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The Wider Life: A Study of the Writings of George Eliot

by

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Chapter I, Part I

"Who Careth for These Souls?"

The Motives of Evangelicalism
The Evangelical Movement begun by John Wesley was a religious revival and a moral revolution that attempted to reform England in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Beginning with a small group of Wesley's personal disciples after his conversion in 1738, it spread the message of new birth rapidly through the working classes, revived by contagion the middle-class Nonconformist sects, and gradually awakened the long slumbering Church of England. Like a great wave, it "gathered to a greatness" many separate forces from almost every Protestant group and all social classes until it reached its peak of strength in the early years of the nineteenth century. In 1817, Robert Southey compared the revival of religious zeal with the growth of fervor during the first years of the Reformation.¹ The Evangelicals, like the Puritans they resembled in so many ways, demanded that the individual make religion the center of his life; it asked no less than total allegiance. Many answered the call, and even those who did not were influenced by it. Noel Annan claims that Evangelicalism was the "single most widespread influence in Victorian England."² But by the time of Victoria's accession, its fervor was waning, its zeal hardening into the Victorian code of social decorum and fashionable orthodoxy.³ The Evangelicals were the fathers of the Victorians. In his recent study of the careers of Hannah More, William Wilberforce, and other early reformers, Ford K. Brown lists the Victorian notables who were Evangelicals during their youths, "through
parental influence or early teaching or both."\(^4\) The list includes the Brontë sisters, Henry Thomas Buckle, Mark Pattison, Sir Gilbert Scott, Samuel Butler, Benjamin Jowett, Elizabeth Barret, Charles Kingsley, John Ruskin, Thomas Babington Macaulay, William Gladstone, Edward Bouverie Pusey, John Newman, Sir Robert Peel, Thomas DeQuincey, and Mary Ann Evans, before she became George Eliot. Brown goes on to add: "It is not meaningless that the eminent Victorians of that list should have had the strong discipline one would expect of a later Puritanism in their early training. But it is not meaningless either that not one of them stayed an Evangelical."\(^5\)

The Victorian motive to reform was one inheritance from the Evangelical Movement. Maurice D. Quinlan makes a broad division of reformers into two kinds.\(^6\) The first are the "system-makers," who believe that man can be morally improved by changing his environment, social, political, or economic, as advocated by such optimists as Marx and Robert Owen. Quinlan's second reformer, in contrast, has little faith that changing laws and systems—for example, extending the franchise—will itself effect moral improvement by making men less selfish and cruel. The second reformer believes instead that the moral improvement of society must begin with the moral reform of the individuals who compose that society. This belief was a basic assumption of the Evangelicals from the start. It apparently derived from their view of man's
natural depravity and their desire to save his soul.

The central motive of the Evangelicals was to save souls. All their other efforts to educate, to reform, to refine, to suppress, come back to this Christian concern for the lost sheep. The theological doctrines they emphasized were few, since they were more interested in practical results than theory or dogma: none was more basic than their belief in man's total corruption. All men, even professed Christians, were lost unless through conversion they accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior. In William Romaine's words: "The corruption of our nature by the fall, and our recovery through Jesus Christ are the two leading truths of the Christian religion." Samuel Walker used the familiar Biblical metaphor to insist on the same truth: "By means of the fall, the soul of every man by nature is altogether dross and base metal." In 1773, after he had preached for more than thirty years throughout the country, Wesley wrote:

Wherever I have been, I have found the bulk of mankind, Christian as well as Heathen, deplorably ignorant, vicious, and miserable.

And debunking the optimism of Hutcheson's Essay on the Passions, he said:

I know both from Scripture, reason, and experience, that his picture of man is not drawn from life. It is not true, that no man is capable of malice, or delight in giving pain; much less, that every man is virtuous, and remains so as long as he lives.
In asserting man's depravity, Wesley argued from Scripture, history, immoral economic practices, war, and especially his own observations of social and individual degradation. But accepting this truth, he went on to make the characteristic Evangelical declaration of faith in human capacity:

To describe human nature as deeply fallen, as far removed both from virtue and wisdom, does not argue that we despise it.¹²

This view of man's corruption became the urgent motive of the saved to convince the heathen of their sinful state and to warn them of the jeopardy of their souls. Such evangelization was not the duty of the minister or preacher only but the responsibility of all those who had been born again. The convert's first duty was to turn to others: to spread the word and to offer spiritual counsel. T. H. Green, the philosopher, commented on the Evangelical emphasis on conviction of sin in its scheme of salvation:

The common doctrine, which connects the sense of sin with the confidence of salvation, has often been denounced by theologians; but it seems to have its root in the truest feelings which bind earth to heaven...our very imperfections may win us to that childlike dependence on God which is only another aspect of the assurance of salvation.¹³

In a sentence that George Eliot quoted in an early letter, Charles Grandison Finney, the American Evangelist, defined religious experiences comprising the Evangelical scheme of salvation: conviction of sin, confession, repentance, acceptance of Christ's Atonement, and the sense of forgiveness.
Evangelicals, Arminians and Calvinists, followed Luther's teaching that man was saved only through faith, and that the doctrine of the efficacy of good works was a Papist error.\textsuperscript{14} It followed from their insistence on human corruption that man had no righteousness to offer God. Justification by faith alone was the second important theological doctrine that all parties shared. The inner assurance that one had "saving faith" was the goal of the would-be convert. This doctrine gave full emphasis to the emotional experience and private judgment of the individual and encouraged, doubtless necessitated, the introspection or soul-searching, before and after conversion, which became habitual. It is right to call Evangelicalism a religion of the emotions, for according to its teaching man's salvation was verified in his heart. It emphasized the personal encounter with God during conversion and meditation and judged the sincerity of the religious experience by the strength and nature of the feelings.\textsuperscript{15} John Newton defined Christianity as "not a system of doctrine, but a new creature."\textsuperscript{16} After conversion the "new creature" traced his own sanctification: the growth in grace through the workings of the Holy Spirit which gave to the convert the power to overcome sin. Though man's moral actions could not contribute to his salvation, if his conversion was genuine his outward and inward life would be altered. Each would reflect the other in an integrated life: such was the
Evangelical ideal. But the road to sanctification was a spiritual pilgrimage endangered by temptations; Evangelical accounts of the soul's progress revived the theme of temptation so prominent in Puritan literature. Progress proceeded by a constant struggle between man's higher and lower wills (Augustine's conflict) or between the old self and the new (Bunyan's conflict).

But such concern with his own subjective experience was not to distract the Evangelical from the wider life his conversion had opened to him: he believed that he had been "saved in order to serve." Salvation of the individual provided the only way to attain the social goal: "a nation peopled by Evangelical Christians leading moral lives of the Puritanical kind." Because it was an integral part of the religion, the Evangelical ethic is wholly Christian, but it gave more emphasis to some values than others. More than any other virtue it preached love. Since selfishness and apathy, the signs of the dominant ego that turned man in upon himself, were the great evils, love in all its forms and activities became the great virtue to Evangelical Anglicans and Methodists alike. Simeon, Wesley, Whitefield, and Wilberforce preached in the manner they urged their converts to live: with warmth, friendliness, and sympathy. 17

The great stress the Evangelicals placed upon duty as obedience to God's will to combat the forces of evil assumed
that the deeper motive was not merely obedience and responsibility but active love of God and man. Evangelization itself demanded zeal, industry, and sincerity: here the leaders set the example for their followers. They taught patience in personal suffering and went further to make mental suffering itself a value that humbled the ego, defeated pride, and turned the self outward. The Evangelical obsession with conscience reflects the same effort toward unselfishness: the aims were to awaken the social conscience to the sufferings of others and to the evils that caused them. One great evil was worldliness. In their war against worldliness, the Evangelicals moved into the enemy camp. Manners became morality.\textsuperscript{18}

From the days of Wesley and Whitefield at Oxford, Evangelical asceticism took the form of a drive on worldliness that used all the resources of sermons, personal counseling, religious pamphlets and didactic literature, and reforming societies. The motives behind this asceticism were personal and social. The Evangelical believed that the temptations of the world were dangerous obstacles in his path toward sanctification. Worldliness was directly opposed to godliness. The social motive sprang from the link between worldliness and extravagance: money spent on pleasure and finery not only distracted the spender from his spiritual goal, but deprived the poor of his charity.
Evangelicals did not condemn money making itself, but they did insist that it be put to unselfish purposes. Thus they agreed that worldliness was a double evil, but definitions of "worldliness" varied widely. In its most repressive form, Evangelicalism condemned all pleasures and play, whether or not they involved spending, from children's games to the theatre, and all luxury, including in that category not only frippery and fine furniture but coffee and tea. Wesley was suspicious of children's games; Ruskin's "toyless childhood" illustrates the code at its most austere. Writing to the Mayor of Bristol in 1764, Wesley explained his reasons for urging him not to permit a new theatre to be built there:

Most of the present stage entertainments sap the foundation of all religion, ... they naturally tend to efface all traces of piety and seriousness out of the minds of men. ... they are peculiarly hurtful to a trading city, giving a wrong turn to youth especially, gay, trifling, and directly opposite to the spirit of industry and close application to business; and drinking and debauchery of every kind are constant attendants on these entertainments, with indolence, effeminacy, and idleness....

This passage well illustrates the Evangelical moral code: piety, seriousness, and industry opposed to (and corrupted by) levity, triviality, and idleness. Strong Evangelicals such as the Wesleyans forbade all superfluity in food, furniture, and dress; jewelry and all other forms of ornament poisoned the soul by encouraging personal vanity, one of the most insidious temptations of the "old self." Wesley
delivered several sermons on the subject of dress alone: the aim was absolute simplicity. But Anglicans could be equally severe. Pusey advised one of his young women confessants on the subject:

The idea of dress seems almost to be a monomania with you. Which dress does our Lord commend, that of John the Baptist or the gay clothing of kings' houses? How was Dives clothed? What is all dress but the fig-leaves, and so a token of penitence and God's pardon of sinners?22

The hard line of asceticism set forth in the Arminian Magazine was modified somewhat by the Christian Observer for its middle and upper-class readers. It criticized George Burder, a Congregational minister, for being too narrow when he limited lawful amusements to "walking, riding, books on history, biography, and natural philosophy, and music in moderation."23 Even so, its articles on conduct and the letters it chose to print from its readers condemn the theatre, novels, and dancing.

The Evangelicals returned the Bible to the prominence it had occupied in the lives of their Puritan predecessors. The hard line attacked all other literature not directly forwarding the Evangelical cause; it exempted printed sermons, religious tracts, self-improvement pamphlets, spiritual autobiography, devotional works and hymns. Among the Evangelicals, the works of Puritan writers such as Milton, Bunyan, Perkins, and Baxter gained a second life, and Pascal's
Pensees and Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ* were widely read. Such devotional works as William Law's *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* (1729), Henry Venn's *Complete Duty of Man* (1763), William Romaine's *Life of Faith* (1763), James Harvey's *Meditations among the Tombstones* (1747), and Thomas Scott's *Force of Truth*, which were read well into the nineteenth century, supplied the demand for studies of conversion and for models to follow in leading the godly life. (The spiritual autobiography, which I study in the next chapter, appealed for the same reasons.) Among the few poets approved by most Evangelicals were Edward Young (Night Thoughts), William Cowper ("The Progress of Error" and The Task), and John Keble (The Christian Year). Isaac Watts's poetry was revived, and Charles Wesley's hymns widely published. Hannah More's many works remained popular for years after her death in 1833, chiefly her Memoirs and Correspondence (1834) and her Evangelical fiction, *Stories for the Middle Ranks of Society, and Tales for the Common People* (1818). These writers, together with the autobiographical works of Evangelical leaders such as Wesley, Doddridge, Newton, and Wilberforce, and lesser known workers in the field, made up the hard core of Evangelical reading for those who wanted to venture beyond the Bible. Some of course did not.
Although Evangelicals differed in their judgments of harmful reading, we can find a central agreement on "the most pernicious sources of corruption." The last is Hannah More's description of novels in her *Strictures on Female Education*.\(^{25}\) When John Newton congratulated her on this treatise, he made one objection: "I hoped your just censure of novels would have extended to the proscription of the whole race without mercy and without exception."\(^{26}\) The *Christian Observer* kept alive the Evangelical suspicion of fiction well into the Victorian age. That now forgotten but still informative journal had the honor of printing George Eliot's first published work, a short poem, and the less commendable distinction of condemning her first novel in the only unfavorable notice it received, a bigotted review of *Adam Bede*.\(^{27}\) Reviewing novels, rather than merely condemning them, was not the *Observer's* usual practice, and the article on "Mr. Eliot's" novel was preceded by an apology to the reader for what might appear to be an unjustified waste of space on trivia. Such views, which remind us of Jeremy Collier's attack on Restoration drama and the Puritan campaign to close the theatres, come back to the larger campaign against worldliness and perhaps reflect a revival of the earlier Puritan suspicion of the imagination as a source of corruption. The great Augustans were not exempt; even Addison
was found guilty by extremists of using ridicule in portraying Sir Roger de Coverly. The Eclectic Review and the Arminian Magazine (later the Methodist Magazine), stronger in their condemnations than the Observer, wrote off Shakespeare, Defoe, Richardson, and Sheridan as dangerous writers and prepared for the expurgators.  

The Evangelical condemnation of fiction, though one side of its campaign against worldliness, reflects also the obsession with time that runs through its literature. The Evangelical Magazine's fear that too much reading "will... preclude punctual attention to the duties of our representative stations..." is simply the negative side of Wesley's teaching of the preciousness of time. (In a pamphlet for his followers on this subject, Wesley suggested that five hours sleep was sufficient.) Here again the continuity with Puritanism is apparent: In Holy Living (1650) Jeremy Taylor had urged the value of time and the dangers of idleness. Richard Baxter had preached to his congregations that time-wasting was a sin against the godly and useful life. In his journal, Wilberforce described the guilt he felt over wasting time, a source of painful anxiety over his spiritual state. In both Puritanism and Evangelicalism the emphasis is on activity, energy, and usefulness; idleness becomes the surest sign of spiritual apathy. It is clear that Carlyle's injunction to "work while it is day" was nothing new in 1829
to the fathers of the Victorians. Wesley preached: "It is the Will of God that every man should labour to eat his own bread." In their revival of the Puritan ethic of work and vocation, the Evangelicals believed that industriousness contributed to happiness and signified moral character.

Hartley says that this belief derived from the early Methodists' observations of the effects of unemployment on the workers: idleness breeds profligacy and irreverence. Wesley certainly saw unemployment as more than a cause of poverty. A passage from his sermon "On the Use of Money" sums up the Evangelical attitude toward time and work:

Use all possible diligence in your calling.
Lose no time. . . 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.' Do it as soon as possible: no delay! no putting off from day to day, or from hour to hour! Never leave anything till tomorrow which you can do today. And do it as well as possible... Let nothing in your business be left undone if it can be done by labour or by patience.

The almost incredible energy and discipline of Wesley's own life is the best illustration of this urgent call to work, which would pass through Carlyle into the Victorian moral code. Wesley's solutions for the problem of poverty were both practical and moral: provide full employment and more education; practice thrift and diligence. These solutions still have some relevance to us, since they approach the problem from the top and the bottom. William Cowper brought the theme of work into several of his poems, notably The Task.
In Book I he tells those "that press your beds of down and
sleep not" to watch a thresher:

... see him sweating o'er his bread
Before he eats it. -- 'Tis the primal curse,
But soften'd into mercy; made the pledge
Of cheerful days, and nights without a groan.
(Ll. 363-366)

Later in Book I, he sets forth the theme through his harsh
picture of gypsy life, which is meant to typify indolence
and sloth:

Strange! that a creature rational, and cast
In human mould, should brutalize by choice
His nature; and, though capable of arts
By which the world might profit, and himself,
Self-banish'd from society, prefer
Such squalid sloth to honourable toil! (Ll. 574-579.)

Neither Wesley nor Cowper sentimentalized the poor by
suggesting that poverty necessarily bred compensatory virtues.
Cowper's lines in "Hope" speak for both poet and preacher:

The poor, inur'd to drudg'ry and distress, (Ll. 7-8)
Act without aim, think little, and feel less.

Wesley, of course, made the poverty stricken lower-classes
his main interest; but his journal and his sermons show that
his attitude toward them was never condescending. Cowper
might claim that poverty had its advantages in that the poor
did not have to face the temptations of the rich, a doubtful
consolation to hungry weavers. Wesley saw it in a different
light. The humble life of the converted might be the surest
sign of their unconcern for worldliness. Most of his converts
came from the working class, and he did not hesitate to urge
that they share the little they had with others still less fortunate. Evangelical philanthropy began with the poor giving to the poor.\textsuperscript{36}

The Evangelical preoccupation with the motive behind every human action was especially important in philanthropy. What were the motives of the giver? Philanthropy was more than a social duty: it was a Christian virtue motivated by sympathy, a feeling of loving pity. Wesley stressed the person to person encounter, lifting charity above the plane of traditional benevolence, while, of course, denying that such good works contributed anything to the giver's salvation. There should be no spiritual arithmetic here. But acts of charity raised the questions: what are the causes of poverty? why do the poor remain poor? In \textit{Giving Alms No Charity} (1704), Defoe had voiced one view, doubtless widely held: the poor remain so because they are idle.\textsuperscript{37} Fifty years later, Wesley described his visits to garrets and cellars, where he found the poor

half-starved both with cold and hunger, added to weakness and pain. But I found not one of them unemployed who was able to crawl about the room. So wickedly, devilishly false is that common objection, 'They are poor only because they are idle.'\textsuperscript{38}

These observations lie behind his teaching that one should give, or, if that was impossible, refuse to give "only with loving words and looks." The Evangelical suspicion of philanthropy not grounded on faith was expressed by Hannah
More when she wondered "whether philanthropy be not the fashion rather as a substitute for Christianity than as an evidence of it." Her insistence that the basis of charity must be a religion which is a "turning of the whole mind to God" is the Evangelical correction of eighteenth century secular benevolence. True charity, then, is the spiritual motive leading to the most practical ends: it is the essence of the best of Evangelicalism.

To achieve their goal of awakening the nation by reviving Christianity as a personal relationship with Christ demanded that the Evangelicals possess in their preachers and lay evangelists men of spiritual fervor, single-minded dedication, and a strong concern for the spiritual welfare of others. Looking back over the religion of his youth, William Gladstone contrasted Evangelical clergymen with their "half-animated" brothers:

... until the close of the reign of George III, the Evangelical clergy were a small, and, it might even be said, a numerically inconsiderable minority of the whole clerical body. ... In activity and moral influence, they counted for a good deal more. The vessels of zeal and fervour, taken man for man, far outweighed the heroes of the ball-room and the hunting field, or the inert, half-animated minds, and perfunctory performers of a minimum of stipulated duty, who supplied so considerable a number of the clerical host.  

The "vessels of zeal and fervour" used chiefly two means of carrying their message to the people: the awakening sermon
and private spiritual counseling. Their view of the sermon had been anticipated by such men as Jeremy Taylor. Taylor had challenged the prevalent view of his time that the pulpit was for oratory: "... the business of the sermon is to preach a holy life, obedience, peace, and love for our neighbours." This view agrees with the Evangelical use of the sermon as a method of moral teaching as well as a means of bringing sinners to repentance. Evangelicals felt that extemporary sermons and prayers were more in accord with authentic Christianity. The manner of delivery was as important as the content, perhaps even more so. To "sit under" an unconverted minister who read his sermon without expression or gesture was intolerable to the Evangelicals. They expected from their preachers warmth, emotion, and the sense of a personal encounter with the spiritual guide. They wanted the "challenge of the speaker's eye, the pointing finger, the voice directed to the personal conscience." They found this drama in the techniques used by Whitefield, Wesley, Newton, and Doddridge to impress the minds and hearts of worshippers. Preaching in churches or in the open fields, the Evangelicals followed Wesley in his method of "turning from one to another" among the crowds, so that every man might feel that the words were directed personally to him. The actions of Cowper and Mrs. Unwin in moving to Olney so
that they might "sit under" John Newton was not unusual at
that time.

But Newton was more than an inspired preacher to
Cowper (as well as to Hannah More and William Wilberforce).
He served also as private spiritual counselor. The importance
of the office of spiritual counselor, whether minister or
layman, in the Evangelical Movement has yet to be studied
fully. Yet the close relationship between spiritual master
and disciple may have been as influential in winning souls
and permanently shaping lives as the public sermon. Such a
relationship is of great importance in this approach to
George Eliot's fiction.

In their practice of spiritual counsel and their
attempt to define the right relationship between the physician
of the soul and the troubled Christian, the seventeenth-
century Anglican and Puritan divines again anticipated the
and William Perkins are representative of the men during the
earlier period who wrote works on spiritual counsel designed
to guide the physician in his work and to teach and comfort
the distressed. Such works were popular reading among the
Evangelicals well into the nineteenth century. We find a
wide agreement in their views that transcends theological and
political differences. For example, the Royalist Allestree
and the Puritan Perkins both emphasized confession to priest or pastor as being of great value to the confessant. In The Whole Duty of Man (1658), an influential work devoted to spiritual counsel and moral casuistry, Allestree recommended confession for its healing value to the spiritually troubled and ignorant and warned against the dangers of excessive self-confidence in the state of one's soul. Confession was valuable because it induced humility. Allestree urged the spiritually ignorant (the unrepentant) to "advise with a spiritual guide" to learn of their own sins and to receive moral advice for overcoming them. William Perkins, best known for The Whole Treatise of Cases of Conscience (1611), based his advice on spiritual counsel on his own experience with the inmates of Elizabethan prisons. He spoke with authority and sympathy when he described how the spiritual counselor had to put up with "the distempered and disordered affections and actions" of the people needing his comfort and direction. In one passage, Perkins described how the counselor must identify himself with the sufferer, participate in his griefs, and thus base his counsel on understanding of the sufferer's needs. Like Allestree and Perkins, Jeremy Taylor declared that confession, though not required by Scripture, was for those "heavy-laden with their sins" a "necessary charity." In Unum necessarium or Doctrine of
Repentance (1655), he said that the value to the confessant lay in the victory over his shame through the acknowledgment of his guilt to a spiritual guide.\(^{48}\) Taylor warned the counselor that if he "lessens the shame" he may also diminish the confessant's hatred of his sin. In *Holy Dying* (1651), Taylor emphasized the value of confession as a necessary step toward repentance by giving a number of arguments that might move the sinner to confess and that might awaken his "stupid conscience."\(^{49}\) He said that the private counterpart of confession was self-examination — "that we may go to God, and to a spiritual guide, and search for remedies, and apply them." Richard Baxter's *Gildas Salvianus, the Reformed Pastor* (1656) influenced the view of the minister's vocation held by such later Evangelical preachers as Wesley, Doddridge, and Spurgeon.\(^{50}\) Baxter too stressed that a pastor ministering to individuals should hold private conferences with doubters and urge them to confession. Like Taylor, he maintained that those bearing the greatest burden of guilt should receive special counsel that would lead to confession, repentance, and conversion.

The eighteenth-century Nonconformists Isaac Watts and Philip Doddridge continued the tradition of spiritual counsel. Watts's *An Humble Attempt toward the Revival of Practical* (1731), a work permitting us to call him a precursor of Wesley,
suggested how ministers could "convince, direct, and comfort others" in private counsel and added that "Parlour preaching" might be more effective than regular sermons. Watts was especially concerned with the manner of the counselor. He told his readers, prospective physicians of the soul, that "even your anger [should] have something divine and holy in it," and that they should inquire into the state of the confessant's soul without showing a "prying curiosity." His real concern here is something any counselor had to learn: how to establish a relationship of sympathetic openness -- communion -- without sacrificing his position as spiritual superior. Doddridge, like Perkins and Wesley, formulated his views of personal ministry after working among prisoners and, later, among his congregation in Northampton. He spelled out to his elders their responsibilities to others in spiritual distress and attempted to stir in them his own Evangelical motive: to bring the sinful to confession and humiliation.

In his most influential work, the Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul (1748), as well as in his personal correspondence, he stressed the value of self-examination, especially the judgment of the inner feelings. One chapter, consisting of a long letter to a young friend seeking counsel, outlined the daily regimen of a strong Evangelical: prayer, reflection, Bible reading, and self-examination.
Wesley urged such a regimen on his followers and also set up the rules for the first Methodist bands who met regularly for mutual confession and discipline. The need for confession and counsel was one of the strongest motives bringing together those who "needed to pour out their hearts" to one another.\textsuperscript{55} (In \textit{Adam Bede}, Dinah Morris tells Irwine of such meetings among her Methodist sect.) The purpose of such meetings among the converted was to quicken the progress toward sanctification. The result was a "new experience of Christian fellowship" and the sense of bearing one another's burdens. Wesley himself found time to serve as spiritual counselor to hundreds. He too urged confession. His letters are mainly apostolic: instructions and counsel in response to those who had written him for spiritual help. About one convert guilty of backsliding he wrote: ". . . incite him not to cast away hope. Nothing but despair can totally destroy him."\textsuperscript{56}

Three leading Anglicans -- Charles Simeon, Edward Bouverie Pusey, and John Keble -- wrote letters and published works of spiritual guidance and comfort. Simeon, an Evangelical, described in his \textit{Memoirs} (1848) many episodes in his life when he served as spiritual counselor to other ministers and to laymen.\textsuperscript{57} The tone of his letters is invariably friendly, warm, and personal. Pusey, who became one of the
leaders of the Oxford Movement, published his Entire
Absolution of the Penitent in 1846. He argued for the
restoration of the confessional in the Church of England on
the basis of the need of "ghostly advice and counsel. . . ."
His letters of spiritual guidance, collected in 1878, are
sometimes gently admonishing, sometimes authoritative and
stern, depending upon the attitude and needs of his
correspondent. But the letters could not be more open or
frank or more concerned for the person's recovery. Though he
had long since left the Evangelicals for the Oxford Party,
his themes are the same:

One grain of love is better than a hundred-
weight of intellect.

Your letter awakens in me the apprehension that
you may really be indifferent to the state in
which you are: which would be the way to become
really indifferent to the loss of God and to lose
your soul. . . . Self is your Idol, and everything
may minister to self. . . . You have no conception
of the extent of your vanity.

Actively endeavour to throw your mind into other
things, so as to find illustrations out of yourself.

. . . very frequent Confession implies very great
earnestness to exterminate some fault.

. . . acts of love increase love; love, without
acts, dies out.

A strong strain of asceticism runs through Pusey's letters;
many of them urge self-denial and self-sacrifice: "The poor,
as a matter of course, are our superiors. We cannot reach
their self-denial when they give a penny."

I have already mentioned Keble's Christian Year (1827) as being one of the most popular poetic works among Evangelicals. But Keble belongs in this tradition of Puritan and Evangelical spiritual counselors. In his Letters of Spiritual Counsel and Guidance (1881), he supports the values of confession, and in one letter recommends that his correspondent find a "discreet and charitable director" whom he can visit personally. The tone of Keble's letters reveals a wide tolerance of human faults: they have the warmth and openness that the Evangelicals asked for in their sermons.

The tradition of spiritual counsel outlined in these few pages answers affirmatively Wesley's question: "Can any that fear God and love their neighbor, hear this without concern? . . . Is there no man that careth for these souls?"
The aim of this tradition, like the aim of the Evangelical Movement, was to heal and to save. The realization of this aim depended, in Newman's words, upon the "force of personal influence."
Chapter I, Part 2

George Eliot's Early Evangelicalism
George Eliot's intellectual biography has been described as a paradigm of the central trend of her age. "Starting from evangelical Christianity, the curve passes through doubt to a reinterpreted Christ and a religion of humanity: beginning with God, it ends in Duty."¹ Basil Willey's concise description is accurate but incomplete. As a more recent student of George Eliot's development points out, Willey omits the first stage.² Her religious life began, not with her Calvinistic Evangelicalism, but with the quiet, traditional ceremonies of the unawakened Anglican Church attended by her family.³ In the village church at Chilvers Coton in Warwickshire, she heard as a child the unimpassioned sermons of such a clergyman as she portrayed with tolerant affection in "Mr. Gilfil's Love Story":

Mr. Gilfil's sermons...were not of highly doctrinal, still less of a polemical cast. They perhaps did not search the conscience very powerfully...amounting to little more than an expansion of the concise thesis that those who do wrong will find it the worse for them, and those who do well will find it the better for them...⁴

During these early years, "she felt awe enough from the mere quietness and solemnity of the church service without understanding it."⁵ And she inherited from her father, Robert Evans, an habitual reverence for human goodness and achievement that grew during her later Evangelical years and indeed throughout her life.⁶ George Eliot's belief that the growth
of the natural affections depends on the child's sense that his life is "well rooted in some spot of a native land" also derives from this earliest period of her life.\(^7\) Gwendolen Harleth in *Daniel Deronda* had a childhood which lacked the "blessed persistence in which affection can take root. . . ."\(^8\)

When George Eliot was nine, she encountered Evangelical Anglicanism in the person of Maria Lewis, a mild Calvinist, who was her teacher until she was thirteen.\(^9\) As teacher and later as counselor and confidante, Maria Lewis was for thirteen years one of the most influential people in her life. A change of schools when she was thirteen did not diminish the Evangelical ardor first roused by Miss Lewis. The Miss Franklins, the new teachers, were the daughters of a Baptist minister who had been an awakening preacher in Coventry before his retirement.\(^10\) (He is assumed to be the model for Rufus Lyon in *Felix Holt.*) The Miss Franklins, strong Calvinists, reinforced Miss Lewis's influence. We have no details about Georgë Eliot's conversion experience other than that it occurred when she was fifteen and that it was the result of the combined influences of these first spiritual masters. The best comment on this period of her life is her own statement, written more than fifteen years after her unconversion:

I was then strongly under the influence of Evangelical belief, and earnestly endeavouring
to shape this anomalous English-Christian life of ours into some consistency with the spirit and simple verbal tenor of the New Testament. 11

From 1836 to 1842, after she had left the school conducted by the Miss Franklins, George Eliot served as housekeeper to her father and brother in Griff and later to her father alone at Foleshill, near Coventry. During these years, her "Evangelical period," her religious views isolated her from her father and brother, and apparently from everyone living near her. After the move to Foleshill in 1841, she wrote to her uncle, Samuel Evans: "We are not greatly favoured in our Minister -- though we hear the truth, yet it is not recommended by the mode of its delivery." 12 The Reverend John Howells, in short, was no Evangelical minister who could stir her heart with the emotional sermons approved by the Evangelicals or serve as spiritual counselor to the fervent young woman often troubled by her fears of backsliding. Her earlier situation at Griff was apparently no better: in 1839, she described it as a "dry and thirsty land." 13 Evangelicalism, whether Anglican or Methodist, emphasized the importance of communion among its adherents, a need surely strengthened by the convert's own desire to share his experiences with an understanding soul. Thus she wrote to Maria Lewis in 1841:

... I have of late felt a depression that has disordered the vision of my mind's eye,
and made me alive to what is certainly a fact, though my imagination when I am in health is an adept at concealing it, that I am alone in the world. I do not mean to be so sinful as to say that I have not friends most undeservedly kind and tender and disposed to form a far too favorable estimate of me, but I mean that I have no one who enters into my pleasures or my griefs, no one with whom I can pour out my soul, no one with the same yearnings the same temptations the same delights as myself.

The isolation described here appears in The Mill on the Floss and Middlemarch in Maggie Tulliver's sense of loneliness amid her family after her religious conversion and in Dorothea Brooke's unshared religious experiences before and during her marriage to Casaubon. But the theme of spiritual isolation appears in the varied experiences of other characters as well: in the loneliness of Janet Dempster before she meets Edward Tryan ("Janet's Repentance"), in the social isolation of Silas Marner, in the lonely studies of Casaubon and Lydgate (Middlemarch), and in the unshared religious enthusiasm of Mordecai (Daniel Deronda).

Because George Eliot was seldom able to see any of the four people who shared her Evangelical views -- Maria Lewis, her former teacher; Martha Jackson, her friend at the Franklin's school; and her Methodist aunt and uncle, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Evans -- she confided in them in her letters as she was apparently never able to do with the closer members of her family. These early letters may be, as Haight says,
"lacking in charm," but they have the value of a private journal in helping us understand the "state of her soul" during this period. Although the Evangelical habit of self-examination and confession appears in nearly all the letters, George Eliot's relationships with her four correspondents were naturally not the same. To her elderly aunt and uncle, especially to Mrs. Evans, she looked for guidance and counsel in her religious longings: "I shall not only suffer, but be delighted to receive the word of exhortation, and I beg you not to withhold it." Although none of their letters to her survive, we can tell from her replies that a recurring question they asked was about her "spiritual state," a question of concern to Calvinist and Arminian alike:

I cannot give you a hopeful account of my spiritual state, for of late I have been much exposed to temptation from contact with worldly persons, and that traitor within, the love of human praise, has opened the door to too many compliances with what is likely to make me less hungry for heavenly blessings, by enabling me to derive a temporary enjoyment from what is merely earthly.

In a later letter to her uncle she writes that she "would rather examine □ her □ own state of feeling than complain of the lack of outward helps." In the letters to Martha Jackson, a girl of her own age, George Eliot herself assumes the role of spiritual counselor though now and again she makes her friend her confessor, as when she complains of her
"spiritual drowsiness" and of her "variableness of mind and affection," a chronic cause of self-blame in Evangelical autobiographies. In one letter to Miss Jackson, she confesses that she is experiencing "much emotion of a kind not favourable to the progress of the soul, either in earthly or heavenly acquirements."20

But most of the early letters were written to Maria Lewis, her most intimate friend during this period, with whom she developed the habit of "saying all the truth." The relationship with Maria Lewis began as one between devoted teacher and exceptional student, but Miss Lewis soon became spiritual counselor to the girl she was most responsible for converting into an ardent Evangelical. As such she served as confessor and adviser through her letters though their meetings were infrequent. The deepest bond between them was their shared religious experience, though in the first years of their correspondence there was an intellectual rapport as well. But the letters of 1841 and 1842, the last years of their active friendship (which ended when George Eliot renounced her Christianity in 1842) indicate a gradual change in their relationship. During these years we see George Eliot assuming the role of counselor and comforter to her older friend, who was in poor health and financial difficulties and living with uncongenial friends while she looked for a teaching position.
compatible with her religious views. We can sense the
intellectual distance widening between them as the once
precocious pupil prepares herself unknowingly through her
private studies for her later vocation as the most intellectual
novelist of her day.

Before that happened, Maria Lewis was the friend to
whom the solitary young Evangelical could "unburthen every
thought and difficulty": In 1839, she asked Miss Lewis to
"reprove and advise" her and to remember that her letters
are those of a "silly girl of nineteen..."21 But the
self-awareness shown in this passage from her next letter
hardly deserves that qualification:

The self-deceptive practice of substituting
confession for amendment is not peculiar to
the disciples of the Pope -- I am continu-
ually detecting myself in its commission,
and even now, I am doing something very like
it when I tell you that my writing to you
just now is an act of unmixed selfishness,
undertaken as a delassment after a day of
disagreeable bustle in preparing for a party
met to celebrate Isaac's twenty-third birth-
day. There is a species of frankness and
candor very inconsiderately lauded, which
often has its source in either a proud
indifference to censure, a deadness to moral
distinctions, or still more frequently an
ostentatious affectation of humility. This
for myself. No one ought to wince more
under the application of that probe than my-
self.22

Although a few months earlier she wrote her aunt that she did
"not attach much value to a disclosure of religious feelings"
she continued to analyze and judge her religious feelings in her letters to Maria Lewis. After mentioning the domestic troubles on her "little horizon," she blames herself for trying to avoid responsibilities that would be a valuable discipline:

If I were truly spiritually minded I should rather delight in an occasion of proving to myself the genuineness of my religious experience and of exercising a cheerful submission to the will of my Saviour, instead of acting as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, murmuring at the slightest opposition to my taste, the slightest mortification of my fleshly mind. I want to feel what St. Paul so strikingly expresses: 'The love of Christ constraineth us because we thus judge, that if one died for all then were all dead, and that He died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them and rose again.' Here is the all-powerful lever or rather the magnet that can alone lift our souls heavenward or quicken our steps in the paths of righteousness; it is for want of this, of a continual 'looking to Jesus' as my 'wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption' that makes my character and conduct so chequered, and my mind a stranger to the continuous enjoyment of that peace that no man can take from its possessors.

The shift in the third sentence to the first person plural with its tone of exhortation suggests that the disciple is already assuming the counselor's role in this relationship. A further indication comes later in the same letter when she wishes she "were one of those well instructed scribes that can bring from their treasure things old and new, and offer to others
the same comfort wherewith they themselves have been comforted of God." Earlier she had professed to have "little title to take on me the office of a comforter, because all her "draughts" were from "shallow waters." But increasingly, as Miss Lewis's despondency grows, the letters show that she has assumed that office as she attempts to comfort and advise her older friend. (Not often enough she gives us glimpses of that wise humor so important in the novels.) This passage from a letter written in July, 1841 is typical:

My own natural aversion to the machinery of society... gives me a full comprehension and lively conception of all the little mortifications and disgusts that you have had and will have to endure in this trying stage of your education. Yes my Veronica your education, that cheering word refreshes I am sure your willingness to undergo all that the 'Only Wise' sees to be a furtherance of your 'growing up to Him in all things, who is the Head' -- glorious portion! To feel the roots of faith strengthened by every blast, daily giving nourishment to the fair and joy-giving fruits of Love, Hope, and Patience. That this is your experience is my 'consolation in all my prayers for you.'

... Truly the night of sorrow brings to the ear 'the sound of many fountains musical by day unheard,' and in blessed freedom from troubles of my own I find those of my loved ones a sweet monitor to keep up my contemplation of that part of the Divine character expressed in the appellative 'the Comforter.'

However glib and stilted may appear to us these words intended to buoy up Miss Lewis in her humiliating situation (and we should remember that the role of spiritual counselor
is still a new one to the young George Eliot), such passages anticipate the view of the mature novelist. Her "teaching" that renewed faith and moral strength results from endured suffering -- a lesson she urges so easily here from her own inexperience -- is the basis of her later view of moral growth. This idea, an assumption of the Evangelical theory of conversion and sanctification, appears in one of the earliest letters.\textsuperscript{26} She refers to it often in these early letters when she is counseling others or when she is speaking of her own unhappiness, but it threads the later letters as well, especially those written during her unhappiest period when she was nursing her dying father and had not yet discovered that second faith, her Religion of Humanity, to replace her lost Christianity.\textsuperscript{27} The "night of sorrow" she offers as a consoling thought to Maria Lewis is dramatized in the later fiction in Janet Dempster's barefoot walk through the dark streets of Milby, in Hetty Sorrel's "Journey in Despair," in Maggie Tulliver's "Valley of Humiliation," and in Gwendolen Harleth's "salvation by fire." Despair may be the most common experience suffered by George Eliot's heroines, but it is always portrayed as part of a larger religious experience of spiritual progress toward conversion or salvation. By the time she portrayed these experiences, of course, she had passed through her own worst suffering and
come to understand it. We cannot doubt her when she later wrote to one of her readers that her books were written out of her own worst suffering.²⁸

Although the experience of conversion as a pattern of spiritual progress is the subject of the next chapter, we can note here how the Evangelical view of life as a spiritual pilgrimage appears throughout the early letters when she is reporting to her counselors her "spiritual state" and her hope of sanctification.

'Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel' seems to be my character, instead of that regular progress from strength to strength that marks even in this world of mistakes the people that shall in the heavenly Zion stand before God.²⁹

In a letter to Martha Jackson, she hints of difficulties with her family and adds that her emotions are "not favourable to the progress of the soul, either in earthly or heavenly acquirements."³⁰ Already we see her emphasis on inner feeling and disposition as the signs of spiritual progress: "All the obstacles to our possessing more grace lie in ourselves."³¹ To Samuel Evans she writes in Bunyanesque language that she is "very often stumbling," but that she has been "encouraged to believe that the mode of action most acceptable to God, is not to sit still desponding, but to rise and pursue my way."³² Wesley taught his followers that spiritual progress after conversion should seek nothing less than moral perfection;
George Eliot's mild Calvinism stressed a "growth in grace" (sanctification) as the surest sign of the convert's election. From the later letters and the novels it is apparent that George Eliot continued to view life as a spiritual pilgrimage though she might substitute the scientific term process for Bunyan's word. But in the novels there are many more allusions to Bunyan and Dante, those great portayers of the "rise and progress of the soul," than to Darwin, Huxley, and Spencer.

Besides the careful attempt to control the emotions by enduring with "patience and cheerfulness daily crossings," Evangelicalism taught that spiritual progress can be achieved by the imitation of worthy models — spiritual superiors in life and literature. This motive probably is one reason that the spiritual autobiography was one of the most popular forms of Evangelical literature. In 1841, George Eliot wrote to Martha Jackson:

I have been reading the little memoir of Mrs. Rowton, a person not probably unknown to you, and am shame-stricken in having brought to my remembrance my own opportunities of benefitting others by conversation, writing, and the powerful eloquence of tacit obedience to the Divine precepts, and contrasting my use of them with that she made of every similar occasion... I trust we shall ever have before our mind's eye... an habitual contemplation of Moral Perfection, and a dissatisfaction with all that falls short of that standard... Let us never hear of or behold what is virtuous or holy without being
stirred to new energy in its imitation. . . . 23

Among other leaders of Anglican Evangelicalism, she found the lives of Hannah More and William Wilberforce worthy of imitation, as she wrote Miss Lewis in 1838:

I have highly enjoyed Hannah More's letters; the contemplation of so blessed a character as hers is very salutary. 'That ye be not slothful but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises,' is a valuable admonition. 34

A few months later when she was reading Wilberforce's Life, she expressed her longing to "be made as useful in my lowly and obscure station as he was in the exalted one assigned to him." 35 It is unimportant that she later reversed her opinion of Hannah More's character as she did of Edward Young's poetry. It is, I think, important that she retained as a permanent belief, indeed a central one in her Religion of Humanity, this Evangelical teaching of spiritual growth through imitation. Many years later she counsels Mrs. Ponsonby, one of her readers who sought advice during a period of religious doubt, that she might overcome her misanthropy by encouraging the natural "yearning to imitate. . . ." 36 people who had passed through similar suffering and gone on to lead valuable lives. But the advice to Mrs. Ponsonby was applied to herself in a letter to Samuel Evans in 1840 when she described her Methodist aunt as "one whom I ought to yearn to imitate, in spirit at least, if not in the particular
practices by which that spirit discovers itself. . . ."37

The importance of Reverence toward human moral excellence, which becomes a surrogate for traditional Christian worship in the Religion of Humanity, was not discovered by George Eliot when she translated Feuerbach's Essence of Christianity (1854). Feuerbach certainly may have helped her (if only through confirmation) to widen her early narrow view that the highest spiritual life is possible only within Evangelical Protestantism (preferably Anglican Calvinism). Soon after she translated Feuerbach she wrote for the Westminster Review two scathing attacks on such Evangelical pretensions to a monopoly on human virtue. We can trace in the letters the growth of her own widening sensibility to all spiritual superiority that depends on no particular dogma or doctrine just as we can note in the novels her progressive assertion that spiritual excellence is to be recognized and revered wherever it be found. The idealized "spiritual masters" in her fiction begin with an Anglican clergyman and a Methodist preacher and end with an agnostic workingman and an enthusiastic Jew. In her article on the popular Evangelical preacher Dr. Cumming, she saves her strongest ammunition for her attack on his assertion of her own earlier assumption that the unbeliever cannot lead a virtuous life:
In his treatment of infidels, we imagine he is guided by a mental process which may be expressed in the following syllogism: Whatever tends to the glory of God is true; it is for the glory of God that infidels should be as bad as possible; therefore, whatever tends to show that infidels are as bad as possible is true. All infidels, he tells us, 'have been men of gross and licentious lives.' Is there not some well-known unbeliever, David Hume, for example, of whom even Dr. Cumming's readers may have heard as an exception? No matter. Some one suspected that he was not an exception, and as that suspicion tends to the glory of God, it is one for a Christian to entertain.  

How important George Eliot's former agreement with Dr. Cumming was is clear from a letter to Miss Lewis in 1840, in which she expresses her disapproval of propagandistic literature:

... it appears to me that there is unfairness in arbitrarily selecting a train of circumstances, and a set of characters as a development of a class of opinions. In this way we might make atheism appear wonderfully calculated to promote social happiness. I remember... a very amiable atheist depicted by Bulwer in Devereux, and for some time after the perusal of that book, which I read 7 or 8 years ago, I was considerably shaken by the impression that religion was not a requisite to moral excellence.  

It may be that some orthodox readers of Felix Holt were similarly shaken by her agnostic hero's moral excellence (as well as by his description of Calvinism as that "awful creed") in the same way that many were critical of her sympathetic portrayal of Mordecai the Jew in Daniel Deronda.
Her greatest disappointment as an author appears to have been caused by the rejection of Mordecai by Christian readers.40

An individual's response to moral excellence in another is an index of his own moral nature, and, as I shall attempt to show in a later chapter, is one way that George Eliot would have us judge the characters in her novels, not merely by their actions but by their perceptions. Here I would merely point out that what we might call the "morality of perception" is another Evangelical belief that George Eliot never abandoned but merely found confirmed in Feuerbach. In Daniel Deronda, she heads a chapter with this statement by Alexander Knox, quoted from Southey's Life of Wesley:

It will hardly be denied that even in this frail and corrupted world, we sometimes meet persons who, in their very mien and aspect, as well as in the whole habit of life, manifest such a signature of and stamp of virtue, as to make our judgment of them a matter of intuition rather than a result of continued examination.41

This statement describing Wesley is meant to apply to Mordecai and to Deronda's response to him, but it applies also to the characters I have previously called the "spiritual masters" in her novels. In the novels she shows that such intuitive perception depends upon the moral capacity of the observer as well as on the visible "stamp of virtue." The discovery of human evil, the theme of so many
stories and novels of initiation, is important in her novels, especially in *Romola* and *Daniel Deronda*, but it is fair to say that the discovery of goodness is an experience she dramatizes more frequently.

