dessen, was lebt und liebt. . . ." He referred to a basic and healthy drive made up of various desires (or drives)

that related to man's well-being: "Jeder Trieb ist ein Glückseligkeitstrieb."⁷ "My pleasure" is equated by Gwendolen with "happiness of everything." But the "Spoiled Child," to which the title of this part refers, cannot move yet from her selfish pleasure to the universal happiness she specifies, cannot cross the invisible boundary between hedonistic and universalistic utilitarianism that could lead toward a Feuerbachian morality tied to altruism. Yet she wants her mother to be happy, not merely with "a sort of make-believe." Mrs Davilow responds simply, "It is always enough for me to see you happy," reinforcing Gwendolen's view that her own pleasure is the fount of all happiness.

Gwendolen not only envisages happiness in terms of pleasure, but pleasure in terms of power. In her own family circle, she has a position of authority, and this idea of personal power is basic to her idea of marriage. Admiration further provides a pleasurable "more ardent sense of living" (I, 4:34), but her ambitions dwell among "feminine furniture," partly because her finishing school has equipped her only for life in polite society. In Daniel Deronda, the utilitarian outlook in education that saw women's education as being less important than men's is one of Eliot's targets, as it was in Felix Holt and Middlemarch.⁸ In one instance, the superficiality of Gwendolen's cleverness is revealed in conversation with

Mrs Arrowpoint. While Gwendolen feels most subjects to be stupid, she is jealous of the mental superiority, which cannot be "explained away," of Mrs Arrowpoint's daughter.

In this last of her novels, Eliot still applies the technique that she used in her Scenes, sometimes ironically, in relation to special objects of criticism, such as Amos Barton. Thus, the omniscient narrator excuses Gwendolen's ignorance: "subjects are apt to appear stupid to the young as light seems dim to the old." If Gwendolen does not feel helpless when certain topics turn up in conversation, it is because no one has yet disputed her power or her general superiority (I, 4:35). A spoiled elder daughter, shunted from one place to another, she was treated like a princess in exile. Her early life lacked the "blessed persistence in which affection can take root." The narrator's observation echoes Eliot's own perception:

A human life, I think, should be well rooted in some spot of a native land where it may get the love of tender kinship . . . for whatever will give that early home a familiar unmistakeable difference amidst the future widening of knowledge: a spot where the definiteness of early memories may be inwrought with affection, even to the dogs and donkeys, may spread not by sentimental effort and reflection, but as a sweet habit of the blood. (I, 3:18)

If Offendene had been Gwendolen's home for longer than a year, her nature might have developed better. Although Gwendolen feels "well equipped for the mastery of life"

(I, 4:34), when the family fortunes collapse through a stock exchange failure (another gambling operation) she cannot adjust to the hardship and loss of status this entails, let alone undergo a "future widening of knowledge."

The strange doubleness of character existing in Latimer of "The Lifted Veil" exhibits itself in a peculiar form in Gwendolen. On rare occasions, Gwendolen's dynamic drive and self-possession are shaken by a terror which can be seen as ultimately redemptive, because it suggests that she has a conscience. In his Essence of Christianity, Feuerbach had noted that fear "inevitably intermingles itself" with primitive religion; the conscience is under restraint, because doubt, the principle of theoretic wisdom, appears to be a crime to the believer. The question was not theoretical, but a matter of heart and conscience (EC 186). If Gwendolen's "religion" is utilitarianism, these surges represent unconscious doubt about her way of life, an ungovernable force that wells up against her will.

Her fear has a dual nature. Though it is caused by conscience, and is therefore, for Feuerbach, not in principle opposed to happiness, at present she is ignoring her conscience. At times her emotion manifests itself in an abnormal sensitivity, as when she strangles the canary that competes with her vocally (even the bird can

undermine her confidence, and so she has to destroy it). Gwendolen is ashamed of these experiences of quivering intensity which seem like a "brief remembered madness" (I, 6:56), separate from her normal existence, and which cause her, like the young George Eliot, to be afraid of being alone at night.

Accordingly, the picture of an upturned dead face from which an obscure figure seems to be fleeing terrifies Gwendolen. It adumbrates a vista of life and death that, encased in her shell of superficiality and so alienated from herself, she cannot fathom. It suggests that Gwendolen is fleeing from herself as later she will see herself to be fleeing from her crime. The picture also foreshadows the death of Grandcourt, with its implications as to Gwendolen's guilt, a horrifying dimension which conjures up Hawthorne's story of the prophetic pictures and Latimer's Lucrezia Borgia vision. Thomas P. Wolfe has suggested that the intensity of Gwendolen's response may be located in the activation of Gwendolen's memory of her "murder" of the father, the figure who set a limit to the child's enormous egoism. Gwendolen's later unaccountably strong hatred of Grandcourt, Wolfe suggests, will derive from the same source--Grandcourt assumes the role of the authoritarian father figure.⁹ As C. G. Jung has shown, an unconscious element is clearly indicated when a person's response is excessive in proportion to the cause. In this

connection, Gwendolen's reaction to Rex Gascoigne's love-making does suggest that Gwendolen's alienation may have been caused by problems relating to her despised step-father, leading to her present inability to love.

Gwendolen orders the picture to be put under lock and key, but she will be no more successful than Tito Melema in keeping essential emotions hidden by material means. (In Romola, he locks the symbolic crucifix inside the triptych.) This "gothic" image of the picture also features Eliot's recognition of the persistence of the unconscious; during a dramatic performance given by Gwendolen and her Gascoigne cousins, Rex and Anna, the panel flies open to reveal again the dreadful face.

The motto which Eliot originally prefaced to her novel drew attention to vengeance and pestilence lurking amid a throng of hurrying desires: "Let thy chief terror be of thine own soul." Daniel Deronda deals with the various unconscious forces that influence men's destinies, and which include the vengeance and pestilence mentioned in the motto. Eliot had read Schopenhauer's The World as Will and Representation prior to writing Daniel Deronda, and possibly she envisaged these forces in terms of Schopenhauer's "Will." In the philosopher's view, the will, which is self-consciousness in man, finds its equivalent in the unconscious forces of nature. Schopenhauer's theory has a certain complementarity to

Feuerbach's more optimistic one in so far as Schopenhauer maintains that egoism which manifests itself in the "will to live" must be overcome, and that its opposite is compassion and the moral law, based on the essential identity of all human beings.

Naively, Gwendolen assumes that marriage to Grandcourt is "the gate to a larger freedom." In speaking of the prospects for women who remained unmarried, and in representing marriage as both an unavoidable condition of life and a lottery, Emily Shirreff, writing about women's education, had abjured the way in which mothers talked to their daughters of marriage. Her description well captures Gwendolen's early frame of mind:

Where there is no active life of thought . . . mere novelty has an unspeakable charm. When the probable result of this exciting pleasure is forced upon a girl's mind, when she sees it will soon rest with herself to fix her destiny for ever, or to fall back into the dreary nothingness that went before, an interval of painful hesitation ensues. In presence of such a reality she tries to reflect. She is quite aware that she knows nothing of the man's real character to make her trust to him for happiness . . . apart from the pleasant nonsense of flirtation. . . . 10

As Shirreff had noted, the only way a girl could hope to improve her position under the usual conditions of life--to attain a course of duties and an honoured position in society--was by marriage (412).

Apparently Eliot is criticizing not merely Gwendolen, but the attitudes of contemporary society

toward women, for Gwendolen's assumptions about the utility of marriage are reinforced by her family and generally by society. Thus, Mr Gascoigne attempts to turn the scale as Gwendolen hovers uneasily. Significantly, her uncle has come up in the world by dint of altering his name, becoming a clergyman, and marrying well: "aristocratic heirship resembled regal heirship in excepting its possessor from the ordinary standards of moral judgments" (II, 13:125). Aware of the gossip about Grandcourt, he nevertheless thinks a woman of "well-regulated mind" (which Gwendolen may not be) would be happy with such a prospect (II, 13:125). Mr Gascoigne considers Grandcourt a match to be accepted "on broad grounds national and ecclesiastical," a euphemism which covers a worldly calculation of the balance of pleasure over pain. Later, the good-hearted rector is described as "innocent" in thinking that Gwendolen would not have known about Grandcourt's mistress, but there is a curious ring to this epithet.

This rector is more worldly and expedient than such comparable characters as Mr Irwine, Dr Kenn, or Mr Gilfil. He cultivates friendships which will be useful and changes his opinions in consistency with this principle of action. Yet he is not a hedonistic utilitarian but a beneficent and universalistic one, looking to the greatest good while not neglecting his own. Eliot's somewhat ironic

description indicates a qualified acceptance of the principle of utility--if only because it is inseparable from his kindly personality. Mr Gascoigne is an excellent, tolerant clergyman, and no clerical magistrate has "less mischievous impracticableness in relation to worldly affairs" (I, 3:26).

Characteristically, when Mr Gascoigne tells his niece she has a duty to herself and her family, this "duty" is based on material advantage. He stresses that Gwendolen holds her fortune in her hands:

--a fortune in fact which almost takes the question out of the range of mere personal feeling, and makes your acceptance of it a duty. If Providence offers you power and position--especially when unclogged by any conditions that are repugnant to you--your course is one of responsibility, into which caprice must not enter. (II, 13:126-27)

In his use of the word "fortune," good luck soon becomes transmuted to material fortune. The word "caprice," by which he means folly, also conjures up Bentham's "system" of caprice, otherwise known as his principle of sympathy and antipathy, or ipsedixitism, any system opposed to utilitarianism. Similarly, Mr Gascoigne is alluding to Gwendolen's wayward reluctance to follow in his utilitarian line of thinking. If Gwendolen ignores his advice, he will regard her as the victim of her own coquetry and folly. His niece's attitude does not accord with his ideas of wifely duty. He is a typical

representative of his environment. Although his niece is a self-satisfied young woman in whom we can see vestiges of Rosamond Vincy's wilful egoism and Esther Lyon's initial triviality, she is not the obedient female described by Emily Shirreff and approved of by the rector. However, after learning of the change in her fortunes, Gwendolen will take the rector's advice; her attitude toward marrying Grandcourt then undergoes a subtle change.

In relation to the development of sympathy, Deronda's history provides a strong contrast to that of Gwendolen. Unlike her, he has an ardently affectionate nature, and so although he is an orphan in the historic home of his uncle, Sir Hugo Mallinger, his affections take root in the soil, the old oak trees in the park, and the people around him. Consequently, when he suspects that he is Sir Hugo's illegitimate son, it marks the beginning of his private sorrow, yet it does not turn his mind to a hard, proud antagonism, as with Gwendolen at the loss of her family fortunes. On the contrary, it produces a keen fellowship with suffering and a meditative interest in all forms of it, similar to the effect produced in Eliot after her quarrel with her father (GEL I, 134). This intensive inward life will lead to his later making a moral commitment to the Jewish Mirah, with her sad history. It has been suggested that Eliot tactfully recognized the

possibility that Deronda might have had a suspicion as to his Jewish heritage;¹¹ if the thought had bothered Deronda, it would of course have intensified his inward life and inclined him toward Mirah.

Ashamed of his suspicions, as Deronda grows up his resentment fades, due to the habit of affection between him and his uncle. As with the young Gwendolen, his future plans are hazy; he seeks an apprenticeship in life. Thus, his wide-ranging sympathy leads to inaction. Through Deronda, Eliot explores the relation between sympathy and "will," as in Feuerbach's energetic will that puts thought and feeling into effect, and is integral to his notion of humanity. Then, through Gwendolen's claim on Deronda, Eliot examines the extent to which sympathy is, in practice, compatible with morality. In Adam Bede, morality had detracted from sympathy; can the situation be reversed? Does sympathy have practical limits? It is important that Deronda support Gwendolen, but, in his contact with this sophisticated and alluring young lady, he must not revoke his unspoken promise to the innocent Mirah. She has his prior allegiance and (although the reader may find her less interesting than Gwendolen) her Jewish heritage will provide her with an understanding of Deronda's situation that is contrasted with Gwendolen's conventional idea of what it means to be a Jew.

At the time that he meets Gwendolen, Deronda's search for his roots is only beginning; yet he has it in him to help her. In discovering the truth about his parentage, Deronda is destined to be freed from the illusions regarding his mother, a process as necessary for him as Latimer's discovery about Bertha's hardness. The Princess Halm-Eberstein alias the dramatic actress Alcharisi has foresworn her Jewish heritage and mother love, and made a name for herself, but she is an unhappy woman; as she says, she miscalculated. Deronda himself will realize the falsity of his preconceptions about the Jews. The vulgar, materialistic yet genial and kindly Cohens with whom the gaunt Mordecai lives represent two distinct aspects of Judaism, but eventually Deronda comes to accept the essential humanity of both and the meaningfulness, in human terms, of Mordecai's visionary dream.

Of course, the discovery of his Jewish ancestry sets him apart from English society. In acceding to Mordecai's desire, Deronda does not forsake Sir Hugo but goes beyond his conventional ideas. After aiding Gwendolen, he will marry Mirah and head East to help the Jewish people, in a destiny which reconciles East to West and past to present. Deronda's Jewish mission relates not to God but to man--the human species. Although his personal relation to Mordecai is based on the mystical Kabbalistic doctrine of the transmigration of souls,¹² Deronda will,

significantly, not profess to believe exactly as his Jewish forebears did, but he will maintain his grandfather's notion of "separateness with communication" and make his vocation the restoration or perfecting of the common life of the Jewish people (VIII, 60:673).

A new era in Gwendolen's life begins after her marriage to Grandcourt. In contrast to Deronda's commitment to Mirah, in marrying Grandcourt she deliberately breaks her promise to his former mistress, Lydia Glasher, and ousts this woman with her four children from any hope of a respectable future. Gwendolen's act is not considered immoral in the circles in which she moves, but, at the thought of breaking this promise, Gwendolen had at first felt a night-time terror in "overstepping the borders of wickedness" which dulled her emotions about Grandcourt's own conduct. Still calculating pleasure over pain, she thought of Grandcourt as a man over whom she would have an indefinite power; since she had never seen herself as loving him, any agreeableness he has is so much gain. However, in pursuing pleasure, she has overlooked her essential nature, suggested by her innate sensitivity and "religious" awe.

In outlining the consequences of Gwendolen's utilitarianism as suffering, Eliot shows how the infusion of a Feuerbachian consciousness in Gwendolen creates a terrible conflict that affects both mind and body.

Gwendolen's sense of guilt is actually a sign of her uniqueness, and it creates a bond between her and Deronda when he understands the cause, for the thought of Mrs Glasher and her illegitimate children brings to mind his own uneasy situation. Earlier, Gwendolen was likened to a Jewish princess in exile, and the rapprochement between Deronda and Gwendolen assumes a greater significance if one sees her, through her alienation, as sharing in the Jewish experience.¹³

Gwendolen's conscience awakes, and her suffering begins, when Mrs Glasher delivers Grandcourt's diamonds. The accompanying note specifies that Gwendolen's chance of happiness is buried with her own: "The willing wrong you have done me will be your curse" (IV, 31:330). Gwendolen screams hysterically when Grandcourt enters the room dressed for dinner; all her repressed emotions have surfaced. In wondering if it is a fit of madness, Grandcourt's reflection is prognostic: "In some form or other the Furies had crossed his threshold" (IV, 31:331).

It is the wedding night, and, as such, much has been made of the sexual implications in Gwendolen's hysteria: she will no longer be able to stave off Grandcourt's attentions with imperious coquetry. Indeed, there is a real sense in which Gwendolen's civilized veneer will be shaken by her fear of subordination to male sexual authority, a return to the primitive state which was

earlier a source of terror to her.¹⁴ But the moral cause is the fundamental factor; it inevitably affects the way Gwendolen views Grandcourt. Here, Eliot describes what is a well-known transference phenomenon in modern analytical psychology: Gwendolen's repulsion of her own act transfers itself into a horror of Grandcourt who appears to be the cause of her problem. Simply with command, he will compel her to wear the diamonds, to wear her guilt, just as he will have her obey his orders in other matters. Discovering that she cannot dominate the incalculable Grandcourt, she becomes afraid of him and loses confidence in herself; but the indications are that her fear and dread are caused primarily by psychosis. As Deirdre David has noted, Gwendolen presents a remarkable study in neurosis; however her phobias and petty empire of manipulation and exploitation are given a greater significance than simply that of an individual life, for this profoundly egotistical consciousness is regarded by Eliot as a slender, insignificant, and yet vital thread of human history.¹⁵

Appropriately, Gwendolen's inner conflict marks the beginning of her difficult movement toward a higher consciousness, evidenced in her more kindly attitude toward her mother and sisters and increased awareness of Mrs Glasher's situation. But it is also manifested in her desire to extricate herself from the situation by

Grandcourt's death. One of them must die (VI, 48:563); she does not want to be that one. She still thinks of his death as an impossibility. The event that triggers her homicidal impulse is learning that Grandcourt knew all along of her "lowest motives," her reason for marrying him. In this instance, knowledge is injurious to both parties--as it turns out, fatal to Grandcourt.

Gwendolen knows no way in which she can atone for her action or relieve her situation, thus she experiences what has come to be thought of as an existential anguish. Now she feels, more intensely than during her brief moments of doubt or in response to new hardship caused by poverty, that there is no point to life. Gwendolen has knowingly committed an unredeemable wrong, and she is not anxious to provide Grandcourt with the son that would crown her guilt by definitively ousting Mrs Glasher's eldest son from the inheritance.