But the aspiration to imitate the moral superiority recognized in another doubtless led many an ardent Evangelical young woman besides George Eliot to wish for a wider sphere than her "lowly and obscure station" provided. One problem facing the heroines of *Middlemarch* and *Romola* is finding enough to do to satisfy their strong social consciences and their Evangelical zeal. In portraying their frustrations, George Eliot wrote from her own earlier experience, for it is clear from her letters that her studies and housekeeping duties did not satisfy her "restless, ambitious spirit." We read of her founding a clothing club for the unemployed workers in her neighborhood in 1840 and visiting the inmates of such a "college" for the poor as she describes in her first story, "The Sad Fortunes of the Rev. Amos Barton," but her dreams of a wider life of usefulness and personal fulfillment -- the goal of all sincere Evangelicals -- led her into a "torpid state" that she explains to Mrs. Evans:

> You have much too high an opinion, my dear Aunt, of my spiritual condition and of my personal and circumstantial advantages. My soul seems for weeks together completely benumbed, and when I am aroused... the intervals of activity are comparatively
short. I am ever finding excuses for this in the deprivation of outward excitement and the small scope I have for the application of my principles. . . .42

She writes to Martha Jackson that she has been reflecting on "the duty of perfect contentment with such things as we have, whether gifts of nature or of fortune," but she finds it a "difficult exercise. . . to the natural man."43 Although she writes to her friends with the fervor of her own Dorothea Brooke about her longing for "glorious activity" and "strenuous exertion," Griff and Coventry, like Dorothea's Tipton Parish, offer no opportunities for a modern St. Theresa. During these years her great energy is mainly turned inward as she pursues her solitary studies at home and continues her habitual self-analysis and conscience searching. One consolation for what she calls her uselessness ("mere encumberer of the ground") is her belief that "it is a solemn duty to cultivate every faculty of our nature so far as primary obligations allow."44 This belief, not shared by less gifted Evangelicals, she never abandoned. Thus she justifies to herself her studies of German, Italian, European history, and astronomy, perhaps with the thought that she is preparing herself for some as yet undefined vocation. The same hunger for knowledge that is part of the frustrated aspirations of some of her heroines -- Maggie
Tulliver and Dorothea Brooke -- draws its strength from her Evangelical zeal since the chief value of learning (as she assures Miss Lewis) is "to enlarge and enlighten the bounds of conscience." Yet that hunger for knowledge drew her to the books which would lead her to question her faith and, when she was twenty-two, reject it.

On the subject of reading, George Eliot's conscience was much less tender than that of most Evangelicals. Miss Lewis and the Miss Franklins had encouraged her to use her inquiring mind, but she was an eager reader from her early childhood. She was reading Scott and Bulwer-Lytton when she was eight or nine, and she never stopped reading novels, though she soon learned which novels were worth reading. At twenty, she is instructing Miss Lewis on the merits of the modern classics and the comparative worthlessness of most current fiction. She is harshest in her strictures on "religious novels" (i.e., propagandistic ones arguing the superiority of the various Protestant sects): "Religious novels are more hateful to me than worldly ones." Romance (excepting Byron's and Southey's poetical romances) can be dangerous; so may be popular "domestic fiction." Here she follows the Evangelical line: such works are time-wasters and they are unreal. They can lead to reveries that exalt the ego and flatter personal vanity. (Pusey wrote to one
of his confessants: "Take care about day-dreaming. It is such special vanity, and so unreal: picturing yourself as being what you would never be, and robbing God in imagination."\textsuperscript{48}

When she writes to Miss Lewis of the "mental diseases" that can be produced by indiscriminate reading of romantic fiction, she means the temptation to live in an illusory world where the self is chief actor. This Evangelical attitude bears fruit in her portrayals of the daydream worlds of many of her adolescent characters: Hetty Sorrel, Maggie Tulliver, Fred and Rosamond Vincy.

She wants fiction that "comes within the orbit of probability" and shows "transactions of real specimens of human nature."\textsuperscript{44} This view is the germ of her later theory of realism set forth in \textit{Adam Bede} and in her book reviews. The works that an educated person must know include \textit{Don Quixote}, \textit{Hudibras}, \textit{Robinson Crusoe}, \textit{Gil Blas}, Shakespeare, Milton, Bunyan, Johnson, and Wordsworth. Her mind was steeped in the Bible during this period; allusions and references run through every letter. Besides the Bible, much of her favorite reading at this time would have been approved by Hannah More and the \textit{Christian Observer}. William Cowper and Edward Young were her favorite poets, along with Isaac Watts and John Keble. Only Young she later rejected. Pascal she continued to read all her life. Bunyan's works became part
of the permanent furniture of her mind. Standard Evangelical writers like Hannah More, Wilberforce, Finney, Doddridge, Craig, Leighton, Gresley, and Milner -- memoirs of Evangelicals, spiritual autobiographies, devotional works -- are mentioned often in her letters to Miss Lewis and Martha Jackson. Thus she read many of the books strict Evangelicals approved and a good many more they did not. While she was reading such works as the biography of Sir Richard Hill, a leader of Anglican Evangelicals, she was studying astronomy, geology, and early Christian history, and thus unknowingly preparing herself for her response to Charles Christian Hennell's *Inquiry concerning the Origin of Christianity*: her rejection of orthodoxy. 50

But if George Eliot's early reading does not reflect the narrower views of the Evangelical hard line, she accepted its moral code in the main. She draws the line clearly between the values of worldliness and spirituality and puts the usual emphasis on the virtue of self-denial and the vice of self-indulgence. At this time she spurns anything that smacks of gaiety -- mere "projects for earthly bliss" -- in "a scene calling for diligence and watchfulness, not for repose and amusement." A passage from one letter that some of her biographers wish she had never written most clearly shows her personal strictness:
I do not deny that there may be many who can partake with a high degree of zest of all the lawful enjoyments the world can offer and yet live in near communion with their God; who can warmly love the creature, and yet be careful that the Creator maintains his supremacy in their hearts; but I confess that in my short experience and narrow sphere of action I have never been able to attain this; I find, as Dr. Johnson said respecting his wine, total abstinence much easier than moderation.51

But rather than merely regret George Eliot's youthful self-repression, we should ask what she retained of the Evangelical ethic in her later life and how this ethic appears in her novels. It is clear that she began to change her definition of worldliness after she abandoned her Calvinism. But the old division remains in her distinction between enthusiasm and apathy, religion and irreligion, and especially seriousness and triviality. Her Evangelicalism gave her the "high moral seriousness" of her attitude toward life and art as well as her permanent belief that triviality leads to vanity and vanity to deeper evil. One of her heroines, Esther Lyon in Felix Holt, is saved, not from sin, but from triviality and vanity, through a religious conversion that leads to a discovery of her unknown capacity for devotion and self-sacrifice. In the novels, triviality is not only a sign of selfishness but of aimlessness and spiritual apathy. This, of course, was the usual Evangelical view. In George Eliot's studies of aristocratic life in
Felix Holt and Daniel Deronda, luxury and ease may hide purposeless and empty lives dedicated to nothing but stultifying comfort and meaningless pleasure. Wide carpeted halls smelling of rose leaves (a daydream image of Esther Lyon) may lead only to a draped window. The theme of the modern wasteland did not enter modern literature with J. Alfred Prufrock. Many of George Eliot's images and symbols derive from the asceticism of her Evangelicalism. Its values of simplicity and naturalness in dress and behavior underlie the portrayals of her unadorned heroines and her unaffected heroes.

In her early view, self-denial was good because it turned the self away from the world toward God. But in her later period, after she had rejected the idea of a God removed from man, self-denial is a virtue because it turns the self outward from its center toward others. A preoccupation in the novels is the problem of turning egoism into sympathy. Thus the motive of self-denial is not the desire of purification and salvation but the recognition of the needs of others. Critics have regretted that Maggie Tulliver in The Mill on the Floss imposes on herself a strict ascetic life; in so doing they assume that George Eliot is simply portraying her own earlier self-repression. But such a view that Maggie's self-denial is wrong or
adolescent disagrees with George Eliot's own judgment, for it fails to take into account Maggie's deeper motive. Maggie denies her own longings so rigorously not merely because she finds moderation difficult but because she is aware that these longings alienate her from her family by making her dissatisfied and at the same time deprive her father of her comfort. George Eliot regrets that Maggie's situation calls for this denial of her desire for music and knowledge, but she approves her sacrifice because it is unselfish. The earlier view of self-denial as a good for its own sake, mere self-discipline, appears in *Middlemarch* when Dorothea decides to give up riding because she enjoys it. Her decision is handled comically, but George Eliot makes clear that it is at bottom an egoistic renunciation motivated by the unconscious desire to appear morally superior. Renunciation is a recurring theme in all the novels, but is only one way that George Eliot explores the various manifestations of unselfishness that lead to moral growth.

The Evangelical teaching that egoism is the source of human evil is the background for George Eliot's profound studies of self-absorption in its many forms: from the childish vanity of Hetty in *Adam Bede* to the spiritual pride of Bulstrode in *Middlemarch*. The self-analysis that preceded her youthful confessions of pride and selfish ambition prepared
her to portray the inward lives of those characters who struggle with shame and guilt and accept or reject confession. The Evangelical concern with conscience and the conception of the moral life as a ceaseless struggle with temptation may be George Eliot's most obvious debt to her early religion. Her early concern with "besetments" was her own confirmation of the experiences described in Evangelical literature. What James Holly Hanford has called the "temptation motif" in Milton is an important theme in all George Eliot's fiction. Sometimes she dramatizes the theme through the use of a character in the role of tempter; more often she reveals the origin of temptation and analyzes the fluctuation of thought and feeling that follows. The Evangelical conception of the two wills, the combat of the flesh and spirit, appears unchanged in the novels; or it appears in the conflict between the "better self" and the "worse self" during the conversion experience. In 1849, she set forth her conception of the "two selves" in a letter to Mrs. Houghton:

I have been holding a court of conscience, and I cannot enjoy my Sunday's music without restoring harmony, without entering a protest against that superficial soul of mine which is perpetually contradicting and belying the true inner soul... When shall I attain to the true spirit of love which Paul has taught for all the ages?5

But during these years at Griff and Coventry, George Eliot's conscience was being enlarged and enlightened by her
direct observation of poverty and misery. As she wrote later in a *Westminster Review* article: "Evangelical opinions... give an especial interest in the weak things of the earth..."53

She found in her own neighborhood confirmation of Carlyle's and Disraeli's indictments of the "tow nations." To Miss Lewis in 1841 she writes: "The prevalence of misery and want in this boasted nation of prosperity and glory is appalling..."54

Two years earlier she reported that the "distress of the lower classes in our neighborhood is daily increasing from the scarcity of employment for weavers, and I seem sadly to have handcuffed myself by unnecessary expenditure..."55

These observations, which she will remember when she describes the scenes of poverty in "Amos Barton," "Janet's Repentance," and *Felix Holt*, indicate the growth of her social conscience during these years. Carlyle's early writings contributed to this growth by opening her eyes to wider scences of misery than Griff and Coventry afforded. She paraphrases for Miss Lewis a passage from *Chartism* (1839) describing the working class world of Glasgow: "Carlyle says that to the artisans of Glasgow the world is not one of blue skies and a green carpet, but a world of copperas-fumes, low cellars, hard wages, 'striking,' and gin..."56 (A passage similar to this occurs in *Felix Holt'*s description of Glasgow misery when he recounts to Rufus Lyon the setting of his conversion.)
In 1842, she urges Martha Jackson to read *Sartor Resartus* and describes its author as having the "purest philanthropy," though she must at this time add that "he is not 'orthodox.'"\(^{57}\)

The permanent influence of the "oracular man" during this period when she is developing her view of the "wider life" comes out in the tribute she paid him in an article in *The Leader* (1855).\(^{58}\) As Thomas Pinney suggests, her statements about the influence of Carlyle upon the "superior and active" minds of the time is also a personal acknowledgment of indebtedness.\(^{59}\) She mentions those "to whom the reading of *Sartor Resartus* was an epoch in the history of their minds."

George Eliot usually means by "epoch" a moral awakening or discovery; thus she says that such a writer as Carlyle "clears away the film from The eyes. . . ."\(^{60}\) The influence of Carlyle doubtless made more meaningful to her the social ethics of her own Evangelicalism. In one of her first letters of counsel to Miss Lewis appears her earliest statement of her conception of the "wider life" as the best antidote for egotism:

> . . . I know no better way of counteracting such troubles as I fear are yours than just that of looking out of ourselves to the approaching changes that are coming over the scene of things throughout the world.\(^{60}\)

This advice, which occurs in a context of Calvinistic assurances to a "true offspring of God," who theoretically
would not need it, is joined in later letters to the sense of social responsibility so important in Evangelicalism and in George Eliot's novels. The idea suggested by the phrase "looking out of ourselves" becomes the basis of her later treatment of religious conversion in the novels and the central precept dramatized in the lives of her spiritual masters and, in turn, taught by them. The entire passage quoted above might be spoken by Daniel Deronda to Gwendolen Harleth, as master to disciple. In his recent study of Ruskin, John D. Rosenberg says that as Ruskin's "religious convictions dissolved in doubt, his sense of responsibility for his fellowman ceased to be narrowly Evangelical and became more movingly human." This passage has a limited relevance to George Eliot's moral growth, for we can trace through her collected letters her ever-widening sympathy, tolerance, and sense of responsibility toward others. Unlike Ruskin's development, the growth of her social conscience begins with her conversion to Evangelicalism, not with her rejection of dogmatic Calvinism.

The problem for the Evangelical, and especially for the Calvinist, was to reconcile the two demands his religion made on him: the demand that he work zealously among others for their spiritual welfare and the demand that he protect the purity of his own soul from worldly contamination as he
strove toward sanctification. The purpose of soul-searching in this scheme was, as Noel Annan says, to make sure that he returned "with clean hands" from his work among worldlings. But habitual introspection might make one's religious interests preponderantly selfish especially if the fears inspired by doubt regarding one's election were strong. Excessive introspection leading to a withdrawal from the world might also be encouraged by the lack of vocation permitting the convert to evangelize. Nehemiah Curnock suggests that the charity work in prisons organized by John Wesley and his friends during their student days at Oxford saved Wesley (and perhaps George Whitefield) from religious selfishness. Still another reason leading to a religious isolation or narrowness completely opposed to the Evangelical ideal is the contempt for the unconverted that Rosenberg says Ruskin overcame when he lost his faith: the division of mankind into the lost and the saved, the heathen and the Christian, the last word designating one's own sect.

That George Eliot was susceptible to a religious selfishness that conflicted with the influence of Carlyle, the careers of the Evangelical saints she admired, and, indeed, the life of her own aunt "working unselfishly for the good of others" is clear from her early letters. This selfishness was encouraged by the excessive introspection
I have described and that introspection became excessive for the reasons I have suggested: her religious fears and her lack of opportunity for "application of [Her] principles," and her loneliness during this entire period. It is also clear that she had her share of bigotry even though she could write to Miss Lewis that a certain book would help overcome bigotry "if you have any bigots near you." Her tolerance at this time was doubtless wider than that of many: it was not limited to fellow Anglican Evangelicals but extended to all awakened Protestants. As a result she knew Baptists, Congregationalists, and Methodists, as well as High and Low Anglicans. But she is as upset that a Jew should sing a Christian oratorio as she is by the activities of the "disciples of the Pope." The Calvinistic divisions of humanity run through the letters: "the Christian" vs. the "worldling" and the "true offspring of God" vs. the "heathen" (who would include apathetic Anglicans). Still, as we have seen, her social conscience was awakening. The conflict between the "closed" and the "open" life or between a life "turned inward" and one "turned outward" appears in her fiction from "Janet's Repentance" onward: usually she presents it through contrasted characters such as Casaubon and Dorothea but sometimes, as in Gwendolen, the two tendencies conflict within a single mind. In her later years,
after she had discovered her vocation as a novelist and found contentment and personal love with George Lewes, she could look back and judge the "mixed influence" for good of her early dogmatic faith. Her judgment comes back to the idea of a widening life that reaches out to others and encourages generosity, humility, and above all imaginative sympathy, and its opposite, a life closed off from others and encouraging selfishness, arrogance, and hardness. In the novels, both possibilities are illustrated in Evangelical characters, for example, in Tryan and Bulstrode.

Granting the fundamental importance of temperament, character, and circumstance in determining which tendency Evangelical influences would encourage in an individual, we need to consider here George Eliot's explanation of this "mixed influence" as she gives it in her letters and articles. (Later I shall try to show how such an explanation appears in *Felix Holt* and *Middlemarch*.) Like most Evangelicals who remained in the Established Church, George Eliot remained a Calvinist until she rejected dogmatic Christianity. The most important difference between Wesleyans and Anglican Evangelicals was theological: Wesleyans subscribed to the Arminianism their leader preached; Anglicans returned to Geneva for their belief in pre-destination and its deduction that men are arbitrarily divided into the elect and the reprobate. When
she was twenty-two, George Eliot shed her Calvinism with undisguised relief, but she never forgot the fear it had aroused in her. Almost thirty years later she explained in a letter to Sara Hennell the "true ground" of the Calvinist's fear as "the doubt whether the signs of God's choice are present in the soul."64 Such doubt led to the soul-searching for "signs of grace," which she later condemned as one source of moral selfishness because it established a habit of self-preoccupation. In 1855 she wrote to Cara Bray: ". . . it is not healthy to dwell on one's own feelings and conduct, but only to try and live more faithfully and lovingly every fresh day."65 But to "live more faithfully and lovingly" here implies "for others": in the highest life duty and love are inseparable as George Eliot shows in her most unselfish characters such as Dinah Morris and Daniel Deronda. Such unselfishness is incompatible with the fears aroused by the "awful creed," as Felix Holt describes it. In 1842, just a few months after she had left Calvinism for a state of "crude free-thinking" she described to Francis Watts her "inexpressible relief" at being freed from the fears inspired by the "awful anticipations entailed by a reception of all the dogmas in the New Testament. . . ."66 These fears of eternity aroused by doubt of one's election "operate unfavorably on moral beauty by disturbing that spontaneity, that choice of
the good for its own sake, that answers my ideal." During the same period. Mary Sibree wrote to her brother John:

Last week mother and I spent an evening with Miss Evans. She seemed more settled in her views than ever, and rests her objections to Christianity on this ground, that Calvinism is Christianity, and this granted, that it is a religion based on pure selfishness.67

George Eliot later described her views toward Christianity at this time as representing the "attitude of antagonism which belongs to the renunciation of any belief. . . ."68 and this attitude may account for her bad logic. After she had passed through a "state of discord and rebellion" she could write to Francois D'Albert-Durade in 1859 just after the publication of Adam Bede:

Ten years of experience have wrought great changes in my inward self: I have no longer any antagonism towards any faith in which human sorrow and human longing for purity have expressed themselves; on the contrary, I have a sympathy with it that predominates over all argumentative tendencies.69

Although this wide sympathy representing an emotional agreement that transcends intellectual differences remained her permanent attitude toward Christianity as a whole, she continued to condemn Calvinism itself as a possible source of moral selfishness. In 1849, she described the low moral tone of a Calvinistic sermon she had heard in Geneva:

". . . the text 'What shall I do to be saved' -- the answer
of Jesus being blinked as usual. The "answer of Jesus," as she asserted to Sara Hennell in 1859, lay not in the doctrine of election that gave a selfish consolation to the believer but in the "spirit of love" and wide tolerance held by her Methodist aunt. The long passage that follows from the letter to Sara Hennell reveals George Eliot's permanent view, based on her own experience, of the intolerance likely to be aroused by Calvinistic assumptions:

... she retained the character of thought that belongs to the genuine old Wesleyan. I had never talked with a Wesleyan before, and we used to have little debates about predestination, for I was then a strong Calvinist. Here her superiority came out, and I remember now, with loving admiration, one thing which at the time I disapproved: it was not strictly a consequence of her Arminian belief, and at first sight might seem opposed to it, yet it came from the spirit of love which clings to the bad logic of Arminianism. When my uncle came to fetch her, after she had been with us a fortnight or three weeks, he was speaking of a deceased minister, once greatly respected, who from the action of trouble upon him had taken to small tippling, though otherwise not culpable. 'But I hope the good man's in heaven for all that,' said my uncle. 'Oh yes,' said my aunt, with a deep inward groan of joyful conviction. 'Mr. A's in heaven -- that's sure.' This was at the time an offence to my stern, ascetic hard views -- how beautiful it is to me now!

As preached by Wesley, Arminianism taught that God's redeeming grace was available to all men who would accept it.

Wesley stated that salvation did not depend upon the accept-
ance of any doctrinal beliefs: "but a desire to save their souls. . . . The Methodists alone do not insist on your holding this or that opinion, but they think and let think." 73

In the above passage George Eliot praises the "bad logic" of Arminianism for the same reason she condemns the strict logic of Calvinism: She bases her judgments on the feelings and attitudes toward others aroused (or suppressed) by the religious doctrine. She expresses the same idea in Adam Bede when she describes the Methodism of Dinah Morris and Seth Bede: "it is possible to have very erroneous theories and very sublime feelings. . . ." 74 Finally rejecting all religious doctrines herself, she continued to judge them according to their tendency to turn egoism into sympathy. Sympathy implies to George Eliot affection for others based on understanding. That side of Evangelicalism which turned the self to others by awakening sympathy retained her lasting reverence. In "Janet's Repentance" occurs a passage describing the effect of Evangelicalism on a previously unawakened town. George Eliot is careful to note that it was a mixed effect. Some of Edward Tryan's followers "gained a religious vocabulary rather than a religious experience"; in others, "selfishness, turning its eyes upward, called itself religion." Nevertheless, "the movement was good."
...Evangelicalism had brought into palpable existence and operation in Milby society 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. No man can begin to mould himself on a faith or an idea without rising to a higher order of experience: a principle of subordination, of self-mastery has been introduced into his nature; he is no longer a mere bundle of impressions, desires, and impulses. ...The first condition of human goodness is something to love; the second, something to reverence. And this latter precious gift was brought to Milby by Mr. Tryan and Evangelicalism. 75

This is George Eliot's permanent judgment of the religion of her youth: the force of Edward Tryan's personal influence opened to his followers a wider life.
Chapter II

The Pattern of Conversion

in the Spiritual Autobiography:

Masters and Disciples
In 1856, just a year before *Scenes of Clerical Life* began to appear in monthly installments in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, George Eliot published an important article, "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists," in the *Westminster Review*. The article is important, not only because it contains George Eliot's first extensive statement on her theory of fiction, but because it indicates (though she herself did not know it at the time) the subjects of her first three books, *Scenes*, *Adam Bede*, and *The Mill on the Floss*, and suggests important themes that appear in the last five novels as well. In this article she criticizes contemporary "Evangelical novels," presumably inferior imitations of the type written earlier by Anna Sewell, because they "gratuitously" portray fashionable manners among the aristocracy and ignore the people among whom Wesley and Whitefield made most of their converts during the Evangelical Revival.

The real drama of Evangelicalism -- and it has abundance of fine drama for any one who has genius enough to discern and reproduce it -- lies among the middle and lower classes; and are not Evangelical opinions understood to give an especial interest in the weak things of the earth, rather than the mighty?²

After asking why an English novelist cannot portray the religious life of the lower and middle classes in the same way that Harriet Beecher Stowe depicted the religious life of American Negroes, George Eliot ridicules the pseudo-con-
versions in such novels as *The Old Grey Church*, which she
cites as a typical "Evangelical travesty of the fashionable
novel." She points out the superficial changes in the
behavior of the characters, which are supposed to indicate
a moral transformation, but do not more than suggest the
adoption of piety as a snobbish fad:

... a worldly woman recently 'converted',... is as
fond of a fine dinner-table as before, but she invokes
clergymen instead of beaux; she thinks as much of her
dress as before, but she adopts a more sober choice of
colours and patterns; her conversation is as trivial
as before, but triviality is flavoured with gospel
instead of gossip. ³

The "real drama" of the evangelical religious life
that George Eliot finds missing from this pious branch of
the Silver Fork School did not lie in the emotions of the
great crowds stirred by the sermons of Wesley and Whitefield
in the fields and villages. To George Eliot the "fine drama"
lay in the spiritual and moral changes produced by religious
conversion; it was an inward drama that could be traced in
somewhat the same way that Bradley indicated the main move-
ments in Shakespearian tragedy. The crisis or turning point
of the Evangelical drama was conversion, as in Puritan
religious experience it had been regeneration. In both
Puritanism and Evangelicalism regeneration or conversion was
the critical spiritual experience when the individual became
aware of a profound change in himself that signified a new
relationship with God and with other men. Cromwell's "new men" and Wesley's "twice-born souls" insisted that conversion was the central experience of their spiritual lives. Conversion was an inward drama, to George Eliot as to the writers of spiritual autobiographies who have described the experience, because it was preceded by an emotional conflict and was followed by later struggles to live up to the "new self" born of conversion. Taking this view of conversion as a crisis or turning point, one can trace all moral experience preceding conversion as leading up to it and all moral experience following conversion as leading away from it. We find this pattern of the spiritual life set forth in interpretations of Saul's conversion, in Augustine's Confessions, and in the spiritual autobiographies written during the Puritan and Evangelical periods. Such works as these constituted George Eliot's favorite reading during her Evangelical period.

From George Eliot's references to St. Paul in her letters and in Adam Bede, we know that her later agnosticism did not lessen her reverent admiration for his life and character. But her agnosticism led her to accept such a humanistic interpretation of Saul's conversion as Ernst Renan offered in his Les Apotres. Rejecting the idea of an instantaneous miraculous change, Renan interprets the most
important conversion in Christian history as the outcome of a period of deep-seated emotional conflict.

St. Paul tells us that his entire life before his conversion was religious. He lived "in all good conscience before God" until the moment before his conversion. The convulsive change that occurred when he saw the vision and heard the voice of Christ outside Damascus was not a change from a selfish, irreligious life to a life of faith: it was a change from one type of faith to another. The three accounts of his conversion in Acts emphasize the same effects of his conversion. At that moment Saul was aware that he was surrendering himself to a new personal influence that called him to a new way of life far different from his previous life, which had been shaped by the hopes and traditions of Judaism.

And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:

And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.
Saul's surrender to the new influence begins with his kneeling when he sees the light from heaven and culminates in his question, "What wilt thou have me do?" The personal nature of this relationship between the disciple and his new master is seen when Jesus calls Saul by name, refers to his past persecutions of Christians, and prepares him to receive his divine vocation in Damascus. Although the three accounts in Acts do not say that Saul's vision was a face-to-face encounter, when St. Paul later mentions his conversion in his letters to the Corinthians, he twice asserts that he saw Jesus. And in his later references to this great turning point or second birth, he contrasts his old life under the Law, in retrospect a spiritually lost condition, with his new consciousness of peace and freedom. Fundamental to Saul's and every other conversion is a receptivity or an opening out to the new influence. The idea of the soul's opening to God occurs continually in Puritan and Evangelical accounts of conversion, and it appears in George Eliot's descriptions of a character's opening his mind to another's moral influence. But Saul's spiritual surrender, like those described in the spiritual autobiographies, does not suggest a completely passive state. The responsibility of choice is part of Saul's inward drama. The Biblical account, emphasizing the miracle of divine presence, depicts his conversion as telescoping
into a moment the call, the decision, and the change of spiritual rebirth through the death of the old self. But the last act of the spiritual drama is not played out until the end of his life: the active dedication of his new spiritual strength to the vocation of evangelist that he found through his conversion. Saul's conversion experience, then, includes his response to the call; his decision to follow it, which demanded the rejection of his old beliefs and his acceptance of new ones; and the dedication of his new self to his new God. Rudolf Bultmann says more than this: "Saul's conversion was not the product of con-
trition and repentance for a life gone wrong, but it was the surrender, the sacrifice of everything of which he had been proud." 9

But we can interpret the gentle admonishment of Jesus -- "it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks" -- to mean "it is hard for you to resist the promptings of your con-
science to accept me." The statement thus suggests that a conflict had been growing in Saul's mind between his old loyalty to the Judaic Law and a new leaning to the faith he despised and persecuted. If we take this view, one held by some contemporary theologians and psychologists, 10 Saul's conversion appeared to him to be instantaneous, but it had been prepared for by his earlier encounters with the Christians
he had persecuted.

This interpretation was first made by such nineteenth-century Biblical scholars as Renan. In explaining Saul's conversion as a natural psychological experience, Renan emphasizes Saul's physical fatigue and his passionate temperament as two possible causes. But George Eliot would have found more interesting and convincing Renan's attempt to trace the conversion to Saul's personal encounters with the Christians he persecuted and the feelings of remorse and guilt that followed. Although Renan rejects the theory that Saul witnessed the crucifixion, he gives full weight to Saul's participation in the martyrdom of Stephen:

Dans cette atmosphère brûlante de Jérusalem, il arriva à un degré extrême de fanatisme. Il était à la tête du jeune parti pharisien, rigoriste et exalté, qui poussait l'attachment au passé national jusqu'aux derniers excès. Il ne connut pas Jésus et ne fut pas mêlé à la scène sanglante du Golgotha. Mais nous l'avons vu prenant une part active au meurtre d'Étienne, et figurant en première ligne parmi les persécuteurs de l'Église.

After he describes Saul's hatred of the Christians in Jerusalem, Renan attempts to account for his state of mind when he left for Damascus to continue his persecutions there. Saul was deeply disturbed and agitated during this journey, Rénan supposes, and such disturbing emotions are unusual in a man whose religious beliefs are firm:
L'homme passionné va d'une croyance à une autre fort diverse; seulement, il y porte la même fougue. Comme toutes les âmes fortes, Paul était près d'aimer ce qu'il haïssait. Était-il sûr après tout de ne pas contrarier l'oeuvre de Dieu? 

Perhaps Saul recalled the temperate warning of Gamaliel, the respected Pharisee who persuaded the Jews to free Peter and his followers and suggested that they might be doing the work of God. More important, Saul had seen the sincere faith of the simple, devoted Christians, whom he had driven from their homes; he could not have failed to be impressed by their strength in their suffering. No one could have known these early Christians so well as the man who persecuted them.

During the journey, Saul's feelings of guilt became intolerable as he imagined his coming role of persecutor in Damascus. Nearing the city, he imagined that the houses he could see in the distance might be those of his future victims. But, Renan maintains, Saul's remorse overpowered him when he thought once more of his responsibility for the murder of Stephen. In his vision, Saul saw and heard that Jesus whom he had heard his victims describe and pray to, that Jesus who had inspired them with love and patience when Saul had mistreated them. And Saul imagined that Jesus looked at him with the same pity and tender reproach that Saul had seen so often in the faces of his victims.
When this imagined vision ended, Saul, standing blind before his bewildered companions, was a transformed man.  

Renan's interpretation of Saul's conversion thus carefully excludes all references to the supernatural and emphasizes the human influences in Saul's past that worked together to produce a change that was only apparently instantaneous because the conflict that preceded it was unconscious. In Renan's view, Saul's conversion is a drama not just because it was a sudden emotionally overwhelming experience but because it was at once the crisis and the resolution of a long-developing conflict. It is the prototype of the drama of Evangelicalism as Augustine's Confessions is the prototype of the Puritan and Evangelical spiritual autobiography that recorded that drama. 

In the Confessions Augustine recalls those experiences of his past life which led up to his conversion and confesses the weaknesses of will which retarded it. In his perceptive analysis of the literary form of the Confessions, Kenneth Burke says that all the events Augustine describes either prepare for the crisis in the garden in Milan or follow from it. The spiritual struggle immediately before Augustine's conversion, which he describes in Book VIII, represents the outcome of years of searching for faith opposed by intellectual doubt and a growing desire for moral purity.
blocked by sexual indulgence with consequent feelings of shame. William James uses Augustine's conflict before his conversion to exemplify the "divided will" in religious experience;\textsuperscript{17} Augustine describes it as a conflict between a lower and a higher will.

The most important influences that Augustine describes as leading him to conversion are his relationships with people whom he regarded as spiritual masters or teachers. These people acted as sympathetic confessors to whom he could open his heart and speak honestly about his inability to accept Christianity because they had themselves passed through the same struggle. To Augustine the lives of these Christians offered worthy examples to be imitated. Roy Battenhouse emphasizes the influence of Monnica, Augustine's mother, whose serene faith was a perpetual "rebuke and challenge."\textsuperscript{18} But shortly before his conversion Augustine met two saintly men who acted as his spiritual counselors. The first of these, Simplicianus, had evidently been instrumental in the conversion of Ambrose, for Augustine describes him as "the father of Ambrose."\textsuperscript{19} Augustine went to Simplicianus in Milan for counsel and confessed the doubts, deriving from his study of philosophy, that prevented his acceptance of Christianity. After listening patiently, Simplicianus did not argue or plea, but told Augustine about the conversion of Victorinus, who, like Augustine,
had also studied Platonism for years and had become the favorite of the pagan Roman nobility. Although reluctant to give up his studies and his admiring friends, Victorinus finally found the strength to say to Simplicianus: "Let us go to the church; I wish to become a Christian." Simplicianus told this story so that Augustine would see his own difficulty in it. He evidently did, for he says that he "burned to imitate him; and it was for this end that he had related it." Even so, his doubts were unresolved, and his conflict continued. 20

Just before Augustine describes his meeting with his second spiritual master, Pontitianus, the episode which immediately precedes the conversion scene, he analyzes the conflict of his two wills. He depicts the struggle between his old "iron will," represented as a chain which holds him in "hard bondage," and his "new will which had begun to develop in me, freely to worship Thee...O God..."

Thus did my two wills, one old, the other new, one carnal, the other spiritual, contend within me; and by their discord they unstrung my soul. 21

In describing this conflict, Augustine uses the image of sleep to describe his unawakened state as a spiritual stupor:

Thus with the baggage of the world was I sweetly burdened, as when in slumber; and the thoughts wherein I meditated upon Thee were like the efforts of those desiring to awake, who, still overpowered with a heavy drowsiness, are again steeped therein. And as no one desires to sleep always, and in the
sober judgment of all waking is better, yet does a man generally defer to drowsiness, when there is a heavy lethargy in all his limbs. . . .22

He remembers the admonition in Ephesians:

Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.23

This metaphor of a spiritual sleep or stupor from which the soul awakens to a new spiritual life appears often in Puritan and Evangelical accounts of the conversion crisis.

After his analysis of this deepening conflict, Augustine describes in detail his meeting with Pontitianus, a court noble and Christian convert, who, like Simplicianus, wisely did not preach or argue but gave Augustine his first knowledge of Christian monasticism by telling him of St. Antony's life in Egypt and of two young Roman courtiers who renounced their careers and their prospective marriages to accept the "travail of the new life. . . when they read of Antony's dedication." Augustine's response to these stories indicates the beginning of his "turning":

. . . Thou, O Lord, whilst he was speaking, didst turn me towards myself, taking me from behind my back, where I had placed myself while unwilling to face self-scrutiny; and Thou didst set me face to face with myself, that I might behold how foul I was, and how crooked and sordid, bespotted and ulcerous. And I beheld and loathed myself; and whither to fly from myself I discovered not.24

This moment of self-recognition, self-loathing, and despair, which Renan suggests was Saul's experience on the road to
Damascus, became in Puritan and Evangelical experience the prelude to conversion.

Augustine endured this inward suffering while he continued to listen to the calm words of Pontitianus. But afterwards, with his friend Alypius, he hurried to a garden behind his house, where he expressed aloud his longing to submit to God: "How long, how long? To-morrow, and to-morrow? Why not now? Why is there not this hour an end to my uncleanness?" Having said these words, he heard a child's voice chanting from a neighbor's house: "Take up and read; take up and read." Because he could not remember having heard such words in a child's game, he thought they must be God's answer to his question. Then he remembered that Antony had been directed to the Scriptures just before his conversion. Augustine found his Bible, opened it, and his eyes fell on this passage: "Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying: but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts." He read no further, "for instantly, as the sentence ended -- by a light, as it were, of security infused into my heart -- all the gloom of doubt vanished away."²⁵ In retrospect, Augustine saw his conversion as the victory of his nobler will through God's grace. Battenhouse concludes that the turning was final,
but that its implications were realized only gradually during
the rest of Augustine's life.²⁶ His conversion represented
to him both a moral and an intellectual change: a turning
from evil toward goodness and from doubt to belief. In all
his earlier moral and intellectual struggles Augustine
emphasizes the effort of his higher will to subdue the lower
until the critical moment when it triumphed by submitting to
the will of God.

We noted earlier that the conversion experience can
be viewed as the leading up to and away from the crisis. But
in Augustine's account of his experience in the garden, we
can see another pattern within this larger one: the pattern
of the crisis itself. This pattern has three stages or
degrees. The first stage, in Augustine's account, is the
state of despair and anguish brought about by his feelings
of guilt and self-loathing. In this state he felt spiritually
isolated and expressed his sense of helplessness because
his higher will seemed paralyzed. The second stage of the
crisis is the actual turning point when his despair and
self-loathing gave way to his new feelings of submission
and he became aware of the sense of security that had banished
doubt. It was a moment of heightened self-awareness in
which he knew that his higher will had triumphed. In the
third stage of the crisis, he was aware of new feelings of
serenity and joy, which confirmed his awareness of the inward change. This pattern of the crisis thus traces the movement and change of Augustine's feelings during the experience. The pattern appears in many descriptions of conversion in Puritan and Evangelical literature.

Other elements in Augustine's experience appear in later spiritual autobiographies by Protestant converts. Augustine's relationships with Monnica, Simplicianus, and Pontitianus, as a disciple to a spiritual teacher, recall the relationships of Jesus and Paul with their disciples. Such relationships are the most important social relationships described in spiritual autobiographies. For example, Augustine devotes entire chapters to his meetings with Simplicianus and Pontitianus but says little about his father. Bunyan, in *Grace Abounding*, barely mentions his parents but describes in detail his relationship with John Gifford, the Baptist preacher who served as Bunyan's spiritual master before his conversion. The submissive role of the disciple in these relationships perhaps prepared for the greater submission to God that occurred later during the crisis. Despite the spiritual distance the disciple feels to exist between himself and his teacher, however, the relationship is characterized by complete openness. The
disciple not only looks up to the teacher as a model to be imitated but feels that communion is possible because the teacher has endured the same kind of suffering. Knowing that the teacher has lived through the same experience, the disciple can confess and be assured of understanding.

Pontitianus's account of the effect of St. Antony's autobiography on the two Roman noblemen anticipates the role that "awakening books" were to play in the Puritan and Evangelical movements. Roger Sharrock and William York Tindall demonstrate that Bunyan's Grace Abounding belongs to a clearly recognizable genre of seventeenth-century Puritan literature, the spiritual autobiography. The models of these works were apparently chapters nine and twenty-two of the Acts of the Apostles, which describe the conversion and ministry of Paul, and the Confessions. Hundreds of such works depicting the spiritual progress of a Christian life were published during the seventeenth century to awaken the unregenerate by tracing the gradual movement toward sanctification that might occur in ordinary lives. The genre survived the Restoration and gained a second life during the Evangelical Revival in such works as John Wesley's Journal and William Wilberforce's Life.

Although we are not sure that Bunyan read the Confessions before he wrote Grace Abounding, the works are
remarkably similar in tone, organization, and content. In Bunyan's autobiography, we find again that conversion is the central experience that determines both the content and the organization of his episodes. Two-thirds of the book describes his conversion. But Bunyan experienced so many critical moments resembling Augustine's crisis that his spiritual progress appears as a series of episodes which repeats the pattern: despairing isolation — heightened self-awareness — expansive joy. His description of his gradual growth in grace illustrates the Puritan conception of life as a continuous pilgrimage toward God as clearly as does Christian's allegorized journey in Pilgrim's Progress. Bunyan confesses his past sins as openly as Augustine does, and he emphasizes even more his susceptibility to temptation. Like Wesley and Wilberforce, he describes the temptations that followed the brief moments of spiritual triumph symbolized by his joy. He never felt that his conversion was final: each triumph was followed by "backsliding" or defeat of will, which called for renewed moral effort to regain lost ground and to make new progress. Still, slow and painful as it was, his progress was both upward toward God, confirmed by his inner feelings, and outward toward his fellowmen, as shown by his ministerial care of souls. Both Grace Abounding and the
Confessions give some account of the call to evangelize by telling others of their experiences through preaching, writing, and acting as spiritual masters in personal relationships. In studying these and similar works describing the discovery of a religious vocation through conversion, I am prone to agree with Kenneth Burke when he says that "one possesses a vocation in the sense that he has had a personal experience which he must socialize." Burke also says:

The evangelizing tendency that usually accompanies rebirth, the need to tell others what one has seen, is interwoven with the whole problem of socialization, the tendency to justify one's change by obtaining the corroboration of others.²⁹

But I think we see in the experiences of Paul, Augustine, and Bunyan not so much a "tendency to justify one's change" as a sympathy for others who have not yet discovered the way of the convert and a religious sense of duty to point it out to them. Bunyan's statement that the backsliding of his converts caused him almost as much grief as his own sinfulness does not agree with Burke's statement. Nor does the absolute assurance felt by Paul and Augustine that they had discovered the way.

One of the most important and moving episodes in Grace Abounding is Bunyan's chance meeting in Bedford with his first spiritual counselors, a group of "three of four women sitting at a door in the Sun, and talking about the
things of God. . . ." Having paused with the intention of
joining their conversation, for he considered himself at
the time a "brisk talker" on religious matters, Bunyan
found himself only listening:

. . .I heard, but I understood not; for they were
far above out of my reach; for their talk was about
a new birth, the work of God on their hearts, also
how they were convinced of their miserable state by
nature: they talked how God had visited their souls
with his love in the Lord Jesus, and with what words
and promises they had been refreshed, comforted and
supported against the temptations of Satan in partic-
ular, and told to each other by which they had been
afflicted, and how they were borne up under his
assaults: they also discoursed of their own wretch-
edness of heart, of their unbelief, and did contemn,
slight, and abhor their own righteousness, as
filthy, and insufficient to do them any good.30

Though he did not know it, Bunyan heard in this conversation
an account of his own future conversion experiences. His
first reaction was a wondering amazement at the tone of joy
he heard in their voices, "as if they had found a new world,
as if they were people that dwelt alone, and were not to be
reckoned among their Neighbours." He was so stirred by the
contrast between his own religious doubts and the evidence of
sanctification he saw in these women that he could not for-
get them. He returned again and again, and the effect of
these visits was to lead him to his first realization of
his own sinfulness. He was aware of a "bending" in his
mind, which had so "turned, that it lay like a Horseleach at
the vein, still crying out, Give, give. . . ." It was the
beginning of his first spiritual crisis. 31

Through these women, to whom he had confessed his doubts and the fears they bred, Bunyan met John Gifford, the pastor at Bedford Church, whose conversion from a life of profligacy had led him to the ministry. 32 Gifford now assumed the role of Bunyan's spiritual adviser. The first feelings aroused in Bunyan by these talks were the same described by Augustine after his meeting with Pontitianus: first, the "burning" to imitate the lives of such men as Bedford: "they shone, they walked alike a people that carried the broad shield of Heaven about them." 33 Then, contrasting his own unregenerate nature, he sank deeper into the self-loathing which he thought would end in a permanent state of despair. But the movement was upward. He later heard a sermon, apparently Gifford's, which "kindled" his heart with its message of the love of Christ for man. The words "Thou art my Love, thou art my Love" raced in his mind as he walked home, and he describes his feelings as growing "stronger and warmer" until he was aware of a "joyful sound" within his soul. 34 But the joyful feeling passed after a month when the old blasphemous thoughts and doubts returned. The insinuating questions of the "Tempter" dragged him down again into his "valley of humiliation." Then the struggle began anew with another gradual movement upward to
assurance and the expansive feelings of joy. Thus Bunyan's spiritual progress, like Christian's, followed a pattern of recurring conversion crises even after he had accepted the call to preach. Bunyan says that temptations to speak blasphemy assailed him even when he was preaching; he dramatizes the conflict between his two wills in dialogues with the "Tempter." Though his victories became increasingly frequent, he regarded none of them as final. 35

The same evangelical zeal that Bunyan says prompted him to write **Grace Abounding** moved John Wesley to publish at irregular intervals portions of his journal with the hope that it would bring new converts into the Methodist movement. Though George Eliot was never a Methodist, as some contemporary readers of **Adam Bede** believed, she had an inside knowledge of Wesley's life and the religious experiences he inspired in his followers. From her letters we know that she learned about Methodism from her aunt, Mrs. Samuel Evans, who had been at one time a Methodist preacher. And she may have read the **Journal** during her Evangelical days or have looked through it when she was thinking about the Methodist background of **Adam Bede** -- two passages in the novel suggest that she did. Or she may have encountered the **Journal** in Southey's **Life of Wesley** (1820), which contains many long quotations from it.
If she read the Journal, she doubtless found it the kind of book that was her favorite reading until she turned to Biblical criticism. Wesley's Journal has proved as fascinating to readers as Augustine's Confessions. As spiritual autobiography, however, it lacks the dramatic movement toward a crisis of the Confessions and the emotional range of Grace Abounding. Wesley was aware of the digressions and the barely relevant details (including the superb account of his experiences in Georgia) which impede the reader's attempt to follow his spiritual progress, for he wrote a lengthy summary of his religious life from his childhood to his conversion and added it as a separate section to the first volume. The over-all picture that emerges from this account is that of an almost torturously slow movement toward an assurance that he had the "saving faith" that became the fundamental doctrine of his mature theology. From May 24, 1738, the date of his famous conversion, he traces his religious awakening back thirteen years and in retrospect points out the main events during that period that led finally to the "heart strangely warmed." Here again we have the pattern of the spiritual autobiography. The fifty-three years of Evangelical dedication after his conversion represent his continuous pursuit after Christian perfection.
Preceding Wesley's conversion in 1738 were noteworthy preparations for it, just as afterwards there were backslidings, the return of old doubts and the sense of his moral failures. He recalls an event in 1725 as the beginning of his spiritual awakening: the discovery through a friend of Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ*.

The providence of God directing me to Kempis's *Christian Pattern*, I began to see that true religion was seated in the heart, and that God's law extended to all our thoughts as well as words and actions...