Gwendolen's gradations of suffering pass through distinct stages. Beginning with guilt, then fear, and reaching a climax in her hatred of Grandcourt, she sinks to a level where she is less than human. Her awakening conscience is not yet redemptive; she acts like an automaton, sees no point to anything. Grandcourt's "ghostly" arm around Gwendolen is but one of the references to ghosts which are suggestive of the unconscious forces that relate more, perhaps, to

Gwendolen's troubled mentality than to Grandcourt's personality.¹⁶ When Grandcourt merely tells her to behave correctly, she senses a ghostly army at his back that will corner her (V, 36:417-18). She strives to retain her sanity through continued contact with Deronda. Although the Grandcourts behave normally to casual view, certain hints Gwendolen lets fall in her conversations with Deronda, and her final confession, reveal her pathological condition at this time. In a dark way, she is undergoing a religious experience.

For Feuerbach, pathology was a state opposed to the clear-sighted rational autonomy that constitutes his "essence"; he regarded mysticism in terms of pathology because it transposed the imaginary into the real. E. S. Schaffer believes this connection between theology and pathology to be intrinsic to the whole novel. In his view, it bears a close relation to Gwendolen's mismating and her sexual deprivation, which he casts as the reason for her hysteria. He sees Deronda to be "a Christ debunked, in terms of looking forward to Freud" (276):

The sexual pathology of marriage and the sexual pathology of Christianity are both revealed through the medium of an intense liaison between a young married woman and a young man she chooses to make her 'confessor', and together form the basis of a searching analysis of the valid emotional sources of religious experience from which doctrine arises.¹⁷

While at first sight this might appear an extreme view, there is much to be said for it, although Gwendolen's loss of morality in marrying Grandcourt and breaking her promise to Lydia Glasher could be seen as primarily provoking the sexual pathology of her marriage. In this novel, however, religion is indeed shown as a pathological state in relation to Gwendolen's experience.

The blame for Gwendolen's condition has often been thought to lie with Grandcourt's character; many critics take him to be the epitome of evil. Brian Swann regards him as the very incarnation of negation and destruction, a force in nature which, in the world of the novel, seems almost Manichean. Badri Raina calls him a blight, totally unamenable to human, even biological influence, a correlative of Schopenhauer's "Will." (However, Gwendolen's "inborn energy of egoistic desire" parallels the will which Grandcourt likes to exercise through the sheer power of his being, without violence, and preferably without words.) The latter critic notes Eliot's major departure from Schopenhauer in the kind of possibility she saw for the individual: where Schopenhauer saw happiness as a state of resigned acquiescence, Eliot presented it as a "joyful affirmation," through an achieved intersubjectivity. Her view was that life does not have to be denied; it has to be celebrated in a fluid mutuality with the "other."¹⁸ Notably, Grandcourt determines never

to settle anything with Lydia except by "will"; his legal will consolidates his psychological one.

On the other hand, Robert McCarron has argued that Eliot's religion of humanity encounters a serious challenge in Grandcourt, a character not egoistically blinded to the I-Thou relationship, and yet whose imagination remains devoid of sympathy.¹⁹ This description of Grandcourt seems disputable. Although he is omniscient, except in relation to moral notions, he is egoistic in wishing always to have his own way; to this extent, he is blinded to any ideals of commitment to others.

At another level, we can see Grandcourt as a type who is not exceptional, but merely hardened by natural inclination and habit into a perverse character. In line with his upper-class notions, outward appearances are important to him: Gwendolen must invariably behave properly in public. Such outward proprieties become more important to him than love or sympathy. And despite Gwendolen's recalcitrant behaviour, his initial attraction to and appreciation of Gwendolen does not entirely wane, for she represents an interesting challenge.

In Grandcourt, Eliot is parodying certain conventional nineteenth-century mores deriving from notions of class that see a positive quality in ennui, condone immorality, and consider it acceptable to ignore

one's mistress and children in public places. Hence, he does not acknowledge Mrs Glasher when he is with Gwendolen. By portraying Grandcourt in an extreme way, Eliot brings out the evil inherent in this type of utilitarian morality as amorality. Certainly, by Feuerbachian standards, he is no paragon. Socially acceptable, strong-willed and silent, he effectively displaces the romantic paradigm of the Byronic hero. In fact, his desire for power, ability to inspire fear, and regard for outward appearances are almost matched by Gwendolen, who had wished "to mount the chariot and drive the plunging horses herself" (II, 13:121). In such a marriage, as Eliot noted in Romola, there will be a struggle for mastery.

Eliot further enlarges Grandcourt's evil through innuendo (the spectators' comments at the wedding) and the distorting lens of Gwendolen's hysterical consciousness; his character is "known" through her responses to him. Indubitably, his callousness may be measured by his behaviour to his companion servant Lush and to Lydia Glasher, as well as in his slightly sadistic behaviour to his dog--but his dogs do fawn on him and not on Gwendolen. He does provide liberally for Gwendolen's mother, Lydia, and make legal provision for his heir by Lydia. Though he has tired of Lydia, she retains some hold over him, which makes him uneasy. Grandcourt not only acts correctly but

perhaps has the glimmerings of a conscience. He honestly informs Gwendolen of his intention, even if his timing is calculated to offset her recalcitrant partiality for Deronda. To take her away on the yacht is a sensible remedy to her fixation with Deronda; but we are shown it from Gwendolen's viewpoint. By leaving Gwendolen Diplo and a modest sum, he expresses in his will the suppressed anger that he has kept within conventional bounds. Overall, his reaction to Gwendolen's continual scheming to see Deronda is eminently reasonable--though it is an unsympathetic rationality--and this again suggests that there is some abnormal distortion in Gwendolen's view. Certainly Grandcourt's "evil" does not exceed the limits set by society. Is he as sadistic as Gwendolen perceives him to be, or is he acting normally according to a utilitarian morality as it appears in a powerfully egoistic personality? Of course, if Eliot had intended to portray Grandcourt as the epitome of evil, her caricature of upper class convention would have been blunted. Having a fairly hardened conscience himself, Grandcourt is unable to fathom the primary bond between his wife and Deronda: a moral need and commitment, as Deronda becomes "a part of her conscience" (V, 35:386), the same Feuerbachian process depicted in previous novels.

In this novel, the means to redemption, to happiness, as well as the possibilities of failure, are

iterated in detail, beginning with the low point, the unstable mental condition that Gwendolen has reached. Without Feuerbach's "I-Thou" relationship, she will not regain her equilibrium. First, Gwendolen is influenced by Deronda's personality alone:

It is one of the secrets in that change of mental poise which has fitly been named conversion, that to many among us neither heaven nor earth has any revelation till some personality touches theirs with a peculiar influence, subduing them into receptiveness. (V, 35:400)

At Leubronn, his reproving interest in her had initiated a dissatisfaction with herself. Now, she learns that affection is the broadest basis of a good life--affection for ideas, knowledge, and wisdom, as well as people (V, 35:388). When Gwendolen later reveals her feelings of being "wrong and miserable" and her dread of the future (V, 36:415), he advises her to see how other people cope, and to attempt to care about something in this vast world besides the gratification of her small selfish desires: "Try to care for what is best in thought and action--something that is good apart from the accidents of your own lot" (V, 35:416). Her quick realization that he considers her selfish and ignorant deflates her, but his faith in her motivates her to improve, for she desires his good opinion. Although acquisition of knowledge seems pointless to her, Deronda explains that some real knowledge would give her an interest in the world beyond

the small drama of personal desires, an echo of Feuerbach's insistence on man's objective as well as subjective existence. In the former, reason is the "profoundest and most essential necessity" (EC 43). Feuerbach noted that the great models of humanity had a dominant passion to realize an absorbing aim; in doing so, they sought fulfilment of their own "objective" nature (EC 4). The importance of this aspect was shown in Eliot's fiction as early as "Mr Gilfil's Love-Story" in relation to Tina's love of music and Sir Christopher's love of architecture.

After Deronda, in conjunction with Gwendolen's own conscience, has broken down Gwendolen's sense of autonomous but perverted individuality, in Feuerbachian terms he becomes her ideal objectification of the moral life.²⁰ As the narrator observes, "our brother may be in the stead of God to us" (VIII, 64:709). Deronda perceives that what Gwendolen needs is "the higher, the religious life, which holds enthusiasm for something more than our own appetites and vanities":

The few may find themselves in it simply by an elevation of feeling; but for us who have to struggle for our wisdom, the higher life must be a region in which the affections are clad with knowledge. (V, 36:421; emphasis added)

His solution for sinners resembles that of Mr Tryan. Deronda, too, believes that the knowledge of one's own

wrongdoing may act as an incentive to lead a worthwhile life in future, even a higher course than is common, and to prevent others from committing similar errors. Gwendolen herself is in an intense state of fear at her possible reactions, and Deronda advises her to increase her remorse, and to keep calm in order to use her memories gradually to change the bias of her fear: "Try to take hold of your sensibility, and use it as if it were a faculty, like vision" (V, 36:422).

Another problem is posed by Gwendolen:

But if feelings rose--there are some feelings--
 hatred and anger--how can I be good when they
 keep rising? And if there came a moment when I
 felt stifled and could bear it no longer--
 (V, 36:422)

Suddenly, Deronda recognizes that his view is too theoretical in light of the depth of her emotion. In light of subsequent events, Eliot's metaphor is supremely relevant: "It was as if he saw her drowning while his limbs were bound" (in the manuscript Eliot had written "hands").

However, Gwendolen has reached a turning point in telling him she will try to do as he advises. Now she asks whether it will trouble him that she has dared to speak to him. He assures her that, if it saves her from an evil to come, it will not. Otherwise, it will be a lasting sorrow. His compassion derives from a sense of

actual pain shared with her. Temporarily deranged, as was Tina Sarti, Gwendolen resembles Janet Dempster in having the strength to seek help.

When, after Grandcourt's death, Gwendolen confesses her guilt to Deronda, the latter "moves to acceptance of a messianic role conceived in Christian terms." This episode has been seen by E. S. Schaffer as an effective attempt by Eliot to express the prehistory of Christian consciousness (between the Old and New Testaments) in terms of a human personality exerting its influence on others (280). He notes that, in adopting the revolutionary egalitarianism of Feuerbach's "I-Thou," Eliot uses piercing images to express her protagonists' mutual responsibility for each other's evil. Deronda takes on Gwendolen's guilt and she crucifies herself:

Deronda could not utter one word to diminish
that sacred aversion to her worst self--
that thorn-pressure which must come with the
crowning of the sorrowful Better, suffering
because of the Worse. (VII, 56:649)

Schaffer finds Strauss and Feuerbach equally important here, Strauss in understanding religious experience as myth, and Feuerbach in understanding the unity of man to reside not in the solitary ego but in the species-being, in the sexual man and woman taken as one (280-81). As he sees it, Eliot is bringing East and West together in a quasi-historical, quasi-psychological synthesis.

This confession, unwillingly heard by Deronda, is the climax of the relationship at a personal level: "He was not a priest. He dreaded the weight of this woman's soul flung upon his own with imploring dependence" (VII, 56:642). He steers a perilous course between sympathy and separation, as shown by his body language: while holding her hand, he turns his head away. But he does not forsake her and, in a real sense, Deronda becomes a Comtian priest of humanity, learning to retain his autonomy in the process.

Through this relationship, the novel describes not only separateness but community, and the movement of the novel has been described as proceeding from individual psychology to the community.²¹ George Eliot had examined this theme before, but now she goes to the ultimate sources, the roots of the human need for community, where the desire for a "sacred" life can scarcely be distinguished from separateness and crime. Thus, urgently desiring to be rescued, Gwendolen teeters on the verge of committing a criminal act. As Feuerbach had noted in his ethical writings, lack of virtue arises out of desperate individual need (SW 10: 268). Deronda, a human Christ, with the tender qualities of Feuerbach's Christ, is her only contact with the kind of "humanity" that can be described as Feuerbachian, for she is separated from her mother.

Despite the radical tension apparent in this novel, there is also a certain underlying cohesiveness, as in Gwendolen's relationship with Deronda and with her mother; in the long term, the physical separations will contribute to an "I-Thou" unity by improving the quality of these relationships. In his examination of the providential aesthetic in Eliot's fiction, Thomas Vargish has discerned an elemental coherence, neither destiny nor providence, that holds human beings together, unites a family, a nation, a people, and the human species, and is, in turn, what the true value of these identities can be for the individual constituents. Indeed, he considers that Eliot has transmuted the devices of the providential aesthetic to her theme of human solidarity in an advance that moves beyond the rational, empirical causalities of Middlemarch.²² Certainly the coincidences in this novel suggest a vastness of cause and effect, although the same could be said of those in Romola. It is true, however, that in Daniel Deronda we see Eliot straining further toward the limits of human awareness--to the extent that U. C. Knoepfelmacher believes that Daniel Deronda illustrates the validity of a poetic faith and possibility of a "prophetic consciousness." Yet he notes that this movement does not constitute a complete break with the philosophical outlook that had led to Eliot's creed of realism; there is merely more emphasis on the relativity

of knowledge, on the unexpected and the unknown, as in relation to Mordecai's prophetic consciousness, of which Deronda himself admits the "bare possibility."²³

Although in Deronda's admission the concept of rationality is extended, Eliot's enterprise in Daniel Deronda was not to endorse the mysticism that Feuerbach spoke of as reversing the real and the imaginary in a pathological doubleness. On the other hand, Daniel Deronda is more than a realistic novel; Joseph Wiesenfarth actually categorizes it as a romance. However, as he has observed, in pushing toward the condition of an epic psychological evolution combined with Jewish longing, it makes less of a compromise with reality than the average romance.²⁴ In entertaining the notion of cohesiveness in relation to individual psychology, as in her descriptions of Mordecai, Deronda, and Gwendolen, Eliot would have borne in mind Comte's notion that the unity of the "I" does not correspond to a metaphysical unity of the soul, as posited by earlier metaphysicians and theologians. According to Comte, such a unity was an abstract notion; in fact, it depended on an equilibrium of the animal (biological) functions.²⁵

Eliot's aim in Daniel Deronda was undoubtedly the Feuerbachian one of showing the roots of religion to lie not in abstraction, nor in history, but in the human psyche. In E. S. Schaffer's opinion, Eliot's critique

here is perhaps the most searching she ever made. We may now review the whole Deronda-Gwendolen episode under an aspect that contains, as Schaffer says, "the first most delicate implanting" of Christianity. Noting, again, Feuerbach's influence, he finds Deronda to be based partly also on Renan's Jesus, in whom the very sensibility and receptivity that are the grounds of his greatness are also a moral flaw which leads to his downfall. Deronda's life has a parallel in the early life of Jesus; his creative influence works in the first instance without any conscious intention on his part, and becomes conscious of itself through its observed effect on others. According to this critic, Deronda's almost hypnotic power over other people, especially Gwendolen, duplicates the magnetism of religious power, even the moral duplicity to which religion may at times be subject (as with Bulstrode of Middlemarch). Shaffer finds this to be exemplified in Deronda's denials to Sir Hugo's admonitions and innuendoes that he might be playing with fire, since there might be some "hidden gunpower in that establishment." While Deronda's denials enable him to become more deeply entangled with the affair, he still hypocritically refuses to admit to himself or others what is going on, enabling him to draw and to hold Gwendolen always more passionately to him (269-70).

Undeniably, there is a sexual basis in the alliance between Gwendolen and Deronda, and, despite himself,

Grandcourt is jealous (VI, 48:543-44). To Gwendolen, Deronda is a messiah, a saviour, and it is in this relationship perhaps more than any other in George Eliot's fiction, more than Janet's with Mr Tryan or Romola's with Savonarola, or even Dorothea's with Ladislaw, that we can see Feuerbach's frank statement that God is sex. The strongest of the impulses of Nature is sexual feeling: "If God is not polluted by Nature, neither is he polluted by being associated with the idea of sex." Feuerbach felt that in "renouncing sex, thou renoucest thy whole principle" (EC 92).²⁶ This aspect is not one in which Gwendolen is fulfilled in the novel, although it is possible she will eventually reciprocate Rex's "divine" love in her new, reformed life. Again, not having been left a fortune turns out to be a good--Rex will consider her approachable.

Eventually, Deronda fully realizes he will compromise his trust to Mirah by extending his sympathy too fully to Gwendolen, as the latter comes increasingly to rely on him. Finally, when Gwendolen believes they will not be parted, he breaks the news that he is to be married and will go abroad. This confession is a crucial moment not only as a painful revelation, but to himself. He realizes that had circumstances been otherwise he would have carried out "to the last" the rescue he had begun in his redemption of the necklace, viewed by her as admonishment and as a token of commitment.

To understand fully Deronda's moral role, and its relation to the sexual (which, as we have seen, for Feuerbach remains a fundamental aspect), Eliot presents the numbness of Gwendolen's inner world, ruled by a hatred that must be reinforced by her relations with Grandcourt: her "demon-visits" on the yacht are subtly shown to occur in the intimacy of a bedroom scene, with the sound of her husband's breathing as a background to her homicidal thoughts.²⁷ It is through Gwendolen's instinctive feelings, at the most basic level, that Deronda is able to influence her on a higher moral plane. Eliot shows again, with Feuerbach and Comte, that love is the primitive source of humanity.