I had much sensible comfort in reading him, such as I was an utter stranger to before; and meeting likewise with a religious friend, which I never had till now, I began to alter the whole form of my conversation, and to set in earnest upon a new life.37

The new spiritual life inspired by the ascetic Thomas began with self-examination, prayer, and a conscious striving for holiness in thought and feeling. Two of Wesley's biographers, Maximin Piette and Augustin Leger, argue that Wesley's discovery of Thomas's *Imitation* marks his true conversion.38 They follow Coleridge in their skepticism toward Wesley's account of his experience in 1738 and the significance he attached to it.39

When Wesley was at Oxford, he and his fellow-members of the Holy Club read two other awakening books: William Law's *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* and Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living and Holy Dying*. In Law's book Wesley found a plan for a religious life that was devoted to God in
every daily act, and he began to practice that rigorous asceticism that made him and his disciples in the Holy Club the talk of Oxford. The impression that Law's *Serious Call* made on both Wesleys led them to walk often twenty miles to visit the author. Law became the first spiritual master of both. Charles Wesley described him as "Our John the Baptist." John appears to have been more deeply impressed by Law and his writings than he had been by Thomas à Kempis: "The light flowed in so mightily on my soul, that everything appeared in a new view." At this time the Wesleys and their followers became "fired with the enthusiasm of humanity": now they began to visit prisons, to care for the sick, and to preach to the ignorant. Though their Evangelicalism became even more intense after their conversions, these activities at Oxford represent the birth of the Methodist social conscience. Curnock says that Oxford Methodism saved John Wesley from religious selfishness.  

Although Wesley described William Law as "a kind of oracle to me" in 1725, he did not meet his most influential spiritual master until he returned from America in 1738. Both Wesleys came to submit themselves to Peter Böhler, a German Protestant refugee who visited England briefly before he went to America as a Moravian missionary. To John Wesley, Peter Böhler was the man "whom God had prepared for me."
Unlike Böhler, Wesley was disillusioned by his unhappy experiences in Georgia and troubled by his religious doubts. In his relationship with Böhler there was from the beginning the same openness between master and disciple that marked the relationships of Augustine and Bunyan with their masters. Wesley was impressed by Böhler's serenity and assurance (again we have the desire to imitate), but he was "quite amazed" when Böhler explained to him his conception of religious faith. Böhler told him that true faith in Christ could be known by two signs in the heart of the believer: "dominion over sin and constant peace from a sense of forgiveness." To Wesley it was a "new gospel." And he saw that if "this was so, it was clear that I had not faith." He felt that he had neither of these assurances; he was constantly aware of his own sinfulness, and he lacked the feeling of "constant peace" that would testify to his faith.

His worst conflict began here. For four months he argued with Bohler since to agree with him would have been to confess to himself that he had no faith and no hope for salvation. In May, 1738, he agreed to meet "some living witnesses" who shared Böhler's view. Böhler brought three of his converts, who told Wesley that they were assured they had faith by feelings in their hearts that they had been pardoned by God for all their past sins and freed from all present sins.
Having heard these testimonies, Wesley submitted. He resolved to seek such saving faith himself by renouncing all pretensions to deserving his own salvation and by submitting himself wholly to God.44

The first stage of his conversion crisis began. For days, with the sympathetic Böhler in the background, Wesley struggled with his feelings of "indifference, dullness, and coldness, and unusually frequent relapses into sin."45 Finally, on the morning of May 24, 1738, he opened his testament to 2 Peter 1:4: "There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises even that you should be partakers of the divine nature." Later in the afternoon he opened it and read "For there is mercy with Thee...and with Him there is plenteous redemption." That evening during a prayer meeting in Aldersgate Street, he listened to a man reading Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans. Then occurred the most famous conversion in the history of Methodism:

...while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt that I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.46

At this moment of crisis, he says that his first impulse was to pray fervently for the people who had persecuted him and to forgive them. Then he told his companions of this change
he felt in his heart -- a new feeling of peace and of victory over himself. But he felt no joy.

Having passed through this crisis in his spiritual progress, Wesley continued to be "buffeted with temptations," as he had always been before, but he felt this difference: "But then I was sometimes, if not often, the conquered; now, I was always the conqueror."47 The feelings of inner peace and comfort continued, and gradually he became aware of a growing spiritual strength to resist the old impulses to anger and resentment toward others. Five days after his conversion Wesley met a Mr. Wolf, one of Peter Böhler's first converts in England. Wesley says that he "was much strengthened by the grace of God in him; yet was his state, so far above mine, that I was often tempted to doubt whether we had one faith." But he concluded that though his faith might be weaker, he had "constant peace, not one uneasy thought... not one unholy desire."48 Wesley then went to Germany to converse with the "holy men" among the Moravians, hoping that meeting these men of strong faith who were yet able to "bear with those that are weak" he might be able to go on "from faith to faith" and "strength to strength."49 When he returned to England, he resumed the life dedicated to the "enthusiasm of humanity" which he had begun at Oxford.
Believing at last that he had discovered his true religion, 
he tried to realize in his daily life his ideal as "a teacher 
sent from God." 50

What is important in understanding Wesley's experience 
is not the life he outwardly lived so much as his own judg-
ment of his life. Up to the moment of his conversion he was 
constantly aware of his own sinfulness. A sharp word spoken 
in impatience caused him deep feelings of guilt demanding 
repentance. The sins that "buffeted" him were more often 
thoughts and feelings than outward acts. His life, like the 
lives of Bunyan and many other Puritans, was largely blame-
less in the eyes of the world, but to him it required con-
stant moral effort to overcome his own weaknesses. The 
struggles with conscience of Bunyan and Wesley suggest that 
men whose outward lives are sinless may have the deepest 
awareness of their own sinfulness. Augustine dwells on his 
theft of some pears when he was a boy, just as Bunyan as a 
youth agonized over his failure to resist the pleasure of 
games on the village green. But to understand the Puritan 
conscience that may seem to magnify trivialities into great 
sins we should remember that men such as Wesley, whose sins 
seem smallest, may see more clearly than others the distance 
separating the spotted actuality and their ideal of moral 
perfection.
In 1785, while Wesley was "storming like a giant" among the working classes, William Wilberforce, the man who was to bring the Evangelical movement to the upper class, was facing the spiritual crisis of his conversion. His journal and letters, which describe his spiritual life, are included in the biography published by his sons. Wilberforce, like George Eliot, saw his greatest moral failures in his desire to be praised by others and in his spending his time in social trivialities and daydreaming. He regarded his position as a gentleman of wealth and member of parliament as offering the worst opportunities to indulge his weaknesses: "all religious thoughts go off in London."52

Wilberforce's prolonged conversion began with casual conversations on religion with a friendly clergyman, Dr. Milner, who accompanied him on a European tour. But under Millner's influence (and the influence of Philip Doddridge's awakening book *The Rise and Progress of Religion*), the conversations increased in seriousness and the relationship between the two men became that of religious disciple and master. Milner revived in Wilberforce religious longing he had experienced as a boy, and he became increasingly dissatisfied with his London life and his own moral character:

Often while in the full enjoyment of all that this world could bestow, my conscience told me that in the true sense of the word I was not a Christian. I laughed, I sang, I was apparently gay and happy, but the thought would steal across
me, 'What madness is all this; to continue easy in a state in which a sudden call out of the world would consign me to everlasting misery, and that, when eternal happiness is within my grasp!'  

The drama of his inward conflict was played out before the unsuspecting eyes of his friends in London society. During his morning "self-conversation" he faced "the deep guilt and black ingratitude" of his past life, but in the evening carried out his customary social obligations. During the following months he charted his spiritual progress by a careful analysis of his thoughts and began to follow a plan of ascetic renunciation almost as strict as Wesley's. At the same time he began to suffer those feelings of despair and self-loathing that preceded his movement upwards:

I must awake to my dangerous state, and never be at rest till I have made my peace with God. My heart is so hard, my blindness so great, that I cannot get a due hatred of sin, though I see I am all corrupt, and blinded to the perception of spiritual things.

In his despair, Wilberforce found a second spiritual master—in an elderly clergyman, Mr. Newton, whose religious experience he thought would help him "perceive God's spirit."

After his first meeting with Newton his mind was in "a calm, tranquil state, more humbled, and looking more devoutly to God." Under Newton's guidance, he became aware of a gradual advance, but so unsure was he of his spiritual progress that he took lodgings near Newton so that he might have daily
counsel. By this time he had resigned from his London clubs for his "safety" in his "critical circumstances." After more than a year in this dependent despair, he passed his conversion crisis: "by degrees the promises and offers of the gospel produced in me something of a settled peace of conscience." Years later he described the dedication that followed his experience:

I devoted myself for whatever might be the term of my future life, to the service of my God and Saviour, and with many infirmities and deficiencies, through his help, I continue until this day.\(^55\)

Wilberforce's *Life* was published in 1838. In that year George Eliot, then almost nineteen, wrote to Maria Lewis:

I have just begun the *Life* of Wilberforce and I am expecting a rich treat from it. There is a similarity, if I may compare myself with such a man, between his temptations or rather besetments and my own that makes his experience very interesting to me. O that I might be made as useful in my lowly and obscure station as he was in the exalted one assigned to him. I feel myself to be a mere cumberer of the ground. May the Lord give me such an insight into what is truly good and such realizing views of an approaching eternity, that I may not rest contented with making Christianity a mere addendum to my pursuits, or with tacking it as a fringe to my garments. May I seek to be sanctified wholly. My nineteenth birthday will soon be here (the 22d) an awakening signal.\(^56\)

Although her Evangelical fervor has embarrassed some of George Eliot's critics for the same reason that some of her heroines' spiritual longings do, the passage is important because it shows the close resemblance between the moral feelings and aspirations of Augustine, Bunyan, Wesley, and Wilberforce,
and those of George Eliot. There is the same preoccupation with temptations "or rather besetments," which might be no more than a wasted hour or a wandering mind during church. There is the same self-dissatisfaction of a "mere cumberer of the ground." And there is the same desire to imitate a person felt to be a spiritual superior, who has passed through the same moral conflicts to find assurance and peace. The Evangelical temperament revealed in George Eliot's letters, as in the spiritual autobiographies we have noted, yearns to find a usefulness in this life reconcilable with the ardent longing for sanctification. Although nineteen years separated the writing of this letter and the publication of Scenes of Clerical Life, a period during which George Eliot's religious beliefs passed from Christianity to pantheism to humanism, her moral temperament and her religious longings did not change. Though she came to reject rigid moral codes and religious dogma, her later letters reveal the same Evangelical aspirations. The discovery of her vocation as a novelist, which came so long after the loss of her first faith, provided her with a different hope for their attainment.

Two years after George Eliot had read the Life of Wilberforce, she wrote to Maria Lewis about "a powerful book" by another great Evangelist, Charles Grandison Finney, who carried the Evangelical Movement to the American frontier.
Finney's *Lectures on Revivals of Religion* is an outline of Evangelical theology and a textbook on conversion written for young preachers who were to become fishers of men.\(^{58}\)

In Finney's outline of the stages of conversion he follows the same pattern of the conversion crisis set forth in the spiritual autobiographies. He describes as the first stage the conviction of sin and the abandonment of hope as the necessary prelude to the crisis or turning point. The crisis is repentance, "a breaking down of heart," which is accompanied by feelings of humility and submission. The final stage is known by a feeling of love for God and for other men.

The love of God will be renewed in their hearts. This will lead them to labor zealously to bring others to him. They will feel grieved that others do not love God, when they love him so much. So their love to men will be renewed.\(^{59}\)

This brief passage summarizing the effects of conversion on the social actions of the convert pinpoints the source of Evangelicalism. The passage describes the post-conversion careers of all the great Evangelists whose conversions we have considered.

Continuing his analysis of the conversion process, Finney names three "agents" that bring about conversion in the heart of the sinner. The Holy Spirit is the Divine Agent that forces the truth of its presence in the heart with
"vividness, strength, and power." But men too may act as agents -- not "mere instruments" -- in the conversion of others. Finney's "moral agent" corresponds to the spiritual master whose role we have noted. To Finney the moral agent need not be the Evangelical preacher; he may be a friend, neighbor, or stranger. Some people, he says, have a visible goodness "molded into the image of Christ," and this goodness is read by others, who are influenced by it.

Men act on their fellow-men, not only by language, but by their looks, their tears, their daily deportment. ... Mankind are accustomed to read the countenances of their neighbors. Sinners often read the state of a Christian's mind in his eyes. 60

Finney's moral agent has an active discernible influence on the lives of others which Finney is more concerned to describe than he is the influence of the Holy Spirit. The third agent in conversion is the sinner himself. Finney insists that conversion cannot occur without the convert's own action. Although the convert is influenced to act by the Holy Spirit and by other men, his conversion depends upon his acceptance of the truth made clear during the experience.

Finney's analysis of conversion is important in understanding George Eliot's treatment of the experience. Finney exalts the self-reliance of man when he explicitly reduces the role of the Holy Spirit to a position of equality with those of the moral agent and the convert. Implicitly Finney's theory almost eliminates the Holy Spirit. If the
Holy Spirit becomes "strictly parenthetical" if not completely superfluous, as Dod charged in his criticism of Finney, conversion becomes a wholly human experience dependent upon the influence of a spiritual master on a receptive disciple. Evangelicalism anticipates humanism in this interpretation of conversion. Such was George Eliot's view when she wrote *Scenes of Clerical Life*. 
Chapter III

The Drama of Evangelicalism

in "Janet's Repentance"
Like most readers of George Eliot today, I came to *Scenes of Clerical Life* years after I had read the novels, having accepted the prevailing opinion that her first book of three stories had slight literary value and that its modest success in 1857 testifies only to the general inferiority of fiction at that time. The high praise given the three stories by Dickens, Thackeray, and Bulwer-Lytton has not been noted, and George Eliot's own permanent respect for her first book has been dismissed as another instance of an author's puzzling inability to evaluate justly her own work.¹ When students have mentioned *Scenes*, they have done so mainly to use its weaknesses to illustrate George Eliot's growth as a novelist. It has been used as a sign saying, "*Adam Bede* Lies Ahead." I submit that if we approach the later works through *Scenes* we can see how the "drama of Evangelicalism" provided George Eliot not only with the material for her first book but also with the most important themes of her six novels.

*Scenes of Clerical Life* is George Eliot's answer to the question she asked in her article on contemporary novels the previous year: why cannot an English novelist portray "the religious life of the lower and middle classes..."?² In a letter to John Blackwood, George Eliot explained the conflict in "Janet's Repentance," the third story in *Scenes*:
The collision in the drama is not at all between 'bigotted churchmanship' and evangelicalism, but between irreligion and religion. . . . I thought I had made it apparent that the conflict lay between immorality and morality -- irreligion and religion. Mr. Tryan will carry the reader's sympathy. It is through him that Janet is brought to repentance.  

In this passage, George Eliot points out the wider social conflict in the story to her conservative editor, who had questioned her unsympathetic portrayal of an Anglican bishop and clergyman, and goes on to state the central character relationship and theme of the story. As the title denotes, "Janet's Repentance" is a study of the religious conversion of Janet Dempster through her relationship with Edward Tryan, an Evangelical preacher, who is persecuted by the faction representing "irreligion" led by her husband. The relationship between Janet and Tryan is George Eliot's first portrayal of the influence of a spiritual master on a disciple. The relationship appears so often in the later novels that I think we can say it is her most important means of dramatizing moral and spiritual growth in her characters.

Janet's moral change follows the pattern of religious conversion noted in the spiritual autobiography. The first part of the story describes her unhappiness as the wife of Robert Dempster, a bigot and drunkard, whose abusive cruelty has driven her to alcoholism. Dempster has posed as the defender of orthodoxy in the town to work up prejudice against the encroachment of Evangelicalism, represented by Tryan and
his followers. Dempster plans to humiliate Tryan publicly by ridiculing his first Sunday evening lecture, the initial step in driving him from the town. Janet gladly joins her husband in his persecutions of Tryan because her compliance offers a way to please him. She has accepted unthinkingly her husband's view of Tryan as a hypocritical, ranting bigot, and she would rather keep this view than disagree. Thus she joins the persecution of a man she has never seen.

Renan points out that Saul learned unwillingly of the personality and teachings of Jesus from the Christians in Jerusalem and perhaps wondered at the patience and strength they found in their faith. An analogous situation appears in *Scenes* and later in *Romola*. Janet Dempster gains unwilling knowledge of the spiritual master she will finally turn to for salvation from conversations with Tryan's followers in Milby. While she is still of the persecuting party, she is forced to admit to herself that some of her old friends who have looked to Tryan for spiritual guidance seem to have found comfort and strength and to have gained a new unselfishness and assurance. During such encounters, "Janet was obliged sometimes to listen to his praises, which she usually met with playful incredulity." Although such testimonies to Tryan's goodness do not shake her desire to condemn Tryan -- her fear of her husband is strong -- she does not forget the
praise she has heard. She suppresses it, as Saul, in Renan's interpretation, suppressed the stories of Christ's virtue that prepared for his later conversion.

What Janet has heard of Tryan from his disciples is confirmed when she meets him for the first time at the home of a girl they are trying separately to help. At first she overhears him in the next room as he speaks to Sally Martin:

'It is very hard to bear, is it not?' he said when she was still again. 'Yet God seems to support you under it wonderfully. Pray for me, Sally, that I may have strength too when the hour of great suffering comes. It is one of my worst weaknesses to shrink from bodily pain, and I think the time is perhaps not far off when I shall have to bear what you are bearing.'

Hearing these words is another step in Janet's movement toward Tryan. She is first surprised that she does not hear the narrow doctrine she expected to hear, the "self-satisfied unction of the teacher, quoting, or exhorting, or expounding. . . .but a simple appeal for help, a confession of weakness."

Janet is deeply moved by Tryan's words because they seem to express her own needs and fears. In this moment she recognizes in him a fellow human sufferer, and the recognition is a "new and vivid impression"; she is unable to resist it though it is opposed to all her previous beliefs. When Tryan leaves Sally's room, he pauses when he sees Janet; they do not speak, but their "eyes met, and they looked at each other gravely for a few moments." George Eliot's comment on this scene is important:
There is a power in the direct glance of a sincere and loving human soul, which will do more to dissipate prejudice and kindle charity than the most elaborate arguments. The fullest exposition of Mr. Tryan's doctrine might not have sufficed to convince Janet that he had not an odious self-complacency in believing himself a peculiar child of God; but one direct pathetic look of his had dissociated him with that conception forever.5

The image of the "direct glance" recalls Finney's description of the moral agent, but in the drama of Janet's conversion it is the visual confirmation of what she felt during Tryan's confession to Sally: the possibility of communion based on the knowledge that someone has suffered in the same way as oneself. We have seen that such knowledge guided Augustine, Bunyan, Wesley, and Wilberforce to their spiritual masters. In the midst of his psychological studies, George Henry Lewes admitted that sympathy is one of the most mysterious human feelings, but George Eliot usually traces its beginnings to this sense of shared or vicarious suffering. In the novels George Eliot continues to use the image of the "direct glance" to suggest how men are influenced by their fellow men when they read, as Finney says, "the state of a Christian's mind in his eyes."6 Through Janet's response to Tryan's words and glance, George Eliot suggests that feeling, rather than opinion or belief, is the strongest basis of human relationships. In 1859 she wrote to Charles Bray:

I have had heart-cutting experience that opinions are a poor cement between human souls; and the only effect I ardently long to produce by my writings, is that those who read them should be
better able to imagine and to feel the pains and the joys of those who differ from themselves in everything but the broad fact of being struggling erring human creatures.7

It happens often in George Eliot's fiction that a character attains the same widening of sympathy that the author intends the reader to achieve. The above sentence exactly describes the effect of Janet's first meeting with Tryan on both characters.

Even at this point in the story we can see that George Eliot's selection and arrangement of her episodes agrees with the larger pattern of the spiritual autobiography, which traced the movement of events toward the conversion crisis and then away from it. Within this pattern in "Janet's Repentance" there are two dramatic movements: the first, the outward action as the heroine moves toward spiritual communion with Tryan; the second, the emotional experience of the heroine, which follows the three stages described in Evangelical accounts of the conversion crisis. The two movements come together in the crisis scene when Janet's confession to Tryan leads to her moral turning. But the gradual movement of the outward action emphasizes the slow and painful progress of Janet's inner change from her "old self" to her "new self." Janet's conversion is permanent but not instantaneous. In this early story it is apparent that George Eliot was interested
from the start of her career in tracing the gradual changes in ordinary lives by dramatizing subjective experience, but she learned here that she needed the "larger canvas of the novel" to portray the wider social significance of those changes.

The crisis of Janet's conversion begins in a melodramatic scene when the drunken Dempster thrusts Janet outside the house in the middle of the night and bars the door behind her. Feeling that the closed door signifies the end of her old life with him, she has no wish to return. Her worse sufferings begin at this moment when she stands alone in the cold and darkness. George Eliot's scene of the dark, empty street to suggest the state of spiritual isolation and the intense suffering that precedes Janet's conversion is reminiscent of similar scenes in the spiritual autobiographies: Saul on the road to Damascus, Augustine in the garden, Bunyan in the fields outside Bedford, Wesley and Wilberforce alone in their rooms. Such scenes appear in all George Eliot's novels when she portrays this despair preceding conversion: Romola on the road outside Florence, Hetty Sorrel in the dark fields and later in her cell, Arthur Donnithorne in his dressing-room, Maggie Tulliver in her dark room at Bob Jakin's,
Dorothea Brooke in her room as she looks at the blank whiteness of the winter landscape, Gwendolen Harleth in her hotel room in Genoa. George Eliot's description of Janet's "total despair" in her isolation bears comparison with a passage in Middlemarch, which depicts a similar experience:

All her early gladness, all her bright hopes and illusions, all her gifts of beauty and affection, served only to darken the riddle of her life; they were the betraying promises of a cruel destiny which had brought out those sweet blossoms only that the winds and storms might have a greater work of desolation, which had nursed her like a pet fawn into tenderness and fond expectation, only that she might feel a keener terror in the clutch of the panther. Her mother had sometimes said that troubles were sometimes 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 vapors, and perverting the very plenitude of her nature into a deeper source of disease. Her wretchedness had been a perpetually tightening instrument of torture, which had gradually absorbed all the other sensibilities of her nature into the sense of pain and the maddened craving for relief. . . . Janet felt she was alone: 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. . . . And if there was any Divine Pity, she could not feel it; it kept aloof from her, it poured no balm into her wounds, it stretched out no hand to bear up her weak resolve, to fortify her fainting courage.  

Dorothea Brooke's despair when she returns from her honeymoon in Rome with Casaubon has come about through her disillusion with her marriage and her increasing loneliness:
. . . when Dorothea passed from her dressing-room into the blue-green boudoir, that we know of, she saw the long avenue of limes lifting their trunks from a white earth, and spreading white branches against the dun and motionless sky. The distant flat shrunk in uniform whiteness and low-hanging uniformity of cloud. The very furniture in the room seemed to have shrunk since she saw it before: the stag in the tapestry looked more like a ghost in his ghostly blue-green world; the volumes of polite literature in the bookcase looked more like immovable imitations of books. . . . Her blooming full-pulsed youth stood there in moral imprisonment which made itself one with the chill, colourless, narrowed landscape, with the shrunken furniture, the never-read books, and the ghostly stag in a pale fantastic world that seemed to be vanishing from the daylight. . . . All existence seemed to beat with a lower pulse than her own, and her religious faith was a solitary cry, the struggle out of a nightmare in which every object was a withering and shrinking away from her. 9

The suffering of both heroines is aggravated by their thoughts of their previous happiness. Janet's thoughts at the beginning of the passage are conveyed through the author's fervent but outside commentary, not through Janet's specific memories or her present perception of the scene. Dorothea's awareness of her change comes through her perception of the scene before her. We are inside Dorothea's feelings because we are viewing the scene through her eyes and are as much aware of the change in the scene as she is. Although both passages describe a despairing state of isolation, the feelings and events that have brought Janet and Dorothea to these states partly account for the differences in tone and imagery.
Dempster's violent actions and Janet's previous terror are echoed in the "clutch of the panther" and the "winds and storms" "images, although admittedly they tritely exaggerate the melodramatic tone. The "sweet blossoms" and "pet fawn" insist too strongly on Janet's victimization. But the imagery in the second half of the passage, suggesting Janet's alcoholic craving, is more precise and less strained. The repetitious diffuseness of the style throughout the whole passage is typical of George Eliot's description of states of mind and feelings in *Scenes from Clerical Life*. When we contrast this passage with the description of Dorothea's despair, we see further that George Eliot has not used the setting of the dark street as well as she might have to suggest Janet's isolation and fear.

In her isolation, Janet does not think consciously of Edward Tryan, but when she chooses to seek help from Mrs. Pettifer rather than from her own mother, she turns toward him. We remember that it was Mrs. Pettifer who praised Tryan's sympathy and compassion to Janet, praise that was confirmed when Janet met Tryan's "direct glance." The breaking of Janet's pride is suggested by her walking barefoot down a public street to ask Mrs. Pettifer to take her in. She has never before told anyone except her mother of her troubles, preferring to walk proudly and to hide her
suffering. Evangelical accounts of conversion stress the breaking of the sinner's pride as a necessary prelude to conversion; Saul knelt on the road to Damascus; Bunyan humbled himself before the Bedford congregation; Wesley told his own converts that he himself had no saving faith; Wilberforce's greatest struggle with his pride was won when he told his fashionable London friends of his new religious life. Such acts of will followed a conscious choice and preceded the convert's submission to God during the conversion crisis.

In depicting Janet's deepest sufferings the following morning at Mrs. Pettifer's, George Eliot first uses an important image that appears often in the novels. It is the image of "broad day" or "pitiless sunshine" which "changes the aspect of misery to us as of everything else."

That moment of intensest depression was come to Janet, when the daylight which showed her the walls, and chairs, and tables, and all the commonplace reality that surrounded her, seemed to lay bare the future too, and bring out into oppressive distinctness all the details of a weary life to be lived from day to day, with no hope to strengthen her against that evil habit, which she loathed in retrospect and yet was powerless to resist. . . .Her life was a sun-dried barren tract, where there was no shadow and where all the waters were bitter. 10

In the passage just quoted from Middlemarch, George Eliot used this same image to probe the depths of Dorothea's suffering by making every detail of the physical scene suggest at once
her painful recognition of Casaubon's limitations and her former happy expectations when she viewed the same scene. The passage in Middlemarch contrasts her past illusions with her dull fears of the future through the concrete representation of her despairing perception of the present. The imagery both shows and explains Dorothea's suffering.

Although the imagery of "daylight" suggesting Janet's suffering is less important than explicit statement, we can see that George Eliot is attempting the same kind of thing in this early story.

At this moment in her "valley of humiliation," Janet thinks of Tryan and remembers the scene in Sally Martin's room:

She suddenly thought -- and the thought was like an electric shock -- there was one spot in her memory which seemed to promise her an untried spring, where the waters might be sweet. That short interview with Mr. Tryan had come back upon her -- his voice, his words, his look, which told her that he knew sorrow. His words had implied that he thought his death was near; yet he had a faith which enabled him to labor -- enabled him to give comfort to others. That look of his came back on her with a vividness greater than it had had for her in reality: surely he knew more of the secrets of sorrow than other men; perhaps he had some message of comfort, different from the feeble words she had been used to hear from others... She had often heard Mr. Tryan laughed at for being fond of great sinners. She began to see a new meaning in those words: he would perhaps understand her helplessness, her wants. If she could pour out her heart to him! If she could for the first time in her life unlock the chambers of her soul!
Janet's longing to submit to a spiritual master recalls the long walks of Charles and John Wesley to find spiritual counsel from their John the Baptist, William Law, and Wilberforce's strong longing, when he waked in the night, to seek out "old Newton," whose experience would show him some way out of his despair. After Janet has passed through her crisis she suggests to her mother that it was "God's goodness" that brought Tryan to her, just as Wesley described Peter Böhler as the man "whom God sent to me."

George Eliot's explanation of Janet's "impulse to confession" elucidates, I think, the same experience in the spiritual autobiographies:

The impulse to confession almost always requires the presence of a fresh ear and a fresh heart; and in our moments of spiritual need, the man to whom we have no tie but our common nature, seems nearer to us than mother, brother, or friend. Our daily familiar life is but a hiding of ourselves from each other behind a screen of trivial words and deeds, and those who sit with us at the same hearth, are often the farthest off from the deep human soul within us, full of unspoken evil and unacted good.12

This insight is verified by all the relationships between disciples and spiritual masters that we noted in the previous chapter. Augustine's confession was to Simplicianus, not to Monnica, his mother, as Wesley confessed to Peter Böhler, who offered "a fresh ear and fresh heart" to Wesley's confession. George Eliot contrasts the unique openness and honesty that we have seen in these relationships with the
deceptions and false perceptions that hide and distort the truth in ordinary life, especially in family life. This idea brings in the theme of appearance and reality, which is so important in her novels, and relates it to the larger theme of spiritual progress. It is relevant to remember here that in *The Mill on the Floss* Maggie Tulliver confesses her guilt to Dr. Venn, who comes to know her better than Tom or Mrs. Tulliver can ever do. Similarly, in *Middlemarch*, Lydgate cannot bring himself to confess his complicity in Raffles' death to Rosamond, his wife, though he can tell everything to Dorothea, who has to this point been only the wife of one of his patients. Adam Bede confesses his moral weakness to Irwine, not to Lisbeth or Seth. Romola cannot bring herself to speak to her uncle, Bernardo del Nero, about the failure of her marriage to Tito, but she can confess to Savonarola. In *Daniel Deronda*, the major contrast in Gwendolen's story is between the development of complete openness that leads to her confession to Deronda, a stranger whom she meets by chance, and the growing secrecy of her inner life from her mother and uncle. One basis for classifying the major characters in the novels would be this ability to confess, which marks the progress of spiritual growth. The tragic egotists are those who suppress the need to confess and use all their energies to hide "the deep human soul... full of unspoken evil" from others: Casaubon and Bulstrode
in Middlemarch and Mrs. Transome in Felix Holt.

When Tryan comes to Janet at her request, what she sees in his eyes recalls the "image of Christ" that Finney described in his moral agent:

Her heart gave a great leap, as her eyes met his once more. No! she had not deceived herself; there was all the sincerity, all the sadness, all the deep pity in them her memory told her of; more than it had told her, for in proportion as his face had become thinner and more worn, his eyes appeared to have gathered intensity.13

The suggestion that Tryan is an "image of Christ" is reinforced by his vicarious participation in Janet's suffering during her confession and by George Eliot's statement:

The tale of the Divine Pity was never yet believed from lips that were not felt to be moved by human pity.14

Janet is able to confess because she senses Tryan's compassion and learns that it stems from a past suffering as deep as her own. While she speaks, she is conscious only of "her misery and her yearning for comfort." Having confessed her craving for alcohol and the self-hatred that follows her failure to resist it, she tells him that she has lost all trust in God. After Janet's confession, George Eliot underlines the contrast between appearance and reality discerned in such a relationship:

In this artificial life of ours, it is not often we see a human face with all a heart's agony in it, uncontrolled by self-consciousness; when we
do see it, it startles us as if we had suddenly waked into the real world of which this everyday one is but a puppet-show copy.¹⁵

Tryan thinks only of Janet's sufferings while she makes her confession, but when she pleads for "any comfort - any hope" he does not offer her easy consolation or attempt to tell her that her recovery will be easy. His response reflects the same view of grief and consolation that George Eliot expressed in a letter to Mrs. Lytton:

Just under the pressure of grief, I do not believe there is any consolation. The word seems to me to be drapery for falsities. Sorrow must be sorrow, ill must be ill, till duty and love towards all who remain recover their rightful predominance.¹⁶

Tryan's response, based on his knowledge that Janet must be assured of his sympathy, is his confession of his own past "self-reproach and despair." His sympathy for Janet is his living again his own past when he hears her story. His account of the death of a woman he had betrayed becomes the story of his own conversion; it follows the pattern of the evangelical experience through the three stages of despair and consciousness of sin, submission to God, and finally the feelings of hope and trust. He emphasizes the importance of a friend to whom he "opened" his feelings:

He was a man who had gone through very deep experience, and could understand the different wants of different minds. He made it clear to
me that the only preparation for coming to Christ and partaking of His salvation was that very sense of guilt and helplessness which was weighing me down. ¹⁷

Through his conversion, Tryan discovered his vocation as an evangelist.

Although Tryan's confession does not complete Janet's conversion, we mark her progress when we learn that during his story she forgets her own suffering. And when she returns to herself it is to contrast her selfish-absorption with Tryan's unselfish life. It is this conscious turning from self to another, permitting her to pray with "a spirit of submission" for "light and strength," that marks the end of her first great crisis. Though she still fears the old temptation to drink, the beginning of her moral change appears as a new hope that she will be able to resist it with Tryan's help. Her submission to Tryan is complete; her new awareness of a trust in God is based on her trust in him. The process of Janet's conversion is depicted just as Finney described the influence that an "image of Christ" might have on a fellow-sufferer.

In Romola (1863), George Eliot's only historical novel, the heroine undergoes a conversion that follows even more closely than Janet's the experience of Saul as interpreted by Renan. Like Saul's hatred of the faith he persecuted, Romola's antipathy toward Christianity springs from
her deepest feelings of personal loyalty. Saul regarded Christianity as a threat to all his beliefs and values; Romola's opposition to the faith of Savonarola stems from her love of her father and her resentment of her brother Dino, who left home when his father most needed him to join the Dominicans. George Eliot agrees with Renan in emphasizing the role of unconscious memory in preparing for the acceptance of a consciously despised faith. She emphasizes the unwilling knowledge that Romola gains of Savonarola and his religion, just as she showed the same kind of preparation in Janet's reluctantly received knowledge of Tryan and Evangelicalism.

When Romola stands by her dying brother's bedside in the cell at San Marco, she not only witnesses the strength of her brother's faith (as Renan supposes Saul witnessed the religious fervor of the dying Stephen) but also experiences the force of Savonarola's influence when she hears his voice and meets his gaze for the first time. Two events in this early scene prepare her mind for her later conversion on the road to Venice. First, when Savonarola orders her to kneel, she feels "that subtle, mysterious influence of a personality by which it has been given to some rare men to move their fellows." When she responds to his command by falling on her knees, the physical act of submission is accompanied by a mental change, a "new state of passiveness." Second, her
taking the crucifix from Dino's dead hand at Savonarola's command, fixes it in her memory as a symbol that gathers new meaning in the months that follow. After her first encounter with Savonarola, she tells Tito: "...his very voice seems to have penetrated me with a sense that there is some truth in what moves them -- some truth of which I know nothing."

According to Renan, Saul was disturbed by the same incomprehensible faith of the courageous Christians he persecuted.

These early experiences with dedicated Christians, which Romola pushes to the back of her mind as the despair and loneliness of her life with Tito increase, remain dormant in her memory until she encounters Savonarola on the road to Venice. During this crisis of Romola's spiritual pilgrimage, the similarity with Saul's momentous journey is very close. Having left the city disguised in religious garb, she feels alone, "with no human presence interposing and making a law for her." As if to indicate the parallel with Saul's conversion, George Eliot titles this chapter "An Arresting Voice." Romola is suddenly called by name by the voice of the man she will submit to as a new master. The calling is followed by her submissive response to Savonarola's gaze.

She had started up with defiant words ready to burst from her lips, but they fell back again without utterance. She had met Fra Girolamo's calm glance and the impression from it was so new to her that her anger sank ashamed as something irrelevant.
The effect of his glance is to tell her of "his interest in her and care for her, apart from any personal feeling." The next sentence echoes Finney's comment on the "direct glance" of the spiritual master and George Eliot's earlier explanation of this form of visual influence in "Janet's Repentance."

It was the first time she had encountered a gaze in which simple human fellowship expressed itself as a strongly-felt bond. Such a glance is half the vocation of the priest or spiritual guide of men. . . .

The episode on the road to Venice, like its prototype on the road to Damascus, ends with a conversion to Christianity and a new sense of vocation. As in Renan's interpretation of Saul's conversion, George Eliot shows that Romola's conversion owes nothing to the supernatural. It is the issue of earlier experiences which force themselves into her consciousness under the pressure of strong emotional needs and the authoritative influence of a spiritual master. Just as Romola's acceptance of Christianity depends upon her faith in another person, Savonarola, her later loss of faith in that person determines her rejection of Christianity. Both the discovery and the loss of faith imply that religious experience derives from human feelings. The final peace that Romola finds after her unconversion results from her recovered belief in human goodness and her consequent dedication to others.
The peace that Janet Dempster finds through her relationship with Tryan gives her the strength to nurse her husband during the weeks he lies slowing dying in a state of delirium. The effects of her conversion are apparent in her forgiveness of Dempster and her absorption in his suffering. But after Dempster's death, when Janet's thoughts return to herself, the demands of her "demon" formed during her years of secret drinking trouble her like the urgent voice of Bunyan's tempter. Her greatest temptation comes when she discovers a flask of brandy in Dempster's desk. George Eliot's placement of this scene of temptation after Janet has passed through her conversion crisis suggests that she is organizing her episodes on the same principle followed by the writers of spiritual autobiography. We saw earlier this view of conversion as a process that does not end with the critical turning exemplified in the temptations that continued to confront Bunyan, Wesley, and Wilberforce.

The placement of the temptation scene also helps explain George Eliot's treatment of alcoholism in the story. We can assume from her refusal to follow Blackwood's suggestion to soften her description of Dempster's delirium tremens that it was not a gesture to Victorian delicacy that restrained her from treating in more detail the growth of Janet's addiction. Although her brief treatment does not
lack verisimilitude, George Eliot purposely avoids the kind of careful documentation Zola uses in *L'Assommoir* to trace Gervaise's slow development of the habit that parallels her moral degradation. George Eliot is not interested in showing "the facts" about the alcoholic habit. Janet's alcoholism is important only as a symbol that George Eliot uses to dramatize her moral struggle before and after her conversion. As a symbol, Janet's secret drinking suggests well enough her dependence on an opiate that turns her in upon herself and gives her the false comfort of a daydream world that excludes others. Silas Marner's gold is the closest thing to such a symbol in the novels, but Silas's gold works more successfully because it is completely integrated with his obsession with his work and it contributes to the tone of parable in the story. Janet's alcoholism is a more arbitrary symbol; another opiate would work as well here. We learn from too many of George Eliot's characters that the opiate of a daydream world representing the will to deny things as they are, need not be induced by alcohol. By the time George Eliot created Maggie Tulliver and Arthur Donnithorne she had learned to portray the temptation to avoid reality as a wholly inward conflict without the melodrama of the hidden brandy bottle.

The renewal of the temptation, though it is resisted successfully, brings back the despair and helplessness she
felt before she met Tryan: "dread and despondency began to thrust themselves, like cold heavy mists, between her and the heaven to which she wanted to look for light and guidance."
Prayer does not help because her fears of failing are too strong. Again she must turn to Tryan: ". . .if she could confess all to him, she might gather hope again." Once more under Tryan's influence, she passes through her second spiritual crisis. It follows the pattern of the first:

. . .even while she was confessing she felt half her burden removed. The act of confiding in human sympathy, the consciousness that a fellow-being was listening to her with patient pity, prepared her soul for that stronger leap by which faith grasps the idea of the Divine sympathy.\(^{20}\)

The feelings of joy and peace that emerge from this second communion with Tryan represent the permanent spiritual awaken-
ing of Janet's "new self":

\[\text{The experience remained forever in Janet's memory as one of those baptismal epochs, when the soul, dipped in the sacred waters of joy and peace, rises from them with new energies, with more unalterable longings.}\] \(^{21}\)

The first "fruits of conversion" appear after this episode in Janet's turning from herself toward others, a change in her manner and actions discerned even by Tryan's old enemies in the town. By representing Janet's "new self" in her encounters with the townspeople she had previously avoided, George Eliot carries the theme of conversion into the social
scene and thus justifies the inclusion of the minor characters on her "narrow canvas," though Blackwood's criticism that there were too many such characters is right.

Besides her patience and unselfishness, Janet's conversion leads to love. There is an implied contrast between Janet's early romantic love for Dempster, whom she did not know, really, until after her marriage, and her love for Tryan. George Eliot implies that the love of Janet and Tryan emerges from the complete honesty of their relationship established during the scenes of crisis when they learn the worst and best about each other. Since their feelings grow from the whole truth, their mutual trust is undisturbed by those disillusioning discoveries that disturb so many marriages in the novels based on incomplete knowledge. Although George Eliot's treatment of the culmination of this relationship is admittedly sketchy, she does trace the change of their feelings, especially Janet's. Janet's feelings develop from grateful submission to sympathy and finally to reverence; Tryan's from pity to sympathy and to reverence. If their marriage had not been prevented by Tryan's death, it would have been not a marriage of true minds, but a marriage of the highest feelings. Reverence best defines George Eliot's conception of the highest love between men and women. Ideally, it is unselfish in the personal and the social sense: it need not be reciprocal, but
it must lead to sympathetic feelings of a wider-fellowship in the community. It thus does not, like traditional romantic love, exalt the loved one into an absolute value that can dispense with the world, but it realizes itself in a dedication to the world. As George Eliot depicts it, this reverence may emerge from the suffering experienced during a spiritual crisis as it does in "Janet's Repentance." But she never portrays it as growing from and transcending sexual passion as Shakespeare does in *Romeo and Juliet* and *Antony and Cleopatra*. She portrays sexual passion in this kind of love as an intensification that grows as a new dimension from this reverence. In this sense it resembles the love of Othello and Desdemona.

In *Adam Bede* reverence grows out of a spiritual crisis to culminate in the marriage of Adam and Dinah. V. S. Pritchett's charge that George Eliot refused to face the nature of sexual passion in her portrayal of this marriage ignores (or rejects) her conception of reverence, which does not depend upon passion, as the strongest basis for marriage. The love of Adam and Dinah grows from the sympathy established during their common suffering with Hetty. Their passion develops last. This complete love is contrasted with the selfish passion based on mutual illusion of Arthur and Hetty and perhaps with the too worshipful attitude of Seth Bede.
toward Dinah. In other novels, love as reverence grows between Dorothea and Ladislaw in Middlemarch, Felix and Esther in Felix Holt, and Mirah and Daniel in Daniel Deronda. Reverence also defines Gwendolen's feeling for Daniel Deronda at the end of the novel. These loves grow from feelings aroused during conversion and lead to social initiation and commitment. The relationships that begin with passion or romantic fantasy and preconception invariably end in unhappiness or even tragedy: Maggie Tulliver and Stephen Guest in The Mill on the Floss, Caterina and Anthony in "Mr. Gilfil's Love Story," Romola and Tito in Romola, Mrs. Transome and Jermyn in Felix Holt, and Rosamond and Lydgate in Middlemarch. There are, of course, many reasonably happy marriages that illustrate neither of these extremes -- marriages based on a love born of compatible temperaments, mutual interests, and long friendship. There are too many to name them all, but the three most admirable may be those of Mary Garth and Fred Vincy and of Celia and Sir James in Middlemarch, and Miss Arrowsmith and Klesmer in Daniel Deronda.

To George Eliot, the reverent love that grows from such a bond of deep sympathy as that between Tryan and Janet is a religious emotion. An important part of her religious humanism rests on her agreement with Ludwig Feuerbach's
assertion that man's love of God is different only in its
object from man's love of man. The following passage from
George Eliot's translation of Feuerbach's Essence of Christi-
anity (1854) illuminates this relationship between a disciple
and a spiritual master that reaches its fulfillment in
reverent love:

Man has his highest being, his God, in himself; not
in himself as an individual, but in his essential
nature, his species. . . .The yearning of man after
something above himself is nothing else than the
longing after the perfect type of his nature, the
yearning to be free from himself, i. e., from the
limits and defects of his individuality. . . .all
may, in general, all moral feelings which man has
towards man, are of a religious nature. Man feels
nothing towards God which he does not also feel
towards man.23

The thought of this passage underlies George Eliot's descrip-
tion of Janet's religious feelings, which are different only
in their vagueness from her feelings toward Tryan:

The act of confiding in human sympathy, the
consciousness that a fellow-being was listening
to her with patient pity, prepared her soul for that
stronger leap by which faith grasps the idea of the
Divine sympathy.24

Feuerbach's next passage simply carries farther the view of
the spiritual master set forth by Wesley and Finney and makes
explicit the implication in Finney's analysis of conversion
that it depends on only the moral agent and the convert:

Want teaches prayer; but in misfortune, in sorrow,
man kneels to entreat help of man also. Feeling
makes God a man, but for the same reason it makes
man a God. How often in deep emotion, which alone speaks genuine truth, man exclaims to man: Thou art, thou hast been my redeemer, my saviour, my protecting spirit, my God! We feel awe, reverence, humility, devout admiration, in thinking of a truly great, noble man; we feel ourselves worthless, we sink into nothing, even in the presence of human greatness. The purely, truly human emotions are religious; but for that reason the religious emotions are purely human. . . .

Feuerbach's humanistic interpretation of conversion, which George Eliot accepted, helps explain the lack of emphasis on specific religious doctrine in "Janet's Repentance" and Adam Bede. George Eliot is faithful to the religious history she knew so well in having Tryan and Dinah preach the Evangelical doctrine of Justification by Faith, but such doctrine plays no part in the influence they exert over their disciples. The implication of this view is that only a few men respond to ideas or doctrines as such with emotion that may move to action. In George Eliot's novels only Lydgate, Ladislaw, Felix Holt, Deronda, and Mordecai are capable of responding passionately to a religious, scientific, or political concept, of turning feeling into thought and thought into feeling, to paraphrase T. S. Eliot's description of the metaphysical poets. (George Eliot implies that Maggie Tulliver and Dorothea would belong to this intellectual aristocracy were it not for their meagre educations.) George Eliot makes the same point in her first published story, "The Sad Fortunes of
the Reverend Amos Barton," when Amos Barton, a clergyman in
the wrong calling, fails to cure souls because he teaches a
theology that his parishioners cannot understand and that has
no relevance to their emotional needs. Dinah Morris's
description of John Wesley in Adam Bede suggests that he made
his converts through the force of his presence as an "Image
of Christ." Janet's conversion does not depend upon the
acceptance of a specific doctrine but upon the awakening of
specific feelings in response to Tryan's sympathy and good-
ness. She is typical of all George Eliot's characters in
not experiencing the intellectual conflict that formed part
of the larger emotional conflict preceding the conversions of
Wesley and Augustine. The faith that Janet gains in the
Divine Pity is an extension of her trust for Tryan. George
Eliot wrote to Mrs. Senior: "One lives by faith in human
goodness, the only guarantee that there can be any other sort
goodness in the universe."26

Janet's fearful sense of her own degradation was experi-
enced by Augustine and the others, but she does not have the
fears of supernatural punishment that tormented Wesley,
Bunyan, and Wilberforce. The preacher's awakening of such
fears, so important in the Evangelical sermon, was condemned
by George Eliot in her scathing article on such a preacher,
Dr. Cumming, in The Westminster Review (1855). She condemned
these fears because they might lead to the convert's selfish absorption in the state of his own soul rather than to the sympathetic response to the weaknesses of others that is the heart of her moral teaching.

Ten years after the publication of *Scenes of Clerical Life*, George Eliot wrote to Clifford Allbutt an explanation of her motives in writing fiction that illuminates her treatment of conversion in "Janet's Repentance" and in the novels as well:

My books are a form of utterance that dissatisfies me less than conversations on religious subjects because they are deliberately, carefully constructed on a basis which even in my doubting mind is never shaken by a doubt... The basis I mean is my conviction as to the relative goodness and nobleness of human dispositions and motives. And the inspiring principle which alone gives me courage to write is, that of so presenting our human life as to help my readers in getting a clearer conception of and a more active admiration of those vital elements which bind men together and give a higher worthiness to their existence; and also to help them in gradually dissociating these elements from the more transient forms on which an outworn teaching tends to make them dependent.27

The "vital elements which bind men together" are the feelings which grow from the shared suffering of Tryan and the wider sympathies motivating Tryan's self-sacrifice and Janet's life after her conversion. The "transient forms" of an "outworn teaching" are the doctrines of orthodox religions, which make faith dependent on their acceptance. To George Eliot the
value of religious conversion is not the individual's sense of his own salvation but the extension of the intensely personal feelings aroused during the experience into communal feelings toward others. In her fiction she faced the problem she praised Harriet Beecher Stowe for solving "with insight and tolerance" in Old-town Folks: the presentation of religious convictions that were not her own.28 George Eliot approached the problem by trying to suggest "the lasting meaning that lies in all religious doctrine." Her impartiality sympathizes with all religious sects that seek through their "transient forms" to worship "the highest good." "Janet's Repentance," like all her fiction, is moral in its teaching, religious in George Eliot's sense, but not propagandistic. The "drama of Evangelicalism" in the story represents a universal experience dependent only on human nobility.
Chapter IV

Masters and Disciples in *Adam Bede*:

The Conversion of Hetty Sorrel
In *Adam Bede* (1859) George Eliot used the "larger canvas" of the novel, which she had needed in "Janet's Repentance," to portray another drama of Evangelicalism, this time with a Methodist background. Before she had corrected the proofs, she wrote in her journal a brief "History of Adam Bede," while the novel was still uppermost in her mind. She says that the story grew from an anecdote told her nineteen years earlier by her aunt, Mrs. Samuel Evans, who had been a Methodist preacher years before George Eliot, then twenty, had come to know her well:

...it occurred to her to tell me how she had visited a condemned criminal, a very ignorant girl who had murdered her child and refused to confess -- how she had stayed with her praying, through the night and how the poor creature at last broke into tears, and confessed her crime. My aunt afterwards went with her in the cart to the place of execution, and she described to me the great respect with which this ministry of hers was regarded by the official people about the gaol.1

George Eliot goes on to note that the problem of construction she had to solve was the relationship of her aunt's story to "some points" taking shape in her memories about the early life and character of her father, Robert Evans. Although to solve this problem of combining two separate stories (a problem she faced again when she wrote her last three novels) she finally used four main characters, she retained as the central relationship that between the two young women, who
appear in the novel as Dinah Morris, the young Methodist preacher and factory worker, and Hetty Sorrel, the girl convicted of child murder. In her aunt's anecdote, the climax was the execution of the girl, but George Eliot decided to have Hetty saved from the gallows by a last minute reprieve, which has been almost unanimously condemned by modern critics. Instead, she worked consciously toward the climax of the confessional scene in the prison. Although she points out in her journal that this scene is the obvious dramatic climax, the obvious has been ignored by George Eliot's critics, who have by-passed it for the following scene of the reprieve.

Since the first reviews of Adam Bede, which set the tone of panegyric maintained until after George Eliot's death, it has been generally approached from two directions. The first approach considers it as a domestic tragedy of illicit passion in a pastoral setting; the second as a rural predecessor of Middlemarch, a social study of ordinary lives in a small community. Although there is much in the novel to support both approaches, neither, I think, goes to the heart of Adam Bede. Keeping in mind that "every way of seeing is also a way of not seeing," I would suggest a third approach, which follows up George Eliot's description of the germ of the novel. I believe that we should view Adam Bede
as a more ambitious attempt to take up her own challenge to English novelists to portray the "fine drama" of Evangelicalism. Jerome Thale and other critics have said rightly that Adam Bede sets forth the basis of moral conduct, but George Eliot's intention is deeper than this phrase suggests. As in the spiritual autobiographies, her major theme in all her fiction is spiritual progress, whether upward or downward, growth or degeneration, expansion or diminishment. In this novel, three of the four main characters -- Adam, Arthur, and Hetty -- undergo experiences comparable to religious conversion as we have studied it in chapter two, and in the experience of Hetty, George Eliot probes the very roots that underlie the beginning of a spiritual life. There is no single main character in Adam Bede; instead there is a central relationship between a spiritual master and a disciple which culminates in conversion.

My thesis that the climactic experience in Adam Bede is the conversion of Hetty Sorrel through the ministry of Dinah Morris disagrees with the opinions set forth by Henry James in his Atlantic Monthly review that Hetty emerges from her great suffering unchanged and by Dorothy Van Ghent, who has said more recently that Hetty's suffering leads to no "illumination." Even without studying Hetty's experience we might be skeptical of these views since they oppose George
Eliot's belief that "character too is a process. . . ." 7 This belief underlies her portrayal of change, growth or degeneration, in all her important characters. James's opinion that Hetty does not change (or Adam either) is related to his description of the novel as a series of static pictures rather than a dramatic progression. A somewhat similar view of the structure has recently been offered by Ian Gregor when he describes the novel as a "moral triptych," three separate pictures related through juxtaposition. 8 James and Van Ghent intend their opinions as high praise of George Eliot for escaping from what James calls the "easy error" of presenting Hetty as being greatly changed at the end of the novel: "She is vain and superficial by nature; and she remains so to the end." 9 But George Eliot has done something much more difficult than escaping from an "easy error": she proves through her drama the possibility of a moral awakening in a character first portrayed as almost wholly self-centered. The major accomplishment in Adam Bede is not just the "deep authority" with which she explores Hetty's suffering during her journey; 10 to this we must add her portrayal of the birth of Hetty's conscience from the inner conflict which follows her crime, and, later, of Hetty's blind groping as she is led by Dinah to make that conscience articulate. Through her suffering
and the influence of Dinah's goodness, Hetty becomes fully human.

As "Images of Christ" who serve as spiritual masters to others, Dinah and Tryan are much alike. In depicting Dinah's Methodism, as Tryan's Anglican Evangelicalism, George Eliot avoided the introspective side of Evangelicalism, which emphasized habitual soul-searching for signs of the presence of Divine Grace, because she thought such spiritual bookkeeping usually led to self-absorption if not self-righteousness, traits antithetical to her conception of these characters. (In Middlemarch she subtly criticizes this side of Protestantism when she describes Bulstrode's conversion.) In portraying Tryan and Dinah she turned to the social concern of Evangelicalism, which she could reconcile with her humanism: Feuerbach's emphasis on human love and Comte's teaching that human sympathy was the basis of the moral life. The strongest motive in both Tryan and Dinah is the Evangelical concern for the weakness of others. When Tryan describes his conversion to Janet, he tells her of the religious friend who influenced him. Dinah's reverent description of John Wesley, whom she heard preach when she was girl; her keeping his picture on the wall of her room; and her refusal to leave the Wesleyan sect after it bars women from preaching emphasize that the founder of the movement which she felt a divine call
to join is to her an "Image of Christ."

Methodism serves as more than background or framework in Adam Bede. Just as Tryan's quickened Anglicanism represented religion as opposed to the irreligion of his persecuting opponents, so does Dinah's Methodism imply a judgment of the torpid Anglicanism of Hayslope. The possessive qualification is important: it is Dinah's Methodism as it is Tryan's Evangelicalism that receives George Eliot's complete approval. In both story and novel we are reminded that Dinah and Tryan are exceptional, if not unique, representatives of their sects. They are the saints of their religious movements. Both are idealized, as indeed are all the characters who perform the role of spiritual master and at the same time represent the possibilities of human goodness. Yet exceptional as they are in their unselfishness and their sympathetic insights, they are believable as well as admirable, and they are justified both historically and artistically. Here is G. W. E. Russell's description of Evangelical Saints:

The Evangelicals were the most religious people whom I have ever met. . . . I recall an abiding sense of religious responsibility, a self-sacrificing energy in works of mercy, an evangelistic zeal, an aloofness from the world, and a level of saintliness in daily life, such as I do not expect again to see realised on earth. . . . Sit anima mea cum Sanctis. May my lot be with the Evangelical Saints from whose lips I first learned the doctrine of the Cross.
Dinah's character and faith resemble that in John Wesley's portrait of the Methodist saint in his sermon on "Marks of the New Birth":

The true, living, Christian faith, which whosoever hath, is born of God, is not only assent, an act of the understanding; but a disposition, which God hath wrought in his heart. . . .

The disposition "wrought in his heart" is purity, and the fruits of this faith are inner calm and hope. But the greatest mark of the man born anew is love:

The necessary fruit of this love of God is the love of our neighbour; of every soul which God hath made; not excepting those who are now 'despitefully using and persecuting us;' -- a love whereby we love every man as ourselves; as we love our own souls.

Wesley says that this love of neighbor must be a real affection working as a force in human life, not charitable deeds done for someone's benefit but unaccompanied by love. George Eliot's first description of Dinah stresses this love born of her faith:

There was no keenness in the eyes; they seemed rather to be shedding love than making observations; they had the liquid look which tells that the mind is full of what it has to give out, rather than impressed by external objects.

The effect of Dinah's candid glance recalls Finney's image of the "direct glance" of the Moral Agent:

The eyes had no peculiar beauty, beyond that of expression; they looked so simple, so candid, so gravely loving, that no accusing scowl, no light sneer could help melting away before their glance.
Dinah's eyes and face reveal her spirituality:

[Dinah's] calm pitying face [had an] open glance which told that her heart lived in no cherished secrets of its own, but in feelings which it longed to share with all the world.\(^{18}\)

In her characterizations of Dinah and Tryan, George Eliot was working against the popular stereotypes of the Methodist kill-joy and hypocrite. In "Janet's Repentance," Tryan's enemies spread the word that he is a Methodist to stir up resentment against him; in *Adam Bede* Dinah's sincerity and lack of bigotry are accepted with wonder by those who know she is a "Methody." The stranger who listens to her sermon shares the prejudice of the Hayslope villagers:

He had made up his mind to see her advance with a measured step, and a demure solemnity of countenance; he had felt sure that her face would be mantled with the smile of conscious saintship, or else charged with denunciatory bitterness. He knew but two types of Methodist -- the ecstatic and the bilious.\(^{19}\)

Both Dinah and Tryan are characterized through their relationships with their weaker fellow-men, a method justified by their roles as spiritual masters but necessitated by the novelist's need to make their saintliness believable to the reader. George Eliot may have learned from her reading of Richardson how to make idealized human goodness interesting and credible by presenting it through the eyes of more imperfect humanity.\(^{20}\) The limitation of George Eliot's method, as distinct from Richardson's, is that we view Dinah and Tryan mostly from the outside, whereas she searches
the thoughts and feelings of the characters who look up to them.

It is generally true of George Eliot's treatment of the relationship between a spiritual master and a disciple that through her manipulation of the omniscient point-of-view she brings us closer to the disciple than to the master. Her didactic intention may determine her technique here: her purpose is to arouse the widest sympathy for a character by giving the fullest knowledge of his weaknesses, motives, and circumstances. Her aims as a psychological novelist are working too: the reader needs the fullest knowledge of the character who undergoes moral change in order to accept such change as credible. A belief in instantaneous conversion testifies to the religious simplicity of Dinah Morris and Seth Bede, but it is opposed to the assumptions of psychological realism. Thus we need to know much more about Janet, Adam, Arthur, and Hetty than about Tryan and Dinah, whose religious conversions are not dramatized. Another reason that George Eliot need not analyze the inner feelings and attitudes of Tryan and Dinah derives from the openness of their characters. They have little to hide. Tryan's only secret is his suspicion that he is dying: Dinah hides only her developing love for Adam. Their inner experience is made public as when Dinah reveals her deepest feelings during her sermon. As we have
seen, Tryan summarizes his conversion experience in response to Janet's confession to convince her that he can sympathize with her suffering. George Eliot's use of his "awakening story" as in spiritual autobiography is justified because it keeps our attention on Janet; it is her response to Tryan's story we are interested in; we are following her spiritual progress when we observe her response to his story. The effect and the purpose are the same as those pointed out in The Confessions and Wesley's Journal.

Dinah Morris's conversion is not described in retrospect, but by allusions to her childhood -- she was raised by a Methodist aunt in a Wesleyan community and taken to hear Wesley preach years before she discovered her vocation as a preacher -- George Eliot implies that Dinah's conversion in childhood or early adolescence was as quiet and gradual a response to these influences as her later discovery of her calling was dramatic and sudden. Dinah's conversion, like Wesley's, was a gradual intensification of inclinations that had long existed. In such experiences, the convert might not be able to point, as Wesley did, to a specific moment when he was suddenly aware of a "heart strangely warmed." This type of conversion, experienced by children and adolescents in Methodist communities, was not always marked by the perceptible climax of a sudden passing from despair and guilt to joy. Henry James was unaware of this fact:
There is in Dinah Morris too close an agreement between her natural disposition and the action of her religious faith. If by nature she had been passionate, rebellious, selfish, I could better understand her self-abnegation. I would look upon it as the logical fruit of a profound religious experience. But as she stands, heart and soul go easily hand in hand. I believe it to be very uncommon for what is called a religious conversion merely to intensify and consecrate pre-existing inclinations. It is usually a change, a wrench; and the new life is apt to be the more sincere as the old one has less in common with it.21

James rightly goes on to say that George Eliot's knowledge of Methodism was doubtless greater than his own; the suggestion that Dinah's religious conversion occurred gradually during her early life is another instance of the historical validity of the treatment of Methodism in the novel. James's objection to the close agreement between Dinah's disposition and her religious actions seems to miss the point of George Eliot's conception of Dinah: as mentioned earlier, her natural disposition is religious. It is impossible to separate her disposition and her faith. (James gives a good description of Maggie's temperament and experience in The Mill on the Floss in making this objection.)

When Dinah recalls to Irwine the experience that led to her discovery of her vocation as a preacher, she says that when she was sixteen she "began to talk to the little children, and teach them..." Dinah's account is comparable to several passages in Wesley's Journal which describe young Methodists. The most interesting such passage is this one:
Forty-three of these [Methodists in Everton] are children, thirty of whom are rejoicing in the love of God. The chief instrument God has used among these is Jane Salkeld, a school-mistress that is a pattern to all that believe. A few of her children are, Phebe Featherstone, nine years and an half old, a child of uncommon understanding; Hannah Watson, ten years old, full of faith and love; Aaron Ridson, not eleven years old, but wise and staid as a man. . . Sarah Morris, fourteen years of age, is as a mother among them, always serious, always watching over the rest, and building them up in love.22

Not only the same last name, Morris, suggests Dinah in Wesley's last sentence. The seriousness, the watchfulness, and above all the maternalism suggest George Eliot's heroine; it would be difficult to write a better one sentence description of her.

Dinah tells Irwine that when she was older she sometimes felt "her heart enlarged to speak in class and was much drawn out in prayer with the sick." But she did not receive the call to preach until one Sunday when she walked with old Marlowe, a local preacher, to a lead-mining village which had no church. Before they reached the village, Brother Marlowe became ill and was unable to deliver the sermon that the people were expecting:

I went to tell the people, thinking we'd go into one of the houses, and I would read and pray with them. But as I passed along the cottages and saw the aged and trembling women at the doors, and the hard looks of the men, who seemed to have their eyes no more filled with the sight of the Sabbath morning than if they had been dumb oxen that never looked up to the
sky, I felt a great movement in my soul, and I
trembled as if I was shaken by a strong spirit
entering my weak body. And I went to where the
little flock of people was gathered together, and
stepped on the low wall that was built against the
green hillside, and I spoke the words that were
given to me abundantly. And they all came round
me out of all the cottages, and many wept over
their sins, and have since joined the Lord. That
was the beginning of my preaching, sir, and I've
preached ever since. 23

From James's criticism, it appears that he may have taken
this experience to be Dinah's conversion. But as we have
seen, in the usual pattern of events in spiritual autobiography,
the awareness of a divine calling to preach came after,
sometimes years after, the assurance of the presence of
Divine Grace or the belief that one possessed Saving Faith.
Dinah's experience in the lead-mining village is a further
confirmation of her earlier conversion, just as the villagers'
response to her preaching confirms to her that she is not
deluded in following the call. Her discovery of her vocation
is a moment of self-discovery when her already strong faith
is intensified and dedicated toward a more definite goal.

Just as we judge Dinah and Tryan by their influence
on others, we judge those others by their ability to respond
to them. It may be that this is George Eliot's most impor-
tant dramatic means of indicating the degree of moral aware-
ness in her characters. Tryan, Dinah, and similar characters
in the later novels do not serve merely to represent the
potentialities of human goodness or to stand as moral yardsticks by which we measure the characters they encounter. Remembering George Eliot's conception of the moral life as activity, we measure the other characters against each other according to their active response, their acceptance or rejection of the invitation of goodness. Thus in Adam Bede the temporary feelings of fearful remorse aroused in Chad's Bess by Dinah's direct appeal to her during the sermon on the green, feelings that reflect the beginning of a hazy self-questioning, make her the moral superior of Hetty, who angrily rejects Dinah's first offer of affectionate counsel. Similarly, our impatience with Lisbeth's Bede whining complaints is modified by her recognition of Dinah's goodness; Lisbeth's response to Dinah is a triumph over her own religious prejudice and maternal selfishness. In the same way, Bartle Massey's admission to Adam that "if there must be women in the world, it's but fair there should be women to be comforters in it; and she's one -- she's one" reinforces our knowledge of his capacity for sympathy with this revealing glimpse of his moral tact. More than anything else, Mrs. Poyser's response to Dinah's goodness gives her character a moral dimension that saves her from being merely a superb caricature. By showing Dinah's moral influence on characters who deplore her Methodism, George Eliot emphasizes again that
such responses depend upon no acceptance of dogma but overleap all differences of belief. Significantly, an important sign of Arthur Donnithorne's moral growth is his memory of Dinah's devotion to Hetty. In the scene of reconciliation between Adam and Arthur, the presence of Dinah in the memories of both men serves as a bond between them indicated by Arthur's giving his watch to Adam as a present for Dinah. In *Adam Bede*, human goodness appears as an active force that overcomes the prejudice and selfishness of hardened hearts by arousing the opposed feelings of compassion and love.

Early in the novel George Eliot reveals the religious limitations of Hayslope by showing the villagers' lack of response to Dinah's fervid sermon. I do not see Hayslope as the halcyon Arcadian world of play that Ian Gregor makes it out to be in his recent essay. Although it is certainly true that George Eliot follows up her first description of the setting -- "full of the scent of cows and hay" -- with a delight and precision suggesting that Ruskin was her master, the villagers and laborers who live in this land of rich crops and sleek livestock are hardly the Colin and Thyrsis types she ironically alludes to when she describes the love fantasies of Arthur, Hetty, and Adam. The villagers that stand apart from the visiting Methodists during Dinah's sermon are the slow-minded, apathetic countrymen that Wesley
found almost as unresponsive to his message as Irish Catholics and Scottish Presbyterians. It may be that George Eliot softened the picture of poverty in her setting, as one contemporary reviewer charged, but she peopled this setting with historical types that might have been drawn from a file of Methodist failures. As the crowd assembles, it displays no antagonism or suspicion toward the Methodists or Dinah — only a dull curiosity:

Now and then there was a new arrival; perhaps a slouching laborer, who, having eaten his supper came out to look at the unusual scene with a slow bovine gaze, willing to hear what any one had to say in explanation of it, but by no means excited enough to ask a question.26

In a similar passage in "Amos Barton," George Eliot described such apathy as "rustic stupidity, and in Silas Marner she portrayed again the religious lethargy of agricultural workers, who knew no more of the Evangelical message of "new birth" than Silas knew of Anglican church music. Methodism, like other forms of Evangelicalism, made slow headway in the more prosperous rural areas such as Raveloe and Loamshire represent.27

But George Eliot is realistically tolerant of the religious differences of communities as of individuals. Accepting as fact that different people and communities have different spiritual needs and capabilities, she can sympathize with Irwine's quiet performance of his religious duties,
which does not disturb the sluggish rhythm of the Hayslope mind. But at the same time she is aware that Irwine's imper-
turbability may lead to a dangerous complacency toward
parishoners who need spiritual counsel more than traditional
ritual and sensible sermons. It is important that Irwine,
for all his private virtues, fails both Arthur and Hetty as
their spiritual counselor and refuses to take seriously the
reform of Chad's Bess. It is not that his intuitions are
weaker than Dinah's but that he is reluctant to act on them.

Except for Bess's outburst, none of the Hayslope
villagers are deeply moved by Dinah's sermon. Dinah's
feelings for Bess are a maternal love and pity for the
vanity of the "poor blind child," who listens fearfully to
Dinah's message:

Ah! tear off those follies! cast them away from you,
as if they were stinging adders. They are stinging
you -- they are poisoning your soul -- they are
dragging you down into a dark bottomless pit, where
you will sink for ever, and for ever, and for ever,
further away from light and God. 28

Bess's pulling the false garnet earrings from her ears marks
the beginning of the deeper response that comes later to
Dinah's personal influence. This scene between Bess and
Dinah, short as it is, is important because it anticipates
the comparable scene in Hetty's bedroom when Hetty petulantly
rejects Dinah's offer of communion. The parallels between
the two scenes extend to the earrings and the mirror, which
become in Hetty's act of self-worship the first symbols of her vanity and triviality. In a later scene when Hetty secretly puts on Arthur's gift of earrings, the "delicate pearls and crystals" she dares not wear before her family

. . . she peeps at them in the glass. . . with first one position of the head and then another, like a listening bird.29

Outward ornaments and decorative clothing as symbols of a "darkened soul clinging to the things of this world" belong of course to the long tradition of Evangelical and Puritan condemnation of worldliness. Dinah's warning to Bess about her earrings is not an exaggeration of Dinah's feelings: the earrings are stinging adders to Dinah. In Bunyan's catalogue of vanities in Vanity Fair, the list builds up climactically to pearl and gold ornaments.30 Carlyle, in Sartor Resartus, extends Bunyan's theme by erecting the false values of Dandyism on the symbol of fashionable clothing so that he can strip it off to reveal man as Lear's "bare, forked animal."31 Such symbols of vanity, which George Eliot retained from her early Evangelicalism, may be the most persistent symbols she uses. They are important in Scenes of Clerical Life and in all the novels. Besides the obvious meanings of vanity and self-indulgence, she uses imagery of jewels, clothing, and ornamental accessories to contrast true and false values, seriousness
and superficiality, reality and appearance. In a letter to Maria Lewis, she expressed her hope that her faith would not be tacked as a mere "fringe" to her garments, a metaphor that suggests the kind of false show disguising superficial feelings which she satirized in her article on silly Evangelical novels. In *Scenes of Clerical Life*, the triviality and selfishness of the Countess Cz Garland and Anthony Wybrow is underlined by the expensive perfection of their dress, and in *The Mill on the Floss* the Dandyism of Stephen Guest's attar of roses and his diamond ring qualify our first impression of him. In *Romola*, a pathetic comedy takes place during Savonarola's ceremonial burning of the Anathema of Vanities when Monna Brigida is bullied by the reformers into giving up her finery -- false hair and all. A little drama of vanity and renunciation is played in a subtly comic vein in *Middlemarch* when Celia and Dorothea divide their mother's jewels; in the same novel we notice Rosamond's jewelled fingers and expensive dress when Lydgate is having his worst financial difficulties. In *Felix Holt*, Esther's expensive watch, the most obvious symbol of her taste for luxury, suggests to Felix, and later to Esther herself, the difference in their values. But only in *Daniel Deronda* does the symbol of jewels figure as importantly as it does in *Adam Bede*. Like Hetty's earrings, Gwendolen's diamonds keep reappearing
as a symbol of her moral failure.\(^{33}\)

When Hetty is alone in her room before Dinah knocks on her locked door, she goes through her narcissistic worship before the mirror with the seriousness of Pope's Belinda. We may also be reminded of "The Rape of the Lock" by the religious imagery and diction describing Hetty's ritual of self-adoration, but George Eliot's purpose is not satirical. She is contrasting two kinds of worship. In the room adjoining Hetty's, Dinah sits quietly in the darkness near her open window:

Dinah delighted in her open window. Being on the second story of that tall house, it gave her a wide view over the fields. . . . the first things she did on entering her room, was to seat herself. . . . and look out on the peaceful fields beyond which the moon was rising. . . .\(^{34}\)

Dinah's open window and her quiet absorption in the scene before her, suggesting the openness and receptivity of her disposition, comment on Hetty's locked door and her hidden mirror and finery, concrete details revealing her secrecy and fear of public shame. The drama of Hetty's confession in the prison is foreshadowed ironically in these juxtaposed scenes, for the strongest barrier Dinah's pitying love must break through is Hetty's dread of exposure. In Chapter II, I noted that images of openness to suggest the soul's submission to God were traditionally used in accounts of conversion, just as Dinah's first prayer for the villagers asks that they
be moved to "open their ears" to her words, after she has reminded them of the woman at the well who learned that her "life lay open" before God. But in her bedroom, Dinah worships silently:

She closed her eyes, that she might feel more intensely the presence of a Love and Sympathy deeper and more tender than was breathed from the earth and sky.35

Hetty too worships silently her own image after she has lighted the secret candles and brought out her hidden shilling mirror:

... devout worshippers never allow inconveniences to prevent them from performing their religious rites, and Hetty this evening was more bent on her peculiar form of worship than usual.36

I believe that the source of this chapter "The Two Bed-Chambers," which contrasts selflessness and vanity, is one of George Eliot's early essays, "A Little Fable with a Great Moral," published in 1847 in a Coventry newspaper.37 The fable contrasts two hamadryads, Idione, who "loved to look into the lake because she saw herself there," and Hieria, who "only cared about watching the heavens... and was always looking farther off, into the deep part of the lake... ."

This "Little Fable," written at least ten years before Scenes of Clerical Life, shows the consistency and permanence of George Eliot's moral beliefs, for it contains two ideas that appear in all her fiction: first, the idea that perception
is a moral as well as a psychological act -- what one sees depends upon one's moral nature; and second, the idea of the wider life itself, the Evangelical teaching that the religious life is realized by opening oneself to others.

Both Bess Cranage and Hetty widen their vision through Dinah's ministry, but before this happens George Eliot compares the littleness of their worlds:

Any one who could have looked into poor Bessy's heart would have seen a striking resemblance between her little hopes and anxieties and Hetty's. The advantage, perhaps, would have been on Bessy's side in the matter of feeling. But then, you see, they were so very different outside! You would have been inclined to box Bessy's ears, and you would have longed to kiss Hetty.38

George Eliot contrasts Hetty's outward beauty with Dinah's visible goodness by portraying it in the same way -- by showing its effect on others. George Eliot effectively uses Homer's method of indirect description, as when he showed the subduing effect of Helen's beauty on the Trojan elders, who had least reason to respond to it. Either Lisbeth Bede or Bartle Massey would have served well as admirers in spite of themselves, but George Eliot's choice of Mrs. Poyser is best because she more than anyone else before Hetty's imprisonment knows the lack of feeling that Hetty's beauty hides. To suggest Hetty's outward beauty and her spiritual emptiness, George Eliot uses imagery which echoes the nymphs and mermaids of her "Little Fable." When Hetty is dressing for
Arthur's party she is likened to "water-nixies, and such lovely things without souls," and earlier when she is looking into the blotched mirror "her great dark eyes" look "as if an imprisoned sprite looked out of them." Her feelings of anticipation at seeing Arthur are "fluttering, trivial, butterfly sensations." (The romantic image of flight rendered pathetic as weak, futile wings reappears in The Mill on the Floss and Middlemarch in passages describing the spiritual hungers of Maggie Tulliver and Casaubon.) Images of lightness and delicacy suggest the triviality of self-absorbed fantasy which slides imperceptibly into deception: Hetty happily weaves her "light web of folly." Hetty's world might be a microcosm of Bunyan's Vanity Fair furnished with the toys of his Madame Bubble.

Images of little birds and animals in the first half of Adam Bede also bring together Hetty's childish beauty and her inner vacancy. Sometimes a metaphor simply describes a gesture or indicates a feeling: Hetty is "a kitten setting up its back" and "a little bird with its feathers ruffled." Another passage describes the roundness and softness of little creatures on the farm in the same terms used to describe Hetty; then George Eliot notes that "this was not the sort of prettiness she cared about." Her dislike of little animals is just one side of her general lack of
affection. Her lack of love for the Poyser children -- Totty is only a nuisance to her -- prepares for Hetty's abandonment of her own baby; before she begins to meet Arthur secretly, "Hetty would have been glad to hear that she should never see a child again." In contrast, George Eliot from the beginning of the novel prepares us for Dinah's marriage and eventual motherhood by showing her maternal feelings for Bessy, Hetty, and the Poyser children. The child Totty is described in words that bring to mind Hetty's "rounded, pouting, childish prettiness." The suggested parallel between Hetty and Totty extends below these obvious images of babyish appeal to the deeper correspondence of selfishness: amusing in Totty but pitiably in Hetty. The parallel is most subtly indicated by Arthur Donnithorne's gifts to each; the shiny sixpences for Totty to hide in her pocket, the "pretty" trifles of locket and earrings for Hetty to hide in her locked drawer. Both gifts fulfill childish wishes. Arthur's third gift, the watch he sends to Dinah in gratitude and repentance, ironically recalls the earlier ones.39

In this depiction of Hetty's world of "narrow thoughts and narrow soul," the theme of secrecy is implicit from the beginning. The first time we see Hetty she is stealing admiring glances at her reflection in the polished furniture and pewter. Later the concrete details of the locked door;
the locked drawer, which hides the earrings and locket; the hidden candles and mirror mark another stage in the growth of Hetty's secret life, which shuts out everyone but Arthur, or rather the romantic image of Arthur as the gentleman who will raise her from dairy-maid to lady. Arthur's inner world becomes increasingly secret too from the first stirring of his passion for Hetty. The strength of his growing temptation which draws him to her is measured by his movements away from Irwine. The secrecy between them begins with the scene in the dairy, and as it grows it darkens like the twilight in the wood where they meet. This growing secrecy progressively shuts out the other characters as well as ourselves from their lives. To enhance this theme, George Eliot limits her point-of-view as the passion between Hetty and Arthur develops. Thus technique becomes inseparable from theme. The effect on us as watchers of this drama is like the gradual extinguishing of a bright light. But the feelings of the lovers toward each other will not bear a strong light. In the first description of the Fir-tree Grove, where Arthur and Hetty meet secretly, George Eliot borrows from her "Little Fable" the imagery of hiding forest nymphs:

\[\text{It is }\] just the sort of wood most haunted by the nymphs: you see their white sunlit limbs gleaming athwart the boughs, or peeping from behind the smooth-sweeping outline of a tall lime. . . . 40
Such images and the later allusions to an Arcadian world suggest the element of unreality in their relationship, the "hazy radiant veil" that encourages their passion but hides the true feelings of each from the other. The passion is real, but it is fed by fantasies that lull Arthur's conscience asleep and silence Hetty's sense of shame.

The secrecy of Hetty and Arthur in the dairy scene is implicitly judged by the openness and freedom between Dinah and Irwine in the following scene. (We may note again George Eliot's use of "adjoining rooms" to point up the contrast.) Perhaps nowhere in Adam Bede is the unity of structure and theme more apparent than in this juxtaposition, for after the scene of secret temptation in the dairy, the characters who would serve as spiritual counselors -- Dinah to Hetty, Irwine to Arthur -- reveal to each other the sympathy and openness which Hetty and Arthur will later reject. The lovers' most decisive actions before they begin to meet in the wood are Hetty's rejection of Dinah and Arthur's failure to confide in Irwine after he has sought him out to do so. These acts are not surrenders to passion; they have the force of commitments.

These deliberate rejections of the spiritual counselors suggest a reversal of the pattern of conversion we have traced in the spiritual autobiographies and in "Janet's Repentance."
We may borrow Kenneth Burke's phrase and say that these rejections mark stages of the "downward conversions" of Hetty and Arthur, which follow in descending order the events of the usual pattern.\textsuperscript{41} I believe that such a view takes more fully into account the characteristics of the relationship and the order of events than does the usual view, which sees it only as another story of the country girl's seduction by the squire of the manor. Thus, in its broadest movement, instead of leading from isolation to eventual communion with others, as the conversions of Janet, and Romola do, the relationship between Hetty and Arthur leads from communion to the complete isolation of each: Arthur retreats from Irvine and Adam until he is finally forced to lie to avoid public shame. We see Hetty after she has discovered her pregnancy, pausing before the dark pool:

No, she has not courage to jump into that cold watery bed, and if she had, they might find her -- they might find out why she had drowned herself. There is but one thing left to her: she must go away, go where they can't find her.\textsuperscript{42}

In turning from Dinah and Irvine, they reject openness and submission for secrecy and personal pride. But even when they believe themselves most happy, there is no communion with each other; their separate secret worlds never really touch. They act as tempters of each other, rather than comforters. He selfishly encourages her to weave her "light
web of folly," just as she in her childish compliance encourages his illusion that he has done nothing that he cannot rectify by compensation. Instead of self-questioning and self-awareness, the relationship encourages their self-deceptions. In this reversal of the traditional conversion experience, there is dramatic movement: the gradual turning inward upon themselves rather than outward to others. To Arthur and Hetty, "others" become questioning eyes to be avoided and voices demanding explanations. Conversion is awakening. But Hetty and Arthur subside into a moral sleep as deep as that induced by Janet's alcoholism and Silas's gold. As we have noted, the progression of feelings during the traditional conversion experience moves upward from despair and helplessness to peace, joy, and finally to love. The feelings of Hetty and Arthur descend from the illusion of love to the despairing helplessness of Hetty during her lonely journey and to the despair of Arthur when he learns that no compensatory action of his can save her.

Before Hetty commits her crime, both she and Arthur are more susceptible to feelings of shame than to guilt. Guilt is self-blame that admits the violation of one's own moral standards and of one's responsibilities to others. The source of disapproval in guilt is oneself.43 Although Arthur has a sense of guilt, it is overcome by his passion
for Hetty and then anesthetized by the opiate of his rationalizations. When George Eliot wrote to Barbara Bodichon that the "highest election and calling is to do without opiates," she meant by "opiates" all falsifications of the truth, especially the truths hidden by comfortable illusions. Arthur's view that he can compensate for any transgression he might make is the opiate that deadens his conscience. To George Eliot the link between triviality and evil is usually the opiate of self-flattering fantasy. Until she abandons her baby, Hetty has no sense of guilt, no private conscience. Her vanity, which has grown from her childhood, has protected her from suffering from any feelings of self-reproach. All the imagery we have noted depicting her fantasy world implies this lack of a private conscience and links it to her vanity.

In contrast with guilt, shame is rooted in the fear of being scorned by others. The root of shame in Old English, meaning "to cover up," suggests secrecy motivated by the fear of discovery. The source of disapproval in shame is society. This distinction between guilt and shame illuminates the first suffering of both Hetty and Arthur, which reflects a fear of public humiliation rather than an admission to themselves of wrongdoing. The greatest dread is public exposure, for George Eliot's Hayslope, like Hawthorne's Boston, is what E. R. Dodds would call a "shame society." This fact may partly explain
the inability of the villagers to understand Dinah's message of sin, repentance, and salvation. In a "shame society," shame is contagious. The first feeling of the Poyser family after Hetty's trial is that they must leave Hayslope. There is no sense of communal guilt, which might lead to forgiveness, only an overwhelming shame that hardens their hearts, apparently permanently, against the offenders. Until Arthur learns of Hetty's crime, he is more fearful of his reputation in the eyes of his future tenants than anxious about harm he may have caused Hetty. (Here Adam's concern for the effect of this "flirtation" on Hetty's future happiness contrasts with Arthur's easy conscience.) Both Arthur and Hetty may be contrasted with Maggie Tulliver in The Mill on the Floss. St. Ogg's is a "shame society" too, but Maggie's knowledge that she is returning to face public scorn counts for nothing against her feelings of guilt, which lead her to return to those she has wronged to ask forgiveness. Tom Tulliver reacts as the Poyzers do toward Hetty when he turns his sister away.

When Hetty discovers her pregnancy, her only thought is to avoid shame in the eyes of the community. This fear drives her to follow Arthur, as a supplicant, and later, during her suffering in the fields, it leads her to try to drown herself rather than return home to face her family and neighbors:
Hetty felt that no one could deliver her from the evils that would make life hateful to her; and no one, she said to herself, should ever know her misery and humiliation. No; she would not confess even to Dinah: she would wander out of sight, and drown herself where her body would never be found, and no one should know what had become of her.48

When she finds the dark pond, she thinks that "in summer, no one could find that it was her body." Every previous act of secrecy that we have noted earlier is recapitulated when Hetty buries her child in the hollow place beneath the tree. She does not mean to kill her child; she wants only to hide it from the world.

During Hetty's "journey in despair," which leads her finally to this action, George Eliot uses circumstantial details that recall the previous images symbolizing Hetty's vanity and self-absorption. The purpose is not just to contrast Hetty's past and present conditions, but to prepare for her later change during the confession scene in the prison. Hetty's eventual submission to Dinah will depend upon her loss of personal pride, the vanity which is the core of her hard self-absorption, and upon her overcoming her fear of shame. Arthur's locket and earrings she sells to the innkeeper at Windsor so she can retrace her steps to Stony-shire, where she thinks Dinah is. Her gold earrings that she wears are now important to her only because of their monetary value.49 The dim, blotched mirror in her bedroom, which she
disliked because it darkened her reflection, is echoed in the
dark pool, in which she does not seek her image but only a
place to die. The terrified spaniel she sees in the wagon on
the road recalls her previous dislike of little creatures, but
now its fear awakens in her a brief feeling of sympathy, for
she sees her own condition in its suffering. It is not far-
etched to think of Lear when Hetty crawls into the hovel in
the field for warm shelter after she has been unable to drown
herself. Hetty too by this point has been stripped of every
vanity and illusion. The laborer whom she finds staring at
her in the morning tells her that she looks "like a wild
woman." She feels that she is "like a beggar already -- found
sleeping in that place." Paradoxically, the same fear of
shame that led her to the pool has been the strongest force
that keeps her going. But after the night in the hovel, she
sinks into a new state of despairing helplessness. Now she
can think of Dinah again.

Hetty had thought of Dinah before during her journey.
At the inn at Windsor, she found Dinah's name in her notebook:

... for the first time she remembered without
indifference the affectionate kindness Dinah had
shown her, and those words of Dinah in the bed-
chamber -- that Hetty must think of her as a friend
in trouble. Suppose she were to go to Dinah, and
ask her to help her? Dinah did not think about things
as other people did: she was a mystery to Hetty, but
Hetty knew she was always kind. She couldn't imagine
Dinah's face turning away from her in dark reproof or
scorn, Dinah's voice willingly speaking ill of her,
or rejoicing in her misery as a punishment. Dinah did not seem to belong to that world of Hetty's whose glance she dreaded like scorching fire. But even to her Hetty shrank from beseeching and confession: she could not prevail on herself to say, "I will go to Dinah"; she only thought of that as a possible alternative, if she had not courage for death. 50

Hetty's memory of Dinah's "pitying eyes" reaches back to the scene in the bedroom when Dinah offered communion, and it is reminiscent of Janet's memory of Tryan's face. This passage makes clear that Hetty's conflict has changed: her struggle is no longer between her fear of death and her fear of shame. It has become a conflict between her fear of shame and her need of pitying love, which Dinah now represents to her. The conflict is unresolved. Hetty's thought of Dinah is the only gesture of faith that she, with her "meager spiritual capacity," can make. But with our previous knowledge of Hetty it appears like a great movement upward, not to God, of whom she has not the haziest notion, but to a human being who possesses the pitying love men seek in God.

Hetty's recurring thoughts of Dinah and her almost unconscious choice of the road toward Stoniton recall the dramatic movement of Janet toward Tryan and anticipate Romola's irregularly returning memories of Savonarola, which prepare for her submission and conversion. In Felix Holt and Daniel Deronda, George Eliot returns again to this use of memories that motivate a movement to submission and
and confession. In Middlemarch she ironically reverses this pattern of experience in Dorothea's disillusioning relationship with Casaubon. The situation is the same in all five works: the need, whether conscious or unconscious, of the troubled soul to find spiritual direction or comfort from an acknowledged superior. Sometimes the drama of the relationship arises from the difficulty of acknowledging the master, as in Romola and in Felix Holt, where Esther's final admission of Felix's superiority has the gravity of a religious affirmation. In all these works the greatest conflict grows out of the barriers, psychological and social, between the communion of master and disciple.

In the light of Jung's theory of archetypes, this pattern suggests variations of a universal religious experience, the search for a spiritual master or even for God.

Perhaps no other novelist uses the physical movements of characters to the extent that George Eliot does to represent feelings and attitudes that have moral significance. Movements of approach or withdrawal, commitment or denial, submission or rejection, indicate the moral progress or failure of characters. In Adam Bede, for example, the relationships among the four main characters are suggested by what we might call the "morality of movement." I have already suggested something of this sort in Arthur's movements away
from Irwine and Adam and finally from Hetty. In contrast, Arthur moves toward Hetty twice: when he goes to wait for her in the wood the first time and, much later, after he has read Irwine's letter about her trial. The first movement represents the failure of his conscience; the second the awakening of his guilt and repentance. George Eliot explicitly contrasts them by having them both begin in the same place, Arthur's dressing room. Dinah's characteristic movement is toward others; only twice does she momentarily withdraw, because of her growing love for Adam, which she must reconcile with her religious calling. Adam's moral growth in the novel is underlined by his approach to Arthur after he has withdrawn completely from him and later by his movement toward Dinah. Hetty's moral life is dramatized first by her turning toward Arthur from Dinah and then from Arthur toward Dinah. When Dinah opens her arms to Hetty in the prison, the single step that Hetty takes to reach her completes that first tentative "turning" begun in the inn at Windsor.

Before Hetty's confession to Dinah in the prison, we see her at the trial through the eyes of Bartle Massey and Adam. Bartle describes her visible shame in the court when Martin Poyser appears:
. . . when she heard her uncle's name, there seemed to go a shiver right through her; and when they told him to look at her, she hung her head down and cowered, and hid her face in her hands.52

But after this response, she subsides into a numb despair unbroken even when Sarah Stone describes the birth of the baby and Hetty's flight with it the next day: "no word seemed to arrest her ear." Hetty has not yet admitted the birth of the child and has refused to break her silence even to Irvine. But the words of the next witness, John Olding, the laborer who found the dead baby partially buried under the nut-tree, penetrate her despair and evoke a new response:

. . . the sound of the next witness's voice touched a chord that was still sensitive; she gave a start and a frightened look towards him, but immediately turned away her head and looked down at her hands as before.53

When he describes how he found the baby, Hetty awakens once more: "She was visibly trembling: now, for the first time, she seemed to be listening to what a witness said." That these responses to Olding's words indicate Hetty's consciousness of her guilt is confirmed by her words to Dinah during the scene of the confession. Her feelings of shame are for a moment, just the length of Olding's testimony, overcome by the voice of her conscience, a voice that she hears as the cry of the baby. Although Hetty does not speak during this scene, George Eliot suggests through her silent responses
that her conflict has become a contest between her shame, which bids her deny, and her guilt, which bids her confess. Unable to resolve this conflict herself, she lapses into her "blank, hard indifference," the despairing stupor that protects her as snow "protects" a freezing person before the "letting go," which is death.

In the prison, Hetty's response to Dinah is the type of awakening and opening to a higher influence that we have traced in the traditional conversion experiences. Hetty's movements, physical and emotional, are upward and outward. When Dinah enters the dark cell, Hetty, "with her face buried in her knees," is like the hunched form of an unconscious embryo. In this climactic scene of the novel, Hetty's posture, movements, and speech, her total response to Dinah, recall those traditional symbols of Christian conversion: "awakening" and "new birth." Her physical response to Dinah's first words anticipates her later submission and repentance. First she makes a "slight movement," then uncovers her face and raises her eyes, and finally makes the single step forward. To appreciate George Eliot's artistry in the description of these simple actions, we must recall all the previous actions of Hetty that are contrasted with them -- not just her covering her face when she heard her uncle's name but her raising her eyes to Arthur in the wood.
Here her timid movements, more instinctual than conscious, have the significance of a religious act. From this point, Hetty's response to Dinah's pity progresses from despair to a complete submission that is an acceptance of love.

But the love that Dinah offers Hetty is inseparable from her desire to save Hetty's soul:

'Cast it off now, Hetty -- now: confess the wickedness you have done -- the sin you have been guilty of against your heavenly Father. Let us kneel down together, for we are in the presence of God.'

Hetty obeyed Dinah's movement, and sank on her knees. They still held each other's hands, and there was long silence. Then Dinah said --

'Hetty, we are before God: he is waiting for you to tell the truth.'

Still there was silence. At last Hetty spoke, in a tone of beseeching, --

'Dinah... help me... I can't feel anything like you... my heart is hard.'