Gwendolen's moral development had only just begun to be implemented by Deronda when she was taken away on the yacht. However, only Deronda's continued presence could reinforce Gwendolen's good intentions and prevent her confused emotions taking control. Eliot now shows the fragility of conscience when personal well-being becomes dependent on the death of another person. She had shown this before, in Hetty's infanticide and in Godfrey Cass's feelings about Molly, but in Daniel Deronda she explores it more graphically, and, albeit sensationally, in far greater psychological depth. Isolated with Grandcourt on board his yacht in the Mediterranean, forcibly kept from Deronda, Gwendolen is intensely vulnerable. Eliot's

pre-Freudian, pre-Jungian, and almost Nietzschean exploration of the unconscious reflects not only an awareness of man's ideal essence but also of his potential for evil when those hidden forces which she aptly typifies as ghosts are denied expression. (Eliot may have read Nietzsche's Die Geburt der Tragödie [1872].) Nature is nothing without corporeality, as Feuerbach had emphasized (EC 91). It is the suppression of feeling and conscience that has led to Gwendolen's peculiarly unstable state; in this, mind and body are inseparably intertwined.

The detailed description of Grandcourt's death, with his normal behaviour offset by Gwendolen's strange behaviour preceding it, and her subsequent confession to Deronda, point clearly enough to Gwendolen's guilt. She delays throwing the rope to save him from drowning, though the description suggests her incapacity to act otherwise. Deronda's "almost certain" belief that her murderous thought ("Die!") has had no outward effect is scarcely convincing; he is trying to reassure himself as much as her.²⁸ If Gwendolen had made a full confession to Deronda previously about the dagger, her evil thoughts would have had less power over her (VII, 61:645); Eliot shows the power of confession by illustrating the harm of a partial one. Gwendolen's situation as she witnesses Grandcourt drowning provides a vivid and extreme example of Spinoza's conatus, where, as for Dorothea Casaubon, the

preservation of the heroine's life--if it is to have any meaning--necessitates her separation from her husband. The circumstances surrounding Gwendolen's inaction suggest a criminality that cannot be proven any more than Bulstrode's "negative" act. Carol Christ calls this "providential death,"²⁹ but in Feuerbachian terms it is hardly providential since Gwendolen's action was opposed to her aim, the dictates of her conscience when it was operative, as well as to Feuerbach's conviction that man must not be a means to an end. In Gwendolen's praying for Grandcourt's death, religion becomes pathology, a diseased state of consciousness.

Deronda (like Gilfil with Tina and the dagger) sees no need to publish the circumstances: "There is no retribution that any mortal could apportion justly" (VII, 57:650). Indeed, her deed has defied analysis; it would be hard to classify in Bentham's humane and intricate system of defining punishments. She was the only witness, and she believes in her guilt, but Deronda convinces Gwendolen that her murderous intent has not altered the course of events.

Through the episode of Grandcourt's death, Eliot acknowledges the evil that is potentially present in human feeling when it is frustrated. Yet in her view man is not intrinsically but only circumstantially bad--though, as noted, there are exceptions. Once again, but more

decisively, she depicts the conflicting forces that make one man's good another's sorrow, and shows her protagonists achieving a higher consciousness only through suffering.

This is, in some ways, Eliot's most optimistic novel. In it she depicts a heroine whose faults outweigh her virtues, yet shows that a redemptive Feuerbachian process is still possible. This is achieved through a full confession and through the remorse that Gwendolen experiences after Grandcourt's death, a remorse which is linked to her realization that she has "sinned herself away" from a possible life with Deronda. The final overturning of her egoistic world in learning that Deronda is Jewish and of his imminent departure and forthcoming marriage causes her to feel completely dislocated and to experience, for the first time, "the pressure of a vast mysterious movement." This sensation dislodges the notion of her own supremacy, and gives her--Eliot here poetically expresses Feuerbach's notion of universality--"a sense that her horizon [is] but a dipping onward of an existence with which her own was revolving" (VIII, 69:749).

In the view of Sara M. Putzell-Korab, Eliot's depiction of the human evolving consciousness in Daniel Deronda expresses an Hegelian awareness. For instance, she sees Deronda's Jewish mission as an incarnation of Hegel's "Reason"³⁰ (which Feuerbach found to be a

metaphysical abstraction insufficiently incarnated in human actuality). However, Feuerbach's own thought undeniably owed much to Hegel, and in Daniel Deronda this fact is particularly evident in Eliot's use of a Feuerbachian concept of alienation which here, as with Hegel, has both negative and positive aspects.³¹ Feuerbach himself drastically modified Hegel's concept of alienation, in describing the self-division as caused by the objectification (projection) of the self into an external subject (God). Unity was achieved in man by reappropriating the elements of extended consciousness back into the self. In both Hegel's and Feuerbach's notions of alienation, the negative aspect can, in the long term, contribute positively to a unified, and indeed more universalized, consciousness.

Evidently Gwendolen's phase of Feuerbachian suffering and inner disturbance might be equated also with Hegel's "unhappy consciousness," which is a nostalgia for an unrealized unity, a deep subjectivity which fails to reach objectivity. Moreover, the twin aspects of Hegelian and Feuerbachian alienation, the negative and positive, are both present in Gwendolen's experience. She has objectified her own consciousness into an external subject--the god-figure of Deronda--and, in line with Feuerbach's assumptions, will only regain her identity by reappropriating those elements that she has reified or

externalized. Thus, her parting from Deronda, which has sometimes been seen solely as a loss for her, is necessary. Here, Joseph Wiesenfarth has recognized that, without the parting from Deronda, Gwendolen would remain dependent.³² In fact, all the indications are that Gwendolen will "be better." Her hysteria after the separation is natural; even then she means "to live" and is tender and thoughtful, now thinking of her mother's happiness in an unselfish way as she had not before. Moreover, Deronda has promised always to write to her. Their relationship will be transmuted to a long-lasting friendship. This aspect could be seen to contain a metaphorical embodiment of Hegelian "Reason" as well as of a universalized Feuerbachian understanding.

The end is a new beginning which emphasizes the happy sameness of an existence no longer experienced by Gwendolen as monotonous. Only Grandcourt, the embodiment of an unsympathetic will, has been abolished, erased by Gwendolen's self-defensive gesture, indicating that in the long run such inhumanity does not work. Opposed to Grandcourt in his indifference is Deronda with his extensive sympathy, sensitivity to suffering, and eventual willingness to immerse himself in another person's problems, even at risk to his private happiness. Hence, his love for Mirah becomes "an enfolding of unmeasurable cares which yet are better than any joys outside our love"

(VIII, 69:741). Deronda's sense of blessedness in his own lot has an aching anxiety at its heart that relates him sympathetically to Gwendolen. Deronda further shoulders his responsibility to humanity in a "marriage of souls" when he continues Mordecai's hard-won knowledge in his own way.

In this novel, Eliot strives to clarify those "gains from past revelations and discipline we must strive to keep hold of as something more sure than shifting theory" (GEL, VI, 216-17). Of course, she has been criticized, as in Felix Holt, for not thoroughly managing to realize her ideal conceptions. Thus, Graham Martin has found that Deronda's choice of Zionism has the effect of removing, with Deronda, the ideal aspirations from any effective engagement from the English Scene (149). He sees Eliot as completing withdrawal from significant English politics, argued for in Felix Holt and confirmed in Middlemarch, and repeating in Daniel Deronda the distinction between social and political reform. Deronda's mission, he concludes, represents a final example of that abstracting idealism which characterized George Eliot's response to the political upheavals of 1848. Yet, in his departure, Deronda becomes more fully a Christ figure incorporating Feuerbachian ideals. In Daniel Deronda, Eliot aspired to the universality which Feuerbach saw as possible for man and Hegel grandly conceptualized, a vision wider than

nationalism, whether it be English or even Jewish. It is in Feuerbach's revelation of the importance of human feeling that the gains of which she speaks are finally to be measured, and not through any calculation of material advantage. Thus, Daniel Deronda expresses the sensualism and naturalism of Feuerbach's later period that was already contained in The Essence of Christianity.

Notes

¹On Judaism in the novel, see William Baker, George Eliot and Judaism (Salzburg, Austria: Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur, 1975) 167. Unless otherwise specified, references to Baker in this chapter will refer to this work. On Mordecai and Judaism, see 159-80. The probable model for Mordecai was George Eliot's close friend, the scholar Emanuel Oscar Menahem Deutsch (1829-1873). His unfair treatment at the British Museum brought antisemitism to her notice; he also desired to visit the Middle East (131-33). Other models were Abraham Leith, whose love of learning equalled Mordecai's and who planned a Palestine Colonization Union, as well as Abraham Benisch, a biblical scholar who hoped to find in a restoration of a Jewish empire the conditions for the introduction of the necessary reforms amongst the Jews. Both of them emigrated to England. See William Baker, Some George Eliot Notebooks: An Edition of the Carl Pforzheimer Library's George Eliot Holograph Notebooks: MSS 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, Vol. 4: 709, 710 (Salzburg, Austria: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Universität Salzburg, 1985) 12-17. Eliot obtained the name Lapidoth from Solomon Maimon's Lebengeschichte (Berlin, 1792); see Baker, George Eliot and Judaism 118-19. As Baker notes, the scene in the Hand and Banner illustrates different Jewish responses to their condition, as shown by historians (122). Eliot's main source of historical information on the Jewish history in Daniel Deronda was Graetz's eleven-volume Geschichte der Juden (Leipzig, 1863-75); Baker 152-53. She used the ideas of the Jewish mystical movements as the basis of her relationship between Mordecai and Deronda; Mordecai's aspirations are not national but universal: the good not only of the Jewish nation but of all nations (157).

²Baker 207-215.

³"Salvation in Daniel Deronda: The Fortunate Overthrow of Gwendolen Harleth," in Literary Monographs, vol. 1, ed. Eric Rothstein and Thomas K. Dunseath (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1967) 201-243 (219).

⁴Cf. Eliot's description of the gambling at Homburg where she stayed in September 1872 and completed the novel. She noted: "all this seems to me the most abject presentation of mortals grasping after something that can be called a good, that can be seen on the face of this little earth. . . ." (GEL V, 312).

⁵"'Daniel Deronda': George Eliot and Political Change," op. cit. 141.

⁶The epigraph to chapter 16 reminds one of the double prologue of Goethe's Faust, on earth and in heaven; see Daniel Deronda by George Eliot, ed. Barbara Hardy (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967) 885, n. 1. It has been seen as Dantean by Cirillo, who relates this "shadow world" to that in which Deronda is rowing on the Thames, singing Rossini's musical setting of Francesca da Rimini's lament in the Inferno, "Nessun maggior dolore/Che ricordarsi del tempo felice/Nella miseria" (225). Cirillo, and also Wiesenfarth, in his chapter on Middlemarch in George Eliot's Mythmaking, have noted Eliot's use of Dante in Middlemarch. This aspect is interesting in view of the distinction that is sometimes drawn between her last two novels.

⁷"Zur Ethik: Der Eudämonismus," SW 10:230-31. In this later fragment, Feuerbach more nearly approaches utilitarianism in his description of pain avoidance. Yet his fundamental emphasis is still on spontaneous moral feeling. Hence, he argues that Kant's categorical imperative creates an artificial distinction not present in praxis. For Feuerbach, morality cannot be separated from human nature and therefore from desire. See also ch. 1, n. 48.

⁸Intellectual Education, op. cit., e.g., 31. Recently, in his examination of comedy in George Eliot's novels, Werner Schäfer has noted certain utilitarian elements in nineteenth-century education; see Komik in den Romanen George Eliots (Amsterdam: Verlag B. R. Grüner, 1985) 169-76.

⁹"The Inward Vocation: An Essay on George Eliot's Daniel Deronda," Literary Monographs, vol. 8: Mid-Nineteenth Century Writers: Eliot, De Quincey, Emerson, ed. Eric Rothstein and Joseph Anthony Wittreich, Jr. (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1976) 3-46; 195-97 (26-30).

¹⁰Shirreff 411, 414.

¹¹See K. M. Newton, "Daniel Deronda and Circumcision," Essays in Criticism 31 (1981): 313-27. As Newton notes (326, n. 3), Henry James may have alluded to Eliot shirking the issue; see "Daniel Deronda: A Conversation," Partial Portraits, op. cit. 65-93. For suggestions of Deronda's destiny, e.g., as apocalyptic imagery, see Baker 186-89. For a feminist view of Deronda, see Bonnie Zimmerman, "George Eliot and Feminism: The Case of Daniel Deronda," in Nineteenth-Century Women Writers, ed. Rhoda B. Nathan, op. cit. 231-37 (232-33).

¹²See Baker 160. See also Brian Swann, "George Eliot's Ecumenical Jew, or, The Novel as Outdoor Temple," Novel 8 (1974): 39-50 (40-42), and E. S. Schaffer, "Kubla Khan and the Fall of Jerusalem: The Mythological School in Biblical Criticism and Secular Literature 1770-1880" (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1975) 257.

¹³Swann 45.

¹⁴In "The Influence of Rationalism," Eliot wrote: "Fear is earlier born than hope, lays a stronger grasp on man's system than any other passion, and remains master of a larger group of involuntary actions. A chief aspect of man's moral development is the slow subduing of fear by the gradual growth of intelligence, and its suppression as a motive by the presence of impulses, less animally selfish; so that in relation to invisible Power, fear at last ceases to exist, save in that interfusion with higher faculties which we call awe." Fortnightly Review 1 (1865): 47; Pinney, Essays 397-414. Her conception of fear here tallies with Feuerbach's concerning primitive religious awe.

¹⁵Fictions of Resolution in Three Victorian Novels: North and South, Our Mutual Friend, Daniel Deronda (London: Macmillan, 1981) 143-44.

¹⁶Cf. Badri Raina, "Daniel Deronda: A View of Grandcourt," Studies in the Novel 17 (1985): 371-82 (376).

¹⁷Schaffer 257. The word "pathology" is derived from the Greek pathologia, meaning study of the emotions. It can be defined as the study of the essential nature of diseases and especially of the structural and functional changes produced by them; as something abnormal; as anatomical and physiological deviations from the normal that constitute disease or characterize a particular disease; or as a deviation from propriety or from an assumed normal state of something non-living or non-material. Feuerbach does not specify his use of the word "pathology" in The Essence of Christianity, but in his chapter on mysticism it is clearly intended as a deviation from "normality," from rationality.

¹⁸Swann 48; Raina 375, 377. After writing Daniel Deronda, Eliot confirmed that she did not hold with Schopenhauer's philosophy. However, it might well have exercised her imagination in relation to Grandcourt and Gwendolen.

¹⁹"Evil and Eliot's Religion of Humanity: Grandcourt in Daniel Deronda," Ariel (U of Calgary) 11, No. 1 (1980): 71-88.

²⁰See Cirillo 203; Sally Shuttleworth, "The Language of Science and Psychology in George Eliot's Daniel Deronda," Victorian Science and Victorian Values: Literary Perspectives, ed. James Paradis & Thomas Postlewait (1981; New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers, The State U, 1985) 269-98 (294-95). She notes that for Feuerbach the more natural reconciliation between the individual and the sacred idea of the species was not God but man. In her view, Feuerbach, in line with Marx's criticism, abstracts the human essence from the historical process, situating it in contemplation rather than sensuous activity, whereas Eliot's study corrects this deficiency. The relationship between Gwendolen and Deronda is placed firmly within the context of social and economic relations of power in nineteenth-century England (295).

²¹Schaffer 286.

²²Vargish, op. cit. 229-30. The structural devices which he mentions as reminiscent of the traditional providential aesthetic are coincidence, a sense of fatality, the inconsequent actualization of individual

desires, and the interpretation of individual and social history to show a plan or pattern.

²³Knoepfmacher, Religious Humanism 136.

²⁴George Eliot's Mythmaking 228. He has noted the relationship of this novel to Eliot's The Spanish Gypsy in terms of the myth of exile, and sees the Hebrew myth becoming a powerful, energizing biblical myth in Daniel Deronda, a myth that affects not only the race but the individual (with Deronda moving toward his true identity). While the name Deronda (de Ronda [a place name]) was drawn from Eliot's researches for The Spanish Gypsy, his first name, Daniel, identifies him with the Book of Daniel, and, in Eliot's mind, with the figure who first grasped the history of the world, and with "a drama which moves onward at the will of the Eternal One" (i.e., a theme of unity) (220-22). Wiesenfarth also observes Eliot's structural motif of jewellery in Romola and in The Spanish Gypsy; in the latter work, her method anticipates her technique in Daniel Deronda, where jewellery is linked with moral obligation.

²⁵Comte, Positive Philosophy (London, 1853) 1:463-64.

²⁶E. S. Schaffer's essay, op. cit., is enlightening on this aspect of the "I-Thou" relationship.

²⁷See McCarron 79.

²⁸On Gwendolen's responsibility, see also Judith Wilt, "'He would come back': The Fathers of Daughters in Daniel Deronda," Nineteenth-Century Literature 42 (1987): 313-38 (313-14; 332-34). I do not agree with Judith Wilt that Gwendolen's criminal act depicts the inadequacy of confession (333). The problem is that Gwendolen had not made a full confession; the earlier partial one was inadequate. She makes a full confession later to Deronda who, priestlike, feels bound to intensify her remorse but not to initiate criminal proceedings against her. Judith Wilt finds that Deronda's decision deprives Gwendolen of an "achievement"; more circumspectly, she considers the verdict that Gwendolen is not responsible averts the priestly, sibylline eye from both the logic and the power of Gwendolen's criminal defiance of the unscrupulous male. While many critics take the scene to reflect Gwendolen's death wish "miraculously" effected (cf. the "miraculous" arrival of Eppie in Marner's life), rather than due to the

consequences of any guilty (negative) act, the facts suggest that Gwendolen's unconscious "took over" and performed the act without her conscious volition; for reasons of space it is not possible to consider these aspects in the present discussion. Gwendolen can be said not to be responsible only in terms of a combined physiological and psychological inability to act: an inaction occasioned by her murderous thought.