After Dinah's fervent prayer to the "mighty Saviour" to "Melt the hard heart," Hetty makes her confession. Her first words make articulate her earlier response to John Olding in the court:

'I did it, Dinah... I buried it in the wood... the little baby... and it cried... I heard it cry... ever such a way off... all night... and I went back because it cried.'

The cry of the baby was the cry of her own sense of guilt, which the thought of this act awakened in her before she did it. The conflict between her guilt and shame is evident when she describes how she looked for a place to hide the baby:
'I seemed to hate it -- it was like a heavy weight hanging round my neck; and yet its crying went through me, and I daredn't look at its little hands and face.\textsuperscript{56}

The older feeling, the fear of shame which compelled her to try to make things as they had been (she thought that without the baby she could go back to her old life at the Hall Farm), led her to place it in the "hole under the nut-tree, like a little grave." But her new feeling of guilt, the private conscience born of this act, pulled her back:

'And I made haste out of the wood, but I could hear it crying all the while; and when I got out into the fields, it was as if I was held fast -- I couldn't go away, for all I wanted to go.\textsuperscript{57}

After she was frightened from the field by John Olding, she returned to the village, still hearing the baby's cry. That night in the barn, the cry kept awakening her, and when it was light the baby's crying made her return to the place in the wood. Her feeling of guilt had become stronger than her fear of being discovered, and her thought of returning home without the baby had gone out of her mind.

'I saw nothing but that place in the wood where I buried the baby. ... I see it now. O Dinah! shall I allays see it?\textsuperscript{58}

Retracing her steps to the wood, Hetty "could hear it crying at every step. ..." But when she found the baby gone, she relapsed into the wooden despair, the silent deadlock between shame and guilt, which was not broken until she heard John
Olding's testimony. The final words of Hetty's confession at last make articulate her acknowledgment of guilt and her plea for the pity of forgiveness:

'Dinah, do you think God will take away that crying and the place in the wood, now I've told everything?'

George Eliot carried out her original intention in making Hetty's confession the crisis of her conversion and the climax of the novel. As such, it is broadly similar to Janet's experience with Tryan, but there is an important difference deriving from the differences between Hetty and Janet. Janet's conversion, like Silas Marner's, is partly a moral and religious recovery, a recapturing of a better self and a lost faith. But in Hetty's conversion George Eliot dramatizes an experience that is much more painful and much more like a miracle, though in having been carefully prepared for it is not instantaneous. Hetty's conversion is not a recovery but it is an "unselfing" such as E. D. Starbuck described when he defined conversion:

Conversion is primarily an unselfing. The first birth of the individual is into his own little world . . . . But in conversion the person emerges from a smaller, limited world of existence into a larger world of being.

Hetty's "unselfing" is, as we have seen, the loss of her vanity (her "own little world") and her fear of public shame through her long suffering and her tragically-won sense of
guilt. These losses force upon her the recognition of a
"larger world of being." After Hetty's confession, Dinah
describes her to Adam:

'Although her poor soul is very dark, and discerns
little beyond the things of the flesh, she is no
longer hard: she is contrite -- she has confessed
all to me. The pride of her heart has given way,
and she leans on me for help, and desires to be
taught. . . . .'61

Dinah's words emphasize that Hetty's conversion is a miracle
limited by her "meager spiritual capacity".62 The "larger
world of being" she enters is large only in contrast with
her own former world. In "Janet's Repentance," Janet is
able through Tryan's sympathy to make "that stronger leap
by which faith grasps the idea of the divine sympathy."
Hetty has not the spiritual capacity to make such a leap:
her response is limited to the "visible sign of love and
pity" that she sees in the face of Dinah Morris. Throughout
the novel, George Eliot has emphasized the spiritual distance
between Hetty and Dinah, and she retains this distance as she
depicts their religious experiences in these scenes. Hetty's
faith in Dinah parallels Dinah's faith in Christ; Hetty's
awareness of Dinah's love, made known to her in look, touch,
and words, parallels Dinah's awareness of the Divine Love and
and Pity in her heart. These two planes of religious
experience meet in a bond of human love:
She was clinging close to Dinah; her cheek was against Dinah's. It seemed as if her last faint strength and hope lay in that contact; and the pitying love that shone out from Dinah's face looked like a visible pledge of the Invisible Mercy. Such passages as this recall all the previous allusions to Dinah's maternalism and Hetty's childishness, for the love that develops between Dinah and Hetty becomes that of a mother and child. An earlier passage illuminates the nature of Dinah's sympathy and her capacity for vicarious suffering:

... 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. ...  

The contemporary Evangelical theologian H. R. Mackintosh uses the analogy of a child and his mother to explain how a child comes to understand the idea of Divine forgiveness. Hetty's understanding cannot reach so far. Hetty's attitude toward Dinah is that of a child who accepts forgiveness from a mother who is neither taskmaster nor judge. Dinah's arms open before Hetty has spoken a word. It is Dinah's forgiveness expressed in the warmth of human contact that breaks Hetty's "hard obstinancy" and leads her to open her heart, not to God, but to Dinah. Not long after the publication of Adam Bede, George Eliot wrote to Charles Bray of her concern to present truthfully "that which is essentially human in all forms of belief. ..." Such a concern underlies her
treatment of Hetty's conversion and Dinah's Methodism.

The change in Hetty extends beyond her acceptance and return of Dinah's love. Her sensitivity to others who have suffered has widened too, as we see in her recognition of Adam's suffering when he comes to the prison on the last morning. Even so, her recognition of the change in him arouses a fear for herself that brings her attention back to her own past suffering and her present condition. Dinah must prompt her to express her repentance and to ask Adam's forgiveness. Her final request of Adam is that he speak to Arthur:

'...tell him... I hated him and cursed him once... but Dinah says, I should forgive him... and I try... for else God won't forgive me.'

Hetty's childlike words of forgiveness, the final confirmation of her conversion and fittingly the last words she speaks in the novel, prepare for the following scene between Adam and Arthur when they meet the following day at Donnithorne Chase.

In a sense, Adam Bede is a study of human forgiveness. Adam's moral growth is an upward curve plotted against his hard-won victories over his self-righteousness and his unrelenting hardness toward the failures of others. His strong conscience tells him too late of his hardness toward his father's weakness, but his knowledge of Hetty's suffering
and his love for her lead him to forgive her long before she
can ask him to. Adam's forgiveness of Hetty is the standard
by which we judge the inflexible judgment of the Poysers:

'I'll stand by her -- I'll own her -- for all she's
been deceitful. They oughtn't to cast her off --
her own flesh and blood. We hand folks over to God's
mercy, and show none ourselves. I used to be hard
sometimes; I'll never be hard again.68

Although we are told that Adam's suffering, like Hetty's and
Arthur's, is a "baptism, a regeneration, the initiation into
a new state," this resolve never to be hard again is put to
the greatest test when he meets Arthur after Hetty's
reprieve.

In the Grove, where he thinks he is walking for the
last time before leaving Hayslope with the Poysers, he feels
for a moment a return of the old affection he had felt for
Arthur before he had learned the truth about him, but he does
not believe that he can hold these feelings again except for
a memory: "It was the affection for the dead: that Arthur
existed no longer." Adam cannot feel "the presence of the
cherished child even in the debased, degraded man...." But
when he meets Arthur a few moments later, he first notices
the change in him, and the desire to force Arthur to suffer
for the misery he has caused dies at the signs of this change.

Adam knew what suffering was -- he could not lay a
cruel finger on a bruised man. He felt no impulse
that he needed to resist: silence was more just
than reproach.69
But silence is not forgiveness. Adam's intention is still to leave Hayslope with the Poysers so that he can end all relations with Arthur. Though anger has died, his pride and his suspicion that Arthur's decision to leave the estate to enter the army is an easy attempt to compensate for his guilt evoke the "old severity." He speaks for himself and the Poysers when he says:

The time's past for that, sir. A man should make sacrifices to keep clear of doing a wrong; sacrifices won't undo it when it's done. When people's feelings have got a deadly wound, they can't be cured with favours.70

Adam's words make Arthur feel with fresh force the impossibility of compensation: "There's a sort of damage, sir, that can't be made up for." Adam's detestation of the idea that all wrongs can be righted through some means of compensation, the basis of Arthur's rationalizations when he seduced Hetty, represents George Eliot's own view. A little more than a year before she began Adam Bede she wrote to John Chapman: "I have long wanted to fire away at the doctrine of Compensation, which I detest, considered as a theory of life."71

But Arthur has already learned the inadequacy of his earlier view. His realization of his guilt and his genuine repentance for the suffering he has caused Hetty, the Poysers, and Adam are stronger than the proud anger aroused by Adam's
hardness. When he continues to plead with Adam to stay and to persuade the Poysers to stay, Adam's immediate anger is again subdued. But Adam does not yet speak. His painful conflict has just begun between two memories which evoke opposing feelings: the memory of his old love for Arthur and the memory of Arthur's guilt that destroyed that love. While Arthur pleads, his words recall to Adam the former hardness he showed toward his father. Then his feelings of forgiveness toward his father and toward Hetty are reawakened to merge with a new feeling of forgiveness toward Arthur that overcomes his hard resistance. His turning toward Arthur signifies his new attitude, and he makes his confession:

... I said I'd never be hard to anybody myself again. But feeling overmuch about her has perhaps made me unfair to you. I've known what it is in my life to repent and feel it's too late: I felt I'd been too harsh to my father when he was gone from me -- I feel it now, when I think of him. I've no right to be hard towards them as have done wrong and repent.72

Adam's forgiveness, which makes possible the return of the old affection between them, prompts Arthur's repentant confession. Adam's act of forgiveness belongs to a different moral order from his earlier abandonment of his desire for revenge. His overcoming that desire, in which he was helped by Irwine's reminding him of his once uncontrollable anger, was an act of self-mastery. But it left unchanged his hard
resentment and scorn. It was not forgiveness. Adam now feels "his own pain merged in sympathy for Arthur." His forgiveness, when it comes, is unqualified: the chance meeting in the woods ends as complete communion.

H. R. Mackintosh sought a valid analogy of one man's forgiveness of another which would serve as a key to a partial understanding of God's forgiveness of man. He looked especially for accounts of forgiveness, biographical or fictional, in which a man forgives a former friend for a deep injury to himself or to a loved one, so that he could study the inward experience of the forgiver and the forgiven. Finding that moral psychologists had nothing to say about this important Christian experience, he supposed that a study of Shakespeare and Dostoievsky might shed some light on "what goes on in the forgiver's mind." One regrets that he did not know this episode in Adam Bede, where George Eliot dramatizes the experience he studied.

Even so, Mackintosh's discussion, which is based mainly on his study of Christ's forgiveness, is helpful in interpreting Adam's experience. The change in Adam is not just in his outward behavior toward Arthur. George Eliot shows that forgiveness is a mental act that is neither painless nor easy. Adam neither can nor should ignore the reality of Arthur's guilt; he will never forget what has
changed to him. It is no longer a source of estrangement because Adam can reach beyond the wrong to knit up the old ties of affection. His act of forgiveness springs from and is shaped by the suffering of both. George Eliot suggests that suffering is presupposed in forgiveness: it is the bond of suffering, the mutual recognition of the other's suffering that deepens Arthur's repentance and awakens Adam's sympathy. Both men sacrifice their pride when they reach out to each other. The drama in this episode is the movement of Adam's feelings as they reach out to Arthur in recognition of the old friend. Adam's sympathy finally puts him where Arthur is. In such vicarious suffering, there is something of the sacrificial. Mackintosh concludes:

Let the man be found who has undergone the shattering experience of pardoning, nobly and tenderly, some awful wrong to himself, still more to one beloved by him, and he will understand the meaning of Calvary better than all the theologians in the world.74

I said earlier in this chapter that goodness in Adam Bede is an active force that overcomes hardened hearts. To that I would add now that the act of forgiveness, whether tentative and prompted as Hetty's or unconditional as Adam's, is represented as the supreme moral act. Although it does not compensate for or eliminate evil, it does "rob evil of its power of alienation" and leads to communion. The great theme of Evangelical sermons from Wesley's day onwards was
Divine Forgiveness, just as it is the climax of Dinah's misunderstodont sermon on the green and her prayer for Hetty in the prison. When he was describing his conversion, Wesley remembered that his first thought after feeling his "heart strangely warmed" was forgiveness of his former enemies.

In this scene between Adam and Arthur, the traditional conversion experience is suggested by the movements from isolation to communion, the mutual confessions, the "turnings" toward each other, and the new feelings of peace that make the sorrow of both more bearable. And underlying this scene is the general truth that George Eliot retained from her Evangelicalism that personal fellowship is the basis of individual moral growth, as it is the beginning of Hetty's moral life and Silas's moral recovery. This belief underlies all her portrayals of the master-disciple relationship as well as her studies of the isolated individual such as Silas and Tito Melema. The isolated man loses not only the opportunity for moral growth through sympathetic fellowship with others but also the "contagion of richer souls," which can arouse the courage for the leap of faith.
Chapter V

The Spiritual Progress of Maggie Tulliver
Most critics of *The Mill on the Floss* have viewed it in two parts, childhood and adulthood, a view that seems to be supported by George Eliot's reference in a letter to François D'Albert-Durade to the childhood section and the last section.¹ But it appears to me that the structure of the novel is based on a division into three parts depicting the childhood, adolescence, and adulthood of Tom and Maggie Tulliver. The childhood section clearly ends with the Miltonic passage which concludes Book II, when Tom and Maggie go "forth together into their new life of sorrow. . . . and the golden gates of their childhood had forever closed behind them." Books V and VI, the last sections, show Tom and Maggie as adults in the adult world. Books III and IV, the central section of the novel, should be viewed as a transitional section that bridges the child and adult worlds because here we follow the development of Tom and Maggie from adolescence to adulthood. In this section George Eliot contrasts their first ineffectual responses to the new life they have been ill-prepared to enter, and, by emphasizing their different responses (responses which we could predict since we have learned to know them so well as children) she anticipates the future barriers that will divide them when they are adults. In Books III and IV, Tom and Maggie are seeking answers that will help them to cope with their
feelings of helplessness. For the first time both realize that they are not able to run away to the gypsies or to the river to escape from the uncomfortable demanding world represented by their aunts and uncles, a world which in childhood had meant only temporary moments of unpleasantness that could often be evaded. The acceptance by Tom and Maggie of the world represented by the Gleggs and Pullets as the world they must live in, and their acceptance by it, is one way that George Eliot portrays their entrance into maturity. For no youthful illusions or rebellions are tolerated in this world of usefulness, family responsibility, and social duty.

But just as George Eliot indicates that Tom and Maggie leave the world of childhood together when they learn of their father's poverty and his illness and become for the first time fully aware of their parents' weaknesses, she shows their separate entries into the adult world and thus lays down the diverging paths of their adult lives. We are not surprised that Tom is able to accept the demands of adulthood before Maggie does. Tom leaves the safety of adolescent dependence when he takes a man's job in the warehouse and assumes the responsibilities of supporting the family and repaying his father's debts. Hard as it is for him to give up his former daydreams of cutting a figure with a fine horse,
the best dogs and guns, his acceptance of duty is easier than Maggie's because his duty is clearly laid down for him and the future he works toward offers definite rewards. His path is also easier because of his unimaginative, practical temperament, which knows none of Maggie's emotional conflicts and vague aspirations. Tom's entrance into manhood follows the familiar pattern of entering into the working-day world and finding a vocation there. But Maggie cannot reach maturity by the same door; for the first time in the novel she cannot "follow Tom." From this point, the end of Book IV, the rest of their history continues to trace the increasing divergence of their thoughts and feelings, which culminates in Tom's refusal to look at Maggie when she returns as a suppliant from her elopement with Stephen Guest.

George Eliot dramatizes Maggie's emergence from adolescence as a religious conversion. Significantly, the title of this section is taken from Pilgrim's Progress: "The Valley of Humiliation." In the Valley of Humiliation, Apollyon's accusations of pride lead Christian to face his infirmities: "thou art inwardly desirous of vain Glory in all that thou sayest or doest." To this Christian replies: "All this is true and much more, which thou hast left out...." His humility is his victory over the selfishness of his past
life in Apollyon's city. But this victory does not lead at once to the Holy City: having experienced his first great spiritual crisis he must then pass through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. Conversion is continuous process.

The devotional book that John Wesley described as marking the beginning of his spiritual life at Oxford figures in the same way as an awakening book in the conversion of Maggie Tulliver. In the chapter titled "A Voice from the Past," which ends the "Valley of Humiliation" section, Maggie discovers Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ* among a little pile of old books which Bob Jakin has brought her. (Also among these books is John Keble's *The Christian Year*, a best-seller in Evangelical circles, which George Eliot refers to often in her letters to Maria Lewis.) We have already noted that George Eliot continued to read Thomas's *Imitation* long after she had turned from Christianity to agnosticism; it was apparently a book that continued to give her comfort in those years when she was striving to "live without opiates."

In this chapter describing Maggie's response to Thomas's *Imitation*, occurs her first spiritual crisis, which signifies the start of her most crucial and permanent psychological and moral change. Maggie's awakening begins in much the same way as John Wesley's experience when he first read Thomas's
Imitation. Before Maggie discovers the "little, old, clumsy book," she is in that state of despair that George Eliot described in a letter to Sara Hennell as "moral asphyxia," a condition of despairing loneliness wherein a person feels himself isolated from God and from all human fellowship. Such a condition of despair, which stems from feelings of guilt, unworthiness, and rejection, is perhaps the most intense kind of spiritual suffering that George Eliot represents in her novels. We have already noted that such a condition of spiritual isolation preceded Janet Dempster's conversion. In the later novels, four other heroines -- Romola, Esther Lyon, Dorothea Brooke, and Gwendolen Harleth -- pass through such a "valley of humiliation" in their spiritual progress toward conversion or repentance. This feeling of spiritual isolation, as expressed in the despairing cry of St. Augustine, the self-loathing of Bunyan, and the self-punishment of Wesley, lasted until it gave way to a new feeling of assurance or joy. But despair might return again and even become a permanently recurring experience as it did in the lives of Bunyan, Wesley, and Wilberforce, and as it does in the life of Maggie Tulliver.

George Eliot describes Maggie's spiritual suffering in several passages, but the following one shows us how carefully she presents it as Maggie's suffering and no other
character's.

The discouragement deepened as the days went on, and the eager heart gained faster and faster on the patient mind. ... She rebelled against her lot, she fainted under its loneliness, and fits even of anger and hatred towards her father and mother, who were so unlike what she would have them to be -- towards Tom, who checked her, and met her thought or feeling always by some thwarting difference -- would flow out over her affections and conscience like a lava stream, and frighten her with the sense that it was not difficult for her to become a demon.³

Maggie Tulliver's suffering is caused by a sense of alienation, not from a loving God, but from human fellowship and love, and her great need is a resigned acceptance of her lot which will permit her to live unselfishly without the support of human love. One could argue that George Eliot's humanism lies behind her depiction of Maggie's spiritual isolation, but it is unnecessary to do so. George Eliot explains Maggie's despair when she describes the home life of the Tullivers and Maggie's religious ignorance. And I think it is clearly unjustifiable to say that George Eliot approves uncritically of Maggie's "vague spiritual yearnings," as F. R. Leavis and others have done.⁴ Maggie's spiritual yearnings are necessarily vague: her only encounter with Christianity has been with that narrow, pragmatic Calvinism accepted unquestioningly by the Dodsons, and its "hard dry questions of Christian doctrine gave her no strength."

George Eliot sympathizes with Maggie's religious inexperience
and ignorance when she says that Maggie was "unhappily quite without that knowledge of the irreversible laws within and without her, which, governing the habits, becomes morality, and, developing the feelings of submission and dependence, becomes religion. . . ." But such sympathy is not uncritical approval. Maggie's religious yearnings are necessarily vague because they reach from no clearly defined belief and because she has no spiritual director and confessor to help her formulate such a belief. But she is conscious of her ignorance, which prompts her to seek in Tom's old school books for "some key that would enable her to understand, and, in understanding, endure, the heavy weight that had fallen on her young heart," and later to turn to the books that Bob Jakin has brought her. Maggie's search, which accidentally leads her to Thomas's Imitation of Christ, follows the same path that led Wesley to read a Kempis and Law, and George Eliot herself to read the Life of Wilberforce. Maggie follows a familiar path in her search for spiritual guidance in what lies at hand.

George Eliot dramatizes Maggie's response to Thomas a Kempis's book as an individual experience and at the same time makes us aware that Maggie's experience follows a universal pattern of spiritual need and awakening. Maggie's conversion is represented as a dramatic meeting with a human
voice and hand. She forgets that she is reading and seems to be aware of a human presence near her speaking in a quiet voice. As she reads, she follows the ink marks beside certain passages made by "some hand, now for ever quiet." Maggie's sense of isolation is the same kind of experience described in the spiritual autobiographies, but the feelings she struggles with derive from her own temperament, her unhappy relations with her family, and the limitations of her own experience and environment. The passage could describe no character's feelings but her own. Dorothea, for example, who most resembles Maggie, is incapable of Maggie's intense rebellion and moments of hatred, though she too feels terror at her resentful feelings toward Casaubon. Maggie's suffering before her conversion differs also in one important respect from that of Bunyan, Wesley, and the other religious writers. The most intense suffering of these men resulted from their feeling that they were alienated from God by their own unworthiness. Their sense of being cut off from human fellowship followed from this greater alienation. Their suffering, then, was defined by their religious beliefs.

This "low voice" and "quiet hand" appear to Maggie to belong to an "invisible Teacher," "a supreme Teacher... waiting to be heard." By suggesting the presence of a spiritual master who provides "insight, and strength and conquest" through the
"direct communication of a human soul's belief and experience,"
George Eliot suggests the same relationship between a disciple
and master that appears in "Janet's Repentance" and in the
spiritual autobiographies. She emphasizes the universality
of Maggie's experience when she pauses in the narrative to
comment on Thomas's book.

...it remains to all time a lasting record of
human needs and human consolations; the voice of
a brother who, ages ago, felt and suffered and
renounced — in the cloister, perhaps, with serge
gown and tonsured head, with much chanting and
long fasts, and with a fashion of speech different
from ours — but under the same silent far-off
heavens, and with the same passionate desires, the
same strivings, the same failures, the same weariness. 6

When Maggie begins to "listen" to Thomas's message of
renunciation with its promise of inward peace and tranquility,
a "strange thrill of awe" passes through her "as if she had
been awakened in the night by a strain of solemn music,
telling of beings whose souls had been astir while hers was
in stupor." The word "awakened" denotes the beginning of
Maggie's conversion experience as the word "stupor" suggests
that her previous moral condition was a selfish sleep. In a
passage in Middlemarch George Eliot says: "We are all of us
born in moral stupidity, taking the world as an udder to feed
our supreme selves. . . ." 7 George Eliot's use of the words
stupor and stupidity recalls Milton's description of Satan in
Paradise Lost; the words connote a stunned or dazed condition, a
paralyzed lack of movement, which contrasts with the active
moral awareness of "beings whose souls had been astir. . . ."
These passages tell us something of George Eliot's widest
conception of the moral life as activity and process as con-
trasted with her conception of its opposite, selfishness, as
stasis or paralysis. These conceptions of good and evil —
for George Eliot follows St. Augustine in regarding selfish-
ness as the greatest evil — underlie her creation of the
"extreme" characters in her novels: those who actively seek
a higher moral life and those who choose to remain in "moral
stupidity." At one end of a moral scale are such characters
as Tryan, Adam, Romola, Felix, Dorothea, and Maggie, whose
inward thoughts and outward actions, during their best
moments, are marked by a conscious striving to turn from their
own selfishness. And this attempt is not portrayed just in
the conversions each of these characters undergoes, but in
the wider social worlds they belong to through their relations
with other characters. George Eliot's view of moral develop-
ment as a continuous process is basically the same as the view
of conversion as a continuous turning described in the spirit-
ual autobiographies. She was able to reconcile this view with
her belief in organic evolution. At the other end of the moral
scale are such characters as Casaubon, Rosamond, Bulstrode, Mrs.
Transome, and Grandcourt. These supreme egotists seldom stir from
their moral stupidity in the face of an urgent plea for help or for moral decision.

The passages from Thomas's *Imitation* that do most to turn Maggie Tulliver from her state of passive "moral stupidity" are those that stress the renunciation of self-love and the patient endurance of suffering. Maggie reads these words:

Know that the love of thyself doth hurt thee more than anything in the world. . . . If thou sekest this or that, and wouldst be here or there to enjoy thy own will and pleasure, thou shalt never be quiet nor free from care: for in everything somewhat will be wanting, and in every place there will be some that will cross thee. . . . Both above and below, which way soever thou dost turn thee, everywhere thou shalt find the Cross; and everywhere of necessity thou must have patience, if thou wilt have inward peace, and enjoy an everlasting crown. . . . If thou desire to mount unto this height, thou must set out courageously, and lay the axe to the root, that thou mayst pluck up and destroy that hidden inordinate inclination to thyself, and unto all private and earthly good. On this sin, that a man inordinately loveth himself, almost all dependeth, whatsoever is thoroughly to be overcome; which evil being once overcome and subdued, there will presently ensue great peace and tranquillity. . . . Forsake thyself, resign thyself, and thou shalt enjoy much inward peace. . . .

As she reads these words, Maggie does not feel the divine presence and does not believe that she does. She hears only a human "voice out of the far-off middle ages. . . . the direct communication of a human soul's belief and experience. . . ."

which speaks to her own deepest needs. John Bunyan responded
in much the same way to another "old book" when he first read

Martin Luther's *Commentary on Galatians*:

But before I had got thus far out of these my temptations, I did greatly long to see some ancient Godly man's Experience, who had writ some hundred of years before I was born. . . . Well, after many such longings in my mind, the God in whose hands are all our days and ways, did cast into my hand, one day, a book of Martin Luther. . . . so old that it was ready to fall piece from piece, if I did but turn it over. Now I was pleased much that such an old book had fallen into my hand; the which, when I had but a little way perused, I found my condition in his experience, so largely and so profoundly handled, as if his Book had been written out of my heart. . . .

Perhaps George Eliot reminds us that Maggie is ignorant of "doctrines and systems -- of mysticism or quietism," to emphasize that Maggie's experience has nothing of the supernatural in it and to imply, as she did in the experience of Janet Dempster, that religious conversion does not depend upon a particular belief or dogma. Even when she presents Maggie's experience directly she presents it as a wholly human experience: the emotional response of one human being to another, disciple to teacher, which leads to a new motive dependent on a conscious turning from self. Maggie submits herself as wholly to the "invisible Teacher" as Janet Dempster does to Tryan:

Maggie drew a long breath and pushed her heavy hair back, as if to see a sudden vision more clearly. Here, then, was a secret of life that
would enable her to renounce all other secrets — here was insight, and strength, and conquest, to be won by means entirely within her own soul, where a supreme Teacher was waiting to be heard. 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; and for the first time she saw the possibility of shifting the position from which she looked at the gratification of her own desires, of taking her stand out of herself, and looking at her own life as an insignificant part of a divinely-guided whole. She read on and on in the old book, devouring eagerly the dialogues with the invisible Teacher. . . .

This submission, and the new feelings of strength and inward peace that follow it, are the turning point in Maggie's moral progress. The experience is proved in the real changes in Maggie's feelings and actions that follow. Bunyan tells us that his neighbors "were amazed" at "such a great and famous alteration in my life and manners; and indeed so it was, though yet I knew not Christ." The change in Maggie is first apparent to her family and later to Philip Wakem:

That new inward life of hers, notwithstanding some volcanic upheavings, of imprisoned passions, yet shown out in her face. . . . Her mother felt the change in her with a sort of puzzled wonder that Maggie should be "growing up so good"; it was amazing that this once "contrary" child was become so submissive, so backward to assert her own will.

But these changes are the immediate "fruits of conversion." George Eliot stresses the permanent importance of Maggie's encounter with Thomas à Kempis through whom she
"found an effort and a hope that helped her through years of loneliness, making out a faith for herself without the aid of established authorities and appointed guides -- for they were not at hand, and her need was pressing."

I think that we must consider Maggie's later conflicts and final tragedy against her conversion experience. To say this is to suggest that her story should be read, not as a romantic tragedy of the Jane Eyre type, but as a realistic novel which follows the main outlines of spiritual biography. This view takes the main movement in the novel to be Maggie's spiritual progress, which follows the traditional pattern we have noted. We can discern the three stages of this movement in Maggie's history: the period before conversion (childhood), the conversion experience itself (adolescence), and the period following conversion (maturity).

If we ask how the portrayal of Maggie as a child fits into this pattern of spiritual progress, other than designating the childhood section as the pre-conversion period, I would suggest that Maggie as a child is George Eliot's representation of the Puritan idea of the unregenerate child -- neither moral nor immoral; but innocent in the sense of inexperienced, not virtuous; natural in the sense of morally neutral, unawakened. Such a view of Maggie as a child is supported, I think, by her capriciousness and wildness and by
her most notable characteristic as a child: her rebellious insistence on going her own way to follow her impulsive feelings. Such qualities, of course, tempered by her affectionate demonstrativeness, make her lovable more often than not, to George Eliot and to us. But that she is outside the worlds of adult social convention and of moral choice in her own world of natural feeling and impulse is shown through her actions and in those scenes where she is literally isolated either by her own wish or by the dictates of adults or Tom. To her Aunts Pullet and Glegg, Maggie is always the "unnatural child", a "wild thing," a view sorrowfully held by Mrs. Tulliver when Maggie is most capricious. The child Maggie would find her most congenial companions, not in Lucy Deane and Tom, but in three other unregenerate children of nature: the young Heathcliff and Cathy and Hawthorne's Little Pearl.

The spiritual autobiographies treat the period after conversion as a series of temptations and describe the individual's struggle with his conscience and his consequent victory or fall. Bunyan and Wesley, as typical spokesmen of Puritanism and Evangelicalism, insist that man is always subject to temptation because the self that we were continues to live on within us. If man succumbs to temptation, the "new self" awakened during conversion is overcome. The old
term is "backsliding." His moral defeat is a relapse or, in the theological term, a falling from grace. Divorced from theology, his succumbing to temptation is a relapse into moral sleep, that unawakened condition of selfishness or "moral stupidity," which to George Eliot is a betrayal of the higher self discovered during conversion.

The titles of the last two books of The Mill on the Floss, "Wheat and Tares" and "The Great Temptation," suggest this post-conversion stage of temptations followed by moral victories and fallings:

Maggie's life-struggles had lain almost entirely within her own soul, one shadowy army fighting another, and the slain shadows for ever rising again.¹²

To accept this view of the basic design of the novel helps us to understand George Eliot's intention in her portrayal of Maggie's love affairs with Philip Wakem and Stephen Guest although it does not take us far in understanding the complexity of the choices Maggie must make, especially in her relationship with Philip.

When Maggie begins to meet Philip secretly in the Red Deeps, she is still following the careful path of renunciation and asceticism, which she recognized in Thomas à Kempis as the best means of controlling her selfish feelings of discontent with her lot and her resentful feelings toward Tom and her parents. Her rejection of all pleasure is true to her
extravagant temper and suggests her deeper fear that her old longings for personal happiness will submerge the "new self" she has discovered. By subduing her longings for the unattainable -- culture, education, comfort, and love -- she has found a tranquil peace in a joyless but an unselfish life. Her conscience tells her the secret meetings with Philip are wrong because the discovery of them would do irremediable harm to her father, whose hatred of the older Wakem has grown into a permanent obsession. Yet this same conscience condemns her father's feelings, although she recognizes them as an unalterable circumstance standing between her and Philip. The memory of her father's past suffering and her imagining the future suffering she may cause him speak through the "low voice" of the spiritual teacher that qualifies her happiness in Philip's companionship. Maggie never overcomes the feelings of guilt that arise because the meetings are secret:

It seemed to her inclination, that to see Philip now and then, and keep up the bond of friendship with him, was something not only innocent, but good; perhaps she might really help him to find contentment, as she had found it. The voice that said this made sweet music to Maggie; but athwart it there came an urgent monotonous warning from another voice which she had been learning to obey: the warning that such interviews implied secrecy -- implied doing something she would dread to be discovered in -- something that, if discovered, must cause anger and pain; and that the admission of anything so near doublessness would act as a spiritual blight.
To George Eliot, as to Hawthorne, secrecy of thought or action invariably implies insincerity or betrayal, as its opposite, open confession, represents moral healing and recovery.

The scenes with Philip in Book V, except the last one, are presented as a series of temptations with Philip in the role of tempter, who holds out to Maggie a revival of those dreams of warm human companionship and who promises "an opening in the rocky wall which shut in the narrow valley of humiliation" to some of the "memory-haunting delights" of music and literature. Philip tempts her with music, and music becomes a symbol of Maggie's old feelings that can lull the low voice of conscience. We see this symbol for the first time in the above passage where it is the "sweet Music" of Philip's voice arousing Maggie's old longings that is the potent tempter. After the low voice speaks, "the music would swell out again like chimes" to persuade her that Philip's arguments against her self-sacrifice are right. Later, when Philip sings to her, she tries to hurry away, saying, "It will only haunt me." This symbol of music as the unrestrained flow of passionate feeling divorced from thought becomes the most important symbol in "The Great Temptation" to suggest the nature of Maggie's relationship with Stephen Guest. But Maggie's relationship with Philip contains no passion. Her feelings toward Philip --
"tranquil, tender affection, ...pity and womanly devotedness" -- make it more difficult for her to resist the temptations of the secret meetings, for she recognizes, as Tom can never do, that such feelings are not in themselves selfish but only so as they may lead her to cause possible pain to others.

Because Philip's poetic temperament can judge Maggie's renunciations and self-sacrifices only as a tragic waste of her "real self," his temptation of Maggie is not entirely selfish. He sees himself as a mentor who can "infuse some happiness" into her life. But suffering no such conflict as hers and unable to discern the real motive behind her attempt to stop "loving the world," he is guided in his arguments mainly by his love for her and his hope that she will eventually return it. Philip sees that Maggie does not understand resignation:

Joy and peace are not resignation: resignation is the willing endurance of a pain that is not allayed -- that you don't expect to be allayed. Stupefaction is not resignation: and it is stupefaction to remain in ignorance -- to shut up all the avenues by which the life of your fellowmen might become known to you. ...You are not resigned; you are only trying to stupefy yourself.14

Maggie is shaken by these words; she recognizes that there is "some truth" in them. At the same time she has a "deeper consciousness" that they do not apply to her conduct. The "deeper consciousness" is the voice of Maggie's conscience. Still, her recognition of the truth spoken by the "low voice"
does not bring her victory. She can say to Philip: "... how dare you shake me in this way? You are a tempter." But a few minutes later when he suggests that they may continue to meet "by chance" in the Red Deeps, she accepts his subterfuge. George Eliot points out the failure of Maggie's "true prompting."

It is the moment when our resolution seems about to become irrevocable -- when the fatal iron gates are about to close upon us -- that tests our strength. Then, after hours of clear reasoning and firm conviction, we snatch at any sophistry that will nullify our long struggles, and bring us the defeat that we love better than victory.\(^{15}\)

Maggie can accept this moral defeat because she feels that her response to his love is a self-sacrifice based on pity. Her love for Philip involves those same feelings awakened during her conversion that prompt her to give him up: Pity and self-sacrifice. This conflict, which becomes that of a divided conscience, is not resolved but leapt over.

Maggie's struggles with her conscience are intensified during her love affair with Stephen Guest. This final section of the novel also follows a pattern: a climactic series of temptations within "the soul in conflict with itself." The conflict arising from her developing "drift" toward Stephen pits passion (or natural feeling) against conscience (or duty represented by the claims of others). The touchstone of Maggie's moral sense is still the spiritual
Teacher, "the old voices making themselves heard with rising power, till from time to time, the tumult seemed quelled."
Although her feelings for Stephen are her first experience with passion, this conflict to Maggie (and also to George Eliot) seems to recapitulate all her earlier struggles between selfishness and unselfishness.

To depict Maggie's yielding to her passion for Stephen, George Eliot uses again the symbol of music. But the sweet, sad music that suggested Maggie's surrender to her feeling for Philip becomes more powerful and disturbing to suggest not only the force of Maggie's passion but its irrationality. George Eliot uses the symbol in several ways: Anticipating her use of symbols in the later novels, she gives an ordinary object or action symbolic significance by repetition and by emphasizing a character's unusual response to it. Here it is Stephen's singing and Maggie's response to it that represents his temptation and her resistance followed by her surrender. In these successive scenes in Lucy Deane's drawing room, Maggie's inner and outer struggles are dramatized before a watching audience of the unsuspecting Lucy, the suspicious Philip, and Stephen, who is now the tempter. One thinks of Yeats's phrase "Caught in that sensual music" when reading these scenes, as Maggie, determined not to listen, gradually surrenders until she is aware of only the music.
Maggie always tried in vain to go on with her work when music began. She tried harder than ever today; for the thought that Stephen knew how much she cared for his singing was one that no longer roused a merely playful resistance; and she knew too that it was his habit always to stand so that he could look at her. But it was of no use; she soon threw her work down, and all her intentions were lost in the vague state of emotion produced by the inspiring duet -- emotion that seemed to make her at once strong and weak; strong for all enjoyment, weak for all resistance.¹⁶

Before she has admitted to herself her love for Stephen, the vague but powerful emotions aroused by music can arouse all the romantic longings bred from her old dissatisfactions with her life. Music takes her "old self that continues to live within us" back to that time in her adolescence before her conversion and arouses "vague, mingled images from all the poetry and romance she had ever read or had ever woven in her dreamy reveries." Stephen's voice comes to have the potency of music. The "vibrating" music shuts out her memories of renunciation, striving, and duty. She tells Lucy:

Life seems to go on without effort, when I am filled with music. At other times one is conscious of carrying a weight.¹⁷

This idea of living without effort, of being borne along without resistance in a passive state of surrender to feeling describes Maggie's moral "falling." The music symbol expresses this idea of a gradual yielding passing into a
state of moral stupor that is contrasted with the waking thought and action of moral decision. Thus through this symbol George Eliot extends the theme of temptation and moral struggle but at the same time through verbal echoes of the conversion scene she reminds us that this contrast between moral sleep and waking began there. The symbol of music to suggest Maggie's struggle with her conscience is especially appropriate. The conscience formed during Maggie's conversion experience and her subsequent moral struggles is the extreme Puritan or Evangelical conscience. The conscience that emerged during the Puritan and Evangelical movements to influence so many areas of English life often emphasized an ascetic rejection of the arts, and especially music, because they might tempt men from the godly life. Maggie's emotional susceptibility to music as a child is established early in the novel, but she tells Philip Wakem after her conversion that she has given up music, "except the organ at Church." One recalls John Bunyan's renunciation of his bell-ringing because it would tempt him from God, Wesley's dismissal of all music but the hymns to be used in his religious services, and Wilberforce's avoidance of concerts in London. In a letter to Maria Lewis, George Eliot, at the age of nineteen when her Evangelicalism was most fervid, confessed herself a "tasteless person," but added that "it would not cost me any
regret if the only music heard in our land were that of
strict worship" because she doubted that such a pleasure could
be "quite pure or elevating in its tendency." 18 Although this
statement sums up the extreme Puritan judgment of music, it
does not fairly represent Maggie's view. Maggie would not
forbid music to others, for to her that would be the same as
forbidding them pleasure. But her conscience tells her that
her own susceptibility to it is a moral weakness, a craving
for an opiate to deaden her thoughts of duty. Maggie's
attitude toward music is much closer to Bunyan's than to
George Eliot's own early view. George Eliot's use of the
music symbol to convey her theme of moral temptation rein-
forces her placement of Maggie's experience in the tradition
of enthusiastic religion.

In the important temptation scene where Maggie and
Stephen drift down the river to moral disaster, the music
symbol is replaced by the symbol of the moving current, and
we see again how setting and action suggest Maggie's sexual
passion. The resemblance between the two symbols is very
close. The dreamy movement of the boat on the water and
Stephen's presence arouse in Maggie the same feelings evoked
by music:

Maggie was hardly conscious of having said or done
anything decisive. All yielding is attended with
a less vivid consciousness of resistance; it is the
partial sleep of thought; it is the submergence of our
own personality by another. Every influence tended to lull her into acquiescence: that dreamy gliding in the boat...helped to bring her into more complete subjection to that strong mysterious charm which made a last parting from Stephen seem the death of all joy.  

Again we note the "partial sleep of thought," and in the next scene aboard the Dutch steamer her feelings are like a "soft stream" that flows through her. The images that describe her actual drifting off to sleep on the boat deck are the same that have been used to describe her moral drifting:

But now nothing was distinct to her: she was being lulled to sleep with that soft stream still flowing over her...  

The title of the next chapter, "Waking," suggests the awakening of the low voice from "dim consciousness" to its former power when she wakes at dawn on the boat. In this scene Maggie finds strength in the memory of her years of moral struggle to resist Stephen's renewed temptations: "I would rather have died than fall into this temptation." The voice of Thomas à Kempis is echoed in her reply:

We can only choose whether we will indulge ourselves in the present moment, or whether we will renounce that, for the sake of the divine voice within us -- for the sake of being true to all the motives that sanctify our lives. I know this belief is hard; it has slipped away from me again and again; but I have felt that if I let it go for ever, I should have no light through the darkness of this life.  

After her return to face public disgrace in St. Ogg's, Maggie is tempted once more by Stephen. When she is alone in
her room at Bob Jakin's, friendless except for Dr. Venn, the
spiritual counselor whose late entrance into the story
emphasizes Maggie's previous moral isolation, she receives
Stephen's letter repeating his old entreaties and arousing
the old conflict. For hours she struggles to choose between
"hard endurance and effort" and the "easy delicious leaning
on another's loving strength." She is finally tempted to
write"'Come!'"

But close upon that decisive act, her mind recoiled;
and the sense of contradiction with her past self
in her moments of strength and clearness, came upon
her like a pang of conscious degradation.22

At this moment Maggie again remembers the strength she found
in her first moral awakening when she discovered the *Imita-
tion of Christ*. She remembers the words she read:

The words that were marked by the quiet hand in the
little old book that she had long ago learned by
heart, rushed even to her lips, and found a vent for
themselves in a low murmur. . . .'I have received
the Cross, I have received it from Thy hand; I will
bear it, and bear it until death, as Thou hast laid
it upon me.'23

These words give her the strength to burn Stephen's letter.

George Eliot's critics have argued that Maggie's moral
conflict is not resolved in this scene and that she prays for
death as a release from her suffering. Joan Bennett, in her
criticism of the deaths by drowning of Tom and Maggie, says
that Maggie, in this scene where she burns Stephen's letter,
is left only with a hope for an early death and that George
Eliot fulfills the hope by "a dishonest contrivance."24
"George Eliot has cut the knot she was unable to unravel. . . ."
Jerome Thale speaks of the "necessity" of Maggie's death,
which represents to him the failure of Tom and Maggie to
reach maturity.25 Barbara Hardy says that "Maggie is rescued
by death," and sees the death as a symbol of reconciliation
between Tom and Maggie.26

None of these views, I think, bases its interpretation
of the ending on Maggie's thoughts just after she burns the
letter and just before the flood waters enter her room. It
is a long passage, but it is necessary to give it in full:

'I will bear it, and bear it till death. . . But how
long it will be before death comes? I am so young,
so healthy. How shall I have patience and strength?
Am I to struggle and fall and repent again? -- has
life other trials as hard for me still?' With that
cry of self-despair, Maggie fell on her knees against
the table, and buried her sorrow-stricken face. Her
soul went out to the Unseen Pity that would be with
her to the end.27

If Maggie's thoughts ended here there would be more support
for the three interpretations I have noted. But her thoughts
continue:

Surely there was something being taught her by
this experience of great need; and she must be
learning a secret of human tenderness and long-
suffering, that the less erring could hardly
know? 'O God, if my life is to be long let me
live to bless and comfort ---.'28
The first passage above presents again the despairing state of spiritual isolation that Maggie endured before the beginning of her conversion experience. The suffering is deeper now because her sin has been greater, but her moral strength is greater too, as we see in the last sentences of the passage. The wish for death expressed at the beginning gives way in her prayer to the "Unseen Pity." And the last two sentences show her thoughts turning from her own suffering to others. She is discovering again those values of resignation and self-sacrifice that form her religion. This second great spiritual crisis reenacts the first, and we see again the pattern of religious conversion as a continuous process.

This interpretation of Maggie's feelings before the catastrophe is supported by her later thoughts and actions during the flood. We see first her resolution and courage in helping Bob Jakin rescue his family, a courage so calm that Bob takes no note of it. When Maggie is alone in the boat, her thoughts are on Lucy, her mother, and Tom, as her thoughts always turned to those with "the primary claim" on her when she was being "true to all the motives that sanctify our lives." Maggie's death, rather than symbolizing her immaturity or the satisfaction of a wish for death, shows her nobility arising from her moral recovery. Maggie's conflict is resolved, and her death is the proof of it.
Chapter VI

Calvinism and Humanism

in Felix Holt
In *Scenes of Clerical Life* (1857) and *Adam Bede* (1859), George Eliot looked back to the turn of the century when Evangelicalism as a moral and religious force was at its peak. In *Felix Holt* (1866), she looks back to the time of her own youth when the movement, as G. M. Young tells us, was "already hardening into a code." The time of the novel is 1830. Although political reform is the main subject, George Eliot contrasts two types of religious experience which underlie the reforming idealism of Rufus Lyon and Felix Holt. Through Rufus, the saintly Congregational minister in Treby Magna, she portrays the type of Calvinistic Evangelicalism she knew from her own past religious experience. Through Felix, she portrays the religious humanism which replaced Christianity in her life. In *Scenes of Clerical Life*, she suggested a contrast between Evangelicalism as practiced by Tryan and its later survival as torpid respectability; in *Felix Holt* she dramatizes this contrast through the character and experience of Rufus Lyon. Rufus's Calvinism is implicitly judged as a "creed outworn" in this new age. Felix Holt's humanism, in contrast, points to the future, as the new faith which can best realize the Evangelical moral ideals.

Even more than the hero himself, Rufus Lyon has been dismissed or overlooked by George Eliot's critics, who have thought it enough to label him as the descendant of Dinah.
Morris. This view is a good starting place for understanding Rufus, but he deserves more attention than he has received: more than any other character in the novels he illustrates George Eliot's final attitude toward her early Calvinism. Rufus's character and unselfish life are much like those of Dinah and Tryan. His belief that he has a divine vocation as a minister is the strongest motive of his life. His most painful conflict in his early years as a minister was, like Dinah's conflict, one between his calling and personal love. His heroes are the Evangelical preachers Doddridge and Whitefield, and like them he is a gifted preacher and healer of souls. But for all his spirituality and energy, he is ineffectual and frustrated in his vocation. He finds no listeners among the miners and workers in Sproxtton, though he continues to attempt to evangelize there, and his own flock of Dissenters, mostly prosperous merchants, would have provided G. M. Young with good examples of Evangelicalism hardened and codified. Among his group, religious zeal has turned inward and congealed into a snobbish exclusiveness, the provincial equivalent of the fashionably respectable London chapels of the time. The Dissenters' strong sense of class distinction is reinforced by their belief in their spiritual superiority deriving from their assurance of election. (Rufus himself is not immune to this type of
snobbishness, as we see when he first wonders why Felix would want to work with his hands as a watchmaker when he might become a clerk in a bank.) Among his congregation, Rufus serves more as an arbiter of petty disputes about choir memberships and sermon subjects than as a physician of souls. George Eliot suggests that the only remaining bond between Rufus and his congregation is the narrow theology of English Calvinism. Here we should recall her statement to Charles Bray that opinions make a "poor cement" between souls.

Felix Holt has his own opinion of this theology: the "awful creed, which makes this world a vestibule with double doors to hell, and a narrow stair on one side whereby the thinner sort may mount to Heaven." Felix's judgment, though wholly in character, hits the two evils of Calvinism that George Eliot criticized in her letters and articles: election and predestination. The selfishness and exclusiveness that George Eliot knew from her personal experience could be encouraged by Calvinistic doctrine appear in members of Rufus's congregation. In Chapter IV it was noted that Dinah Morris's naturally loving temperament found its doctrinal complement in the simple Methodist belief that salvation was possible to all men. Rufus Lyon's Calvinism directly conflicts with his wide social sympathies and his generous temperament. It is probable that many Calvinistic Evangel-
icals experienced this same conflict: George Whitefield, Rufus's spiritual master, parted company with the Wesleyans because he refused to renounce or modify his Calvinism. At the same time, his zeal to evangelize among the unconverted did not slacken though his theoretical belief was that many of them were predestined to pass through the "double doors." In Rufus, George Eliot portrays the same Calvinistic contradiction between natural feeling and theological belief. Unlike Dinah's Methodism, Rufus's faith does not encourage the extension of his feelings to others but would limit them to the members of his sect -- the "true church." The conflict between feeling and belief comes to a head twice in Rufus's life. In his youth he came to love Annette Ledru, an "unregenerate Catholic," the mother of Esther. But he cannot reconcile his love for Annette with his Calvinistic conception of his vocation as a minister. Yet George Eliot shows that his love for Annette calls forth the best of his nature, the same feelings, in fact, that lie behind his religious devotion. The knife that splits his life and leaves a permanent scar of guilt is his "awful creed." For three years he leaves the church to minister to Annette and her child and returns only after Annette dies, yet he considers himself a great sinner for having loved her. In one sense, we can view the Annette episode as another instance of George Eliot's permanent
preoccupation with the conflict between the private life and
the public life or between love and vocation. But more
specifically the episode reveals her belief in the superiority
of feeling -- warmth and affection -- to any dogmatic belief
or system of thought. The pathos of such a man as Rufus, she
suggests, is that his best feelings can triumph only at the
expense of his Calvinistic conscience. In his victory of
love over creed, he considers himself the loser.

George Eliot's critics have given much attention to
the importance of her childhood in her depiction of the
early years of Tom and Maggie Tulliver in The Mill on the
Floss. Since her husband J. W. Cross published her Life and
Letters soon after her death, much biographical material has
been available, but Cross carefully expurgated the letters.3
Gordon Haight's much more complete edition of the letters
has supplied nearly all of the omitted passages, and one of
them, I think, strongly suggests that Rufus Lyons's conflict
comes from George Eliot's own experience. Of her earliest
romance we know no more than she tells us in this passage
written to Maria Lewis in 1840:

With respect to my own state of soul...I fear that
my sins or rather one particular manifestation of
them, have forsaken me instead of my forsaking and
abhoring them. I feel that a sight of one being
whom I have not beheld except passingly since the
interview I last described to you would probably
upset all; but as it is, the image now seldom arises in consequence of entire occupation and, I trust in some degree, desire and prayer to be free from rebelling against Him whose I am by right, whose I would be by adoption. I endeavoured to pray for the beloved object to whom I have alluded, I must still a little while say beloved, last night and felt soothingly melted in thinking that if mine be really prayers my acquaintance with him has probably caused the first to be offered up specially in his behalf. But all this I ought not to have permitted to slip from my pen. 4

Despite the stilted diction and the girlish underlinings, she was clearly, like Richardson's heroines, "writing to the moment" 5 when her feelings were still agitated and her conflict painful. We see again, perhaps nowhere more clearly, how strong her Calvinism was at this time, but not as strong as her conscience would wish, as we see from the second sentence. The conflict is Rufus's conflict: the Calvinistic version of the traditional struggle between personal love and religious calling or duty. It is clear that the young man was "unregenerate," outside the pale of Calvinism and doubtless of Evangelicalism, just as Rufus's Annette Ledru is a "blind French Catholic." And the young George Eliot, like Rufus, viewed love for such a person as a "spiritual fall," as a succumbing to the voice of the tempter, a rebellion against God. Rufus's first struggle is simply an "abridgment of all the struggles that came after":

He never went to bed... that night. He spent it in misery, enduring a horrible assault of Satan. He thought a frenzy had seized him. Wild visions
of an impossible future thrust themselves upon him
. . .what to the mass of men would have been only
one of many allowable follies -- a transient
fascination. . .was to him a spiritual convulsion. . .
These mad wishes were irreconcilable with what he was,
and must be, as a Christian minister. . .he never
ceased to regard it as the voice of the tempter: the
conviction which had been the law of his better life
remained within him as a conscience.6

In such passages as this we see how George Eliot was able to
adapt the Evangelical portrayal of temptation to her purposes
as a novelist. For Rufus's temptation is not only an
individual's moral struggle but an historical experience too
deriving from the Calvinist's peculiar view of the world. In
her analysis of Rufus's experience, she reveals her characteris-
tic double attitude, when she condemns the beliefs that shape
his conscience but at the same time admires his attempt to
follow it.

Rufus faces a similar conflict between his friendship
for Felix Holt, the agnostic workingman, and the demands of
his congregation that he offer Felix no support during his
imprisonment and trial. The earlier experience with Annette
showed that his generous feelings for others could not be
stifled by Calvinistic doctrine; despite that doctrine he had
to admit to himself that Annette possessed a moral goodness
superior to the pretensions of many of his congregation. His
experience with Felix follows the same pattern. His refusal
to abandon Felix is a victory of his best feelings that leads
to a widening of his beliefs. He tells Esther:
...I will not lightly turn away from any man who endures harshness because he will not lie; nay, though I would not wantonly grasp at ease of mind through an arbitrary choice of doctrine, I cannot but believe that the merits of the Divine Sacrifice are wider than our utmost charity. I once believed otherwise -- but not now, not now. 7

Rufus rises to his highest "moral elevation" during Felix's trial when he testifies in Felix's defence. His testimony is a statement of faith in human goodness and a public admission that such goodness owes nothing to the "true church." When he is asked sneeringly whether Felix does not belong to his flock, he replies:

Nay -- would to God he were! I should then feel that the great virtues and the pure life that I have beheld in him were a witness to the efficacy of the faith I believe in and the discipline of the Church whereunto I belong. 8

Rufus's public admission of Felix's moral superiority is George Eliot's implied reply to the Evangelical teaching that the highest virtue cannot be realized outside the Christian faith. (The same implication lies behind her characterizations of Felix, Esther, Daniel Deronda, and Mordecai.) Rufus's testimony represents the ability of a sympathetic nature to transcend the restrictions imposed by an intolerant religious creed, the same ability that George Eliot found in William Cowper and found lacking in Edward Young. In "Worldliness and Other-Worldliness," her article on Young that exposed the worst side of Evangelicalism, she concluded with a comparison of "Night Thoughts" and "The Task":
On some grounds, we might have anticipated a more morbid view of things from Cowper than from Young. Cowper's religion was dogmatically the more gloomy, for he was a Calvinist; while Young was a 'low' Arminian, believing that Christ died for all, and that the only obstacle to any man's salvation lay in his will, which he could change if he chose. . . .The sum of our comparison is this -- In Young we have the type of that deficient human sympathy, that impiety towards the present and the visible, which flies for its motives, its sanctities, and its religion, to the remote, the vague, and the unknown: in Cowper we have the type of the genuine love which cherishes things in proportion to their nearness, and feels its reverence grow in proportion to the intimacy of its knowledge.  

In Cowper, as in Rufus, human sympathy asserts itself at the expense of intellectual consistency and, perhaps, the conscience itself. It is hard to understand how Henry James could say shortly after he had read Felix Holt that George Eliot "made no attempt to depict a conscience taking upon itself great and novel responsibilities." James describes here just what Rufus does when he marries Annette and defends Felix. Many of George Eliot's characters learn that "genuine love" (sympathy) is inseparable from close knowledge of others -- that a love of humanity or of God grows not from a love of nature or of the idea of holiness, but from a love of individuals nearest to them.

Nicholas Bulstrode, the Evangelical banker in Middlemarch, is George Eliot's second important portrayal of a Calvinist. He is, as Haight tells us, a conspicuous example of George Eliot's sympathy since he might easily have been
portrayed as a conventional villain. "Bulstrode is the first serious study of the religious hypocrite." But he is also the first study of the capitalist who has managed to adapt his other-worldly religion to his aggressive business practices and his egotistic acquisitiveness. He comes fairly close to being the businessman produced by the Puritan ethic that Tawney describes in *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*.

having convinced himself that his business activities are dedicated to the greater glory of God (his Calvinism permits him to consider himself an instrument of God) he can sell inferior dyes that rot the silk of other merchants and use the profits to finance his private philanthropies. If we recall the early Evangelicals' insistence on the right motives of charity, we can see that George Eliot is portraying in Bulstrode the atrophy of the movement. Her description of Dr. Cumming's theory in her article on "Evangelical Teaching" exactly fits Bulstrode:

Dr. Cumming's theory...is that actions are good or evil according as they are prompted or not prompted by an exclusive reference to the 'glory of God.' God, then, in Dr. Cumming's conception, is a being who has no pleasure in the well-being of his creatures: He has satisfaction in use only in so far as we exhaust our motives and dispositions of all relation to our fellow-beings, and replace sympathy with men by anxiety for the 'glory of God.'

In this article she had previously suggested that Dr. Cumming's creed did not encourage sympathy toward others unless they
belonged to his own sect -- the morality of the clan. What she is really suggesting is that Dr. Cumming's God is a projection of his own egoism. She does more than suggest this in the article about Edward Young's religion: "The God of the 'Night Thoughts' is simply Young himself, 'writ large . . . .' Young has no conception of religion as anything else than egoism turned heavenward. . . ."¹⁴ Such is Bulstrode's God, or rather such has Bulstrode's God become as he needs increasingly a personification of his moral rationalizations that assures him the larger purpose justifies the smaller transgression. His prayers are not secret confessions but elaborate sessions of adjustments and assurances ("exercises"), in short, spiritual bookkeeping. His charities are his means of keeping his contract and one of many methods of self-aggrandizement. Bulstrode's "sympathy with men" is indeed replaced by "anxiety for the 'glory of God'," if we understand that last phrase to mean "egoism turned heavenward." Spiritual bankruptcy is a lack of human sympathy. Rufus Lyon has the "sympathetic nature that manifests itself in spite of creed or circumstance."¹⁵ Bulstrode, professing the same Evangelical motives as Rufus, is incapable of the personal response to his fellow men, even to those close to him, as we see in his attitude toward Fred Vincy and Lydgate. He turns both away with cant phrases that
suggest again the hardened code of Evangelicalism. Another
passage from the article on Young is relevant here:

...the predominant didactic tendency proceeds rather from the poet's perception that it is good for other men to be moral, than from any overflow of moral feeling in himself. A man who is perpetually thinking in apothegms, who has an intermittent flux of admonition, can have little energy left for simple emotion.\(^{16}\)

Whether or not we agree with the first statement, it hits Bulstrode's weakness. But a sentence from *Middlemarch* is the best explanation of the differences between George Eliot's two Calvinists: "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 fellow-men."\(^{17}\) Both Bulstrode and Rufus have secret pasts, which they are concerned to hide from others. Rufus's guilt prompts his confession to Esther that he is not her father. But in Bulstrode the sense of shame is far stronger than his guilt: his fears of exposure are stronger than Hetty Sorrel's, and, when the moment for confession comes, he is not as tough as Hetty. For this reason more than any other, the brief scene with his wife, when his strength fails and hers unexpectedly emerges, moves us deeply. Haight is right in calling it "one of the finest in English fiction."\(^{18}\)

In portraying the pasts of Rufus and Bulstrode, George Eliot uses a method described by Erich Auerbach in *Mimesis*.\(^{19}\) In his analysis of epic narrative, Auerbach points out what
he calls the "retarding principle" and what Goethe described as "the retarding element appropriate to Homeric epic." This narrative method "consisted in the breaking off of a dramatic incident in order to shift and explore the background character of the event." In Auerbach's words, the method was "In dire opposition to the element of suspense." It is this method that George Eliot uses often, in her last three novels especially, and in Middlemarch most of all. In a recent essay, Ray B. West, Jr. notes Katherine Anne Porter's use of the "retarding element" in Ship of Fools and says that its effect is to deepen and enrich the narrative. We can say the same of its effect in George Eliot's last novels, which have the breadth of scene and multiplicity of character demanded by the social novel and the depth of the psychological study. George Eliot's concern for the influence of the past on the present (or the survival of the past in the present) is shared by Miss Porter; this concern doubtless led both writers to use this method.

George Eliot uses the "retarding element" also in her presentation of Felix Holt's past to illuminate his progress toward humanism. His new religion is Adam Bede's religion of work and duty extended into politics and informed with the Evangelical zeal of Dinah Morris. In her criticism of Dr. Cumming's Calvinism, George Eliot asserted that the
"fundamental faith for man is faith in the result of a brave, honest, and steady use of all his faculties." 22 Both Adam and Felix hold this faith, but Felix has gained the education that will permit him to use "all his faculties" in his work of moral reform. But despite this common faith, Felix is not, as Gerald Bullet says, the descendant of Adam, but of Tryan and Dinah Morris. 23 He belongs clearly in the line of George Eliot's Evangelicals, agnostic though he is. One of the important parallels in Felix Holt is that between Felix and Rufus, agnostic and Calvinist, who have similar aims, motives, and virtues.

Felix's conversion is much like Tryan's despite the fact that one leads to an acceptance of Christianity and the other to a rejection of it. The psychological experiences are almost identical; both follow the traditional pattern by beginning with a state of despair brought on by a strong sense of sin, and both find in their own degradation their initial motive for attempting to help others. Neither conversion is dramatized but told in retrospect. During the episode when Felix describes his conversion to Rufus Lyon, Rufus first assumes his role as a Christian commentator on the experiences of both Felix and Esther. His function in this role is to suggest the parallels between the experiences of the humanists and the orthodox Christian experiences. Using Rufus in this capacity is the best method George Eliot could have chosen, for his role here in no way conflicts with
her presentation of his dramatic character. Rufus's choral comments are motivated by his own faith and naive hope, which would explain any moral improvement in others to the workings of the Holy Spirit. His first response to Felix's account of his conversion is to ask hopefully whether the younger man was influenced by any of the preachers in Glasgow. Throughout the novel he attributes the goodness he sees in Felix to the mysterious workings of Divine Grace, as he does to the visible changes in Esther after she has come under Felix's influence. The effect of Rufus's comments is to emphasize "whatever is human" in religious experience.

A second similarity between Felix and his Evangelical predecessors is the discovery of his vocation. Dinah's experience is the closer parallel. In Chapter IV we noted her description to Irvine of her sense of discovery, which she experienced as the movement of a "strong spirit" in her heart. At the same time, and without impugning the sincerity of Dinah's interpretation of her experience, George Eliot indicated Dinah's response to the human need she saw reflected in the faces of "the aged and trembling women at the doors, and hard looks of the men. . . ." 24 Although Felix Holt has no experience attributable to divine agency, he marks the discovery of his vocation from the moment he recognizes the misery of the working class in Glasgow: "the
spawning life of vice and hunger." The motivating image in his memory of this moment in the Glasgow slum is much like Dinah's sight of the miners and their wives. He recalls "old women breathing gin as they passed me on the stairs... ." Like Dinah and Tryan, Felix feels that his "inward vocation" is not only a chosen path of dedication but a necessity laid upon him to work among the people of such places as the Glasgow slums. After this awakening which followed his conversion, he saw his course as a simple one: "It was pointed out to me by conditions that I saw as clearly as I see the bars of this stile." Dinah's vocation was a burden she felt she had been specially chosen to carry: the original Christian interpretation of a divine calling. Felix's awareness of the ignorance and misery around him is "like a splinter" in his mind. His explanation of this experience is the humanist's interpretation of divine calling:

It all depends upon what a man gets into his consciousness -- what life thrusts into his mind, so that it becomes present to him as remorse is present to the guilty, or a mechanical problem to an inventive genius.

The statement "what life thrusts into his mind" echoes the metaphor of the "splinter in his mind" and suggests how suddenly and accidentally such a discovery of vocation can occur, but the experience assumes the receptivity of the individual mind that accepts the "splinter." Here would be
the humanist's explanation for the order of experiences described in the spiritual autobiographies: first conversion, which assumes an awakened receptivity; followed by vocational discovery. The analogy of remorse suggests again the pain of the "splinter" and extends the experience to the social conscience, and the analogy of an unsolved problem in the mind of a genius suggests an obsessive concern to reach a definite goal that overrules all other interests. Such a concern is the best basis for grouping Felix, Mordecai, and Savonarola with Dinah and Tryan. A product of this concern is the great energy that George Eliot portrays in these characters; energy and concern together define the moral zeal of Evangelicalism. As I suggested in the previous chapter, these Evangelical characters are George Eliot's active characters, who do not themselves change but serve as spiritual masters to influence others. A product of zeal and dedication is seriousness. The Evangelicals are George Eliot's humorless characters by her own definition of humor: "It is diffuse and flows along without any other law than its own fantastic will."29 Her humorous characters are the unregenerates like Mr. Brooke and Mrs. Poyser.

Just as Tryan followed his inward calling to work among the working people of Paddiford Common, "a dismal district where you heard the rattle of the hand-loom, and
breathed the smoke of the coal-pits," and Dinah could not forget the needs of the poor workers in Stoniton and Leeds when she was in Loamshire, so Felix tries to fulfill his calling among the mining families of Sproxton. Renunciation is presupposed in any Evangelical calling, as Tryyan explained to Mr. Jerome:

'. . .I like to be among the people. I've no face to go and preach resignation to those poor things in their smoky air and comfortless homes, when I come straight from every luxury myself. There are many things quite lawful for other men, which a clergyman must forego if he would do any good in a manufacturing population like this.'30

Any sincere Evangelical preacher, Methodist or Anglican, might have made such a statement: Wesley, Whitefield, Doddridge, or Finney. Felix Holt's explanation to Esther of the life he must live makes the same points:

'Some are called to subject themselves to a harder discipline, and renounce things voluntarily which are lawful for others. It is the old word -- "necessity is laid upon me". . . Some men do well to accept riches, but that is not my inward vocation. . . I will try to make life less bitter for a few within my reach.'31

It was this same sense of necessity that Dinah tried to explain to Mrs. Poyser, who could not understand, although her own calling, housekeeping, pre-occupied her as much as religion pre-occupied Dinah.

Again to underline these common experiences of the Christian and the humanist, George Eliot has Rufus Lyon
compare Felix with St. Paul, Felix's "wise man," who continued his work as a tent-maker while he fulfilled his vocation of preaching the word. In Chapter II, we noted that one result of conversion is the need to socialize one's experience by bearing the truth one has discovered to other men. This Evangelical experience underlies George Eliot's characterization of Felix Holt and his role in the novel. Although he speaks of political abuses and working class votes, his long speech to the crowd in Duffield is a sermon carrying the message of moral reform and awakening. One of the best scenes in the novel, the second quarrel scene between Esther and Felix, begins as a Gay Couple comedy but quickly deepens into a drama of salvation with Felix as Evangelical savior and Esther as the troubled candidate for conversion:

The tumult of feeling in Esther's mind -- mortification, anger, the sense of a terrible power over her that Felix seemed to have as his angry words vibrated through her -- was getting almost too much for her self-control. She felt her lips quivering; but her pride, which feared nothing so much as the betrayal of her emotion, helped her to a desperate effort. She pinched her own hand hard to overcome her tremor, and said, in a tone of scorn, --

'I ought to be very much obliged to you for giving me your confidence so freely.'

'Aha! now you are offended with me, and disgusted with me. I expected it would be so. A woman doesn't like a man who tells her the truth.'

'I think you boast a little too much of your truth-telling, Mr. Holt,' said Esther, flashing out at last. 'That virtue is apt to
be easy to people when they only wound others and not themselves. Telling the truth often means no more than taking a liberty,'

"Yes, I suppose I should have been taking a liberty if I had tried to drag you back by the skirt when I saw you running into a pit.'

'You should really found a sect. Preaching is your vocation. It is a pity you should ever have an audience of only one.'

'I see; I have made a fool of myself. I thought you had a more generous mind -- that you might be kindled to a better ambition. But I've set your vanity aflame -- nothing else. I'm going. Good-bye.'

Felix's denunciation of vanity and his language of warning -- "...if I had tried to drag you back by the skirt when I saw you running into a pit" -- echoes Dinah's warning to Bessy during the Sermon on the Green: "...they are dragging you down into a dark bottomless pit, where you will sink..."

The motives in this scene are the same as those in the little drama in Hetty's bedroom when Dinah comes to her. We may note the Evangelical action of seeking the convert in both scenes: Felix seeks out Esther to "save" her as Dinah seeks out Bessy and Hetty. Bergson says that the initiative in such relationships between a spiritual superior and a disciple lies always with the superior.  

In "Janet's Repentance," Tryan brought to the Milbyites who became his followers the vision of a wider life:

...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. 34

Such a vision, which insures moral growth, is in George Eliot's judgment the most important contribution of Evangelicalism. The moral vision of the wider life is the ideal Felix Holt inherits from Tryan and Dinah and, removing it from its Christian framework, holds up to Esther Lyon as the message of a man of his generation. The moral lives of the Milbyites before Tryan's arrival were "mere bundles of impressions." To Janet Dempster and Eliza Pratt, Tryan opened a new life of piety and self-subjection. Before Esther Lyon meets Felix Holt, her life was a "heap of fragments and so were her thoughts: some great energy was needed to bind them together." Felix fulfills his most important role in the novel as spiritual master. He is the Evangelical humanist.

This role accommodates the related role of social critic and is really inseparable from it. Here again Felix belongs with his Evangelical predecessors. Although Dinah and Tryan know nothing of politics and are concerned with individuals rather than with classes, their values implicitly judge the upper classes. Teaching by example is the oldest Christian method of moral persuasion. But Felix, with his strong class consciousness and political awareness, would
teach in another way too. The themes of his speeches resemble closely those found in the young Carlyle's *Signs of the Times*, *Sartor Resartus*, and *Chartism*, which he wrote during the reform period depicted in this novel. There are many similarities in Felix's criticism of luxury, misused wealth, and abuses of the poor, as well as in the values he preaches: self-discipline, social responsibility, useful work, and the necessity of educating the working classes as a prerequisite to political change.\(^{35}\)

Other critics, notably the early Evangelicals, had made the same charges and preached the same values. Wilberforce's special mission was to awaken his class to its responsibilities; Hannah More's first writings as an Evangelical were directed to the apathetic aristocracy, just as her first practical work was to establish schools for working-class children.\(^{36}\) In *Felix Holt*, the hero conducts such a school in Treby Magna and attempts to establish another one in Sproxton. Neither the early Evangelicals nor later conservative Victorian thinkers challenged the social structure; their aim was to convert selfish class interests into class functions, the central message of George Eliot's essay "Felix Holt's Address to the Working Men."\(^{37}\) In *The Spirit of the Age* (1831), John Stuart Mill described the failure of the aristocracy to assume its responsibilities by contrasting
its lethargy then with the vigor it possessed in the
seventeenth century:

Their very opinions... are now hereditary. Their
minds were once active -- they are now passive:
they once generated impressions -- they now merely
take them. What are now their political maxims?
Traditional texts, relating, directly or indirectly,
to the privileges of their order, and to the exclusive
fitness of men of their own sort for governing.38

Carlyle's attack on a do-nothing aristocracy was character-
istically scathing:

We have private individuals whose wages are equal to
the wages of seven or eight thousand other individuals.
What do these highly benefited individuals do to
society for their wages? -- **kill partridges.**39

Such a life is portrayed profoundly in Daniel Deronda in the
character of Grandcourt, an aristocrat whose mind is reduced
to the "barrenness of a fastidious egoism, in which all
direct desires are dulled, and have dwindled from motives
into a vacillating expectation of motives..."40 To
George Eliot, such a condition is apt to befall "a life too
much at large, unmoulded by the pressure of obligation."

Grandcourt's importance as a subject of this realm
was of the grandly passive kind which consists in
the inheritance of land. Political and social
movements touched him only through the wire of his
rental, and his most careful biographer need not
have read up on Schleswig-Holstein, the policy of
Bismarck, trade-unions, household suffrage, or
even the last commercial panic. He glanced over
the best newspaper columns on these topics, and
his views on them can hardly be said to have wanted
breadth, since he embraced all Germans, all commercial
men, and all voters liable to use the wrong kind of soap, under the general epithet of 'brutes;' but he took no action on these much agitated questions beyond looking from under his eyelids at any man who mentioned them, and retaining a silence which served to shake the opinions of timid thinkers.

In *Felix Holt*, the charges made by Carlyle and Mill are implied in George Eliot's portrayal of the Transome and the DeBarry families, whose response to the needs of the times is withdrawal or participation for selfish interests. Philip DeBarry, a highly intelligent and socially concerned young aristocrat, who finds the prevailing political corruption and the apathy of his own class too great a burden for his social conscience, becomes a Catholic convert and takes orders in Rome. Harold Transome, the aristocrat who stands for parliament as a Radical, appears superficially as a man aware of the social evils of his day; but his interest in the workers is shown to be coarsely pragmatic and opportunistic. In *Felix Holt* and *Daniel Deronda*, George Eliot confirms the melancholy truth that history teaches: it is difficult, if not impossible, to establish in social institutions a "close relationship between worth and ability on the one hand, and, on the other hand, wealth, family, and political influence."

*Felix Holt*, like Carlyle, insists that men of all classes recognize the truth about the needs of the workers and the debasement caused by poverty and ignorance. This recognition is the basis of his belief (and George Eliot's)
that an extension of voting power to the workers before they have been educated to use it intelligently may worsen rather than improve social conditions. In his views, appears George Eliot's unmodified Evangelical attitude toward moral and political reform: political reform must be achieved through moral reform of the individual. George Eliot did not agree with Carlyle's later authoritarianism; she believed in democratic government. But, like many of her contemporaries, Disraeli, Mrs. Gaskell, Charles Kingsley, and such Americans as James Fenimore Cooper, she was fearful of the irrationality of mob action and its destruction of civilized values. The scene of mob violence in *Felix Holt* dramatizes this subversion of law and rationality and suggests how power given to the uneducated class can be an opening to the most unscrupulous demagogue. George Eliot is not contemptuous of the ignorant workers, as Carlyle later became; on the contrary, they represent the best hope of the future, as her hero says. But she attacks the sentimental assumption that poverty and ignorance foster moral virtue. In a *Westminster Review* article (1856) which treats this subject she singles out Holman Hunt and Dickens as artists who idealized the poor:

But for the precious salt of his [Dickens'] humour, which compels him to reproduce external traits that serve, in some degree, as a corrective to his frequently false psychology, his preter-naturally
virtuous poor children and artisans, his melodramatic boatmen and courtesans, would be as noxious as Eugene Sue's idealized proletaires in encouraging the miserable fallacy that high morality and refined sentiment can grow out of harsh social relations, ignorance and want; or that the working-classes are in a condition to enter at once into a millennial state of altruism wherein everyone is caring for everyone else, and no one for himself.46

What is wanted is a truthful representation that will guide the social sympathies intelligently; the fallacious view is "miserable" not only because it is false but because its sentimental optimism hides the real needs of the workers.

In her article on Riehl, George Eliot praises the German historian for revealing the inadequacy of stereotypes in any serious representation of a social or vocational class. In this article, written a year before she began Scenes of Clerical Life, she sets forth a view of the stereotyped character that is important in understanding her representations of such characters as Tryan, Dinah, Felix, and Mordecai, who fulfill the role of spiritual master. The first thing to note is that George Eliot is consciously working against an unfavorable stereotype in her portrayal of these characters: the Evangelical clergyman, the Methodist preacher, the Radical workingman, the visionary Jew. She is, of course, doing the same thing in her portrayal of many other characters, such as Bulstrode and Herr Klesmer, but in the spiritual masters her attempt to overcome a popular
prejudice is more apparent. The labels themselves are important: other characters are at first more aware of the label which suggests the stereotype than they are of the individual. We noted how Janet Dempster is forced to modify her judgment of Evangelicalism as well as of Tryan when she first sees him and how Colonel Townley, the stranger in Hayslope, is surprised by his recognition that Dinah does not fit his preconception of a Methodist. The same attempts are made to force Felix and Mordecai into molds by characters who have accepted unquestioningly the antagonism of their societies toward the ideas of these reformers. An important theme in *Felix Holt* and *Daniel Deronda* is the antagonism between social classes which results from mutual lack of knowledge. One cause of such misunderstanding, which encourages the "vulgarity of exclusiveness," is the stereotype and class snobbery. Alan D. McKillop's statement on "snobbery" is based on the idea of mechanical judgments:

'Snobbery' must be extended to mean any set of mechanically applied or conventional values by which the individual is to be judged and with which he therefore comes in conflict.  

By showing the stereotyped responses to such labeled characters as Tryan and Felix, George Eliot reveals the superficiality of such labels as "Methodist" and "Radical" and goes on to reveal the unperceived motives and feelings that transcend class distinctions. In Chapter IV, I suggested
that the capacity to respond to human goodness is one way we should judge George Eliot's characters. We also judge them by their moral vision. This phrase can have more than one meaning relevant to her characters; I used it earlier to describe the unselfish aims that Tryan teaches. But George Eliot uses it sometimes to mean the sympathetic perception of the motives and feelings of another person, a perception blocked by stereotyped thinking. Rufus Lyon's perception of Felix's motives is one side of his moral vision; it is the basis of his sympathy for Felix and contrasts with the mechanical responses of the snobbish Dissenters, who cannot see beyond the labels "radical" or "workingman." The same lack of moral vision revealed through stereotyped responses is apparent in Matthew Jermyn, Harold Transome, and, at first, Esther Lyon.

Although the isolated tragedy of Mrs. Transome has received much more attention from George Eliot's critics, the relationship between Felix and Esther determines the central thematic movement of Felix Holt and unites the two stories of the novel. It might seem that George Eliot is reworking the story of the romantic middle class heroine who gives up her dreams of an aristocratic life to accept a worthy man from a lower social class or varying Jane Austen's version of the mature man who waits for the heroine to grow up to him, but
neither of these views will do. From the beginning, the relationship between Esther and Felix is primarily one between a spiritual master and a disciple, that leads gradually to love. But love, in *Felix Holt* as in "Janet's Repentance," is an outgrowth of religious awakening. Conversion, rather than courtship, precedes marriage. The pattern of events defining this relationship follows closely the pattern of Evangelical conversion. In the portrayal of Esther Lyon's experience, George Eliot for the first time removes conversion entirely from a Christian context, yet in no other work except "Janet" does she follow more closely the traditional sequence of events as it occurs in Augustine and Bunyan. The wide scope of the novel permitted her to dramatize not only the gradual process of Esther's conversion through its stages of despair and doubt, submission and self-awareness, and serenity and joy, but the traditional experiences that follow the conversion crisis: temptation and sanctification. By excluding the Christian context, George Eliot simply makes explicit the implication evident in her earlier works that religious awakening and moral growth occur wholly through the force of human influence.

The pattern of Evangelical conversion defines the course of the heroine's development and establishes the themes of the wider life and the closed life, with their conflicting
values. But into this pattern of dramatic movement and thematic oppositions, George Eliot introduces the clumsy and conventional sub-plot of the missing heir, involving Esther's inheritance of the Transome estate. Here lies the main weakness of the novel, not so much because George Eliot was unable to integrate the legal machinery with the conversion theme but because the elaborate care and effort needed to do so is simply not justified by the results. These results at their worst introduce melodramatic characters and incidents into a searching study of spiritual growth. We can see that George Eliot's problem was to bring Esther into the lives of the Transome family and to integrate her story with theirs by continuing to trace her growth through the mutual influences they exert on each other. Esther's final renunciation of their values is led up to through a series of temptations that test her commitment to Felix and the opposed values his life symbolizes. But the legal plot is surely the most wearisome way George Eliot could have chosen to accomplish this purpose. The relationship with the Transome family might have grown naturally from Harold's political interest in Rufus and from the mutual liking of Esther and Harold, which begins to develop before the legal machinery has been introduced. I have emphasized this weakness in *Felix Holt* because I think it is the only major fault in an otherwise fine novel.
When Felix Holt first meets Esther Lyon, she is discontented with her life as the daughter of a Dissenting minister because she finds it dull and demeaning when judged by the fashionable values of the aristocratic life she aspires to. Her years at school in France and her later position as a governess in a wealthy home have encouraged her "native tendencies towards luxury, fastidiousness, and scorn of mock gentility." Her standard of judgment is aesthetic rather than moral, her longings social rather than religious:

She had one of those exceptional organizations which are quick and sensitive without being in the least morbid; she was alive to the finest shades of manner, to the nicest distinctions of tone and accent; she had a little code of her own about scents and colours, textures and behaviours, by which she secretly condemned or sanctioned all things and persons. And she was well-satisfied with herself for her fastidious taste, never doubting that hers was the highest standard.48

Her greatest fear is of being thought ill-bred or ridiculous. In Treby Magna, she feeds her vanity and her romantic dreams with Byronic romances and silver-fork novels, and keeps Rufus, her foster-father, in a state of timorous subjection: "in this small dingy house of the minister in Malthouse Yard, there was a light-footed, sweet-voiced Queen Esther." To Rufus, this "unregenerate child" is the cause of tears and prayers; his greatest desire is for her conversion.

The manners and dress of Felix Holt are an affront to Esther's fastidious little code. Her first judgment of him
is that he has the coarse, boorish disposition to fit his working class clothes. He writes her off just as easily as a shallow, proud, pretentious girl, whom he would like to make ashamed of herself. The first clash between them pits etiquette against spiritual arrogance or triviality against moral seriousness: such are their views of the conflict. In these initial misjudgments, we may think that George Eliot is varying the Elizabeth - Darcy relationship, which emphasizes the gradual discoveries of mutual values. But in Pride and Prejudice neither lover is the obvious superior. What we have in Esther's misjudgment of Felix is an ironical variation of the disciple's sense of distance separating him from a spiritual superior. The development of Esther's moral vision is measured by her growing awareness and even more gradual admission of Felix's merit. After their second meeting, the "preaching scene," her conflict has begun:

There was a strange contradiction of impulses in her mind in those first moments. She could not bear that Felix should not respect her, yet she could not bear that he should see her bend before his denunciation. She revolted against his assumption of superiority, yet she felt herself in a new kind of subjection to him.49

As in "Janet," Adam Bede, Romola, and Daniel Deronda, the acknowledgment of moral superiority in another and submission to it becomes a religious act.
In those works, submission is prompted by guilt and despair. Esther's movement toward conversion begins when Felix's criticism of her triviality and selfishness forces her to question the values she has held with unquestioning pride. The experience is analogous to Finney's "confrontation with self," which, according to that Evangelist, leads to doubt and self-blame.

For the first time in her life Esther felt herself seriously shaken in her self-contentment. She knew there was a mind to which she appeared trivial, narrow, selfish. Every word Felix had said to her seemed to have burned itself into her memory. She felt as if she should forevermore be haunted by self-criticism, and never do anything to satisfy those fancies on which she had simply piqued herself before without being dogged by inward questions. 

The presence of Rufus in his role as Christian interpreter enforces the parallel between the experience Esther is undergoing and traditional Evangelical conversion.

Her father's desire for her conversion had never moved her; she saw that he adored her all the while, and he never checked her unregenerate acts as if they degraded her on earth, but only mourned over them as if unfitting her for heaven. Unfitness for heaven (spoken of as "Jerusalem" and "glory"), the prayers of a good little father, whose thoughts and motives seemed to her like the "Life of Dr. Doddridge," which she was content to leave unread, did not attack her self-respect and self-satisfaction.

In suggesting this parallel, George Eliot contrasts Esther's response to Felix's "sermon" with her previous lack of response to Rufus's attempts to bring her into the
Dissenting fold. The passage makes clear that Calvinistic otherworldliness is too remote from her experience to awaken her from her moral stupidity. Rufus Lyon is the character in the novel whom we might expect to serve as spiritual master to Esther, but his paternal love lets her dominate him and leaves her unchanged. From his Calvinism stems another motive that reinforces his fatherly permissiveness: he waits hopefully for the stirrings of Divine Grace that will lead to her conversion.

Instead of Divine Grace, the harsh, uncompromising words of Felix Holt perform a comparable work in stirring the best and hitherto hidden part of her nature. The first result of Felix's influence (which she will not yet attribute to him) is to prompt in her a new understanding and thoughtfulness toward Rufus. Rufus can account for the beginning of this change only by "thinking with wonder of the treasures still left in our fallen nature" as later he assures himself that the Spirit is at last performing its merciful work. The new consciousness of Rufus that Felix's words have aroused is followed by the wholly new experience of repentance:

'Father, I have not been good to you; but I will be, I will be,' said Esther, laying her head on his knee.52

The language George Eliot uses in her commentary on this scene suggests that the change beginning in Esther is
comparable to traditional conversion:

When Esther was lying down that night, she felt as if the little incidents between herself and her father on this Sunday had made it an epoch. Very slight words and deeds may have a sacramental efficacy, if we can cast our self-love behind us, in order to say or do them. And it has been well-believed through many ages that the beginning of compunction is the beginning of a new life; that the mind which sees itself blameless may be called dead in trespasses -- in trespasses on the love of others, in trespasses on their weakness, in trespasses on all those great claims which are the image of our own need.53

The key word here, "epoch," George Eliot usually uses to denote the moment when a character becomes conscious of a momentous turning that marks a new stage of moral awareness. Felix Holt has forced Esther to turn toward her father and see him in a different light, but she does not yet admit to herself that she is "bending" to Felix's criticism. Intending to "keep as much at a distance from him as possible," she is only partly aware of her emerging feelings that will lead her to seek him out at whatever cost to her vanity. The word "distance" not only ironically foreshadows her future movement toward Felix but also emphasizes the moral distance that still lies between them. To admit this distance to herself will be to accept Felix as her spiritual master. The moral conflict that precedes this admission is portrayed as the struggle between Esther's "new self," which has been awakened by Felix and fed by his idea of what she might be,
and her "old self," which still craves its daydream substance of rank and wealth. This conflict is deepened by the unconscious stirrings of love for Felix, which follow her admission of his superiority and her awakening need of a spiritual guide. It is this need which leads to the feelings of submission and dependence that mark the transition from moral to religious experience. In The Mill on the Floss, George Eliot said that religious experience begins with submission; years earlier during her Evangelical period she had paraphrased for Maria Lewis a statement of the same idea, which she had read in Finney's Revivals of Religion. 54

Esther's submission to Felix is a complex experience which affects her attitude toward all the other people in her life. A passage from a letter to Harriet Beecher Stowe three years after the publication of Felix Holt defines this experience:

I believe that religion has to be modified... and that a religion more perfect than any yet prevalent, must express less care for personal consolation, and a more deeply-awing sense of responsibility to man, springing from sympathy with that which of all things is most certainly known to us, the difficulty of the human lot. 55

Felix's religion denies the personal consolation of the promise of immortality but demands the acceptance of responsibility for others through sympathetic awareness of common human needs. When Esther admits to herself the nobility of
this ideal and attempts the self-denial it presupposes, she approaches the crisis of her conversion. Her submission to Felix, which leads to her acceptance of his religion of duty, is dramatized in a series of scenes in increasing seriousness. Each scene brings them closer to communion, indicating her gradual submission and also the development of love. George Eliot uses physical action again to dramatize the movement of disciple toward master as the initiative passes from Felix to Esther. When Esther seeks out Felix for the first time at his mother's house, she is walking home, while her pride assures her that "she could not possibly call at Mrs. Holt's." But when she reaches a corner, she turns it without pausing to find herself at Felix's door. Here the simple action of turning a corner enacts her mental "turning" toward the man who is assuming the role of conscience in her mind. Under the pretext of having him repair her watch, she wants to signify through her attitude that she has accepted his former criticism of her trivial values as just. What is to Mrs. Holt an inexplicable condescension on the part of the heretofore proud Miss Lyon, is an action of religious significance. In a later scene, George Eliot contrasts the public view of this relationship with its deeper religious significance. The action is a mere walk through the town to the green fields beyond, an event that in a Jane Austen novel
would be an admission to observing society of the mutual interest, perhaps love, between the two young people. But Esther's decision to "walk out with" Felix not only shows how far she has come in rejecting her former snobbish values: the act is analogous to a public pronouncement of faith. Parallel experiences lie not in novels of courtship and marriage but in the spiritual autobiographies, for example, in Victorinus's public acceptance of Christianity at the cost of his pagan friends among the Roman nobility, and in William Wilberforce's declaration to his friends in London society that he intends to turn his back on his former life by joining the Evangelicals and accepting their austere moral code. These decisions showed the converts' willingness to appear ridiculous in the eyes of their peers for the sake of the new life they had chosen. Esther's fear of being ridiculous in the eyes of the townspeople of Treby Magna is stilled by the influence of Felix Holt. This action looks ahead to her later public testimony in behalf of Felix during his trial, when her voice sounds "as it might have done if she had been making a confession of faith."56

In the scene that follows the walk through the town, the communion between Esther and Felix leads to confession and submission: it is the crisis of her conversion.
'. . . you did think me contemptible then. But it was very narrow of you to judge me in that way, when my life has been very different from yours. I have great faults. I know I am selfish, and think too much of my own small tastes and too little of what affects others. But I am not stupid. I am not unfeeling. I can see what is better.'

'... That is what I want,' said Felix, looking at her very earnestly. 'Don't turn your head... I do believe in you; but I want you to have such a vision of the future that you may never lose your best self. Some charm or other may be flung about you -- some of your attar-of-roses fascinations -- and nothing but a good strong terrible vision will save you.'

When Felix holds up to her as his own ideal the Evangelical social ethic of self-denial and dedication to others in a life lived close to the people it would help, Esther replies:

"That seems a hard lot; yet it is a great one."

'Why, can you imagine yourself choosing hardship as the better lot?' said Felix, looking at her with a sudden question in his eyes.

'Yes, I can,' she said. . . .

In this scene, love is felt but it remains unspoken:

Their words were charged with a meaning dependent entirely on the secret consciousness of each. Nothing had been said which was necessarily personal.

Love has emerged from the mutual discoveries of the best in the other, but it evokes different responses in each. Felix, like Dinah Morris and Tryan, believes at this time that he must renounce marriage for the sake of his vocation. He cannot imagine finding a woman who would be willing to share the life he feels called to live. He still believes that
marriage with Esther will ruin both their lives. In Esther, renunciation takes the form of rejecting her earlier selfish dreams to accept Felix's ideal. But in turning to him she faces the problem of her own inferiority. She must prove to herself that she is worthy of him. Recognition of her inferiority makes her dependence upon him greater. We are told that she had heard Rufus's Calvinistic formulas so long that they did not touch her; she neither felt nor understood them. Instead,

The first religious experience of her life -- the first self-questioning, the first voluntary subjection, the first longing to acquire the strength of greater motives and obey the more strenuous rule -- had come to her through Felix Holt. No wonder that she felt as if the loss of him were inevitable backsliding.60

But, as in the pattern of the Evangelical religious life, her conversion to Felix's values is followed by a series of tests or temptations analogous to the experience of sanctification.

The aristocratic world of Transome Court is the setting for this second half of Esther's spiritual pilgrimage. Her entrance into the lives of Harold Transome and his mother removes her from Felix's world of dingy backstreets and working class homes and places her amid a beauty and refinement that realizes her earlier dreams. In Felix Holt, the homes of Felix and Harold become powerful symbols in Esther's
mind of the conflicting values of the two men she must eventually choose between. But these homes -- one the small house in a back street in Treby Magna with a work table near the window, the other a venerable mansion furnished with a rich but subdued luxury -- take on a greater authority in the novel than Esther's drama of temptation alone can invest them with. They are settings built up on full concrete detail to become substantial images, not just of two men, but of the two nations, each isolated from the other by the "vulgarity of exclusiveness." In this portion of the novel, class conflict complicates the drama of private morality.