²⁹As Carol Christ has seen it, Gwendolen, like Caterina, plots to murder the man she hates; they then have "magically brought about the deaths by their desires." (This is now a fairly common interpretation.) "Aggression and Providential Death in George Eliot's Fiction," Novel 9 (1976): 130-40. In this article, Christ speaks of Eliot's fear of aggression as an unmanageable and dangerous emotion. This is a perceptive article (though flawed by misspellings of Gwendolen, Baldassarre, and Latimer), but its attribution of causality to "magic" does not accord with Eliot's realism. It would, however, accord with the numinosity of the Jungian archetype (often seen in magical terms), if we consider the Feuerbachian development of Gwendolen's personality as a Jungian process: the fulfilment of an "essence" that must be realized in order to attain wholeness.

³⁰The Evolving Consciousness: An Hegelian Reading of the Novels of George Eliot (Salzburg, Austria: Universität Salzburg, Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, 1982) (see esp. the last chapter). See also her assessment of Deronda as a rational idealist in "The Role of the Prophet: The Rationality of Daniel Deronda's Idealist Mission," Nineteenth-Century Fiction 37 (1982): 170-87. She sees in Eliot's novels the concept of man's evolving consciousness as suggestive of Hegel's transpersonal Geist (180-81). Joseph Wiesenfarth has also discerned a Hegelian element in Daniel Deronda. As he puts it, "We find ourselves here in a world where God is One, where Mankind is One, and where logically--because two things equal to the same thing are equal to each other--Mankind is God." He sees this as "a world of the Hegelian ideal" arrived at through the myth of the return to the promised land. Elsewhere, he maintains that Deronda emerges as a Hegelian world-historical figure living in service of an idea. George Eliot's Mythmaking 223, 226. Feuerbach himself was, of course, strongly influenced by Hegel until he came to the conclusion that Hegel was putting spirit before man. In her description of self-consciousness in man, George Eliot seems to owe far more to Feuerbach than to Hegel, although there is (as Marx noted) undeniably an idealist strain in Feuerbach, which may seem to align him

with Hegel. Earlier, of course, Feuerbach had been greatly influenced by Hegel. The transcendence of the merely personal in George Eliot, as in Feuerbach, is always related to man. Hence, Deronda's interpretation of Mordecai's theories allows for man's ignorance. At the same time, however, at a mythic level, we may see Deronda in this novel as representing man's divinity to such an extent that an Hegelian affinity may be granted.

³¹Briefly, alienation (Entäusserung) for Hegel consisted in the surrender by a subject of his essential being. At one level, both alienation and estrangement play a positive role; they are necessary for the development of culture. The natural self is transcended as self-consciousness assumes an objective existence; but, at the same time, this universality which is the result of the alienation of self-consciousness appears outside the self as an estranged world in which the self can no longer recognize itself. See Philip J. Kain, "Alienation and Estrangement in the Thought of Hegel and the Young Marx," Philosophical Forum 11 (1979-80): 139-60.

³²Wiesenfarth, *ibid.* 228.

CONCLUSION

Certain critics, notably Bernard Paris and U. C. Knoepfelmacher, and also George Levine, Joseph Wiesenfarth, David Carroll, William Myers, and John Kucich, to name some others, have already recognized the relevance of Ludwig Feuerbach to George Eliot's novels. Their insights have been valuable, and I have acknowledged them in this first comprehensive analysis of the influence of Feuerbach on the fiction of George Eliot. Based on a detailed consideration of Eliot's fictional canon, the present study has shown that Eliot's primary theme of happiness is uniquely linked with Feuerbach's interpretation of religion and opposed to utilitarianism.

Feuerbach's ambivalent attitude to Christianity, sceptical yet idealistic, is reflected in Eliot's own demythologizing, where religion is shown as imagination (the religious projection), as egoism, as providence, as creative work, as elements of man's ideal nature (love, intellect, or morality), as irrationality (arbitrary law and fanaticism, for instance), as mysticism, as celibacy, as the miraculous, as prayer (a dialogue which divides man in two yet expresses what is important to him), as logos, as pathology, as immortality, and as an antithesis to culture. Above all, in her fiction, she expresses

Feuerbach's crucial distinction between faith and love.

We may see three major aspects of George Eliot's fictional demythologizing as inherently influenced by Feuerbach: alienation, "essence," and the realization of man's essential nature through the transition from alienation to "essence." The description (though compact) of Eliot's astonishing philosophical education in chapter 1 has provided a basis for identifying and comprehending Eliot's use of philosophical ideas in her fiction.

In relation to alienation, there are many instances in Eliot's fiction of religious and imaginative projections of the self. These depict the self-divisive phenomenon of the religious projection that distinguished Feuerbach's demythologization from that of others, such as Strauss and Hennell. In Eliot's novels, ideal projections can be beneficial; however, in general projections lead to a necessary disillusionment. The secularizing overtones present in Eliot's narrative also reflect the contradictory nature of dogma, in accordance with Feuerbach's ideas in his Essence of Christianity. In her Scenes of Clerical Life, the contrast between "essence" and dogma is especially clear.

In relation to "essence," Eliot's descriptions of man's essential nature thoroughly harmonize with Feuerbach's interpretation of Christianity in terms of feeling, thinking, and willing (love and suffering;

reason; morality). Certain elements emphasized by Feuerbach in The Essence of Christianity, such as love and suffering as the principal aspects of feeling, are endemic in Eliot's narrative, where, as with Feuerbach, feeling is linked with music. Both see suffering as an ultimately redemptive experience and confession as a healing act of speech that is capable of altering past assumptions, conferring the power to reconcile human beings with their wrongdoing and to bring moral freedom and the possibility of happiness. Thus, in Eliot's fiction confession is a turning point. As in Feuerbach's interpretation of Christianity, love becomes the ultimate source of morality, and it must reciprocate with reason.

The transition from alienation (as religious alienation or utilitarianism) to "essence" emerges as a basic pattern of human development in Eliot's novels and stories, a movement from egoism through suffering to sympathy which bears the imprint of Feuerbach's interpretation of Christianity; throughout her fiction, "Feuerbachian" characters act as exemplars to her less enlightened characters. On the other hand, utilitarianism generally leads to suffering, which may, however, instigate a Feuerbachian development.

The many clerical figures that appear throughout her opus generally express Feuerbachian human nature. However, the purely secular (more enlightened) characters,

through their sheer humanity, can express this even better than religious characters. Hence, certain almost secular clergyman in Eliot's fiction are, despite their profession, notably undivided in themselves. Other enlightened characters are associated with religion indirectly, sometimes through divinizing language, used also by Feuerbach to emphasize purely human qualities. Yet Eliot's secular characters are morally diverse. Having no orthodox affiliation with religion, they may correspondingly lack humanity, especially love, although up to a point where habit is irrevocably formed their essential nature may be redeemed. In this respect, mother love--emphasized by both Feuerbach and Comte--is a beneficial influence.

The infusion of Feuerbachian assumptions in George Eliot's fiction has been detailed in the preceding chapters on Eliot's various works. The results have been consistent, and the recapitulation here, novel by novel, of the evidence, even in a greatly abbreviated form, would be unduly repetitive. A degree of reiteration of conclusions in the preceding chapters has, in fact, been unavoidable. The detailed novel by novel approach, rather than a purely thematic one, risks such an outcome, even though the steady accumulation of similar findings throughout the opus greatly augments and consolidates the evidence. I have striven to define differences as well as

similarities in Eliot's treatment of various themes relating to the Feuerbachian goal of a unified self achieved through love and reason.

The fundamental aspects of Eliot's theorizing as it relates to Feuerbach have been fully presented. However, the detailed complexity of Eliot's treatment, the ambivalences and subtleties, the ramifications of her metaphors, and her intense irony may appear at times to have been passed over too quickly. The focus on certain vital themes may give the impression that other important elements of her fiction have also been undervalued. The examples may even appear not to be sufficiently illustrative of her creative genius, because they define (as was my intention) the broad outlines of her basic Feuerbachian philosophy relating to happiness, as it conflicts with utilitarianism. The author's richness cannot readily be encompassed in a focused approach covering all her novels. It may also be objected that my literary criticism unduly conflates philosophy with fiction. An author's philosophy and writing may be separate considerations; however, there is particular justification for such analysis in Eliot's fiction, for she was notably inclined to mingle overt as well as covert philosophical notions with fiction. Although an accomplished and creative literary artist, she is also properly regarded as a didactic writer.

With respect to Feuerbach, a constraint was that, although The Essence of Christianity was his most famous work and includes many ideas amplified in his later works, a study referring mainly to this one work could not capture the depth and scope, even the inconsistencies, of Feuerbach's total dialectic. It was considered appropriate to concentrate on the work by Feuerbach that Eliot is known to have particularly admired, and had translated, as opposed to making conjectural statements regarding affinities to works that Eliot may not have read or even been aware of. Then, too, I have presented my own interpretations of Feuerbach and Bentham and of George Eliot's interpretations of them, without dwelling on the obvious difficulties and ambiguities inherent in any such endeavour where no critical consensus of the philosopher in question has been reached.

My thesis does establish the significant presence of certain kinds of systematic thought in George Eliot's works. It may be considered that the way in which the novels renew, revise, misunderstand, and improve upon the ideas they employ has not been presented in sufficient depth, or that the generality of the conclusions could be raised to relate Eliot more consistently to the development of nineteenth-century humanism and emerging notions of class struggle. In this connection, the limited focus of Feuerbach's Essence of Christianity

should again be borne in mind; Feuerbach was examining the human "essence" as it appeared in Christianity, and my purpose was primarily to explore this inner dimension. Regrettably, I have not been able to pay full tribute to the renewed interest in Feuerbach's works by various writers in many different countries. Further, the differences between Eliot's Feuerbachian and Comtian affinities have not been exhaustively explored, and a comprehensive and critical attempt to separate the two, although a difficult task, might sometime usefully be attempted.

Finally, the critical reader may refer to broad affinities between Feuerbach's humanism and the general cast of nineteenth-century thought, and question the definitive nature of proofs linking Eliot with Feuerbach. Admittedly, to some extent, one must speak of parallels, rather than directly verifiable influence, in assessing her affinity to Feuerbach. Specific instances may not amount to definite proof, even where many of the parallels are so marked that we are scarcely left in doubt as to Feuerbach's influence on Eliot. Although many of Feuerbach's insights contained similarities to the ideas of certain progressive Victorians, a degree of particular relation appears indisputable. As well as the extensive analogies already given in the preceding chapters, we cannot ignore the considerable influence that Feuerbach

himself had in contributing to nineteenth-century humanism, both directly and through his awakening of other philosophers and writers to his insights. The opening description of George Eliot's philosophical education has indicated how her own notions fused with those of Feuerbach. It is hard to determine from the evidence to what extent she eagerly recognized a similarity of view and to what extent she found his view a distinct revelation. Yet here we may reasonably assume that his unique theory of the religious projection was a revelation to Eliot. We cannot ignore the implications of certain biographical facts such as Eliot's transition from Hennell and Bray through Strauss to Feuerbach's purely psychological demythologization, which she then obviously adapted in her Scenes of Clerical Life to indicate what she understood by "religion." However, the reader must determine whether the multiple analogies given earlier are sufficient to arrive at a proven connection through Eliot's fiction. My own study of the novels has led to the conclusion that Feuerbachian assumptions had become fundamental to Eliot's own thought, so that they appeared even in her later fiction, probably by this time quite unconsciously.

Espousing Feuerbach's concept of human nature, Eliot had, despite her undeniably polymathic interests, somewhat closed her mind to the possibility that, in practical

implementations, utilitarianism and Feuerbach's philosophy might not be so widely divergent as she usually portrayed them to be. Even with her occasional attempts to come to terms with utilitarianism--at times, her attitude is ambivalent, or hard to ascertain--it is evident from Eliot's fiction as a whole that she considered the system unworkable in practice, potentially unprincipled, and, above all, over-calculating. The concept of achieved happiness which she espoused would be reached, if at all, through a spontaneous morality that did not veer away from pain or suffering. Like John Stuart Mill, she had to move beyond Bentham, and through her novels she went much farther than did Mill in his criticism of Bentham.

Incorporated into fiction by such a profoundly realistic writer as George Eliot, Feuerbach's "essence" becomes something realized, rather than the abstraction that Marx considered it to be. While endorsing Feuerbach's concept of human nature, yet showing this is not easily achieved, Eliot moves beyond Feuerbach; for instance, in examining how a lack of love in the nature of certain of her protagonists is fostered by upbringing and environment. She sees conventional notions on the merits of class, status, and wealth as basically "external" considerations, often reinforcing false assumptions. She criticizes the system of women's education, her treatment of women moving increasingly to depict a Feuerbachian

autonomy, rather than a Comtian submission.

Going beyond Feuerbach again, she examines the extent to which the distinct attributes of sympathy, morality, and will are compatible with each other, drawing the conclusion that a balance must be maintained between them. In relation to self-sacrifice, she sees its necessary limits. Agreeing with Feuerbach as to the possible merits of suffering, she shows that the suffering that may engender new knowledge and sympathy can be created by the death of a loved person, by consciousness of sin, and even by an incompatible marriage relationship. She brings Comtian, Wordsworthian, Spinozan, and Spencerian insights to bear on the Feuerbachian framework. Thus, in Comtian vein, she expands on the function of memory in contributing to ultimate well-being.

One of the most fascinating aspects of Eliot's fiction surely also owes something to Eliot's understanding of Feuerbach. This is her insight into the deepest levels of human motivation. While, here again, Bentham's initial influence cannot be ignored, Eliot with Feuerbach goes far beyond Bentham in anticipating the analytical psychology of Freud and, especially, of C. G. Jung, whose emotional attachment to religion and interest in questions of individuation, or human self-fulfilment, can be seen as paralleling Eliot's. Eliot, too, sees that subconscious or unrealized needs must be brought to

consciousness. Perhaps in specific instances my analysis would have benefited from a fuller integration of Eliot's foreshadowing of Jungian insights via Feuerbach.

Bray, Spencer, and Comte had all attempted a new philosophical synthesis, and it has been shown that Eliot, too, attempted to establish one, within a fictional world. Here, Feuerbach was crucially important to Eliot in providing a bridge from an orthodox interpretation of religion to a meaningful humanism. Without abandoning some dearly held earlier assumptions, through Feuerbach she revised her ideas about religion to meet her intellectual needs and formed a philosophy which was valuable to her, and which she then felt would be equally valuable to her readers. Feuerbach's concept of essential human nature appeared to her as a "truth," and in her fiction she attempted to describe life realistically so as to impart this truth that appertained to human well-being. Her fiction describes life in its exceeding painfulness, redemptive love, and minutest joys that inseparably for her constituted an incalculable human happiness.

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LUDWIG FEUERBACH AND
GEORGE ELIOT'S GERMAN TRANSLATIONS

I. LUDWIG FEUERBACH (1804-1872)

The following account of Feuerbach and his thought is not intended to be fully comprehensive, but, rather, a focus on those elements of his thought most relevant to this study. A list of further reading is appended.

In the left-wing critical reaction to Hegel, Ludwig Feuerbach was the first real proponent of atheism and the most important representative before Marx. He profoundly influenced the Berlin circle of Young Hegelians with the publication of his major work, The Essence of Christianity (EC), and there is a continuing discussion of his philosophy even today. According to Marx, he vanquished the Hegelian philosophy, and he has been described as "focus[ing] the threads of pantheism, Spinozism, and organicism, turning his philosophy truly into a stream of humanistic fire."¹ Awareness and sensuousness of matter were regarded by him, as for Spinoza, to be inherent in nature.

His major contributions have been seen to be:
1) mediating between mechanical and dialectical materialism, which bridged much of the gap between the Encyclopedists; 2) contributing to historical analysis by

emphasizing the source of ideas and systems instead of the content, as Strauss had done; 3) propounding the strong connection between idealism and religion, broadening the development analysis of philosophy, theology, sociology, and history; 4) reducing abstractionism, symbolism, and myth from primary to secondary consideration; 5) becoming a forerunner of projective psychological analysis, providing tools to such successors as Eduard von Hartmann and Sigmund Freud; 6) as (in Strauss's view) giving a conclusive answer to the question of how symbols and myths arose. In this light, he might be considered as a founder of the science of mythology, and as providing important contributions to nineteenth-century Protestant thought, influencing such radical followers of Hegel as Bauer, Moses Hess, K. L. Bernays, and Arnold Ruge. He was seminal to the thinking of N. G. Chernyshevski and G. V. Plekhanov, founders of Russian Marxism. His major influence in the history of thought was his impact on Marx, Engels, and, later, Lenin. Sidney Hook has recently claimed that the significance of the life and thought of Feuerbach is only now emerging in contemporary philosophy through the interest of Marxists in the thought of a man whom both Marx and Engels, in the formative period of their philosophy, acclaimed as their intellectual leader. He also notes that Feuerbach's psychology of religion remains the most comprehensive and persuasive hypothesis

for the study of comparative religion.²

Feuerbach was greatly influenced by Hegel, but nevertheless criticized Hegel's "rational mysticism." In contrast, religion for Feuerbach was a dream of human development: man's way of objectifying his real essence (essential nature) in ideal terms. In his view, theology was a doctrine of nature and a doctrine of man. The Christian idea of the Incarnation was, in his view, nothing but a reflection of the dream of man to become God and the realization that this could be achieved only through a transcendent love of one's fellow man.