Both Mrs. Transome and Harold have their own stories in *Felix Holt*: the first of the mother's hidden guilt and tragic nemesis, the second of the son's ambition and mild megalomania, with the figure of Matthew Jermyn, the former lover of Mrs. Transome and the unacknowledged father of Harold, standing between them. Harold Transome, like Felix, has several roles in the novel, but in his relationship with Esther he fulfills the same function that Stephen Guest has in *The Mill on the Floss*, though less obviously. Harold becomes the tempter, who extends to Esther those values symbolized by Transome Court itself: leisure, refinement, luxury, pleasure, aristocratic exclusiveness, the values that Felix describes as "attar-of-roses fascinations." Esther's
old pride is reawakened by her feeling that her natural breeding and her education make her worthy of this environment. The conflict that preceded her conversion to Felix's values is resumed as a struggle between her "old self," which Harold appeals to and her "new self," which is partly the presence of Felix Holt in her mind as conscience and critic. The choice she must make resolves itself finally in her mind to one between the easy and the difficult life, but the choice is not as simple as these labels make it appear and the influences that work on Esther before she finally renounces her inheritance and the Transomes and their values are complex. There are Felix, whose influence is part of her deepest sensibility; Rufus, who, she knows, could never share the Transome way of life; Mrs. Transome, whose solitary grief and unspoken guilt shut her off in a narrow world that only Esther's sympathy finally penetrates; and Harold, in whom the discovery of his mother's past awakens a need that makes its own demand on Esther's sympathy. Esther's choice demands renunciation on either side. Finally, in the climactic scene of the novel, she sees that "terrible vision" that Felix had urged her to keep before her: the vision of the future that would prevent her from losing her better self.

With a terrible prescience which a multitude of impressions during her stay at Transome Court had
contributed to form, she saw herself in a silken bondage that arrested all motive, and was nothing better than a well-cushioned despair. To be restless amid ease, to be languid among all appliances for pleasure, was a possibility that seemed to haunt the rooms of this house. . . .

Esther's moral progress during her stay at Transome Court is measured by her changing attitudes toward Mrs. Transome and Harold as well as by this judgment of the values they offer her. In 1857, George Eliot wrote to Charles Bray:

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.

This passage, which states the humanist's revision of Evangelical sanctification, well describes what happens to Esther as she comes gradually to know the Transomes and to enter into the sufferings they cannot share with each other. At the same time, close as she comes to them through her growing sympathies she comes to judge the life of Transome Court as a moral asphyxia. Her view is finally Felix's view, and of course George Eliot's, which is but a modification of the novelist's earlier Evangelical attitude. The aristocratic life of the Transomes fails because its exterior beauty and refinement cover a spiritual apathy as rigid as that found among the Sproxton miners. Such a life expends its energies in protecting what it has; it is closed, rather than open, narrow, rather than wide. It represents a negative
form of evil, but, as we learn from the histories of
Mrs. Transome and Harold, this very negation becomes
debilitating because it offers no opportunities of ultimate
commitment and assumes no responsibility to exert an
influence for good beyond itself. Here we may return to the
symbols of the two houses. The windows of the mansion at
Transome Court look out on its silent lawns and gardens. The
small window behind Felix Holt's work table looks out on the
wider life of common humanity.
Chapter VII

Vocation in Middlemarch
Such studies as Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic* and *the Spirit of Capitalism* and R. H. Tawney's *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* emphasize the importance that early Protestantism placed upon the concept of man's secular vocation.¹ The term *Beruf* or *vocatio* gained new meaning with the Reformation. Weber turns to English Puritanism for evidence to support his thesis that Protestantism encouraged men to view their daily work as an ethical obligation demanding self-discipline.² He traces the origin of the concept of a calling as a life task of religious significance to Luther's translation of Ecclesiastes 11:20, 21: "Trust in the Lord and abide in thy *Beruf*." According to Luther, man accepts his work as a decree of God.³ Man is obligated to do God's work, and every honest calling is of equal value to God. Man must work, and not away from the world in cloister or sanctuary, but in the world. To Luther, man's *Beruf* is a fixed station in society appointed by God. Yet, as Harkness says, "to serve God *within* one's calling is not the same as to serve God *by* one's calling," and the conservative Luther did not take this last step in formulating his conception of vocation.⁴ According to Weber, Calvin did take this step: in his teaching, the obligation to serve God passed from service *in vocatione* to *per vocationem*.⁵ By teaching that man glorifies God through his secular work, Calvin raised
the dignity of work and gave new importance to social responsibility, since society must be served for the glory of God. Calvin advocated a rationalized and impersonal social service, not one motivated by brotherly love and concern for humanity:

Brotherly love, since it may only be practised for the glory of God and not in the service of the flesh, is expressed in the first place in the fulfillment of the daily task given in the lex naturae; and in the process of fulfillment assumes a peculiarly objective and impersonal character, that of service in the interest of the rational organization of our social environment. The Evangelicals inherited from Puritanism Calvin's view of vocation, but they modified it by emphasizing a personal concern for others as the basis of man's attitude toward his work. They continued to teach the values of self-discipline, active industry within the economic sphere, and the dignity of common work, but they socialized the motive and in so doing further secularized the concept of vocation.

This brief summary is the background of George Eliot's preoccupation with vocation and work in her fiction. But to bring that background closer to her novels, we need to note the same preoccupation with vocation in her personal life as revealed in her letters. In Chapter One we noticed her frustrated desire to find some opportunity of applying her Evangelical principles in work that would count for good in the lives of others. Her letters tell us that this frustration
was one of the main causes of her unhappiness until she discovered her vocation as a novelist. The long period after her unconversion when her chief duty of nursing her father isolated her even more from the world was a period of valuable study and intellectual growth, but study alone did not satisfy her artistic and moral nature and its need of purposeful activity. She approached the translation of Strauss's *Life of Jesus* with her characteristic Evangelical fervor; but long before she had finished it she found it poor "work for the soul." She wrote to Sara Hennell:

> The difficulties that attend a really grand undertaking are to be borne, but things should run smoothly and fast when they are not important enough to demand the sacrifice of one's whole soul.  

Although this work of translation did not give her the sense of achievement that she wanted, she went on to translate Spinoza's *Ethics* and Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity* because such work was a "contribution towards the perfecting of a mental product, to be reckoned with improving crops and all other real human work." Her work on the *Westminster Review* was "real human work" too; nevertheless, like her translations, it was not a vocation but a preparation — for what? She did not find the answer until she was thirty-seven years old, when George Henry Lewes, during the first year of their union, urged her to write fiction and gave her the constant encouragement she needed to complete *Scenes of*
Clerical Life. The approval that Lewes and John Blackwood gave to her first book, reinforced by the praise of Mrs. Carlyle, Dickens, Froude, and Thackeray, convinced her that she had found her vocation. Marian Evans had become George Eliot. After the great popular and critical success of Adam Bede in 1859, she wrote to her old friend François D'Albert Durade a letter that contains some important statements about her attitude toward her art and her discovery of her vocation:

...a great change has come over my life -- a change in which I cannot help believing that both you and Madame d'Albert will rejoice. Under the influence of the intense happiness I have enjoyed in my married life from thorough moral and intellectual sympathy, I have at last found out my true vocation, after which my nature had always been feeling and striving uneasily without finding it. What do you think that vocation is? I pause for you to guess.

I have turned out to be an artist -- not, as you are, with the pencil and the pallet, but with words. I have written a novel which people say has stirred them deeply -- and not a few people, but almost all reading England.

I think you will believe that I do not write you word of this out of any small vanity:--my books are deeply serious things to me, and come out of all the painful discipline, all the most hardly-learnt lessons of my past life. I write you word of it, because I believe that both your kind heart and Madame d'Albert's too, will be touched with real joy, that one whom you knew when she was not very happy and when her life seemed to serve no purpose of much worth, has been at last blessed with the sense that she has done something worth living and suffering for.9

The experience described in this letter -- the discovery of a vocation and the great change such a discovery brings about
in the life of an individual -- is portrayed in all George Eliot's books. Man's discovery of his life's work and his attitude toward that work remained a moral preoccupation with her throughout her life. From this concern she developed the theme of *Middlemarch*.

On December 2, 1870, George Eliot wrote in her journal:

> I am experimenting in a story which I began without any very serious intention of carrying it out lengthily. It is a subject which has been recorded among my possible themes ever since I began to write fiction, but will probably take new shapes in the development.¹⁰

She refers here to the story of Dorothea Brooke. To begin it, she put aside another story, one dealing with two young men and their lives in a provincial town. But by the time she completed the tenth chapter of Dorothea's story, she had decided to combine both into one novel. The theme that suggested Dorothea's story is set forth in the Prelude to *Middlemarch*, which summarizes the career of St. Theresa:

> Theresa's nature demanded an epic life: what were many-volumed romances of chivalry and the social conquests of brilliant life to her? Her flame quickly burned up that light fuel; and, fed from within, spared after some illimitable satisfaction. some object which would never justify weariness, which would reconcile self-despair with the rapturous consciousness of life beyond self. She found her epos in the reform of a religious order.¹¹

As George Eliot expected, this theme of the ardent soul's longing for a "life beyond self" did take "new shapes in the
development." In bringing Dorothea's story into organic relationship with that of Fred Vincy and Tertius Lydgate, she extended her theme until it became the general concept of man's vocation in the world. The aim of Evangelicalism to integrate the private life and the public life into one activity "worth living and suffering for" is implicit in George Eliot's treatment of vocation. Her theme demanded that she give full weight to the individual and to his society. As a result, Middlemarch has the broad dimensions of the social novel and the depth of the psychological study. The many subordinate themes, which include marriage, self-discovery, illusion versus reality, ambition, and self-fulfillment -- are all related to the central theme. The theme of vocation is the seed that draws these tributaries to it.

Inclusion of Fred Vincy's problem led George Eliot to widen her theme to include the search of the ordinary man for his life work. If she had limited the novel to Dorothea's story or to the stories of Lydgate and Dorothea, her original St. Theresa theme would have served, for they are the exceptional souls, the idealistic Evangelicals who consciously seek "illimitable satisfaction" in heroic activity. But, I think, George Eliot's permanent Evangelical interest in the medicore individual prompted her to include Fred Vincy, and, with him, Caleb Garth, who stands at the moral center of the
novel, and the Vincy and Garth families, the Featherstones, and the Bulstrodes. These are the characters who, much more than the relatively isolated Dorothea and Lydgate, permitted George Eliot to depict in Middlemarch her conception of the community as an organism, a viable network of lives crossing, intersecting, and withdrawing, which is the finest achievement of the novel. Through her theme of vocation in the widest sense -- religious and secular, humdrum and heroic -- she approached the diverse problems of her characters. For example, the longing for a vocation with religious significance is the main motive of Dorothea's marriage to Gasaubon; failure in a vocation is the basis for tragedy in the lives of Lydgate and Casaubon; the discovery of their vocations leads to the salvation of both Fred Vincy and Ladislaw. One of the questions implied by this theme-- what should I do in the world? -- faces Dorothea, Mary Garth, and Rosamond, and nearly all the men in the novel, from the admirable Farebrother to the despicable Raffles, who assures Bulstrode that his "calling" is to do nothing. Some characters, the younger ones, face this question for the first time; others, in reexamining their mistaken earlier decisions, must live with the knowledge that they have wrongly chosen; still others, the fortunate few, have made the right choice of vocation and face the problem of proving themselves worthy of it. It is
surely George Eliot's treatment of this theme through so many diverse characters that accounts for the deep impression *Middlemarch* makes on younger readers.\(^{12}\)

Through the experiences of two characters in *Middlemarch*, Tertius Lydgate and Caleb Garth, we can formulate George Eliot's conception of vocation and see how her humanism led her to carry it far beyond the traditional Protestant idea of work for the glory of God and the betterment of man. Caleb and Lydgate are among those fortunate few who have found without effort or pain the life work best suited to their natural inclinations and abilities. Before the novel opens, they have discovered their callings in a manner analogous to the religious experiences of Dinah Morris and Felix Holt. We learn that in their boyhoods they underwent awakening experiences which determined their later lives; both experiences are related through that method of retrospective analysis Auerbach calls the "retarding element." Lydgate's discovery is as sudden and dramatic as the comparable experiences of Dinah and Felix Holt. During one wet vacation when he was a schoolboy, he was hunting for some diversion in the old books in the home library and opened at random an encyclopedia to an article on anatomy. The first passage he read described the valves of the heart:
He was not much acquainted with valves of any sort, but he knew that *valvae* were folding doors, and through this discovery came a sudden light startling him with his first vivid notion of finely-adjusted mechanism in the human frame. . .the moment of vocation had come, and before he got down from his chair, the world was made new to him by a presentment of endless processes filling the vast spaces planked out of his sight by that wordy ignorance which he had supposed to be knowledge. From that hour Lydgate felt the growth of an intellectual passion.  

Caleb Garth's discovery is less dramatic than Lydgate's because it is not traced to a specific moment that he recalls, but it is described as a recurring imaginative vision that shaped his first boyish ambition to have his share in what he later called "business."

Caleb Garth often shook his head in meditation on the value, the indispensable might of that myriad-handed labour by which the social body is fed, clothed, and housed. It had laid hold of his imagination in boyhood. The echoes of the great hammer where roof or keel were a-making, the signal shout of the workmen, the roar of the furnace, the thunder and plash of the engine, were a sublime music to him. . .the precision and variety of muscular effort wherever exact work had to be turned out, -- all these sights had acted on him as poetry without the aid of poets, had made a philosophy for him without the aid of philosophers, a religion without the aid of theology.  

To Caleb, "business" means the needful work of the world, which has its own dignity and its own morality. Having served his apprenticeship as a surveyor, he went on to teach himself more of "land, building, and mining than most of the special men in the county [knew]."
Garth's attitude toward business and Lydgate's attitude toward medical practice and research assume those values that Calvin stressed and that Carlyle and Ruskin also promulgated: the dignity of useful work, self-discipline, cooperative effort, and energetic activity. But in George Eliot's humanism, work becomes more than an activity with religious significance; the work of Caleb, Lydgate, and Adam Bede becomes a religious surrogate, an activity of ultimate concern. Adam is the first character to express this view of work as religion:

I know a man must have the love of God in his soul, and the Bible's God's word. But what does the Bible say? Why, it says as God put his sperrit into the workman as built the tabernacle, to make him do all the carved work and things as wanted a nice hand. . . .there's the sperrit o' God in all things and times -- weekday as well as Sunday -- and i' the great works and inventions, and i' the figuring and the mechanics. And God helps us with our headpieces and our hands as well as with our souls. . . .

It is in this sense that Caleb regards "business," a word that he speaks with reverence, as if he "wrapped it, as a consecrated symbol is wrapped in its gold-fringed linen." Like Adam, Caleb regards himself as an orthodox Christian, but "his virtual divinities were good practical schemes, accurate work, and the faithful completiton of his under-takings: his prince of darkness was a slack workman." This view of work as an activity of ultimate concern also appears
in George Eliot's dramatic poem "Stradivarius," in which the violin maker describes man's creative abilities as his best means of filling the world with God's gifts. Conversely, man's failure to use his natural abilities is to "rob God."

And...if my hand slacked...
I should rob God -- since he is fullest good -- Leaving a blank instead of violins.16

As Wolff says, when a man is as closely identified with his work as Stradivarius, work becomes "not merely the fulfillment of God's will, but God in action."17 The same is true of Adam, Caleb, and Lydgate. George Eliot takes a large step beyond the traditional Calvinist teaching that man glorifies God through his work: her humanism asserts that man expresses and realizes his own divinity through his work.

Carlyle followed Calvin and the Evangelicals in preaching the duty of work for all men:

Produce! Produce! Were it but the pitifullest infinitesimal fraction of a Product, produce it in God's name! 'Tis the utmost thou hast in thee: out with it, then. Up, up! Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy whole might. Work while it is called Today; for the Night cometh, wherein no man can work.18

But this famous clarion call to work ignores as insignificant the question of human happiness that depends upon a man's finding the work which demands the full response of his best abilities. Here Carlyle is much closer to the teachings of
Luther and Calvin that man should be contented with or at least resigned to his inherited lot and station and should find in the nearest duty his needful work than to George Eliot's belief that it is man's obligation to seek within the unalterable confines of circumstance and environment the vocation that holds the best possibility of self-fulfillment. When a man finds such a vocation, duty and happiness become one. Thus Stradivarius' work becomes to him "as natural/As self at waking." He uses his tools "As willingly as any singing bird \(\text{that}\) likes to sing and likes the song."

Leavis has noted the concreteness of George Eliot's portrayal of Lydgate's passion for his scientific studies, but Caleb's love for "business" is of the same order of intensity and is portrayed with the same verisimilitude. Aristotle's dictum that "pleasure makes work perfect" is an important part of George Eliot's ideal of vocation. In Daniel Deronda, Herr Klesmer, the genius whom George Eliot may have modelled on Franz Liszt, describes to Gwendolen the life of the true artist:

'...a life of arduous, unceasing work, and -- uncertain praise...it is out of the reach of any but choice organizations -- natures framed to love perfection and to labour for it. An honourable life? Yes. But the honour comes from the inward vocation and the hard-won achievement.'
This view of the artist's vocation applies as well to the scientific career that Lydgate envisions and to the technical mastery of Caleb. Robert Calhoun's recent description of the workman as artist expresses George Eliot's view:

When...workmanlike competence and conscious responsibility reaches the level of technical mastership and intense love for one's work, the workman becomes an artist of exceptional insight, skill, and devotion.22

The artistry of such men as Klesmer, Adam Bede, Lydgate, and Caleb lies in the doing itself, in the work performed, but, more deeply than that, in the attitude toward the work, the inner disposition from which it springs.

Although each calling has its special conscience, George Eliot believed that any kind of work has a larger ethical significance since it inevitably influences the lives of others. Her statement that "conscience goes into the hammering of nails"23 expresses this belief in the integral relationship of occupation and morality. Thus she wrote to Alexander Main:

I think you have a strong faith, as I have, in the influences of a life apart from authorship, and in that dignity of work which comes from the thoroughness of doing, rather than from the order of work.24

Shoddy workmanship and sham products are a violation of public trust and a poisoning of the moral atmosphere. George Eliot, like Carlyle and Ruskin, was concerned about the public
tendency to remove duty from the realm of the daily occupation. In her last book, *Impressions of Theophrastus Such* (1879), she devotes one essay ("Moral Swindlers") to this tendency to make an artificial distinction between private and public morality.

...this duty of doing one's proper work well, and taking care that every product of one's labor shall be genuinely what it pretends to be, is not only left out of morals in popular speech, it is very little insisted on by public teachers, at least in the only effective way -- by tracing the continuous effects of ill-done work. 25

In this essay, one of her specific targets is the manufacturer who enjoys a reputation for high moral principles because he is a kind father and husband but who falsifies his products without suffering in his own conscience and without loss of his reputation for "private" virtue. Such a man resembles Nicholas Bulstrode in *Middlemarch*. It is precisely this sense of social responsibility in his work that nourishes Caleb Garth's aim to make his unpretentious contribution toward improving the world men live in.

The theme of the wider life appears in the social perspective that Caleb and Lydgate gain through their contributive and cooperative effort. Both men have the wider vision that at once looks backward and forward: the true historical sense that acknowledges with gratitude, even
reverence, the accomplishments of earlier workers in their fields and that looks ahead hopefully to future generations who may benefit from their present work. Lydgate's potentiality for greatness appears in his desire, which has nothing of self-aggrandizement in it, to continue the pioneering work of Bichat in his own studies of living tissue and at the same time to combine these theoretical studies, which would add another link in the chain of discoveries, with the duties of medical practice: "to do good small work for Middlemarch, and great work for the world." The religion of work has its saints and heroes, though they may be nameless: Lydgate looks back to Vesalius and Bichat as his heroes, while Caleb reveres the anonymous builders and workers who leave to posterity an improved agricultural method or some solid building -- "that those who are living and those who come after will be the better for." George Eliot first emphasized the idea of an impersonal immortality through the permanence of human work in Adam Bede when she described the significance of such lives as Adam's:

Their lives have no discernible echo beyond the neighborhood where they dwell, but you are almost sure to find there some good piece of road, some building, some application of mineral produce, some improvement in farming practice, some reform of abuses, with which their names are associated by one or two generations after them. . . the work of their hands has worn well, and the work of their brains has guided well the hands of other men.
Susan Garth pays the same tribute to Caleb when she describes him to their children as a "father whose good work remains though his name be forgotten." As we shall see in a later chapter, George Eliot sought such an extension of her life through her writings.

The Christian paradox which demands that man lose his life in order to gain it is transmuted in George Eliot's idea of vocation. Such men as Lydgate and Caleb lose themselves and find themselves in their needful work. Implicit in this view is George Eliot's usual distrust of egoism and exclusiveness, which she depicts in Casaubon's attitude toward his scholarship. Caleb's vocation is his means of self-discovery and self-transcendence. Lydgate's solitary studies are anything but lonely since he feels that he is participating in a shared experience and a common task which began long before his time and will extend long after it. Casaubon, in contrast, taking no pleasure in his studies, finds in them no path to a wider fellowship with his peers. His vocational loneliness is absolute. He hides from himself the pitiable truth that the results of his research have already been judged and by-passed by German scholars (whose works he refuses to read) and broods paranoically on the fate of his monographs when they fall in the hands of those critics whose sarcasm he fears. Rather than losing himself
in his work, as Caleb and Lydgate can do, he approaches it
with an attitude that aggravates his egoism; rather than
finding himself in his work, he uses it as a self-deluding
mirror that flatters his capacities and hides his worst
faults. In Casaubon, George Eliot portrays the intellectual
vocation that is neither contributive nor cooperative, neither
inclusive nor absorbing. Caleb Garth is the touchstone by
which we measure Casaubon, as well as all the other men in
Middlemarch. Against Casaubon's inflated sense of dignity
stands Caleb's modesty; against Casaubon's fearful doubts
that his work has value stands Caleb's reverence for "business."
And Caleb's "natural piety," his unprotesting acceptance of
the inevitable, which is his deepest wisdom, is George
Eliot's best comment on Casaubon's painful obsession with
his scholarly rivals' reception of his work.

In his recent study Culture and Society, Raymond
Williams notes how D. H. Lawrence depicts in Sons and Lovers
his belief that man must build a common life on a basis which
unites work relationships and personal relationships.27
George Eliot shares this belief with Lawrence, but I would
say that she attached even more importance to it than he did
on the evidence of its appearance in their respective novels.
In George Eliot's novels, and in Middlemarch especially, the
integrated and shared life, which implies a common ground
where vocation and personal love or family life can meet, is attained by only a few characters. In Middlemarch, Caleb has such a life with Susan and their children, as does Sir James Chettam with Celia, and Fred Vincy eventually achieves such a life with Mary Garth. It is Dorothea's aim to build such a life with Casaubon by sharing his work, or at least by understanding his goals. Lydgate's great blindness is to think that his marriage to Rosamond and his vocation as a doctor can thrive separately in isolated compartments. On this point of the common life, the Garths stand at the moral center of the novel. In the small world of this family, George Eliot portrays without sentimentality the deep attachments and the full sympathies which underlie a unity containing both rights and responsibilities. The Garth children, no less than their mother, are fully aware of the way their father earns his living, and, though the Garth boys are encouraged to choose other vocations in accord with their inclinations, they understand Caleb's attitude toward his work and respect his technical knowledge. Juxtaposed to the Garths are the Vincys, their relations, who consider themselves higher in Middlemarch society because Mr. Vincy is a manufacturer who owns his own firm. But the Vincy children, Fred and Rosamond, know nothing of their father's work other than its usefulness as a steady source of spending money.
Of their father's anxieties and losses in his business they know only what they learn unwillingly from his complaints about their extravagance. This ignorance has its counterpart in the father's lack of understanding of his children's needs and real ambitions. Both Fred and Rosamond are encouraged in their snobbery by their father's plans for their futures. One reason that Fred Vincy remains a stranger to his father is that Mr. Vincy has educated his son to be a clergyman, although he is inherently unfit to be one. Thus the father, by attempting to push his son into a vocation that will be "better" than his own, suggests to both children that his own work is inferior when judged by the professions or by the lives of unworking aristocrats. Rosamond absorbs this vocational snobbery at home and at her finishing school; she tells Lydgate after their marriage that she wishes he "had not been a medical man," and adds that his aristocratic cousins think that he has sunk below them. The Vincy family life consists of separate, selfish worlds of unshared interests, goals, and monied fantasies. Rosamond's relationship with Lydgate is largely a continuation of her selfish life at home.

Lydgate's failure to reconcile his vocation with his private life is the basis of his tragedy. In defining the "new morality" of the Victorians, H. G. Nicholas says that
"what strikes one most is the vitality their public life drew from their private and personal convictions." George Eliot spoke for her age when she asserted in *Theophrastus Such* that public morality should be inseparable from the private conscience. This conviction, deriving from the Evangelical belief that moral reform must begin with the individual, presupposes that the institutional expression of morality cannot survive if it is not nourished by the private moral sense of the individual. To Nicholas, the dichotomy of private and public morality is one of the central themes in *Middlemarch*, and he cites Lydgate as the public man who fails to realize his own new standards of public morality because of his personal weaknesses. Lydgate's is the tragedy of the unintegrated life.

At twenty-seven, with years of intensive medical study and research behind him and his beginning medical practice before him, Lydgate believes that his clear objectives -- to combine a completely honest medical practice with anatomical research -- are entirely possible. At the beginning of the novel, in contrast with Dorothea, Lydgate is the practical idealist who can define his goals; in contrast with Fred Vincy, his goals are unselfish and humanitarian. He intends to make no compromises with his ideal; in these days of social reform in England, Lydgate has an Evangelical
zeal to be a reformer in his profession.

He went to study in Paris with the determination that when he came home again he would settle in some provincial town as a general practitioner, and resist the irrational severance between medical and surgical knowledge in the interests of his own scientific pursuits, as well as of the general advance: he would keep away from the London intrigues, jealousies, and social truckling, and win celebrity, however slowly, as Jenner had done, by the independent value of his work.31

But George Eliot applies her famous statement "character is a process and unfolding" specifically to Lydgate. His personal character, like his medical career, is in the making, and he has "both virtues and faults capable of shrinking or expanding." We learn that he is a little too self-confident, even disdainful, in his personal relationships, and although keenly intelligent in his scientific work, his mind is tinctured with a certain "commonness" that appears in his opinions of politics, art, and women. As his character unfolds in the novel, the dichotomy between his vocational and his private judgment grows deeper:

\[\text{The}^7\] distinction of mind, the clear vision, which belonged to his intellectual ardor, did not penetrate his feeling and judgment about other things -- about furniture, or women, or the desirability of its being known (without his telling) that he was better born than other country surgeons.32

This dichotomy that splits his judgment also affects his perceptions. His attitude toward his work is at once idealistic and objective: he attempts to take into account
all the possible obstacles that might block his progress as a physician and scientist; thus, he correctly estimates the opposition his advanced medical views will meet from the reactionary Middlemarch practitioners. On the other hand, in those affairs of his life which he assumes have no direct bearing on his work, he is shortsighted, insensitive, prejudiced; this blindness leads to the regrettable marriage with Rosamond Vincy. In the drama of Lydgate's life, George Eliot depicts a causal chain of misconceptions and their fatal issues. She presents with dramatic irony a different version of the divided self, for Lydgate only gradually learns of the dichotomy within his own nature as he discovers Rosamond's hard egoism. The new world of social reality he enters in Middlemarch, centering upon Rosamond and her desire for social advancement, is a world he only partially sees. And this world slowly impinges upon and gradually obliterates that true vision of ideality which was to Lydgate, as it remains in a vaguer sense to Dorothea, the true reality. The appearance-reality theme in Middlemarch derives from the more pervasive theme of vocation, and in the stories of Lydgate and Dorothea takes the form of the tragic contrast between what is and what ought to be. The "two selves" within Lydgate, which imply this theme, are first shown during the Laure episode, a foreshadowing of his marriage.
He knew that this was like the impulse of a madman -- incongruous even with his habitual foibles. No matter! It was the one thing he was resolved to do. He had two selves within him apparently.\textsuperscript{33}

The Laure episode prepares us for the slow encroachment of Rosamond's paralyzing blight on his professional morality, culminating in his failure to question Bulstrode about Raffles's death. Before Lydgate's compromise with Bulstrode, we have seen Caleb Garth's integrity when he tell Bulstrode he can no longer work for him; his action is the proof that his morality dictates equally his private and his public behavior. But Lydgate, after the death of Raffles, is aware that his "occupation's gone."

One day his earlier self walks like a ghost in its old home -- and makes the new furniture ghastly.\textsuperscript{34}

A vignette titled "A Half-Breed" in \textit{Theophrastus Such} details the history of such a man as Lydgate, who yields to petty circumstances his vocational goals and eventually finds his "abandoned belief," like Lydgate's forsaken "earlier self," to be "more effectively vengeful than Dido."\textsuperscript{35} To superficial observers, Mixtus, like Lydgate in later life with his fashionable London practice, is a success, but the old unsatisfied stirrings, his "unfailing Nemesis," assure him, as they do Lydgate, of his failure.

Just as Lydgate's story transcribes a downward arc leading to the loss of a vocation, so Fred Vincy's story
follows the line of a rising curve leading to the discovery of one. Here again a man's discovery of his life's work is tantamount to his discovery of himself. But until Fred finds himself through the guidance of Caleb, who is an example of what he himself should be, and through the love of Mary Garth, who is in every best sense Caleb's daughter, his life is a series of misapprehensions, based on his egotistical perceptions.

... what secular avocation on earth was there for a young man (whose friends could not get him an "appointment") which was at once gentlemanly, lucrative, and to be followed without special knowledge? Until Fred discovers the world and his own place in it, he constantly confuses appearance and reality. With less self-knowledge than any other character in the novel, Fred is sure of only two things: his love for Mary and his expectation of being made Peter Featherstone's heir. He has loved Mary since childhood, but the expectation of being a wealthy squire, with its attendant fantasies of full stables, healthy dogs, and hospitable manor, and Mary, of course, near at hand loving him uncritically, is the more recent product of four wasted years at Oxford, where he has learned little but how the sons of wealthy men enjoy their untroubled, pleasure-seeking lives. Both Mr. Vincy and Fred regard the clergy as a convenient refuge any young gentleman can enter if better
expectations -- such as the Featherstone estate -- fail. Sometimes in rare moments of honesty with himself, Fred feels that he is unfit for the clergy, but those lucid moments do not prompt him to grapple with the larger problem of what he is fit for. After failing his university examinations, he comes home to live as an idle young gentleman and expectant heir. But his knowledge of Fatherstone’s intention is based mainly on his own fantasies:

Fred fancied that he saw to the bottom of his Uncle Featherstone’s soul, though in reality half of what he saw there was no more than the reflex of his own inclinations. 37

Fred’s consciousness, like Rosamond’s, is chiefly made up of his own wishes.

In Chapter One we noted the Evangelical suspicion of daydreams and George Eliot’s own judgment of them as egoism writ large. The view expressed by Pusey in a letter of counsel defines Fred’s problem:

Take care about day-dreaming. It is such a special vanity, and so unreal: picturing yourself as being what you would never be, and robbing God in imagination. 38

Fred’s progress is a gradual process of self-recognition. The hardest thing he must do is face the true picture of himself: the miseducated son of a father harrassed by financial worries, untrained for any useful occupation, and unable to imagine a life any different from one he has been encouraged
to expect. When Featherstone leaves him out of his will, his illusions are shattered, and for many months he has no new expectations to replace them except the possibility of becoming a clergymen. And this choice is difficult because he learns from Mary that she will never marry him if he takes orders.

Like Fielding and Trollope, George Eliot created a gallery of misfit clergymen, men who enter the church from no sense of inward calling or religious dedication but from selfish or misguided motives. The hero of her first story, Amos Barton, is such a bumbling, ineffectual pastor, who would have been useful and happy if he had entered a humble trade and devoted his Evangelical energies to the duties of a deacon in a Dissenting Chapel. Although Amos chooses the wrong vocation, his motives are unselfish, and George Eliot's attitude toward him is on the whole sympathetic. For such a clergymen, however, as Fred Vincy would make, a man who chooses the church because he can raise his social status or because he thinks himself too good to become a clerk or to work with his hands, she has no sympathy. In several letters she refers scornfully to the view that the religious vocation should be a sanctuary for useless English gentlemen, who are "poor sticks" in the wrong calling despite their elocution lessons. In *Middlemarch* she expresses this view in Mary
Garth's opinion of Fred's intentions:

'I could not love a man who is ridiculous,' said Mary . . . 'Fred has sense and knowledge enough to make him respectable, if he likes, in some good worldly business, but I can never imagine him preaching and exhorting, and pronouncing blessings, and praying by the sick, without feeling as if I were looking at a caricature. His being a clergyman would only be for gentility's sake, and I think there is nothing more contemptible than such imbecile gentility. I used to think that of Mr. Crowse, with his empty face and neat umbrella, and mincing little speeches. What right have such men to represent Christianity -- as if it were an institution for getting up idiots genteelly . . . Fred would be a piece of professional affectation. 39

This speech is fully in character since Mary holds Caleb's view of the dignity of needful work and of the moral obligation of Fred to find his own niche in the world, even if it means, in Mr. Vincy's despairing phrase, to "come down in the world." The Garth family upholds George Eliot's Evangelical values; and Professor Haight is surely right when he suggests that if we must identify the author with one character in the novel it should be Mary Garth. Mary tells Fred that she will never marry a man who will not work. In one exchange with him, she summarizes the values of Calvin's doctrine of work:

'. . . selfish people always think their own discomfort of more importance than anything else in the world: I see enough of that every day. . . As if it were not very painful to me to see you an idle, frivolous creature. How can you bear to be fit for nothing in the world that is useful? And with so much good in your disposition, Fred, -- you might be worth a good deal. 40
Fred's own hesitation about entering the clergy is the best sign that he should not do so; he needs to find work that will give him what Adam Bede calls a "grip-hold o' things" outside his own lot. Like Gwendolen Harleth in Daniel Deronda, his "ennui has no outlet in the joy of work."

Fred's deepest conflict between his better and his worse self resembles Esther's struggle in Felix Holt; and, like Esther, he feels the full force of social pressure pushing him toward the wrong choice. Against this force stands his developing conscience, which speaks in the tone of Mary's admonishments and gathers strength from the sympathetic presence of Caleb. The long months of indecisiveness and frustration end on a pleasant summer afternoon when Fred meets Caleb by chance in a field and volunteers to act as his surveying assistant for the rest of the day. His "frustrated imagination" is liberated by the physical work, which soils his "perfect summer trousers." Caleb accepts his role as Fred's spiritual master; his guidance is the "touch of fire" to the "oil and tow" of Fred's deepest but hitherto hidden inclination. When the afternoon's work is over, Fred is on the way to being a committed man. Caleb's sense of duty to help the young recalls Bulstrode's earlier refusal to help Fred other than by pointing out his errors. As we noted in the previous chapter, Bulstrode's Calvinism
isolates him from human fellowship; his active work is
dedicated to the "glory of God," (the projection of his own
ego), not to the betterment of other men's lives. Caleb's
words to Fred imply a judgment of Bulstrode's attitude
toward Fred and of Casaubon's attitude toward Will Ladislaw:

'Yes, my boy, you have a claim,' said Caleb, with
much feeling in his voice. 'The young ones have always
a claim on the old to help them forward. I was young
myself once and had to do without much help; but help
would have been welcome to me, if it had been only for
the fellow-feeling's sake.\textsuperscript{41}

Sir Henry Wotton's lines heading this chapter suggest that
Fred's discovery of his vocation is a liberation from false
ideals and a coming to manhood:

This man is freed from servile hands
Of hope to rise, or fear to fall:
Lord of himself, though not of lands,
And having nothing, yet hath all.\textsuperscript{42}

Arthur Miller defines his tragedy of the common man as a
spiral of events that stems from the hero's attempt to claim
his rightful place in his world. Fred Vincy's story is a
comedy that traces the same attempt through the theme of
secular vocation, but George Eliot's social criticism here
is no less penetrating than Miller's exposure of Willy
Loman's shoddy unquestioned values. Fred's decision to work
with his hands is his author's most forceful condemnation of
the middle-class "hope to rise, or fear to fall" philosophy
that Mr. Vincy holds out to Fred with the same snobbish pride
that Willy feels when he inculcates the same values in his boys, Biff and Happy. And we may remember too how Willy Loman might have found his salvation as a carpenter or brick layer, as Biff learns too late.

Willy Loman's hobby of carpentering and making repairs around his home is his compensation that indicates that his work as a salesman does not satisfy his deepest needs. Kenneth Burke observes that hobbies are "symbolic labor" that may reflect a man's dissatisfaction with his calling. In Middlemarch, Camden Farebrother, the intelligent and conscientious clergyman, pursues his hobby of biological studies with an intensity and ardor he does not bring to his clerical duties (though he does not neglect these) and goes so far as to imply to Lydgate that he "felt himself not altogether in the right vocation." Mr. Brooke, George Eliot's version of Wesley's "poor steward," neglects his duties as a land owner for the pursuits he "takes up": his life is a chaos of hobbies. (Brooke's flighty activities parody Ladislaw's dilettantism and make us judge less harshly Dorothea's future husband's lack of direction.) The elder Transome in Felix Holt arranges his dried insects with a pitiable care that comments not on an unsatisfactory vocation but on the life-long lack of one. The heroine of
Middlemarch, Dorothea Brooke, attempts to find in her hobby of drawing plans of improved workers' cottages a source of preoccupation that will satisfy her deeper longing for a religious vocation.

Dorothea is a modern St. Theresa: ardent, idealistic, striving to find a suitable medium for a spiritual passion that reaches forward "towards the fullest truth, the least partial good." Like St. Theresa, she has dreams of an epic life with a "constant unfolding of far-resonant action," but she has no clearly formulated idea of how she can realize it. Before her marriage to Edward Casaubon her vocational longing can find little room for expression in Tipton Parish, and her field of action is restricted further by polite society's idea of what is suitable for a young woman of her social standing. The frustration of her longing to justify her life in some worthy action leads her to marry Casaubon, who appears to her naive judgment the personification of that selfless devotion to a great vocation that she seeks for herself. Assisting him in this great work of discovering the "Key to all Mythologies" appears to be the highest calling her world offers:

To reconstruct a past world, doubtless with a view to the highest purposes of truth -- what a work to be in any way present at, to assist in, though only as a lampholder!43

Dorothea's story before her marriage is built upon a series
of ironical misapprehensions resulting from her vocational longings. But after her marriage, her story sets forth the discoveries that give rise to the growing disillusionment with her husband and his work. She marries Casaubon to discover a great vocation. She discovers with tragic irony that Casaubon himself is her vocation.

In the drama of this marriage, George Eliot is mainly interested in the relationship between Casaubon and Dorothea and their influences on each other. The usual concern with moral growth and deterioration appears here as she demonstrates again the truth of Parebrother's statement to Dorothea: "Character is not cut in marble...." Before her marriage, Dorothea bears a resemblance to Bulstrode in her sense of moral superiority, her somewhat domineering philanthropy, and her wearing her asceticism as a badge to remind others of their self-indulgence. (These characteristics suggest the young George Eliot as she appears in some of the early letters to Maria Lewis.) The resemblance of Dorothea and Bulstrode emphasizes the differences in their conversion experiences. The contrast does not just reveal Dorothea's painful, slow movement from moral stupidity and Bulstrode's easy conviction that he is a chosen instrument serving God through a divine vocation; the contrast makes explicit again George Eliot's view of the conversion
experience. Unlike Bulstrode's experience, which depends upon the acceptance of religious doctrine and the convert's assurance of the presence of the Holy Spirit, Dorothea's conversion begins with emotional need, depends upon human influences and her own moral determination and struggle, and is proved in unselfish devotedness. But in dramatizing Dorothea's moral growth, George Eliot suggests a reversal of the traditional pattern. The effect of this reversal is not parody but dramatic irony.

Before and immediately after her marriage, Dorothea regards submission to Casaubon less as a duty than as a privilege which will mark her "higher initiation" into a wider life, indeed into a participation in a religious vocation. Although the manners of Middlemarch prevent her kneeling before Casaubon as Romola does before Savonarola, she responds to Casaubon at first with the same submissive reverence that Dinah Morris feels when she speaks of John Wesley. She regards Casaubon as a "living Bossuet, whose work would reconcile complete knowledge with devoted piety; here was a modern Augustine who united the glories of doctor and saint." But during the honeymoon in Rome, there begins the alienation between them, which George Eliot depicts in gesture, image, speech, and silence as a gradual closing off of each from the other. The usual movement of teacher and
disciple toward a mutual openness that culminates in confession on the one hand and sympathy on the other and ends in full communion is reversed here. The basis of communion is mutual openness; Dorothea and Casaubon gradually withdraw from each other into separate worlds.

Professor Haight has pointed out some of the images of "enclosed places" which partly determine our attitude toward Casaubon. To portray the mental habits of his isolated, futile work, George Eliot uses images of closets, catacombs, narrow passages, and locked drawers that suggest a vocation of no public issue and an emotional withdrawal that shuts out any overtures of sympathetic interest in his work and its problems. But these images do more than suggest the futility of his scholarship and the extent of his egoism. By emphasizing his closing his mind to Dorothea's attempts to share his work and to submit to his direction, the images help us to understand both her helpless disillusion and his feelings of resentment and suspicion when she tries to reach him. Contrasted with these images of enclosure and darkness are images of wide vistas and complete communion that suggest Dorothea's earlier dream of the wide vocation to be achieved through her voluntary submission to a spiritual master. Such passages as these bring these contrasting images together:
...in the weeks since her marriage, Dorothea had not distinctly observed but felt with a stifling depression, that the large vistas and wide fresh air which she had dreamed of finding in her husband's mind were replaced by anterooms and winding passages which seemed to lead nowhere. ... 45

... she was gradually ceasing to expect with her former delightful confidence that she should see any wide opening where she followed him. Poor Mr. Casaubon himself was lost among small closets and winding stairs... With his taper stuck before him he forgot the absence of windows... 46

The clear full heights where she expected to walk in full communion had become difficult to see even in her imagination; the delicious repose of the soul on a complete superior had been shaken into uneasy effort and alarmed with dim presentiment... 47

During her honeymoon, Dorothea begins to learn the truth of George Eliot's comment early in the novel: "... the time was gone by for guiding visions and spiritual directors..." 48

The lamp of spiritual guidance becomes Casaubon's dim taper; the spiritual director is discovered to be a man whose suffering is as intense as Dorothea's own but whose pride can accept neither her sympathy nor her pity. Casaubon's response to Dorothea's questions about his work is to see in her the "personification of that shallow world which surrounds the ill-appreciated or desponding author." Yet Dorothea's attitude is not at first based on an understanding of her husband's needs:

She was as blind to his inward troubles as he to hers: she had not yet learned those hidden conflicts in her husband which claim our pity. 48
At this point, George Eliot gives equal emphasis to the blind selfishness of both Dorothea and Casaubon. The end of their first quarrel leads to silence and retreat: "Dorothea rose to leave the table and Mr. Casaubon made no reply." But at the same time the conflict between them and the pain it causes Dorothea is the beginning of her moral awakening.

Alternating with these scenes between Dorothea and Casaubon are scenes depicting the growth of friendship between Ladislaw and Dorothea. These scenes prepare for the later emergence of love between them and also for Ladislaw's discovery of his vocation in politics. The openness and trust between the two young people contrasts with Dorothea's alienation from Casaubon. Although Dorothea is too respectful of her husband to make an open confession of her unhappiness to Ladislaw, he senses her feelings with ready sympathy, and she derives comfort from these opportunities to express her feelings more freely than she can ever do to Casaubon. Dorothea learns from Ladislaw the futility of Casaubon's scholarship; this knowledge is important because it evokes her first feelings of pity for his wasted life. Her pity begins to grow with her knowledge of his anxieties and loneliness:

...she had felt the waking of a presentiment that there might be a sad consciousness in his life which made as great a need on his side as on her own.
The "new motive" born during this "epoch" when her old expectation dies is Dorothea's conscious turning from her own desires to the beginning of a sympathetic understanding of him. It is a slow change of "mental poise" that grows from dim awareness to full knowledge. Dorothea's moral progress depends upon both an awakening to the truth about Casaubon and upon the growth of unselfish feelings which derive from that knowledge. But the change in Casaubon is a downward conversion: his feelings of distrust and estrangement grow as he begins to misinterpret Dorothea's motives toward Ladislaw.

As Dorothea's pity for Casaubon grows, so does the weight of the burden she assumes during his illness and growing despondency. Dorothea chooses to bear this burden. She, who longed for the liberation to be found in joyful submission to a moral superior, subjects herself to Casaubon's needs and demands with the same self-repression Maggie Tulliver used to subdue her egoism. No reader of Middlemarch can forget the scenes showing Dorothea in Casaubon's library, patiently copying his notes in a language she but dimly understands for a book she knows will never be completed. George Eliot observes in her portrayal of Casaubon's futile scholarship the distinction between "work" and "labor" that Mary McCarthy makes in her essay "The Vita Activa."50 Work is
creative activity producing objects of some permanence; labor is repetitive and monotonous toil that leads to no permanent product. The "laboring man or woman is the equivalent of a tame animal in servitude. . . ."

The doom of labor, pronounced on our first parents at the time of the Expulsion from the Garden, is a life sentence of cyclical repetition, in which the earth itself shares, condemned to endless rotation, and yet to eternal fixity; that is, to a routine.51

When Casaubon demands of Dorothea that she promise to complete his "Key to all Mythologies" after his death, he trusts that her compassion and devotion will lead her to comply. This is the "bequest of labour" he would leave her: "he willingly imagined her toiling under the fetters of a promise to erect a tomb with his name on it." To Dorothea, the prospect means saying "'yes' to her own doom," but her compassion will not let her "smite the stricken soul that entreated hers."

Although Dorothea chooses to bear the burden of Casaubon's "bequest of labour," his unexpected death comes before she makes her intended promise and frees her from the "dead hand" that would hold her in servitude. "The Dead Hand" (the title of this section of Middlemarch) refers to Casaubon's hand, George Eliot's fitting symbol of his pathetic, unproductive life. But Casaubon's is not the only hand described in Middlemarch. The description of hands is one of George Eliot's favorite means of suggesting the aptitudes and callings
of her characters. In this novel, Lydgate's powerful, tender hands; Caleb's strong, long fingers; Fred Vincy's smooth, white hand (which we assume will receive new callouses just as his summer trousers receive their baptism in dirt) attempting to grasp Mary's firm, brown hand; Dorothea's strong, "maternal" hands; Ladislaw's sensitive, quick hands; Rosamond's delicate, bejewelled fingers, patting her coiffure or weaving a "trivial chain" are revealing and recurring images.