He obtained his degree in 1828 in Erlangen with his thesis De ratione una, universali, infinita. His Gedanken über Tod und Unsterblichkeit was published anonymously in 1830. The appendix of satirical theological epigrams and the work's denial of the immortality of the soul embarrassed the authorities and detracted from his chances of promotion within the university hierarchy. His next work, Geschichte der neuern Philosophie von Bacon von Verulam bis Benedict Spinoza (1833) was based on his lectures on the history of philosophy.

In 1837 he married Bertha Löw, who had inherited a share of a porcelain factory in Bruckberg, a small village near Ansbach; subsequently, Feuerbach pursued a career as an independent philosopher, publishing works on Leibnitz, Pierre Bayle, and Hegel. His Zur Kritik der Hegelschen

Philosophie (1839) made apparent his break with the Hegelian idealist philosophy. His most important work, Das Wesen des Christenthums [The Essence of Christianity] (1841) brought him immediate fame; it was promptly translated into English, French, and Russian. In this work, he showed that every aspect of God or of religion corresponded to some feature or need in human nature. However, after the 1848-1849 revolutionary movement his reputation declined.

The Essence of Christianity contained positive and negative parts: in the first part, Feuerbach proclaimed the essence of religion as a new philosophy which defined man's nature in the light of the intellect, the power of affection, and energy of being (EC 2-3). Here, virtue was the presupposition of happiness and necessity, "the iron bond which inevitably binds effects to causes" (EC 103), and could be mitigated through a new inward orientation in man's consciousness. In the second part, he concentrated on the "false or theological essence of religion." While criticizing various religious dogmas, he showed their humanistic meaning.

As Feuerbach put it, in a well-known statement, his first thought was God, his second Reason, and his third was Man. The basis of his philosophy, however, was man, viewed through "natural science." He defined the religious phenomenon as the projection and hypostasis of

some element of human experience into an object of worship. In his opinion, religion fundamentally arose from an emotional need in man, and an individual fell into error when he was unconscious of his projection, for sensory experience was the real criterion of existence.

A particularly important aspect of The Essence of Christianity is his distinction between feeling and thought; he describes the former in terms of love and suffering, and he describes the latter in terms of understanding, of which the highest form is an impartial reason. While feeling and thought reflect man's subjective and objective being, and are different in quality, they are also inseparably linked, having their basis in human sensibility.

Implicit in Feuerbach's description of human nature is a teleology that aims at happiness and indicates the means to happiness in terms of love, morality, and understanding, which he sees as aspects of man's essential nature: ". . . God is the realised salvation of the soul, or the unlimited power of affecting the salvation, the bliss of man" (EC 185). For Feuerbach, the religious state of blessedness then becomes a metaphor for man's own strivings. It is in this sense that Eliot's work is most profoundly affected by Feuerbach's philosophy. Feuerbach's important concept that religious feelings depend on an alienation of man from himself is most clearly reflected in Eliot's later, more openly secular,

work. He saw religion to be the uncontrolled and unconscious exercise of the human faculty that with the aid of anthropology, physiology, and psychology could be controlled, raised to consciousness, and turned toward the attainment of genuine health, well-being, and community on earth--the consciousness of the species. His final contradiction between faith and love draws attention to the distinction between a religious alienation and a unity that can be achieved through the harmonious joining of love and thought.

Feuerbach, sceptically, sees Christian love as a particular, limited love, whereas in his view love is in its nature universal, as is thought. The problem with Christianity is that it makes love collateral to faith, and can place itself in contradiction with universal love; since the latter is not limiting, it does not produce disunion in man. Although, in The Essence of Christianity, Feuerbach recognized various drives that were important to man, his emphasis remains on man's need for love and community. In this work, as well as in his Principles of the Philosophy of the Future, he promoted his "new philosophy."

Feuerbach has been seen by some to have striven in vain to reconcile the religious consciousness with subjectivism. In his "Theses on Feuerbach," Marx noted that Feuerbach resolved the essence of religion into the essence of man, but that the essence of man was no

abstraction inherent in each separate individual as Feuerbach made it out to be; it was the ensemble of the social relations. It is hard to contradict such a view; however, Feuerbach laid the foundation for the phenomenological anthropology that inspired modern philosophers such as Heidegger, Sartre, and Karl Barth.

The young Karl Marx was distinctly influenced by Feuerbach's theories, but Feuerbach held himself aloof from Marxism. He revised his Essence, which was to go through three editions in seven years, and in 1843 published his Vorläufige Thesen zur Reform der Philosophie (1843) and his Grundsätze der Philosophie der Zukunft (1843). His work considering God in nature, Das Wesen der Religion, appeared in 1846. In Das Wesen des Christenthums he had been obliged to ignore this theme, since he considered the central theme of Christianity to be not God in nature but God in man.

After the failure of the 1848 revolution, Feuerbach was unable to obtain a university post. He accepted an invitation from the students at Heidelberg to give a series of public lectures, and through them he met the eminent physiologist Jacob Moleschott whose medical materialism he enthusiastically espoused. When Feuerbach reviewed Moleschott's popular book on foodstuffs, published in 1850, he became known for his aphorism "Mann ist was er isst" ("Man is what he eats"). In October 1851, he published the Heidelberg Lectures on the Essence

of Religion as the eighth volume of his Collected Works. He also worked on a biography of his father and considered emigrating to America, but remained in Bruckberg.

His next work was his Theogonie, nach dem Quellen des classischen, hebräischen und christliche alterthums, a study of the material foundations of the Greek religion, published in 1857 as the ninth volume of his Collected Works. In 1860, he was compelled by the failure of the porcelain factory to leave Bruckberg, and he and his family moved to Rechenberg in Munich. Here, Feuerbach completed the tenth volume of his Collected Works with writings from the Rechenberg period. He would have suffered hardship had it not been for the assistance of friends, supplemented by a public subscription. His last book, Gottheit, Freiheit und Unsterblichkeit, appeared in 1866.

Notes

¹Dale Riepe, "Feuerbach, Ludwig." The Encyclopedia of Unbelief 1, ed. Gordon Stein (Buffalo, New York: Prometheus Books, 1985) 221-25 (223). I have drawn on this essay in relation to Feuerbach's major contributions and influence.

²Sidney Hook, From Hegel to Marx: Studies in the Intellectual Development of Karl Marx (n.p.: U of Michigan P, 1950, 1962) 220-21.

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Eugene Kamenka, The Philosophy of Ludwig Feuerbach (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970).

Hans-Martin Sass, Ludwig Feuerbach in Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten (Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1978).

Marx W. Wartofsky, Feuerbach (London: Cambridge UP, 1977).

II. REVIEWS OF GEORGE ELIOT'S TRANSLATIONS OF LUDWIG FEUERBACH AND DAVID FRIEDRICH STRAUSS

The Spectator, Saturday, August 5, 1854, 837.

FEUERBACH'S ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY.*

JUST before the year 1848 changed the aspect of modern Europe, three men stood conspicuous as the literary chiefs of that party who to freedom in religious matters united extreme Radicalism in politics. Of these the most renowned was David Strauss, author of the "Leben Jesu"; next came Ludwig Feuerbach, author of "Das Wesen des Christenthums"; and lastly there was Bruno Bauer, compared with whom Strauss was mild and orthodox. A caricature, published some eight or ten years ago, introduced all the three, in symbolical forms, in the act of assailing the Cross; a punishing application of names converting Strauss into an ostrich, Bauer into a German peasant, and Feuerbach into a brook of fire.

Loud as these men were in the time of peace,--Strauss was even the involuntary cause of a reactionary revolution

in Zurich,--they were not loud enough to be heard through the tumult of 1848, and since that year they have been little talked about. Speculative Republicanism and Infidelity were forgotten amid practical revolution, and they have not revived during the period of reaction. Hence, the appearance of Miss Evans's translation of Feuerbach's "Wesen des Christenthums," makes us feel for the moment two or three lustres younger--takes us back to the time when there was a whole polemical literature devoted to Strauss alone, and when Feuerbach was a splendid name to write on the banner of a faction. Looking around us, however, we find that the names of these great apostles are no longer productive of excitement, and that the "Wesen des Christenthums," far from being a party watchword, has become an object to be calmly contemplated as a monument of a certain phase of human thought, fittingly placed in the "Quarterly Series" of Mr. John Chapman, who is to that wide category of divinity, which, though including countless shades of opinion, may be called by the general name of "free," what our Rivingtons and Parkers are to orthodox theology.

Renewing our acquaintance with Feuerbach now he has become historical, we are inclined to believe that he owes much of his fame to the clearness of his purpose. His reasonings are, indeed, often obscure, and he often renders his meaning inaccessible by his mass of

elucidatory remark; but this difficulty applies to details only. The reader, who feels himself sticking fast at a dark phrase or passage, should skip it over at once--he will be sure to find everything clear at the end. Feuerbach's book is not only one which he who runs may read, but he who reads it certainly ought to run. The arguments will convince no one who is disposed to reject the startling doctrine, and are superfluous to all who are willing to accept it. What some Epicurean philosopher said of one of the simplest propositions in Euclid, that the diagram was easier without the demonstration, and quite as conclusive, will apply with double force to Feuerbach. If you apprehend his idea, you have got all that his book will afford; if you cannot apprehend his idea, you are not the sort of reader he had in contemplation when he wrote. His subject is after all very little elaborated; though his elaboration of words, so as to make a thousand do the work of twenty, approaches the miraculous.

Feuerbach's main propositions are these. First, there are certain qualities so essential to human nature, that, far from being in the individual, the individual is rather in them: such are love, will, and understanding. Secondly, the unreflecting individual, instead of regarding these qualities as subjective, projects them out of himself, and thus constitutes an imaginary being whom

he regards as a deity. Thus, in the Christian scheme, the First Person in the Trinity is the projected understanding, the Second Person is the projected Love, and so on. Thirdly, this very projection is the cause of illiberality and its concomitant horrors, inasmuch as men persecute each other for the sake of gratifying a creature of their own imaginations; whereas if they ceased to regard the Deity as a personal independent being, and recognized Him as an idealized humanity only, one great source of the world's troubles would be dried up.

In plain English, this system is rank Atheism; but whether it is equally so in plain German, we much doubt. Abstraction and unreality are identical according to English notions; but we are by no means sure that the essential human nature, which, according to Feuerbach, lies at the foundation of the human individual, is not in his view a sort of substance. The German mind is ever more inclined to Pantheism than to Atheism in the oldfashioned sense of the term; in other words, it puts the zero lower down in the theological scale than we should be inclined to do here.

In his criticisms on the religious character, Feuerbach shows great acuteness, and even a knowledge of those "experiences" which are so much talked about by Evangelical pietists and Catholic devotees. If some of the pages were torn out, they might almost pass for

portions of a devotional volume, and many a pious person would applaud with rapture Feuerbach's strictures on the rationalizing theology of Germany. It is a principle of Feuerbach's strategy to attack everything in the shape of rational religion. He maintains that the most irrational form of Christianity is the most genuine, on purpose to overthrow the entire scheme from the stand-point of reason.

However, the whole work is a mere sketch of a theory, which for its completion requires a great deal of supplementary matter. Granted this theory of projectiles, why did projections of such and such particular kinds take place at such and such particular periods? There is scarcely a line in reference to the historical genesis of any positive religion; and yet, unless this genesis is made out, we have little more than a hypothetical sum total without explanatory items. Nor is even the sketch, such as it is, always in harmony with itself. The natural consequence of the main theory would be, that the deity of a particular people would share some of the characteristics of that people,--just as, for instance, Odin represents the warlike disposition of the old Scandinavians. But Feuerbach lays down another proposition, to the effect that when a man transfers a quality into his deity, he takes it out of himself. Thus, the Catholic monk having placed a queen in heaven, devotes

himself to celibacy on earth. Here are two opposite doctrines, which, unless their limits be defined, threaten to neutralize one another. If the Peace Society should make for itself a coat of arms, would the dove with the olive branch, or the god Mars, be the more appropriate symbol? From Feuerbach's book we could get an argument in favour of both.

Miss Evans has executed her hard task capitally; her discovery of equivalents in language, not only rendering the book as readable as its nature will admit, but proving beyond a doubt her thorough comprehension of her subject.

* The Essence of Christianity. By Ludwig Feuerbach. Translated from the Second German Edition, by Mary [sic] Evans, Translator of "Strauss's Life of Jesus." Published by Chapman.

The Prospective Review, 10, No. 40 (1854), 581-84.

The Essence of Christianity. By Ludwig Feuerbach. Translated from the second German Edition. By Marian Evans. London: John Chapman. 1854.

This book is an attempt to show that actual Humanity really worships possible Humanity--that Humanity as it is reverences Humanity as it hopes to be--attributing to its

own glorified image the vague attributes of omnipotence, omniscience, and eternal duration. We can well imagine a mind driven painfully by intellectual defect, into accepting, for a time, with dread, and yet with firm determination to look its conclusion thoroughly in the face, the conviction that Man is his own Providence, and that there is no love behind the stern monotony of Physical Law. Such men we are sure there are. But this does not seem to us like the book of such a man. Feuerbach does not sound the depths of his own dreary system. He trifles with it on the surface, and writes chapter after chapter of cold theory to prove that this is what man has always been seeking after, that it satisfies all our wants, and covers all our deeper convictions. We could feel the veracity and understand the broken spirit of a thinker who said boldly--"All hearts ask after a Lord and Father; but all minds come back either deluded, or foiled and wearied from the fruitless search; let us face the truth that there is no God." We can have no sympathy with one who tries to persuade us--generally with calm indifference, sometimes with a positive levity of manner--that the human race is the only God man has ever desired or conceived.

Feuerbach explains, with more apparent solicitude for his theory than for the faith he would uproot, how Divine attributes are nothing but human attributes referred to an

imaginary inhabitant of space. The attributes are real, but belong to us, the personality is fanciful altogether. Thus because human reason can alone explain the world, itself, and its own laws, all other things are dependent on reason for their explanation, but reason is dependent only on itself. Hence we take reason as the type of the Absolute, and fancy falsely that it alone can have originated that which it alone can explain. Feuerbach does not notice that reason, at best, only reduces complex streams of mystery to simpler streams of mystery quite as deep, and is really so far from explaining anything, that the simplest act of living will, the simplest springs of life, are quite unfathomable to it. In like manner Feuerbach declares that in the act of recognising moral obligation, man gives evidence that the goodness he contemplates is internal, not external. How could he recognise the divine law as sacred if his own natural goodness were not its spring? Of course this indicates a confusion, which runs through the whole book, between the moral knowledge of what is right and the practical achievement of it. We do not even perceive the sanctity of moral obligation, until we are aware of some being above us actually fulfilling it, living as we ought to live. Our conscience is roused by a higher life, and might remain at the same point, for ever, without its presence. Feuerbach goes on to maintain that the

greatness of human suffering has given rise to the belief in an incarnated Deity,--that the vividness and sacredness of human emotion alone suggests the idea of One who could and would at once enact the purer desires of our hearts. This, too, is said to be the secret of the belief in the Creator. Baffled by the stern laws of the physical creation, man makes up to himself for their inexorability by regarding them as the mere results of an arbitrary act of volition on the part of a Being like himself, and tries to persuade himself that, after all, they are only a mushroom growth produced for human benefit, and to be withdrawn directly the occasion for them is past. In other words, the self-love of man contradicts his reason, and while the latter regards the Universe as absolute order and beauty, the former would believe it made and abrogated only for the sake of human advantage. It is here clear that Feuerbach wishes to trace the faith in Providence and a Supernatural Will to a morally despicable source, while he wishes to trace the belief in absolute Order and Immutability to a worthy part of the human mind. Accordingly he accuses the Hebrew faith of being a purely selfish view of God as a useful Being at the moral disposal of Israel. We believe, on the contrary, nay, we know, that the Hebrew faith in a moral Providence is born in a much higher part of the mind than that of the Greek faith in the pervading beauty and harmony of creation,

which Feuerbach so much exalts, and which, indeed, cannot be too carefully cherished. We have thus briefly indicated the method and a few central thoughts in this painful book. We may truly say that we have seldom read a book that so helplessly struggles to cover intractable moral realities with the shreds of a meagre theory, nay, that is so blind to the discrepancy between the two. One effort to resist temptation, one single true glimpse of the deeper life, and the whole painfully-spun fabric is rent into miserable tatters, which could clothe no man's thought, however narrow. None could fancy this theory real except in some utterly dead and torpid mood, when everything seems as barren and desolate as Atheism itself. Only let any one think what was really passing in the mind of the man who wrote, "If I go up into heaven, Thou art there. If I go down to hell, Thou art there also. If I take the wings of the morning, and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there also shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, 'Peradventure the darkness shall cover me,' then shall my night be turned to day; yea, the darkness is no darkness with Thee, but the night is clear as the day; the darkness and the light to Thee are both alike," and he will be in no danger of believing that this book contains the essence of any Religion, false or true--much less the essence of Christianity.

The review article in The Prospective Review 2 (1846): 479-520 is too lengthy to reproduce in full. The extracts given below will suffice to indicate why George Eliot was not satisfied with the review despite its praise of her translation.

ART. II.--STRAUSS'S LIFE OF JESUS.

1. The Life of Jesus critically examined: by Dr. David Friedrich Strauss. Translated from the Fourth German Edition. London: Chapman, Brothers. 1846. AT length the far-famed Leben Jesu of Strauss appears before the English Public in a fitting shape--in a faithful, elegant and scholar-like translation . . . the rendering is word for word, thought for thought, and sentence for sentence. The style of Strauss, indeed, unlike that of many of the German Theological writers, is, for the most part, clear, simple, and uninvolved, and in so far it is favourable to the labours of the translator. But in preparing so beautiful a rendering as the present, the difficulties can have been neither few nor small in the way of preserving, in various parts of the work, the exactness of the translation, combined with that uniform harmony and clearness of style, which impart to the volumes before us the air and spirit of an original. Though the translator

never obtrudes himself upon the reader with any notes or comments of his own, yet he is evidently a man who has a familiar knowledge of the whole subject, and if the work be the joint production of several hands, moving in concert, the passages of a specially scholastic character, at least, have received their version from a discerning and well-informed theologian. A modest and kindly care for his reader's convenience has induced the translator often to supply the rendering into English of a Greek quotation, where there was no corresponding rendering into German in the original. Indeed, Strauss may well say as he does in the notice, which he writes for this English Edition, that as far as he has examined it, the translation is, "et accurata et perspicua."

. . . His theory is of so peculiar a nature that it must defy every adversary, or it will fall. A single breach brings on the ruin of the whole tower. A solitary concession--of any extent or importance--destroys the solidity of the fabric. To allow that St. John's Gospel was a product of the Apostolic age is fatal to the Theory of the Myth; and therefore our Author, on reconsideration, will not allow it. To admit that St. Paul's Epistles were the product of the Apostolic age is alike fatal, and therefore he is cautious not to include a consideration of them in the collateral argument. Any considerable concession of actuality or of authenticity is ruin to the

position of Strauss. His only strength lies in the total abnegation of contemporaneous record and fact (479-83).

. . . The mythic theory rises from the ashes of the rationalistic. It has originated, however, mainly in the same state of mind, and a perception of similar difficulties. To both theories, miracle was alike unacceptable. To both, the Scripture representations of God's words and dealings were often unwelcome and incredible. The problem was, to discover a principle of interpretation, which should be consistent at once with the antecedent convictions and presuppositions of the theorists, with the phenomena of the Scriptures themselves, their history and their influence, and with the fixed religious wants of man. This must be conceded to be a problem of intense difficulty, and it is no discredit to any of those who have hitherto attempted it, of whatever school, to say, that they have only as yet contributed elements towards its satisfactory solution. The fate that has overtaken Paulus is fast overtaking Strauss, and each must be content to leave from his bulky commentary, a small residue of valuable truth for the use of the future.

The hollowness of the Rationalist theory became manifest from the fact, that it received accounts, from which the impression and the intention of the supernatural could by no human skill be separated, and yet denied the

supernatural to them. The historical piece consisted of warp and woof of natural and supernatural--it took out every thread of the woof, and placed it longitudinally with the warp, and maintained the integrity of the piece. It became, though slowly, yet at length perfectly, clear to every thinking person, that if we received the narrative as true, we could not deny the miracle; if we denied the miracle, we could not receive the narrative. Clearly discerning this necessity, the mythic theory, receiving its completion at the hands of Strauss, declared that the Gospel records were not to be received as narratives of actual occurrences at all--whether natural or supernatural--but especially not of the latter. We were no longer to be engaged in a process from which every moral chemist of any discernment began to shrink--of resolving a compound into its two constituent elements . . . and maintaining the unity and identity of the compound itself. We were to declare that the Gospels were not narratives of facts, but compositions of the religious imagination--romances, of great beauty, great ethical truth, even of sublime moral purpose, and arising from a sincere and virtuous state of mind.

The name of Jesus was a reality--but the reality of Jesus only a name. History does not trouble itself to deny that there was a young man, who lived and probably preached in Galilee, and was crucified in Jerusalem, and

that he either announced himself, or was then or subsequently announced by others, as the expected Messiah of the Jews. This is nearly all of which we can be certain in the region of actual fact. But around this small nucleus, and whatever else of the same sort there may have been of actual occurrence, the religious meditation of devout minds in subsequent years gathered the accretions which now constitute the beautiful Dream of our Gospels. Cherishing thoughts of what the Messiah was to be, and therefore must have been; building on the data for such a character already supplied by the Prophets, the Old Testament generally, and the pious expectations of the devout--the whole picture of himself, his sayings and his doings came out at length in strong and full relief--like the heads on the refectory wall of the Dominican monastery at Milan--where Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper, at first a dim and shapeless spectre, is recovered by much gazing into a living, breathing, speaking, and impressive reality.

Such, in brief and general outline, is the mythic Theory, adopted and perfected by Strauss. Christ as a person, did not create the religious belief and consciousness of the Church, but Christ as an idea, did Further--the process thus gone through actually originated everlasting truths, for though the Gospel of Jesus is false historically, the doctrines contained in

the false historical garb are true. As this strange, wild, wayward fancy, is the peculiarity of Strauss's work, and is applied with a monotonous and wearisome consistency throughout the whole Gospel narrative, we purpose selecting it, from the mass of general and cognate matter that presents itself, as the principal topic of our observations; especially as the other very important ground taken by our Author, of the antecedent improbability, nay, impossibility, of miracle, is common to him with the old English Deists, and the later German Rationalists, and has its own time and place for discussion. Indeed, the objection to miracle is as old as Thought.

The Gospel Narrative, then, its statement of facts, and conception of the character and teachings of Jesus, originated in myth. And what is myth? A vague description of the word is easy, an exact definition difficult. And yet a very clear understanding of the difference between the myth, the legend, the fable, and the forgery, is becoming more and more necessary, and if it be found requisite for distinction's sake to limit the signification of the word to a narrower field than that which has been hitherto, or is usually, considered its province, we shall gain in clearness what we may lose in breadth. We are inclined to think that usage is against the more restricted application of the word, which we are

nevertheless convinced has now become necessary, if we are to preserve any of that exactness of idea which can only be conveyed by an equal exactness of phraseology. Even with Strauss it is only the vague and popular acceptation of the word that can cover his theory (488-91). And if we assent, which we are disposed to do, to George's acute definition--that mythos is the creation of a fact out of an idea; legend the seeing of an idea in a fact, or arising out of it--then Strauss's system is based on both myth and legend, and though principally, is not exclusively, mythic--in the restricted meaning of the word, thus adopted (488-491).

. . . Whatever may have been Strauss's intention in preparing for his work, or impression in reviewing it, the fact is, that he has admitted the historical elements, even in its legendary form, to so very trifling an extent into his criticism, that we wonder he should have trespassed at all upon the almost uniform principle of his application, and that he should have conceded even the small modicum of real fact that he does, when so trifling an additional exercise of his practised ingenuity would have enabled him with equal success in most instances to resolve it also into myth.

It is a happy encouragement to our Author's ingenuity, and a fortunate omen for his criticism, that he encounters at the very commencement of two of our Gospels

as they now stand, the accounts of the miraculous conceptions of John and Jesus, the angelic visits and messages to their mothers, the star-led journey and homage of the Magi, the dream-led flight to Egypt, and all the other marvellous incidents characterizing the initial Chapters in Matthew and Luke. Here he has the fulcrum for that lever with which he seeks to reduce to myth and legend all the remaining portions of the Gospel--and he commences his course, it must be avowed, with a high prestige of success. We think he does so, however, at the expense of his candour. He treats the arguments against the genuineness of these Chapters in by far too summary a manner.

. . . But to part with these Chapters would be a ruinous loss to Strauss. He not only uses them as bases for his system, but he makes use throughout of that very inconsistency, which we say proves their want of homogeneity with the rest of the Gospels, as ground of argument against subsequent narrative. He first proves these Chapters to be incontestably legendary and mythical, and then makes use of them as a test, by which to try the credibility and consistency of the remainder of the narrative. Thus they serve a double purpose, first to prove his own Theory, (which, as far as they themselves are concerned, they to a great extent do,) and then, being shown to be totally fanciful and unworthy of any credit,

to disprove the other features of a subsequent and entirely independent narrative, because they do not agree with them. Surely there is as much reason, in all good faith, that they should fall, (as they should,) by comparison with the rest of the record, as that the rest of the record should fall, by comparison with them. It is at least clear, that these Chapters cannot serve both purposes--first to prove Strauss's theory, by disproving their own trustworthiness, and then to disprove the trustworthiness of the rest of the Gospel by appealing to their authority.

The importance--indeed the indispensableness--of these Chapters to Strauss is indicated by his extreme unwillingness not only to part with them, as heterogeneous materials, but to part with them in the sense of leaving their company. Their consideration occupied 200 pages. And indeed the word farewell must have been an unwelcome one to pronounce. No such gracious and congenial reception awaited him beyond their margin. The very first incident that he encounters, even though still in the history of Jesus' childhood, is of a far less yielding and pliant hospitality to his Theory. His effort to make the visit to Jerusalem and the temple mythical is absolutely spasmodic. . . . When he has a myth to evolve from really mythical material, an inconsistency to expose in two irreconcilable accounts, he does it with the utmost

precision, perseverance and success. But he is a Hercules, and must use his strength . . . so is there something satisfactory in witnessing the peculiar genius of Strauss applied to the exposition of a really mythical, legendary or imaginative passage of the Gospels, but something absurd in the sight of the same strength exerted to extort the mythical out of the most natural, probable and literal passages--an effort necessary however to the unity and self-consistency of his theory, if it is to be proved the theory of true evangelical interpretation.

We give some instances of his over-straining. . . . There is one fact indeed in the early life of Christ which our Author admits--namely, that his father was a carpenter! . . . The circumstance to us is as mythical as a great many others that he elsewhere insists upon. . . . We are not ourselves well skilled in this kind of criticism, but we think, a little more natural ingenuity, with additional practice, would enable us to include within the theory of his affections, the very few passages which Strauss, with (we must think) an unworthy despondence, has thought too solid to resolve into nebulae (492-97).

. . . though these and many other passages exhibit the entire moral unfitness of our Author for the task of a full exposition of the spirit and the power of the Evangelic Narrative, there are notwithstanding to be

claimed for him great and extraordinary merits of another kind. By universal acknowledgment his learning is vast, comprehensive, and profound--his patience inexhaustible--his temper imperturbable--his courage invincible, and his ingenuity infinite. But the grounds on which these qualities are most wanted, and most exhibited, are those in reference to which they are, to our minds, the least successful. The ablest part of this Work is not the peculiar part of it. The attempt to resolve the Gospel into myth--which is the differentia of the Work--is to us immeasurably the weakest part of it. At a time when the remaining critical material of these volumes will retain its value, the peculiar hypothesis to which the whole is made to minister will be universally rejected as untenable. It will stand to the remainder of the Work, as Hartley's theory of vibrations has been supposed to do to the rest of his Observations on Man.

It is not that we consider the mythical element absent from the Evangelical records, or that we suppose that there is no inconsistent and unhistorical matter in their contents--but that the application of a highly refined critical analysis, and a severe canon of historic exactitude to the Gospel Narratives, is a procedure totally unwarranted by the nature of the case, and that the effort to convert the whole Gospel into an ex post facto production of the imagination must fail in reality

and truth, just in proportion as it succeeds in scientific uniformity and self-consistency. In vulgar English, the hobby has been ridden too hard, and its girths are broken. The precise characteristic that gives it a charm to the scientific mind of the German theologian, and is in fact indispensable to its admission among the number of well-sustained and self-consistent theories, is the very thing that carries it beyond the modesty of nature, and the genuineness of truth.

The general and abstract objections to the hypothesis are numerous. . . . Such a unity of thought and feeling as this theory requires never existed in any community. . . . It is tautology to say that legend gave rise to the evangelical records, and that the evangelical records are legendary. It is reasoning in a circle to declare that the evangelical ideas are a myth, and that the myth originated in the ideas of the evangelical community. What is the origin of the myth itself? if in the consciousness of the early Christian community, what was the origin of that consciousness? If we cannot realize the idea of a narrative, like that of one of the Gospels, proceeding from the consciousness of a community, it must have come from the consciousness of an individual, or contributions from the consciousness of several persons, and then comes the question, how did the individual or the individuals arrive at it? Whence, for

instance, did the author of St. Mark's Gospel obtain the idea of his Gospel? If it originated in himself, then he is in the position of Christ to us. We have only transferred the origin and the wonders from one person to another. He is then the creator of the Gospel and of Christianity, instead of Christ. We henceforth trace "the eternal truths" to Mark instead of to Jesus. What is gained by this, except distortion and improbability?

It is justly argued, then, against Strauss, that his hypothesis is no solution of the origin of the Gospel, and can only at most furnish an explanation of some of the peculiarities of its outward form--the clearly legendary character, for instance, of a few parts of it (as we now have it), and the diversities in many of the accounts--but it leaves untouched the questions of the source of its essential facts and features. In truth, the vanity of the effort to let inquiry rest in this vague region of the myth, has only served to make men perceive more clearly that the Gospel could only have arisen as the transcript of the wonderful actuality--or (a less probable and a more difficult supposition) in the conception of Christ's character by some individual living at that era, who was able to convince his own and preceding generations that he had depicted a reality. Bruno Bauer well observes, that in the moment when Strauss wishes to show the process which produced the evangelical history, he only gives us

the appearance of a process.

Another main point in which the hypothesis of our Author as signally fails, is his attempt to trace the image of Christ to the Messianic expectation of the age (501-505).

. . . We regard, then, the peculiarity of this great work--namely, the logically complete development of the mythic theory as explaining the origin of Christianity, and the phenomena of the Gospel narrative--as the weakest and poorest part of it; at the same time that we acknowledge the success of Strauss in proving, not that myth accounts for Christ and the Gospel, but that myth does enter into a portion of the narrative of Christianity . . . and that . . . the Gospels must be allowed to exhibit many discrepancies and some contradictions. Thorough, patient, ingenious and profound, however, as is his elaboration of these two arguments, neither of them originated with himself--both are (essentially) coeval with the birth of Scripture criticism. His work, as Quinet well designates, it is a kind of mathematical result of almost all the labours which during half a century have been accomplished beyond the Rhine.

As we have already indicated, we think Strauss triumphant in his detection of mythical and legendary matter in the greater part of the initial Chapters of Matthew and Luke. To his explanation of the Temptation in

the Wilderness, on the same principles, we surrender at discretion, although so overstocked is our Author with materials for his mythus here, and so fertile is the inventive ingenuity he exercises upon them, that if in acknowledging the mythical character of the account, we had to express a belief that its originator had in his head all that Strauss has so prodigally collected for him, we should be at a loss which to consider the most incredible, the usual literal acceptation of the passage, or the profusely ingenious explanation of it which Strauss would substitute. We should think that there was ground for the inquiry whether some of the circumstances attendant on the Transfiguration--in that case accretions to the real incident--might not have in them something of a mythical character. The rending of the Veil of the Temple may be another instance. We are far from thinking that Strauss is totally wrong. . . . But this German idea, "that nothing is good, but what is completely carried out,"--which turns human nature into a steam-engine, and supposes that we may interpret its movements by some uniform law . . . appears exceedingly puerile to the moralist and the metaphysician . . . nature and truth are too often sacrificed to the desire of a theoretic cohesion and self-consistency. One of the most fallacious and unsatisfactory grounds on which Strauss builds his argument, is his own idea (which he fastens on

the early Christian community) of what would be likely to be done and said by the expected Messiah. Indeed, his whole criticism resolves itself into what, according to the (supposed) imagination of the writers, was proper or improper for Jesus, and, identifying himself with them, he justifies, not the actual facts of the narrative, but the true keeping of it, against the explanations of modern critics, and rejects all attempts to clear up a difficulty, especially if they tend to make the narrative in itself more likely. Thus when we read that an angel rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulchre on the resurrection morning, to those who receive this literally and exactly, Strauss replies, in the first place, that there are no angels (a truth for which we have the sufficient authority of the learned Professor); secondly, that even if there were, it could not be an angel, because it was not proper for the Son of God to be assisted in rolling away the stone, as he could have rolled it away himself . . . (506-509).

The most powerful, and (in its results) the most useful portion of Strauss's Work, is that which relates to the Harmony, or rather, in his hands, the Dissonance of the Gospels. Here we recognise an acute and searching mind dealing with a pure question of criticism. His presuppositions here give way to evidence, which his reader can examine as well as himself, and his ingenuity,

though still prodigally exercised, is a little curbed by the critical nature of the subject. It is true that a vast proportion of the matter introduced into these portions of the Work has been already discussed again and again, in this country as well as in others, but part of the value of Strauss is the brief yet masterly manner in which he concentrates and girds up questions, which have so long occupied the critics, and the conflicting representations which have filled so many volumes. . . . To the difficulties which all must acknowledge to be connected with [certain critical] subjects, he adds a formidable array of discrepancies, inconsistencies, contradictions, in dates, in facts and in doctrines, which he asserts to exist in the four Gospels--compared with themselves and with each other. Although many of these are familiar to the scriptural critic, and have already received their solution in some shape or other at his hands, yet the additions to the old and accredited stock of difficult passages are so numerous, and often so important, arrayed with so much effect, and enforced with so much acuteness, that while they will make most receivers of the Gospel narratives, as substantially truthful accounts, pause to re-consider their judgment, they must create an unmitigated panic of alarm in the bosoms of those, whom the absurd and gratuitous position of modern orthodoxy has taught to regard the Gospels as

exact historical accounts of all that was done and said,--unerring and inspired transcripts in every sentence and every word of the All-wise mind of God.

The work of Strauss is absolutely fatal to this position. It can never be taken with any confidence again. The unerring accuracy--the perfect consistency--the unmixed truth of the four Gospels, as a literal record of facts, are disproved. And if the popular faith receive a shock from the discovery of this truth, let the blame rest with those who have blindly claimed for the Gospels a character which they never claimed for themselves. . . . It has been after a careful watching for many years, of the inevitable tendencies of theological criticism, and after a deliberately-formed conviction that Christianity was not safe on the old ground of the letter, that this Journal has adopted, amidst some misunderstanding, the position, "that only the free mind, not in bondage to the letter, can receive the living spirit of Revelation," and that for such a mind "there is a true Gospel of God, which no historical or critical speculation can discredit or destroy." Those who know nothing of these difficulties, and are determined to know nothing of them, may keep their old ground--but their security lies in their unconsciousness. We have no expectations of these things being long concealed from the general public, and we have no desire that they should. The truth must be spoken, and

it is fittest to be spoken. But we are deeply anxious for religion, for high morality, and pure devotion, for Christianity and Christian hopes--in short, for the integrity of man's nature; and we have deliberately taken our ground for the promotion of these great objects, as the only safe and the only true one. We do not trust our spiritual hopes and interests to the keeping of any book, nor will we permit them to hang upon a literary and historical accuracy, which the breath of the first clever critic may disperse. We desire to lay our foundations deeper--in our own nature, and the nature of God. We behold in Christianity the manifestation and expression of original truths. Our Church is not founded on John or Matthew, on Peter or Paul--but on the unchanging hopes and characteristics of our nature; and we view in the Spirit of Christianity, as collected from a liberal and comprehensive interpretations of its records, the guide of that nature. Jesus Christ is in fact and in reality the sent of God to us [sic]--literally the way, the truth and the life to us. But for this very reason, we do not regard the case in which his spiritual portrait has been preserved and handed down to us, as the ancile of Numa, the Sybil leaves of Tarquin, or the Ephesian Image of the great Goddess Diana which came down from heaven (509-511).

. . . it is plain that the well-versed Theologian finds in many of [the Gospels] only points which he has

long ago considered, and perhaps long ago settled; and we are further strongly impressed with the conviction . . . that if a man of the same ingenuity of thought and patience of detail, were to apply himself in a spirit of reverence to the Gospels, and disposition to put faith in the truth of their contents--he might find almost as many undesigned coincidences, mutually confirming statements, differences at first appearing in contradiction, and then in support of each other--as Strauss has found contradictory statements, and irreconcilable variations.

It is quite manifest that Strauss begins and carries on his inquiry with the intensest prepossession against the existence of any but the smallest admixture of fact and truth in the narratives. To the making out of this case he bends the whole force of his genius and learning. He applies a severe critical standard, the creature of philosophic imagination, before which even the most carefully and accurately composed histories must fall, to narratives whose simplicity is almost pastoral, and whose inartificial structure exhibits throughout an unsuspecting guilelessness. The greater part of his so-called contradictions, while they may show that the narratives are not without inaccuracies, no more prove the dishonesty, or the dreaminess, or the prevailing untruthfulness of the writers and compilers, than do the hesitation, and contradiction, into which a simple-hearted

witness may be thrown by the cross-questioning of a skilful pleader, the falsehood of his testimony. In a scholarly way, all is fair with Strauss. . . . His very concessions of truth are made for the sake of proving untruth. We are persuaded that Strauss's character for candour is in great measure the confused result of the impression created by the concessions of the third edition, which were retracted, and which therefore cannot now be brought forward as signs of this honourable disposition in our Author. His mode of arguing is indeed a great contrast to the angry, hostile, recriminatory spirit in which theological controversy is usually conducted in this country, and he scorns many of the unworthy modes of concealing or mis-stating an opponent's argument, common among us. But full and candid as he is in the treatment of his several points, sound as is a large portion of his criticism, and valuable as is the element which he has, in spite of all his excesses, contributed to the elimination of a true Theory of the Gospels, we cannot be blind to the fact, that as a Writer he is in spirit a thorough and a prejudiced special pleader, and that his Work, as a whole, is one ponderous and gigantic misrepresentation (511-13).

. . . On the whole, we do not regret the appearance of this Book. It will accomplish a good work, though not the work which it intended. We know now the utmost that

human ingenuity can advance against the credibility of the Gospels. The cup of hostile criticism is full; and we shall be hereafter able to distinguish more clearly, solid ground from quicksand,--what we may retain, from what we must concede. There are two other things that Strauss has done. He has dealt the concluding blow to the theory of poor Paulus--though of the two men, we would immeasurably prefer to place ourselves under the forced marches, yet healthy, attaching and exhilarating companionship of Paulus, than accompany Strauss through his stony, streamless, weary Desert. In truth, though long seeing, and seeing, if possible, even more clearly in consequence of the pungent, successful criticism of Strauss, the entire untenableness of the rationalistic theory--we nevertheless exceedingly venerate the mild, thoughtful, moral criticism of Paulus. . . .

The other matter in which Strauss has been equally successful is, his destruction of the old literal mode of receiving the Gospels. He has not only shown that they cannot in their own nature, and from their varieties and differences, be so received--but he has unconsciously, as it were, supplied a parody of the system in his own book. Orthodoxy has laboured at its words and syllables, and arrayed its clauses of sentences with clauses, and entered with the most edifying faith and patience into this measurement of barley-corns, this weighing of scruples, to

prove its several tenets. And now Strauss has presented its own process to it in a reversed mirror, and goes with equally exemplary patience, through an equally minute criticism, to show that all its tenets and deductions are false. We think the two processes together must surely put an end to both; and that the time will come when this textual hair-splitting . . . will have an end. . . . The theology of our age, both believing and unbelieving, is essentially scholastic: and though the process we are going through be necessary, and all the discussions attendant on it are important, yet we cannot forbear an eager look towards the future age, when the points of intelligent discussion will be less microscopic, and the treatment of religion, both by friends and by foes, less pedantic.

Taking this wider prospect of the fortunes of Religion, we cannot admit that the Work of Strauss fills so very large a portion of our horizon. There has been a great disposition in one party in this country to regard it as a monstrous, wicked book, full of lies and blasphemy, and destructive of all faith--and in another party to take it as a kind of *Novum Organum* in Religion. We wish to persuade our readers that it is neither. . . . The true solution of Christianity, as connected with the records, is not yet. Impatient spirits catch at anything that offers itself to satisfy their appetites, rather than

be starved--but what they seize on in their haste, is often but a "two months' victual." Even as we write, Strauss in his own land has passed away. We do not know of any fresh edition of his Work being called for, for six years. The Bacon of Theology is still in the womb of Time. We should be loath to appear bigotted, but we must risk the charge, by laying before the worshippers of Strauss one further and a collateral consideration. We know full well that there are many pure and noble minds who have hailed the labours of Strauss with a welcome of gratitude, as affording them a solution of great intellectual difficulties. But it must not be forgotten that there is also a far larger class of minds, who likewise welcome the appearance of Strauss--but do so, not because it relieves them of mental difficulties, and supplies them with mental food--but because they regard such a work as sapping the foundation of the whole fabric of Christianity, and with this, the hopes, the beliefs, the restraints and the severities of a higher moral law. We join not, in these remarks, in the vulgar cry that all doubt is immoral, and that scepticism of received opinions originates in a vicious and unprincipled state of mind. But we think it worth while for all enjoyers of such works as that of Strauss to bear in mind, that their joy is shared by many, who merely look on these works for their results, and rejoice in them solely as overthrowing the

authority of principles and hopes, with which their own impure and heartless lives are at perpetual variance.

There is one declaration of our Author which it is quite beyond our power to understand. It seems, according to a passage from the Introduction quoted above, that this criticism in no way affects the security and integrity of the Christian faith. "The supernatural birth of Christ, his miracles, his resurrection and ascension, remain eternal truths, whatever doubts may be cast on their reality as historical facts. The certainty of this can alone give calmness and dignity to our criticism, and distinguish it from the naturalistic criticism of the last century, the design of which was, with the historical fact, to subvert also the religious truth, and which thus necessarily became frivolous." . . . Are we to suppose . . . that this is a mere deprecation of the penal consequences of his Work, and meant as a sop to authority, bigotry and public opinion? The man who could do this, would not, we think, have composed such a work at all. Are we then to believe that the facts of Christianity, as usually received, really were taught, but that our present Gospels are a false and unreliable medium of their transmission to us? If this be the state of the case, on what does our reception of the Christian history and doctrine rest at all, and how, since we can then have nothing but tradition, vague and more unreliable than the

records themselves, can we be so certain that they are "eternal truths?" Is it meant that though the incidents never took place, and the doctrines were never orally delivered, they are nevertheless the expression of spiritual truths, and that though Christ did not rise from the tomb, yet man is immortal, and though Christ did not work miracles as the representative of God, yet God nevertheless is the Father of all mercies, an Instructor and a Comforter to us? If this be the Author's view, as we are inclined to suppose from the concluding Dissertation on the Dogmatic import of the Life of Christ, then we regret that the very distinct passages above quoted from the Preface are calculated to mislead, and do not properly express the Author's meaning. Nor can we understand the morality of the position in which he seems to imply a clergy may, if they can do so comfortably to themselves, remain; preaching historic Christianity and Calvinism, but agreeing with himself as to the interpretation of the Gospels. We have no justification to offer for the man who is in this position. Unless he is consciously and assiduously moving his people on towards what he in his own heart believes to be the best and highest truth, he is treacherous to them, and faithless to himself. To keep the kernel and give the husk, to proclaim that which is erroneous, and reserve that which is true--to keep the people to the old point,

when he himself has passed on to a new--this is the position of a false man. . . .

The notices of Strauss which have appeared in this country have been few, and for the most part fearful . . . (513-18).

JEREMY BENTHAM, JOHN STUART MILL,
BENEDICT DE SPINOZA, AND AUGUSTE COMTE

The reduction of the utilitarian philosophy of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill to the summary given here is intended as a cross-reference to the ideas dealt with in the text of this study; for further details, the actual sources should be consulted.

I. JEREMY BENTHAM (1748-1832)

Jeremy Bentham's An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation (IPML), first published in 1789, was intended as an introduction to his plan for a penal code. However, this was never completed, and Bentham's Introduction is a comprehensive work in itself. As Bentham acknowledged, it was indebted to predecessors such as Priestley, Beccaria, Helvétius, and Hume. Unlike Hume, Bentham invoked the principle of utility ("utility" being a more general word than "happiness," which implied an intensity of feeling) as a critical principle to support a general movement toward reform of the penal code. Through their incorporation in the treatises, written in French and published between 1802 and 1825, of his disciple, Etienne Dumont of Geneva, his writings reached a wide public. Bentham, as well as John Stuart Mill, attached importance to Bentham's exhaustive scientific method of

importance to Bentham's exhaustive scientific method of "bifurcate division" into sub-classes.

Bentham defined his principle of utility (which he later called "the greatest happiness of the greatest number" and then the "greatest happiness principle") as

that principle which approves or disapproves of every action whatsoever, according to the tendency which it appears to have to augment or diminish the happiness of the party whose interest is in question: or, what is the same thing in other words, to promote or to oppose that happiness. (IPML I, para. 2)

In such actions, he included those of private individuals and measures of government. He defined utility as

that property in any object, whereby it tends to produce benefit, advantage, pleasure, good, or happiness, (all this in the present case comes to the same thing) or (what comes again to the same thing) to prevent the happening of mischief, pain, evil, or unhappiness to the party whose interest is considered: if that party be the community in general, then the happiness of the community: if a particular individual, then the happiness of that individual. (IPML I, para. 3)

For Bentham, the "community" was a fictitious body, composed of the individual persons who constituted its members.

Bentham also described the four "sanctions," or sources of pain and pleasure, as physical, political, moral, and religious (later adding an additional sanction of sympathy, included by Bowring in his compilation of Bentham's Deontology from Bentham's notes after the

latter's death). Pleasure and pain could be measured, according to circumstances such as their connection with other pleasures and pains, the number of persons affected, and their intensity, duration, certainty or uncertainty, propinquity/remoteness, fecundity, purity, and extent. If the balance was on the side of pleasure, it would give the general good tendency of the act with respect to the total number of individuals concerned; if on the side of pain, it would give the evil tendency. This was his "felicific calculus."

In addition, Bentham described and defined various kinds of pleasures and pains. The pleasures were those of sense, wealth, skill, amity, piety, benevolence, malevolence, memory, imagination, expectation, those pleasures dependent on association, and the pleasures of relief. The pains were of privation, of the senses, awkwardness, enmity, ill-repute, piety, benevolence, malevolence, memory, imagination, expectation, and those dependent on association. Further, he elaborated circumstances influencing sensibility (causes of pleasure and pain).

He considered that the business of government was to promote the happiness of society by punishment and reward in relation to the "material" consequences of acts (i.e., acts consisting or influencing pain and pleasure), and analyzed various human acts. The Introduction also

covered intentionality, consciousness, motives, discussed human dispositions in general, mischievous acts, cases "unmeet" for punishment, the proportion between punishments and offences to be taken into account, properties of punishment to be allotted, classes of offences, and the limits of penal jurisprudence.

Bentham's system of rewards and punishments was designed to take account of cases where, led by self-interest, a man's action contradicted the good of the majority. Although his primary concern in his Introduction was legislation, the principle of utility required the maximization of the general welfare and therefore determined what should be done by individuals in the conduct of their lives as well as what laws should be legislated. However, there is some difference of critical opinion as to whether, in his discussion of private ethics, Bentham's standard of right and wrong for the individual was the maximization of the general happiness or of the individual's own. An interpretation that seeks to overcome this difficulty is that Bentham believed in a natural harmony of long-term interests (as opposed to his holding that punitive sanctions are necessary to create an artificial harmony). It is most likely that Bentham believed in a harmony of long-term interests, but realistically allowed for human error.

The underlying assumptions of Bentham's ethics, his

view of human nature, are to be found in his Table of the Springs of Action, printed in 1815 and published in 1817 without major changes. The fourteen tables, together with his Explanations and Observations, enumerate and classify human interests, desires, and motives, with their various names, neutral, eulogistic (laudatory) and dyslogistic (vituperative). The pleasure and pains are those of taste, sexuality, sense, pecuniary interest, power, curiosity, amity, reputation, religion, and sympathy; the pains of labour, death and body; and the final pleasures and pains. That Bentham had in mind a longer work is apparent from his marginals.¹

Bentham considered that his principle of utility was a true standard for whatever was right or wrong in human conduct, whether in the field of morals or of politics. He spoke of the dictates of utility as the most extensive as well as the most enlightened benevolence and referred to the "most enlarged affections" as concerned with the happiness of mankind. His discussion of the ill-treatment of animals further enlarged the scope of his principle. Although Bentham's principle of utility was applicable to the individual, its most frequent formulation required the augmentation of the happiness of the community, governed by the legislator.

Benthamite utilitarianism is a consequentialist morality: what matters in the moral assessment of conduct

is only the outcome of conduct. (While George Eliot herself inclined to this notion of moral judgment, she had some difficulty accepting its implications.) In his view, punishment was an evil that was justified only when, as an artificial consequence attached by law to offences, it might prevent greater evils or mischief arising from offences; the punishment itself should be calculated carefully to be just sufficient in quantity and quality to produce the desired effect, and should not exceed this. Bentham's theory of punishment inspired humane reform in the penal system.

Bentham's principle of utility has often been criticized for appearing to privilege the general good at the expense of the individual. Hence, much of the modern criticism of utilitarianism attacks it on the grounds that it licences in principle the sacrifice of individuals when this can be shown to maximize aggregate general welfare, treating individuals as of no intrinsic value. This is one of the criticisms that George Eliot raises against utilitarianism. Bentham has also been criticized for failing to explain how the principle of utility, which may require the subordination of the individual's interest to the general welfare, is compatible with the doctrine of psychological hedonism set out at the beginning of his first chapter. He has also been criticized for not clarifying whether the individual is to take his own

interest as a guide, or the general interest. A further criticism relates to the practical difficulties inherent in measuring pain and pleasure (Bentham divided pain and pleasure into "lots" or units), and hence in making the requisite calculation of the balance of pleasure/pain.

II. JOHN STUART MILL (1806-1873)

In his Utilitarianism, John Stuart Mill (1861, 1863) agreed in principle that Bentham's principle of utility, or "greatest happiness principle," was the foundation of morals, but maintained that pleasures differ in kind or quality, as well as in quantity, and that certain pleasures were more desirable and valuable than others. He also recognized "the conscientious feelings of mankind" as an internal sanction to be added to Bentham's external sanctions. George Eliot is more in accord with Mill's moderated (though less logical) utilitarianism than she is with Bentham's, because Mill invokes another criterion of value than pleasure and pain. However, like Bentham, Mill did not clearly distinguish pleasure from happiness.

While Mill's Utilitarianism is his best known work, his earlier criticisms of Bentham are particularly relevant in the present context of Eliot's criticism of utilitarianism.

Mill first challenged Bentham's principle of utility in his "Essay on Bentham's Philosophy," which appeared

anonymously in an appendix to Lytton Bulwer's England and the English (1833). He criticized Bentham for confounding the principle of utility with the principle of specific consequences, and for ignoring states of mind as motive and course of actions: "any act . . . has a tendency to fix and perpetuate the state of mind in which itself has originated" (CW 10:8). Mill found Bentham's psychology narrow and egoistic, and he distinguished between the morality of an act and the virtue of the actor (the virtuous man was deterred not by a view of consequences or of future pain, but by the thought of committing the act, a pain which precedes the act. However, he praised Bentham's efforts as a legislator of penal law. In light of Eliot's own criticism of utilitarianism in her fiction, she might well have been influenced by the views set out in this essay. It should be noted, however, that Mill insists that the structure he is attacking is not the true doctrine, but a false one raised entirely upon the foundations of a false psychology, a false view of human nature.

Mill also argued that while conduct was indeed sometimes determined by conscious deliberation, sometimes it was determined by an impulse. He found the attempt to enumerate motives an error, seeing motives as innumerable; there is nothing which might not become an object of desire or dislike through association. He also pointed

out that Bentham omitted conscience, or the feeling of duty, in his list of motives. He saw this omission as a gross error. (However, he noted that Bentham included sympathy, and that to Bentham conscience was probably indistinguishable from sympathy.) Mill noted that persons of weak sympathies often have a strong feeling of justice; others, with strong benevolence, have little consciousness of moral obligation. Further, Mill had gained the impression that Bentham imagined mankind to be cooler and more thoughtful calculators than people actually were.

While recognizing the need for new political institutions, Mill noted the adverse effects of a break in the line of historical duration, through old institutions having become associated with the historical recollections of a people. Mill felt that institutions should be regarded as the primary means of the social education of a people, but that they must be adapted to the state of civilization of a particular people. Bentham had proposed democratic government and, though Mill aligned himself with radicalism, Mill's conservative stance here reflects Eliot's later one depicted in Felix Holt.

In his article entitled "Bentham," first published in The London and Westminster Review of August 1838, Mill criticized Bentham's philosophy more openly. He considered Bentham and Coleridge to be the two great seminal minds of England in their age, representing

respectively progressive and conservative tendencies. He envisaged their influence as two systems of concentric circles, which had just begun to intersect. To Bentham, it was given to discern the truths with which existing doctrines and institutions were at variance; to Coleridge, to discern the neglected truths that lay in them.

In the article on Bentham, Mill respected Bentham's premises but, like Spencer, felt that his practical conclusions must often be rejected. As he noted, Bentham's ideas were not new--in all ages of philosophy, and long before Epicurus, one of its schools had been utilitarian--but Bentham had brought into morals and politics scientific habits of thought and modes of investigation, with his "sifting and anatomizing" method, treating wholes by separating them into their parts, resolving abstractions into the things--classes and generalities, etc.--of which they were composed. Hence, Bentham found that many abstractions (e.g., social order, law of nature, social compact, moral sense) were mere phrases or catchwords or allusions to reasons by which an appeal was made to sentiment. However, Mill maintained that this method was security for accuracy, but not for comprehensiveness. He also noted that Bentham failed in deriving light from other minds, and that he lacked qualities of imagination by which one human being enters into the mind and circumstances of another. Hence,

Bentham overlooked some important principles which he did not perceive, which invalidated his conclusions.

The truths which he did not recognize were that man has a conscience and a feeling of self respect; that he is a being capable of pursuing spiritual perfection as an end; that he can pursue other ideal ends than perfection for their own sake; that he has a love of beauty, of order, of congruity, of consistency in all things, and conformity to their end; a love of power, not in the limited form of power over other human beings, but "abstract power" as the power of making volutions effectual; a love of action (as opposed to the love of ease which Bentham mentions); a love of loving, the need of a sympathizing support, or of objects of admiration and reverence.

In short, Bentham's theory lacked subtlety through his want of imagination, and accordingly able men may have followed his doctrine of utility and his rejection of a moral sense as the test of right and wrong, but they have acknowledged it as a fact in human nature, and have endeavoured to account for it and to assign its laws. Bentham's system, Mill states, will do nothing for the conduct of the individual beyond prescribing some of the more obvious dictates of worldly prudence and outward probity and beneficence; it will not aid him in the formation of his own character. For Mill, education

consisted of two parts, internal and external: 1) self-education, as the tracing by the human being himself of his affections and his will, and 2) the regulation of his outward actions.

The above summary inevitably suggests many points that Eliot would take up in her fiction in criticizing utilitarianism; notably, though her interests in many ways reflected Bentham's, Eliot's character, in her learning and depth of imaginative sympathy, might be considered Bentham's opposite.

Note

¹Goldworth, Introduction, Deontology op. cit. xiii. Some aspects of this Introduction were drawn on for the present Appendix.

III. BENEDICT DE SPINOZA (1632-1677)

Benedict de Spinoza's exposition of Descartes's Principles of Philosophy appeared in 1663, and his Tractatus theologico-politicus was published anonymously in 1670. His posthumous publications include his Treatise on the Correction of the Understanding (Tractatus de intellectus emendatione), his Ethics (Ethica ordine geometrico demonstrata), regarded as his most important work, and his Political Treatise (Tractatus politicus). His Short Treatise on God, Man and His Well-Being

(Tractatus brevis de Deo et homine ejusque felicitate) was discovered in 1851 and is known as the Short Treatise.

The fundamental idea of Spinoza's philosophy is that there is only one substance, the infinite divine substance which is identified as Nature, Deus sive Natura, God or Nature. His Ethics is presented in geometrical form, and divided into five parts. Spinoza saw finite minds as modes of God/Nature under the attribute of thought, and finite bodies as modes of God/Nature under the attribute of extension. In passing from consideration of the modes of God as an infinite substance with divine attributes to consideration of the modes of God, the mind is passing from Natura naturans to Natura naturata; that is, from God in himself to "creation" (though the latter is not distinct from God). The intellect can discern changeless and eternal properties of the universe which it considers under the attributes of thought and extension. However, for Spinoza the human mind and body were one, although they could be spoken about under the mode of thought or of extension; he insists on the physical dependence of mind.

In his Treatise on the Correction of the Understanding, Spinoza distinguishes four levels of perception, whereas in his Ethics he gives three levels of knowledge, omitting the lowest level of "perception by hearsay"; the second level of perception of the Treatise appears in the Ethics as "knowledge of the first kind,"

opinion or imagination. In the Ethics, the levels are as follows:

1) Cognitio primi generis, in which ideas are derived from sensation or imagination, not by logical deduction from other ideas. Here the mind is passive, reflecting bodily changes and states produced by other bodies. They reflect "vague" experience and inadequate rather than scientific knowledge. Although there is association of ideas, these are not determined by a clear knowledge of objective causal relations between things. It should be noted that for Spinoza general or universal ideas belong to this level of experience, as confused composite images. Although Spinoza denies the adequacy of the first and lowest level of knowledge, he does not deny its utility. Nor does the inadequacy of an idea involve that idea being false when it is taken in isolation.

2) Cognitio secundi generis involves adequate ideas and is scientific knowledge. Spinoza calls this the level of "reason" (ratio), as distinguished from the level of "imagination." All men have some adequate ideas, i.e., ones which reflect common properties of bodies; that is, some pervasive features of extended Nature or common properties of extension. These common notions (notiones communes) must not be confused with the universal ideas which have been spoken of under the heading of "imagination." The latter are composite images, formed by

the confusion of "ideas" which are logically unrelated, whereas the former are logically required for the understanding of things. Knowledge of the second kind is for Spinoza necessarily true, based on adequate ideas, i.e., an idea which, in so far as it is considered without regard to the object, has all the properties or intrinsic marks of a true idea. We know that an idea is adequate by having it: truth is its own standard and criterion (i.e., a self-evident proposition).

In passing from the first to the second level of knowledge, one passes from logically unrelated impressions and confused ideas to logically related and adequate ideas, but one abandons the concreteness of sense-perception and imagination for the abstract generality of mathematics, physics, and other sciences.

3) Scientia intuitiva (intuitive knowledge). In this level of knowledge, the whole system of Nature in all its richness is grasped in one comprehensive act of vision. This arises from the second kind of knowledge and not by a disconnected leap or mystical process.¹ This could be taken to mean that in the third level of knowledge the mind returns to individual things but perceives them in their essential relation to God/Nature and not, as in the first level of knowledge, isolated phenomena.² This third level of knowledge is accompanied by the highest satisfaction and emotional fulfilment. This vision of all

things in God is not something which can be fully attained but only approximated to. The vision in question, given Spinoza's definition of God, is an intellectual contemplation of the eternal and infinite system of Nature and of one's own place in it, not a contemplation of a transcendent God, or a religious contemplation in the ordinary sense.

Human Emotions and Conduct

As pointed out, the problem of the interaction between mind and body was not a problem to Spinoza, since he regarded mind and body as the same thing, conceived at one time under the attribute of thought and at another under the attribute of extension. In the last three parts of his Ethics, Spinoza sets out to give a naturalistic account of human emotions and human conduct, and to show how freedom from the bondage of the passions can be achieved. (His combination of causal analysis, based on a theory of determinism, with ethical idealism, has been regarded as involving two inconsistent positions.³

In Spinoza's view, every individual thing, including man, endeavours to persist in its own being; this endeavour he calls conatus. Its essence or nature determines its activity, and what it endeavours to do is identical with its essence. The fundamental drive in man and other things, then, is the endeavour to persist in its

own being, to preserve itself and to increase its power and activity. When this tendency, the conatus, relates simultaneously to mind and body, he calls it the "appetite" (appetitus); conscious appetite in man is called "desire" (cupiditas). The transition to a higher or lower state in vitality or perfection is reflected in consciousness: in the movement toward a state of greater perfection this reflection in consciousness is called "pleasure," and toward a state of lower perfection is called "pain." (On Spinoza's general principles, an increase in the mind's perfection must be an increase in the body's perfection, and vice versa.) The perfection of the mind increases in proportion as it is active, i.e., its ideas are logically connected with each other. It follows from Spinoza's definitions that everyone necessarily pursues pleasures, i.e., seeks to preserve and perfect one's being (Spinoza does not mean to suggest sense-pleasure only).

According to Spinoza's theory, man can be dominated by his emotions when they are passive, but not all emotions are passive. There are active emotions which flow from the mind in so far as it is active. The active emotions, however, cannot have reference to pain, for according to Spinoza the mind's power of thinking is diminished or hindered by pain; it is only the emotions of pleasure or desire which can be active. These will be

"adequate ideas," derived from the mind, in contrast with the passive emotions which are confused or inadequate ideas. All actions which follow from the emotions in so far as the mind is active or understands, Spinoza calls "fortitude," distinguishing within this "courage" or "magnanimity" and "nobility."

Moral advancement for Spinoza is the movement from passive emotions to active emotions, an aspect of the intellectual advance (which to him is all one). Spinoza makes no sharp distinction between feeling and thinking because he regards every conscious state as involving an "idea." The more the idea proceeds from the mind itself as it thinks logically, the more "active" the emotion will be. Human lack of power in moderating and checking the emotions he calls servitude. For Spinoza, the words good and bad (though not logically deducible from his description of human nature) are meaningful, since we are aware of a means of our attaining the type of human nature we have set before ourselves. He recognizes that the desires which arise from the passive emotions, depending on external causes, can be stronger than those deriving from a true knowledge of good and evil; for instance, the attainment of an ideal may be weaker than the desire for a thing which is present and causes pleasure. The primary distinction, then, in Spinoza's account of the passions is between the bondage of the passive emotions and the life

of reason, which is the virtuous life of the wise man. Through understanding man is freed from the servitude of the emotions. According to Spinoza, an emotion which is a passion ceases to be a passion as soon as we form a clear and distinct idea of it, for it becomes an expression of the mind's activity rather than of its passivity. For Spinoza, hatred is a passion, not an active emotion. Understanding is the path to freedom from the servitude of the passions. Spinoza called the human mind eternal in essence, although he rejected the Christian doctrine of immortality.

There are marked affinities between Spinoza's moral theory and the Stoic ethics, especially, it has been thought, in their common acceptance of determinism. Copleston considers that his monism, like that of the Stoics, leads logically to some doctrine of human solidarity (4:245). Here, perhaps, it should be noted that for Spinoza the only limits of "right" from the point of view of Nature at large are desire and power, although natural right points to the formation of an organized society. However, for him the social compact rests on enlightened self-interest; the restrictions of social life are justified because they constitute a lesser threat to one's welfare than the perils of the state of nature. He considers that it is a universal law of human nature that no one ever neglects anything which he judges to be good,

except as the hope of gaining a greater good or from the fear of a greater evil. A compact is made valid only by its utility, without which it becomes null and void: we may see this aspect as non-F Feuerbachian and non-Eliotian. However, Spinoza considered that if a sovereign acted in a capricious, arbitrary, or irrational manner, he would raise such opposition that he would lose his power to govern.

Spinoza maintained that we feel ourselves to be free because we do not understand the causes of our actions and the causes which determine us to desire certain things and to have certain motives. He felt that a genuine freedom lay in understanding them. However, Copleston draws attention to the difficulty of reconciling a moral theory with determinism (4:254). As he points out, it would have been open to Spinoza to say that some people enjoy a lower degree of knowledge and others a higher and that nothing can be done to enable the former to render their ideas adequate and to free themselves from the servitude of the passions (evidently, if we consider Eliot's fiction deterministic, the same could apply). But Spinoza evidently supposed that intellectual progress was possible through effort (notably, this is a point Eliot herself stresses in her fiction, see, e.g., Gilfil's advice to Tina Sarti, *Deronda's* to Gwendolen). Moral progress is achieved, for Spinoza, through purifying confused and

inadequate ideas.⁴

Spinoza emphasized toleration in relation to religious beliefs, for he saw the function of theology as impelling people to adopt certain lines of conduct. Evidently, this is an aspect with which George Eliot was later in complete agreement.

Spinoza's Ethics was designed not merely as a treatise on metaphysics, but to treat of man's nature and the moral life.⁵ Although Descartes had written a treatise on the "passions," Spinoza was the first great philosopher since Aquinas to explore human passions systematically; it was from his theory of the passions that he derived his idea of freedom: he recognized that this must be expressed in other terms than that of the distinction between the caused and the uncaused. He defined emotions in terms of desire, pleasure, and pain, together with certain characteristic causes, explained so as to involve the concept of mentality which related to particular conceptions of the world; these defined not only causes but the object of the emotions. The essence of all emotion, for Spinoza, is passion: to the extent that he reacts to the world in an emotional way, a man is held to be passive toward it: emotion is something suffered; the cause is something outside him. Spinoza then argued, from the premise that to every physical event

in the body there is a mental event that constitutes its idea, that the more active a man is, the more his mind contains adequate ideas of the causes of his action. A man is active in respect of his behaviour the more his consciousness contains an adequate idea of the behaviour and its cause. To have a completely adequate idea of the cause is to see it in relation to its own cause and to understand the full necessity of the system of which the causes form a part. He argued that this ever-increasing understanding of the causes of our action was the only legitimate concept of human freedom that could be postulated. Freedom lay in the consciousness of necessity itself. Since, in his view, emotion already involved an obscure perception of reality, it could be refined from the passive to the active, as perception improved. His final vision of the "intellectual love of God (Substance)" has an Aristotelian and a Platonic aspect; it relates to the understanding of the universe in its totality, under the "aspect of eternity." The moral life of the enlightened man has no need of an anthropomorphic religion. Seeing things sub specie aeternatis, he recognizes that happiness, freedom, and virtue are one and the same, and that virtue is its own reward.

Notes

¹C. D. Broad, Five Types of Ethical Theory (Totowa, N.J.: Littlefield, Adams, 1965) 15-16.

²Frederick Copleston, A History of Philosophy (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Image Books edition, 1962-1977) 4:242.

³Ibid. 245.

⁴In finding that it is hard to see how Spinoza's view is compatible with a consistent determinism, Copleston argues that it is all very well to say that it is a change of point of view which is involved rather than a change in conduct. He notes that change in conduct for Spinoza depends on a change in point of view; and how could one change one's point of view unless one were free? One might note that such a criticism could apply equally to Bray's and Bentham's notions of determinism, as well as to Spinoza's and Eliot's. Evidently they believed that in practice a willed change could occur.

⁵See Roger Scruton, From Descartes to Wittgenstein: A Short History of Modern Philosophy (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981) 61-66; I have drawn on this work for Spinoza's account of the emotions.

FURTHER READING

Stuart Hampshire, Spinoza (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1951).

IV. AUGUSTE COMTE (1798-1857)

Auguste Comte, who was educated in Paris, founded the school of philosophy known as positivism. Comte's major works were the six volumes of his Positive Philosophy, that is, the Cours de philosophie positive (1830-1842), and the four volumes of his Système de politique positive (1851-1854), which was conceived as a revised edition of his Cours. Harriet Martineau provided an abridged translation of this work as his Positive

Philosophy in 1853; a full translation appeared as his System of Positive Polity (1875-1877). Between these two major works, Comte published in 1848 his Discours sur l'ensemble du positivisme, which was translated into English in 1865 by J. W. Bridges as A General View of Positivism. Comte also produced his Catéchisme positive (1852) and his Synthèse subjective (1856). Comte's Positive Philosophy provided a formidable synthesis of the objective findings of the several sciences with the knowledge of mankind, as "Humanity." This work was remarkable for its symmetry. In his interlocking law of the three stages of knowledge--theological, metaphysical, and positive--the idea of progress was implicit. Comte classified the sciences according to their decreasing generality and increasing complexity, with mathematics at the base and sociology at the pinnacle of his structure.