Lydgate and Dorothea fail to attain what George Eliot calls in Daniel Deronda the "best of human possibilities" -- the blending in one current of personal love with a "larger duty," a great vocation. The sense of waste attached to Lydgate's failure is the greater since his love for Rosamond inevitably dies and leaves only pity to replace it and since he loses his vocation. Even so, I disagree with Jerome Thale's conclusion that "Lydgate's ruin is complete,"52 however melancholy the effect of his accepting a lucrative London practice may be. When she was writing the last book of Middlemarch, George Eliot assured John Blackwood that there was "no unredeemed tragedy in the solution of the story," and I believe that the novel bears her out. Our view of Lydgate's failure must take into account the fact that though he never ceases to blame Rosamond's triviality
he blames himself much more for what happens to him. He never loses his sense of responsibility for Rosamond's happiness. Not the least reason that she is able to master him is his growing sense of pity for her limitations. Like Rufus Lyon in Felix Holt and Dorothea too, his own best nature makes him vulnerable to the demands of another's moral inferiority. Finally, Lydgate gains self-knowledge, but in facing his own failure he does not become cynical about the men performing the work he himself was not great enough to do. Nor does his painful sense of failure tempt him to put down the burden of Rosamond's life, the "weight of chain" he must drag:

Lydgate had accepted his narrowed lot with sad resignation. He had chosen this fragile creature, and he had taken the burthen of her life upon his arms. He must walk as he could, carrying that burthen pitifully.53

After Casaubon's death, Dorothea assumes other burdens that lie close at hand. Before she visits Rosamond the second time, having defeated her jealousy and pride in that memorable night-long struggle, she opens the curtains and looks out:

On the road there was a man with a bundle on his back and a woman carrying her baby; in the field she could see figures moving — perhaps the shepherd with his dog. Far off in the bending sky was the pearly light; and she felt the largeness of the world and the manifold wakings of men to labour and endurance. She was a part of that involuntary, palpitating life, and could neither look out on it from her luxurious shelter as a mere spectator, nor hide her eyes in selfish complaining.54
Dorothea's burdens are the responsibilities she assumes in her new relationships with Caleb, Lydgate, Rosamond, and Farebrother. More important, she embodies what James Nichols calls the "redemptive power of idealized woman" in saving Ladislaw from "motiveless levity."

Both quoted passages above describing the smaller burdens Lydgate and Dorothea carry in their narrowed lots recall Dinah Morris's quotation to Seth Bede of St. Paul's words to the Corinthians regarding man's vocation: "'as God has distributed to every man, so let him walk.'"55 Near this passage in Corinthians is another that Calvin developed into his doctrine of religious calling: "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called."56 St. Paul's words suggest how Lydgate and Dorothea are redeemed through their tragedies of unfulfillment. Failing to achieve the "great and distant" results of an "epic life beyond self" such as St. Theresa found, they continue to care for the small and immediate results of their deeds on the lives nearest to them.
Chapter VIII

Salvation by Fire in Daniel Deronda
In Daniel Deronda (1876), her last novel, George Eliot transposed the traditional love story based on a triangular relationship of a jealous husband, unhappy wife, and sympathetic bachelor into a religious drama of conversion and salvation. The theme of marital infidelity enters the novel only as a passing suspicion in the minds of some characters who observe without understanding the relationship between Gwendolen Grandcourt and Daniel Deronda, but this misunderstanding creates dramatic irony that underscores the true nature of their relationship, which is known only to them and to the reader. The central theme of Daniel Deronda is older and more universal than that of adulterous romantic love. It is the conflict of the divided soul guarded by goodness from the temptations of evil. In Grace Abounding, this theme appears in the struggle between the Tempter (Satan) and Bunyan's higher will (strengthened by the thought of Christ and his promise of salvation). In Daniel Deronda, the drama of Gwendolen's spiritual biography is a succession of temptations aroused by her relationship with Grandcourt and resisted by her higher will (strengthened by her thoughts of Deronda and her hope of salvation through his guidance). These relationships suggest a tableau: on one side of Gwendolen stands her spiritual master, Deronda, who becomes in her mind during her worst struggles the image of a "dark-
browed angel," speaking with the authority of conscience; on the other side hover the "white-lipped tempters," the terrifying symbols of the destructive impulses aroused by her hatred of her husband.

More than any other of George Eliot's characters, Gwendolen Harleth is portrayed "in process." The Puritan and Evangelical assumption that the life of the Christian on earth was in constant movement and that moral progress or degeneration was always taking place underlies George Eliot's portrayal of Gwendolen as clearly as it does Bunyan's description of his conversion. Midway in the novel, Deronda, observing Gwendolen, thinks:

I fancy there are some natures one could see growing or degenerating every day, if one watched them. . . .

This thought, which agrees exactly with the assumption of the spiritual autobiographies, informs her conception of all the characters who undergo conversion. But an important difference between Daniel Deronda and the earlier novels -- say Romola and The Mill on the Floss -- is that the drama of conversion, the alternating process of growth and degeneracy, extends throughout the novel and comes to no final conclusion. The conception of conversion as continuous process determines the beginning and ending of the novel. The novel opens with Gwendolen "in process" when we see her in the first
scene in the spielbank in Leubronn and closes with her still in movement. The ending of the novel, like the beginning, is open. George Eliot's contemporaries, readers and critics, expressed dissatisfaction with the in medias res beginning and the inconclusive last chapter. John Blackwood anticipated objections to the last chapter when he wrote to George Eliot shortly after he had read it:

There will I know be disappointment at not hearing more of the failure of Gwendolen and the mysterious destiny of Deronda, but I am sure you are right to leave all grand and vague, and the real disappointment of your public will be that their monthly food for interesting thought and speculation is stopped.²

That George Eliot anticipated objections to her refusal to use the traditional formulas of "beginning at the beginning" and ending with a marriage or a death is clear from the epigraph heading the first chapter, which justifies her new method:

Men can do nothing without the make-believe of a beginning. Even Science, the strict measurer, is obliged to start with a make-believe unit, and must fix on a point in the stars' unceasing journey when his sidereal clock shall pretend that time is at Nought. His less accurate grandmother Poetry has always been understood to start in the middle; but on reflection it appears that her proceeding is not very different from his; since Science, too, reckons backwards as well as forwards, divides his unit into billions, and with his clock-finger at Nought really sets off in medias res. No retrospect will take us to the true beginning; and whether our prologue be in heaven or on earth, it is but a fraction of that all presupposing fact with which our story sets out.³
The scientist measuring the "unceasing journey" of the stars and the novelist tracing the continuous changes in the human soul face the common problem of where to begin. Although every beginning of an attempt to follow an unceasing process is a make-believe, George Eliot's assumption in Daniel Deronda is that starting in medias res is more easily reconcilable with her purpose of portraying continuous process than the pretense of giving the reader a "true beginning." The problem of the artist here is to reconcile the limitations imposed by the literary form with this portrayal of life as continuous process or change. George Eliot was aware of this problem from the start of her writing career, especially as it affected the endings of her stories and novels.

Shortly after she had sent the final chapters of "Janet's Repentance" to John Blackwood, she wrote to him that any ending is "at best a negation." In "Janet" and Romola she tried to resolve this conflict by suggesting a continuation of a process of sanctification in the heroines we are to imagine continuing beyond the final chapter. In Romola this suggestion is made so strongly that in the final chapters the heroine is almost translated to a higher sphere. In Adam Bede, the epilogue suggests the continued growth of Adam and Arthur, but our knowledge of Hetty simply stops with
her deportation after the climax of her conversion. In *Middlemarch* an epilogue summarizes Lydgate's continued decline into prosperity and tells us of his early death; it also gives us a glimpse of Fred Vincy's increasing maturity after his marriage to Mary Garth. But the epilogue works less satisfactorily in the case of Dorothea and Ladislaw because George Eliot says so little; the ending of their story is left somewhat open. Maggie Tulliver's death ends her story after her greatest moral victory, but she is still "in process" when she dies. In all the works before *Daniel Deronda*, it is clear that George Eliot attempted to supply an ending that would suggest finality and resolve suspense in the manner of Fielding and Jane Austen. But we can sense her dissatisfaction with the closed, "tied strings" ending in her failure to use it for Dorothea and Ladislaw. We still feel suspense about these two when we close *Middlemarch*: the question remains, not what would they have done (if George Eliot had continued their histories) but what would they have become? In her treatment of Gwendolen's story in *Daniel Deronda*, she rejects all the tied strings of marriages, deaths, and suggestions of future events. Gwendolen's story stops as it starts *in medias res*. The open ending of *Daniel Deronda* is one contribution that George Eliot made to the later development of the novel that F. R. Leavis has not
noted in his assessment of her influence on Henry James.\textsuperscript{5}

Gwendolen's drama of conversion begins like Esther Lyon's with a sense that she has been judged and found wanting by a man first rejected and then accepted as a spiritual superior. In \textit{Felix Holt} and \textit{Daniel Deronda}, the dramatic movement that defines the relationship between master and disciple begins with an act of interference initiated by the master, followed first by withdrawal of the disciple, and later by her submissive approach, confession, and communion. As we have seen in other works as well such a general pattern of movement became after "Janet's Repentance" George Eliot's usual way of dramatizing this relationship which leads to conversion. (Although the conversions of Maggie Tulliver and Silas Marner do not occur through acceptance of a spiritual master, the pattern is suggested in their relationships with Dr. Venn and Dolly Winthrop respectively.) In analysing the influence of Deronda on Gwendolen, George Eliot generalizes about such a relationship in a statement applicable to all the conversions we have noted in her fiction and, from her standpoint, in the spiritual biographies as well:

\begin{quote}
It is one of the secrets in that change of mental poise which has been fitly 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.\textsuperscript{6}
\end{quote}
The influence which subdues Gwendolen Harleth into receptiveness begins as the disapproving presence of Daniel Deronda, who silently watches her reckless gambling at the roulette table in Leubronn. His facial expression (an ironic smile when she loses) is enough for Gwendolen's mistaken inference that he considers himself her superior. Her initial receptiveness ends here with the planting of the first seed of self-distrust, which will grow gradually, as her relationship with Deronda deepens into complete self-abasement and loss of pride. But her first defiant anger (recalling Esther's first repulse of Felix) becomes stronger when Deronda redeems her pawned necklace and sends it to her with an unsigned note she guesses rightly is his.

He knew very well that he was entangling her in helpless humiliation: it was another way of smiling at her ironically and taking the air of a supercilious mentor... No one had ever before dared to treat her with irony and contempt.7

The very novelty of Deronda's disapproval heightens her susceptibility to it and lodges the image of his face in her memory. The first scene of the novel not only establishes the relationship between the two main characters: it also prefigures as a kind of tableau the course it will follow as a drama of salvation. George Eliot's sparing use of imagery in the first scene subtly suggests that the spielbank is a
kind of Dantesque hell from which Deronda, "the dark-browed angel," attempts to save a lost soul. After Gwendolen's marriage to Grandcourt, this first setting is echoed repeatedly in the portrayal of Gwendolen's mental conflict: a private hell peopled by fiendish tormentors and tempters held back by hopes visualized as the face of Deronda.

The first meeting with Deronda is the beginning of Gwendolen's submission to him, though she will not yet admit it to herself. By the time of their next meeting at Diplow, after her engagement to Grandcourt has been announced, the thought of Deronda has merged with her feelings of guilt toward Mrs. Glasher and her children. As she gradually comes to know him better, he becomes more consciously identified with her conscience, her higher self, but before that happens he evokes in her the kind of awe Romola felt toward Savonarola.

Her anger towards Deronda had changed into a superstitious dread -- due, perhaps, to the coercion he had exercised over her thought -- lest that first interference of his in her life might foreshadow some future influence.8

In a previous chapter I suggested that Adam Bede is a study of forgiveness. It might be said that Daniel Deronda is primarily a study of submission -- voluntary and forced, gradual and sudden. Gwendolen's history traces as conflicting mental attitudes her submission to two masters: the submission
forced upon her by Grandcourt, the man she herself vainly thought of mastering, and her voluntary submission to Deronda in his reluctantly accepted role as her spiritual master. Her relationships with the two men are counterpointed throughout the novel, but nowhere more complexly than in these opposed submissions. The mastery that Grandcourt exercises is like a gradual tightening of the reins on a horse unused to the bit (metaphors of horsemanship suggesting power and control run through the scenes between Gwendolen and Grandcourt);\(^9\) the progression is from Gwendolen's naive expectation of exercising her own will to power to a state of thralldom suggested by images of suffocation and asphyxiation (first appearing in the description of the spielbank in the opening scene). Working against this forced submission to Grandcourt is her gradual submission to Deronda, which begins her conversion. To describe these developing opposed attitudes is to describe Gwendolen's moral conflict, for they arouse conflicting feelings and new susceptibilities representing her best and her worst nature. Although these feelings are dramatized in alternating scenes with the two men, which might suggest that Gwendolen's inner drama is also a simple alternation of feelings, such an account ignores the tension produced by conflicting coexistent feelings. Gwendolen's tension grows until she is finally,
at the climax of her story, in a state of moral paralysis. It is like the experience of Augustine and Bunyan before their conversion crises -- a state between belief and disbelief. George Eliot portrays two opposing processes working in Gwendolen's mind: the process of conversion dramatized through her relationship with Deronda and a process of counter-conversion set in motion by her submission to Grandcourt. After Grandcourt suggests to Gwendolen that Deronda is no better than other men, George Eliot tells us that

...she was undergoing a sort of discipline for the refractory which, as little as possible like conversion, bends half the self with a terrible strain, and exasperates the unwillingness of the other half.10

Her relationship with Grandcourt arouses feelings that grow from resentment into hatred and bring with them vague destructive impulses that emerge in her consciousness as the desire to see him dead and finally the conscious impulse to kill him. Her attempt to suppress these feelings works upon her "as little as possible like conversion." Her feelings toward Grandcourt would not only alienate her from Deronda, who by now is wholly identified with her conscience, but would overcome all the impulses toward good that Deronda's influence has awakened. The second sentence of the novel poses the question whether "the good or the evil genius" is dominant in Gwendolen's nature. John Blackwood
put this question in another way when he asked George Eliot after he had read a third of the novel whether Gwendolen would be saved. She answered:

It will perhaps be a little comfort to you to know that poor Gwen is spiritually saved, but "so as by fire." Don't you see the process already beginning? I have no doubt you do, for you are a wide-awake reader.  

George Eliot's portrayal of Gwendolen's conversion, leading to salvation "by fire," presents it as a more complex, painful experience than any we have noted previously. In *Felix Holt*, the obstacles to the spiritual progress of Esther were certain fixed attitudes, hardened prejudices, and selfish feelings that did not grow but only diminished during the conversion process. Esther's moral movement was only in one direction: upward. In *Romola*, George Eliot contrasted degeneration and growth in two characters -- Tito and Romola -- but again these processes were not impeded by an opposing process: movement was in one direction. Only in her portrayals of Dorothea Brooke and Maggie Tulliver did George Eliot previously attempt something like Gwendolen's experience: the simultaneous growth of good and evil within one soul as opposing processes that produce an habitual conflict and a constant state of tension. Clear examples of this experience are found in the spiritual autobiographies we have studied. Both Augustine and Bunyan say that their evil
impulses grew as their spiritual longings became stronger and that it was the suffering caused by their consciousness of their own growing evil that finally brought them to the despair preceding the crises of their "turnings." Their salvations too were "by fire." In one of Deronda's conversations with Gwendolen, George Eliot suggests that some conversions can come about only through such suffering. Deronda says:

Lives are enlarged in different ways. I dare-say some would never get their eyes opened if it were not for a violent shock from the consequences of their own actions. And when they are suffering in that way one must care for them more than for the comfortably self-satisfied.\textsuperscript{12}

These statements, which we can take as George Eliot's explanation of salvation "by fire," apply as well to the conversions of Hetty Sorrel, Arthur Donnithorne, and Maggie Tulliver as to Gwendolen. The enlargement of life, which agrees with Starbuck's conception of conversion as an "unselfing," is measured by one's attitudes toward oneself and others and by the range of one's perceptions, interests, and sympathies.

The process of Gwendolen's "unselfing" is revealed mainly through successive scenes with Deronda. John Blackwood rightly called Gwendolen's story a "series of dramas":\textsuperscript{13} the meetings between these two characters are a succession of confessional dramas of increasing intensity and revelation, which reveal gradually to Deronda the causes of Gwendolen's
suffering. The growth of his knowledge parallels her moral growth. Each meeting is a further stage of Gwendolen's submission, receptivity, and openness and of Deronda's sympathy and involvement. But she holds back her greatest guilt -- the fact that she knew of the existence of Lydia Glasher and her children when she accepted Grandcourt. She cannot bring herself to confess to Deronda this betrayal until she believes that she has been guilty of a worse crime: the death of Grandcourt. The drama of these ascending confessions builds up to the climactic scene in Genoa when Gwendolen, like Hetty, suffering from feelings of guilt that override her shame, confesses to Deronda. This scene of final confession is also the crisis of her conversion -- the moment when she accepts fully her guilt and moves toward repentance.

To trace with some fullness the process of Gwendolen's moral growth, we would have to notice every scene and conversation between her and Deronda, but we can illustrate here her movement toward submission to him, the obstacles that oppose it and the gradual revelations of her confessions. Deronda's ironically disapproving look at the roulette table becomes in the second meeting an important image recalling Finney's "direct glance":

Her face was turned towards Grandcourt as she smiled and spoke, but she gave a sidelong
glance at Deronda, and saw his eyes fixed on her with a look so gravely penetrating that it had a keener edge for her than his ironical smile at her losses -- a keener edge than Klesmer's judgment. She wheeled her neck around as if she wanted to listen to what was being said by the rest, while she was only thinking of Deronda. His face had that disturbing kind of form and expression which threatens to affect opinion -- as if one's standards were somehow wrong.¹⁴

George Eliot comments on the "corrective power" of such faces. Its importance for Gwendolen is that it enters her consciousness and eventually merges with her conscience. The faces of Gwendolen's two masters become the two most important recurring images in the novel: the dead white face of Grandcourt (foreshadowed by the painting of the dead face in the wainscot paneling) and the sympathetic but admonishing face of Deronda. In this second scene, Gwendolen recognizes Deronda's moral superiority (as we have seen, such a recognition is an indication of the conversion experience) and begins to make it a reason for making "exorbitant demands" upon it. Already the initiative is passing to her in their relationship. When Deronda sees Gwendolen again six weeks after her marriage, he wonders what changes that marriage will have made apparent in her:

He distrusted his impressions; but as he saw her receiving greetings with what seemed a proud cold quietude and a superficial smile, there seemed to be at work within her the
same demonic force that had possessed her when she took him in her resolute glance and turned away a loser from the gaming-table.\textsuperscript{15}

Here Deronda perceives first the public self that Gwendolen assumes in her role as Mrs. Grandcourt. Ironically, her amateur theatrical performances before her marriage and her egotistical fantasies of being a great actress bear fruit in the "automatic performances" she gives in society to hide her private misery. Like Rosamond Vincy, she is an accomplished actress, but she, unlike Rosamond, knows the role she is playing under Grandcourt's almost omniscient tutelage and she detests it. But her pride, her guilt, and her growing terror of Grandcourt prompt her to play her part well: to be "the equal of her husband." After Mirah's public singing performance, Mirah, the professional actress, contemplates Gwendolen during their first meeting and her thought underscores the irony of Gwendolen's being condemned to act a role she intended to live:

It was like a new kind of stage-experience to her \textsuperscript{[Mirah]} to be close to genuine grand ladies with genuine brilliants and complexions, and they impressed her vaguely as coming out of some unknown drama, in which their parts perhaps got more tragic as they went on.\textsuperscript{16}

The "genuine brilliants" are Lydia Glasher's "poisoned diamonds," which Grandcourt forces her to wear publicly. This necklace symbolizes to Gwendolen her guilt for taking
her advantage at the expense of Lydia and her children and also for her subjugation to Grandcourt. Contrasted with it is another symbol of submission: the old turquoise necklace (the one Deronda redeemed for her), which she wears to signify to Deronda her acceptance of his judgment of her.

In George Eliot's depiction of Gwendolen's movement toward Deronda, much of the drama grows from their need to surmount the obstacles posed by the decorum of aristocratic society. Nowhere in the novel are we more aware of the setting than in these scenes of confession, where the background almost assumes the importance of a watchful third character. The scenes of Gwendolen's drama of conversion are played under the brilliant lights of fashionable drawing rooms: in short, in Grandcourt's world. The setting enters the consciousness of both Gwendolen and Deronda like an alien presence, which they must circumvent without arousing its suspicions. Gwendolen must continue to act her part as Mrs. Grandcourt (which becomes increasingly an exaggerated version of her old self with its dreams of power and luxury) up to the minute she can disclose her real self to Deronda. The atmosphere of secrecy -- maneuvered meetings in crowded rooms, lowered voices, watchfulness -- suggests that George Eliot has consciously turned the machinery of the love intrigue to provide the most incongruous setting for a drama
of salvation. (The same purpose lies behind her use of the
green fields in Adam Bede as contrasting setting of Hetty's
sufferings.) In Lady Mallinger's drawing room, Deronda and
Gwendolen meet for the first time after her marriage:

Later in the drawing-room, Deronda, at somebody's
request, sat down at the piano and sang. Afterwards Mrs. Raymond took his place; and on rising
he observed that Gwendolen had left her seat, and
had come to this end of the room, as if to listen
more fully, but was now standing with her back to
every one, apparently contemplating a fine cowled
head carved in ivory which hung over a small
table. He longed to go to her and speak. Yet he
hesitated some moments, observing the graceful
lines of her back, but not moving.

... Deronda ended by going to the end of
the small table, at right angles to Gwendolen's
position, but before he could speak she had
turned on him no smile, but such an appealing
look of sadness, so utterly different from the
chill effort of her recognition at table, that his
speech was checked. For what was an appreciable
space of time to both, though the observation of
others could not have measured it, they looked at
each other -- she seeming to take the deep rest of
confession, he with an answering depth of sympathy
that neutralised other feelings.17

From the first calm statements on music, the conversation of
these few moments rapidly shifts to the "hard intensity" of
Gwendolen's questions: "And hate people? Confess you hate
them when they stand in your way -- when their gain is your
loss. ... if they injure you and could have helped it?"
Then, with a "sudden little laugh," she resumes her public
self and turns to the group at the piano, while Deronda
wonders whether Grandcourt has been following Gwendolen's movements.

Before their next meeting, we learn what her attitude toward Deronda has become:

. . . he was unique to her among men, because he had impressed her as being not her admirer but her superior: in some mysterious way he was becoming a part of her conscience, as one woman whose nature is an object of reverential belief may become a new conscience to a man.18

Looking back to previous chapters, we can note again how this description of the working of moral influence, expressed by the Evangelical Protestant Finney and the German Positivist Feuerbach, applies to so many of the relationships among George Eliot's characters. George Eliot was aware that her moral viewpoint remained consistent throughout her writing career. A few months after the publication of Daniel Deronda (1876), she wrote to Elizabeth Stuart Phelps:

. . . Apropos of a distinction you seem to make between my earlier and later works,
. . . though I trust there is some growth in my appreciation of others and in my self-distrust, there has been no change in the point of view from which I regard our life since I wrote my first fiction -- the 'Scenes of Clerical Life.' Any apparent change of spirit must be due to something of which I am unconscious. The principles which are at the root of my effort to paint Dinah Morris are equally at the root of my effort to paint Mordecai.19
One of the principles implicit in the master-disciple relationship is Matthew Arnold's belief that righteousness rather than dogmatic belief is salvation. Righteousness is "not to be found in metaphysical refinements about a 'personal God' but... in our idealization of human relations and human needs." The spiritual distance that we have noted between the masters and disciples serves as the basis of George Eliot's characterizations because it reflects her belief in a spiritual hierarchy among human beings. A character's awareness of this spiritual distance between himself and a moral superior is one sign of spiritual awakening. The attempt to rise to the level of the moral superior is the Positivist's counterpart of the Christian's pursuit of righteousness and the sign of spiritual growth. Such an attempt presupposes a moral struggle, which is the source of much of the inward drama in the novels. Perhaps no character has a fuller awareness of the spiritual distance separating her from the person she looks up to than Gwendolen. This awareness affects her in conflicting ways: at times when her sense of unworthiness is strongest the thought of Deronda's inaccessibility deepens her despair. But again, when a conversation with him has revived her hopes and her belief in herself, her admiration for him stimulates that "yearning to imitate"; and at times she seeks in books that she imagines
he has read some knowledge that will give her "a point of view nearer to his level." But the rapid dipping into Descartes and Locke cannot satisfy Gwendolen's longing, which by now has become a spiritual hunger. In another drawing room scene observed at a distance by Grandcourt and others, she demands some answer that will relieve her despair.

'What should you do if you were like me -- feeling that you were wrong and miserable, and dreading everything to come?' It seemed that she was hurrying to make the utmost use of this opportunity to speak as she would.

'That is not to be amended by doing one thing only -- but many,' said Deronda, decisively.

'What?' said Gwendolen, hastily, moving her brow from the glass and looking at him.

He looked at her in return, with what she thought was severity. He felt that it was not a moment in which he must let himself be tender, and flinch from implying a hard opinion.

'I mean there are many thoughts and habits that may help us to bear inevitable sorrow. Multitudes have to bear it.'

She turned her brow to the window again, and said impatiently, 'You must tell me what to think and what to do...tell me what better I can do...'

'Many things. Look on other lives besides your own. See what their troubles are, and how they are borne. Try to care about something in this vast world besides the gratification of 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.'

For an instant or two Gwendolen was mute. Then, again moving her brow from the glass, she said --

'You mean that I am selfish and ignorant.' He met her fixed look in silence before he answered firmly --
'You will not go on being selfish and ignorant.'
She did not turn away her glance or let her eyelids fall, but a change came over her face -- that subtle change in nerve and muscle which will sometimes give a childlike expression even to the elderly: it is the subsidence of self-assertion.21

I have quoted most of this scene because, though it represents just one stage in the continuous process of Gwendolen's conversion, it is itself like a small drama of conversion as Gwendolen's experience progresses from despair to self-confrontation and finally to submission. This scene also shows us those characteristics of the master - disciple relationships that we have noted in all of them: here Gwendolen's almost complete dependence, her absolute trust, the spiritual distance between them felt by both characters, and the openness presupposed by communion. (At this point -- midway in her story -- she has still not been completely open with Deronda about her feelings of guilt toward Mrs. Glasher; her shame is still stronger than her guilt. Full confession still lies ahead after her trial by fire.) Deronda's counsel, which he urges on her with increasing but "unconscious fervour" might be spoken early in Felix Holt by the hero were the tone not just severe but scornful; the message Deronda urges to "care about something in this vast world besides the gratification of small selfish desires" is once more the message delivered in the sermons and conversa-
tions and exemplified in the lives of Tryan and Dinah. The
message does not change, as George Eliot wrote Miss Phelps,
but the manner of delivering it does just as the response of
the different character varies. A good example would be the
precipitancy of Maggie Tulliver's sudden awakening joy when
she first reads Thomas à Kempis, contrasted with Gwendolen's
silent change of expression. Both are experiencing "the
subsidence of self-assertion," but the different manners of
responding are fundamental to the characters and their
situations.

Like Esther and Maggie, Gwendolen has gained nothing
from traditional Christianity to strengthen her growing
resolve not "to get worse." Early in the novel we learn that
she has had no religious experience before she meets Deronda;
after her marriage the Anglican Church becomes a part of her
ceremonial life with Grandcourt:

Church was not markedly distinguished in her
mind from the other forms of self-presentation,
for marriage had included no instruction that
enabled her to connect liturgy and sermon with
any larger order of the world than that of
unexplained and perhaps inexplicable social
fashions. While a laudable zeal was labouring
to carry the light of spiritual law up the
alleys where law is chiefly known as the
policeman, the brilliant Mrs. Grandcourt,
condescending a little to a fashionable Rector
and conscious of a feminine advantage over a
learned Dean, was, so far as pastoral care and
religious fellowship were concerned, in as
complete a solitude as a man in a lighthouse.
But the parallels between Gwendolen's experience under Deronda's influence and traditional Christian experience are indicated in many ways:

Without the aid of sacred ceremony or costume, her feelings had turned this man, only a few years older than herself, into a priest; a sort of trust less rare than the fidelity that guards it. — 23

This absolute trust is based on that reverence for a moral superior that Feuerbach defined as the highest religious feeling. George Eliot suggests that Gwendolen's trust in Deronda grows into a faith that can only be called religious because her hope for her own salvation and her resistance of Grandcourt's cynicism depend upon it. Grandcourt's aspersions on Deronda, made by suggesting that he is having an affair with Mirah, is less like a jealous husband's attempt to discredit his wife's lover than an unbeliever's attempt to undermine the faith of a convert. The effect of his insinuations on Gwendolen is to make her think that "heaven mocks itself."

Deronda unlike what she had believed him to be, was an image which affected her as a hideous apparition would have done... It had taken hold of her as pain before she could consider whether it were fiction or truth; and further to hinder her power of resistance came the sudden perception, how very slight were the grounds of her faith in Deronda -- how little she knew of his life -- how childish she had been in her confidence. His rebukes and his severity to her began to seem odious, along with all the poetry and lofty doctrine in the world... — 24
The doubt aroused by Grandcourt's words affects her like suffocation. Her faith does not return until she has made her desperate trip to Mirah to learn the truth; until then it is as if "Chaos is come again." She hears only the "desperate cry of faith, finding suffocation intolerable."
The revival of her faith in Deronda is like a return to life, suggested by the simple images of water and air, which are set against the images suggesting Grandcourt's blighting influence:

. . . Gwendolen was like one parched with thirst, drinking the fresh water that spreads through the frame as a sufficient bliss. . . . Deronda and his life were no more like her husband's conception than the morning on the horizon was like the morning mixed with street gas. . . .

The "strong and living reasons" for believing in Deronda she imagines as being "suffocated and shrivelled up" under Grandcourt's breath. During this episode, Gwendolen's hatred for Grandcourt grows into a moral repulsion, which she finds it increasingly difficult to hide. At the same time, his unsuccessful attempt to destroy her faith in Deronda makes her cling to it more tenaciously. Again George Eliot draws the parallel with Christian experience: Gwendolen is like "a Protestant of old [who] kept his Bible hidden or a Catholic his crucifix, according to the side favoured by the civil arm. . . ."
After this episode in which Gwendolen recovers her faith in Deronda, she is forced by Grandcourt to accompany him on the Mediterranean cruise on his yacht. In *The Mill on the Floss*, George Eliot symbolized Maggie's moral drift by the effortless movement of the little boat carrying her and Stephen downstream. In *Daniel Deronda*, the maddening torments of Gwendolen's inner struggle are portrayed against the calm movement of the yacht on the halcyon sea. In these scenes, the stillness of the sky and water, the unobtrusive silence of the crew and servants, and the quiet watchfulness of Grandcourt, like "an ornamental snake coiled in her chamber," focus our attention compellingly on Gwendolen's frenzied thoughts and dreams. In reading this portion of the novel, one feels that all George Eliot's previous works were preparation for her portrayal of Gwendolen's salvation by fire, for in none of the earlier works does she search so profoundly the experience of spiritual suffering. Yet the quotations from Dante that head these chapters remind us that this suffering is part of a larger movement leading through hell to purgatory.

But Gwendolen's experience resembles more closely the torments that Bunyan describes in *Grace Abounding* than the suffering of Dante's damned souls. In the central portion of his autobiography, Bunyan mainly describes fluctuating
feelings -- despair and hope -- and the recurring conflict
between temptation and dread. In his long conflict with the
Tempter, Bunyan emphasizes the continuity of the "assaults,"
the force of the tempting thoughts and images that through
insistent repetition urged him to "sell Christ for this...
Sell Christ for that..."

...the temptation lay upon me for the space of
a year, and did follow me so continually, that I
was not rid of it one day in a month, no not some-
times one hour in many days together, unless I
was asleep.27

His greatest fear that he will submit to the whisper running
in his thoughts is at bottom a fear of his own weakness in
this conflict of the divided self:

And now was I both a burthen and a terror to
myself, nor did I ever so know, as now, what
it was to be weary of my life, and yet afraid
to die.28

Gwendolen's fear of her own thoughts and the action they urge
her to commit is stronger than her fear of Grandcourt's
sadistic domination. She fears, like Bunyan, that the images
running through her thoughts and dreams will work their way
through into reality. Frustrated hatred has bred the
destructive impulses that arouse in her the thought of murder,
symbolized by the murdering hands of the "white-lipped, fierce-
eyed" temptations and by the white, dead face of Grandcourt.

Side by side with the dread of her husband had
grown the self-dread which urged her to flee from
the pursuing images wrought by her pent-up impulse. In Gwendolen's consciousness Temptation and Dread met and stared like two pale phantoms, each seeing itself in the other — each obstructed by its own image; and all the while her fuller self beheld the apparitions and sobbed for deliverance from them.29

George Eliot tells us that Gwendolen's "fluctuating stages of despair" are relieved by "gleams of hope," which come in two forms. One is the hope of Grandcourt's accidental death, which gives her at moments a refuge from the "worst temptation." The other form of hope is the memory of Deronda's face and his words, which by now stands for no less than salvation. But, as in Grace Abounding, despair is the dominant feeling, a growing darkness lighted intermittently by brief moments of hope. Gwendolen's state of mind before the death of Grandcourt is well described by a passage in C. G. Jung's Modern Man in Search of a Soul:

Neurosis is an inner cleavage — the state of being at war with oneself. Everything that accentuates this cleavage makes the patient worse, and everything that mitigates it tends to heal the patient. What drives people to war with themselves is the intuition or knowledge that they consist of two persons in opposition to one another. ... It is what Faust means when he says: 'Two souls, alas, dwell in my breast apart.' A neurosis is a dissociation of personality.30

The passage is sufficiently general to apply to the spiritual conflicts we have noted in the autobiographies, in George Eliot's early letters, and in her earlier fiction. But it is remarkably relevant to Gwendolen because we watch the growth
of the "two persons in opposition to one another" as well as her discovery of their existence.

This struggle within the divided self reaches its culmination on the tranquil, sunny afternoon in Genoa when Gwendolen and Grandcourt embark alone for a sail on the calm bay. Grandcourt is pleased because he has gratified his will in forcing her to accompany him; he knows that Deronda is in Genoa and knows intuitively that Gwendolen longs to see him although he does not know why. Through his sheer lack of sympathy he is unaware of the silent war being waged within her as she guides the tiller under his eyes:

. . . .she was afraid of her own wishes, which were taking shapes possible and impossible, like a cloud of demon faces. She was afraid of her own hatred, which under the cold iron touch that had compelled her today had gathered a fierce intensity. . . .the strife within her seemed like her effort to escape from herself. She clung to the thought of Deronda: she persuaded herself that he would not go away while she was there -- he knew that she needed help. The sense that he was there would save her from acting out the evil within. And yet quick, quick, came images, plans of evil, that would come again and seize her in the night, like furies preparing the deed that they would straightway revenge.31

The scene in the boat ends here with Gwendolen's conflict still unresolved.

The full account of Grandcourt's drowning and Gwendolen's thoughts and actions while it happened are revealed during the scene of her full confession to Deronda. (We may note here how George Eliot builds suspense through her use of
Gwendolen's delayed confession just as she did with Hetty's confession in Adam Bede. Yet in neither novel does the author seem to be working a contrivance since the confession is seen as the outgrowth of the character's previous development. Further, George Eliot as omniscient author never pretends to know as much as her characters do about themselves in these moments of absolute honesty and self-confrontation. This moment is the greatest test of Deronda in his role as spiritual master. He begins to listen with a reluctant dread of "the weight of this woman's soul flung upon his own with imploring dependence." Yet he listens, and his receptivity widens the sense of spiritual distance that Gwendolen has always been aware of. We recall Hetty Sorrel again as Gwendolen's shame gives way to guilt: she conceals nothing now, beginning with her initial guilt in marrying Grandcourt, her act of hiding the knife in her dressing-case, her growing desire to see her husband dead, and all the horror aroused by her own thoughts. She then describes the accident of Grandcourt's death, for which she accepts full responsibility:

'I don't know how it was -- he was turning the sail -- there was a gust -- he was struck -- I know nothing -- I only know that I saw my wish outside me.' 32

When she saw Grandcourt in the water she held the rope that he called for, thinking in her heart, "Die!" as he sank before her eyes.
'. . . I felt "It is done -- I am wicked, I am lost!" -- and I had the rope in my hand -- I don't know what I thought -- I was leaping away from myself -- I would have saved him then. I was leaping from my crime, and there it was -- close to me as I fell -- there was the dead face -- dead, dead. It can never be altered.' ³³

After Gwendolen tells her story, Deronda is aware that her conscience has made her dwell on the "determining power of her evil thoughts," and he is convinced that throughout her ordeal her better self has struggled against her criminal impulses. He does not, however, interpret her final act of leaping into the sea -- what Gwendolen called "leaping from my crime." This act, following immediately her expressed wish to see Grandcourt die, is the enactment of her self-aversion and repentance, which are made articulate during her confession. (A similar act would be Hetty's returning to the place in the wood where she buried her baby.) Richard Hooker defined repentance as the deed that marks amendment of life and the beginning of the soul's recovery: a spiritual nativity.³⁴ Deronda says nothing to lessen Gwendolen's remorse, though he knows that her desire for Grandcourt's death did not cause it. Her remorse is the sign of a recoverable nature: "...it was the culmination of that self-disapproval which had been the awakening of a new life within her. . . ." Her self-aversion is the "thorn-pressure" which
is presupposed in the "crowning of the sorrowful Better, suffering because of the Worst." In the pattern of conversion, Gwendolen's acceptance of her guilt and her permanent remorse is the crisis of her turning. In the light of Jung's definition, we can say that her acceptance of the "thorn-pressure" makes possible the healing of the inner cleavage of the divided soul.

To George Eliot, as to Jung, such healing is a religious problem. Gwendolén was driven by her own egoism into complete isolation, but this very isolation was necessary to her eventual recovery. Only in isolation could she, in Jung's phrase, take her own measure and learn the value of human love and communion. She tells Deronda during her confession:

> It was like a writing of fire within me. Getting wicked was misery -- being shut out for ever from knowing what you -- what better lives were.\(^{35}\)

After she returns to England from Genoa, she discovers her family as if for the first time. And, as Jung says, it is "only in the state of complete abandonment and loneliness that we experience the helpful powers of our own natures."\(^{36}\)

No conscious thought prompted her to attempt to save Grandcourt: it was an instinctive reaction against her own evil. These assumptions regarding the good that may emerge from spiritual isolation are implicit in all George Eliot's representations of the conversion experience as well as in
the spiritual autobiographies. Jung's explanation of enantiodromia illuminates the experience of all the characters who attain spiritual growth through suffering:

When one has several times seen this development take place one can no longer deny that what was evil has turned to good, and that what seemed good has kept alive the forces of evil. The archdemon of egoism leads us along the royal road to that ingathering which religious experience demands. What we observe here is a fundamental law of life -- enantiodromia -- the reversal into the opposite; and this it is that makes possible the reunion of the warring halves of the personality and thereby brings the civil war to an end.37

But the individual cannot hold his own singlehanded against what Jung calls the "powers of darkness" emerging from his own unconscious. Jung emphasizes what the spiritual autobiographies and all George Eliot's novels assert through the master - disciple relationships: man needs spiritual help. In his suffering he needs the "revelations of a wisdom greater than his own" given by a spiritual superior. In our time, patients force the psychotherapist into the role of a priest and expect and demand of him that he free them from their distress.38 Deronda is all too aware that he is not a priest, but he is forced by his recognition of Gwendolen's need and his consequent compassion to accept the role. The strength of his personal influence enters her mind as a healing force. To Jung, the image of the "dark-browed angel" would be, perhaps, the symbolic form of what he calls the
"rescuing force" emerging from the depths of Gwendolen's unconscious:

...the archetypes come to independent life and serve as spiritual guides for the personality, thus supplanting the inadequate ego with its futile willing and striving. As the religious-minded person would say: guidance has come from God. 39

This statement bring us very close, I think, to George Eliot's conception of the relationship between master and disciple. The change wrought in the disciple by the master's "force of personal influence" does not depend upon the teaching of a moral code or a religious creed. The master's influence works as a catalyst to awaken in the disciple hitherto unsuspected sources of spiritual strength and goodness. As George Eliot states this idea in Felix Holt, before Esther met Felix her "better self" had been "slumbering beneath the surface."

Just as Gwendolen comes to regard Deronda as a savior, he comes to think of her as Felix thought of Esther from the beginning -- as a lost soul to be saved. Deronda's thoughts of Gwendolen drowning before his eyes while he stands helpless recall Dinah's attitude toward Hetty and Savonarola's warning to Romola. During one meeting, Deronda imagines that "he saw her drowning while his limbs were bound." Another time his words of counsel "seemed to have no more rescue in them than if he had been beholding a vessel in peril of
wreck. . . ." The appearance of these images in Deronda's mind is natural after his rescue of Mirah from drowning in the Thames; the images complement Gwendolen's imagined fears of dying from suffocation under the pressure of Grandcourt's benumbing tyranny. Such images foreshadow Grandcourt's death ironically. Deronda's fears for Gwendolen indicate that his concern for her is the same as Tryan's anxiety for Janet: the desire not to comfort the feelings or to educate the mind but to save the soul -- the Evangelical motive. But such images have a new importance in Daniel Deronda, for their recurrence suggests the emergence and growth of that motive in Deronda. Unlike Tryan, Dinah, and Felix, Deronda accepts gradually and reluctantly his role as spiritual master and in a sense grows up to it. His movement from detachment to sympathy and finally to complete commitment is one way we measure his growth. Another way we observe it is by noting his self-awareness during what he calls his "preaching" to Gwendolen. He knows, although she does not, that his counsel applies as much to himself as to her. When he tells Gwendolen that the curse of her life is the narrow round of her thoughts and feelings, limited to the self-absorption of a soul "pauperised by inaction," we recognize the Evangelical theme. But Deronda is speaking as much to himself as to Gwendolen:
The refuge you are needing from personal trouble is the higher, the religious life, which holds an enthusiasm for something more than our own appetites and vanities.\textsuperscript{40}

The shift in point-of-view suggests more than his tact. He recognizes that his words define his own need, finally fulfilled through his relationship with Mordecai and Mirah. During the meetings of Gwendolen and Deronda, George Eliot focuses on Gwendolen's conflict, but she keeps us aware of Deronda's own search for the religious life, a search partly influenced by the demands that Gwendolen makes on him and one that will eventually lead him away from her. George Eliot's critics tend to dismiss Deronda as a static character, but he is "in process" throughout the novel as much as the heroine is.

In portraying Deronda's spiritual progress as a movement from moral neutrality to commitment, George Eliot dramatizes his acceptance of demands made upon him by Hans Meyrick and Mirah as well as by Gwendolen. With these characters he serves in different ways as a kind of savior, a role demanding self-sacrifice and vicarious suffering. Each relationship illuminates the others and reveals different sides of his character. But in his relationship with Mordecai, the roles are reversed. Deronda becomes the disciple who responds to the enthusiasm of a man he finally accepts as his spiritual master. He accepts as a duty
the attempt to carry out Mordecai's vision of a revived Jewish nationalism because he recognizes Mordecai's moral greatness, but this duty does not become a vocation until he discovers his own Jewish parentage. Playing these double roles as master and disciple, Deronda encounters nearly all the other characters in the novel (all but Rex Gascoigne) and thus serves as the most important link between the English and the Jewish parts of the novel. Though raised and educated as a gentleman by Sir Hugo Mallinger, Deronda is classless, as indeed are all the enthusiasts from Tryan to Dorothea, who belong to a spiritual aristocracy that transcends the usual social boundaries. Deronda thinks of Mordecai:

...poverty and poor clothes are no sign of inspiration...but they have gone with it in some remarkable cases. And to regard discipleship as out of the question because of them, would be mere dulness of imagination.41

The Jewish workingman saves Deronda not from active evil or death but from moral inertia.

Mordecai is the most isolated character in Daniel Deronda, yet he is the most morally influential. Through his influence on Deronda, his life affects the lives of those he never meets, and those thus indirectly influenced by him transmit that influence to others. This conception of moral influence as an ever-widening circle was a working principle
of Evangelicalism. It rested on the assumptions we noted in
the first chapter that the moral reform of society depends
upon the moral growth of individuals and that the duty of
each new convert was to carry the Word to the unawakened.
This view of the widening circle of good does much to explain
the importance George Eliot attaches to the seemingly
insignificant life which touches only a few others. As she
wrote to Mrs. Senior, the "little life" may be more
"diffusive" than the individual can know, but no one can
take the measure of that slow radiation.
Chapter IX

The Evangelical Artist
The evangelizing tendency that George Eliot retained from her early Christianity did not find its outlet until she began to write fiction. Having discovered her vocation, she was led to review her early memories and to find in them the quarries for her stories and novels. When she was writing *The Mill on the Floss*, she wrote to Barbara Bodichon: "...at present my mind works with the most freedom and the keenest sense of poetry in my remotest past; and there are many strata to be worked through before I can begin to use artistically any material that I may gather in the present."¹ Kenneth Burke suggests that an artist's return to his past may produce an experience of rebirth, "a new angle of vision whereby so much that he had forgot suddenly becomes useful or relevant, hence grows vivid again in his memory."² George Eliot's discovery of her past when she began to write fiction gave new force to her Evangelicalism, which became a strong need to communicate her moral beliefs to others. Wayne C. Booth believes that most English and American novelists today want their readers to share the moral judgments implied in their works.³ Burke goes further when he says that every artist is an evangelist comparable to a religious reformer, who "wants others to feel as he does."⁴

Perhaps more than any other important novelist, George Eliot needed to know that she had touched her readers. Soon
after the publication of her first two stories, she wrote to Blackwood:

I can only go on writing what I feel, and waiting for the proof that I have been able to make others feel.\(^5\)

This need for proof remained a permanent source of anxiety. Although the great success of *Adam Bede*, her second book, assured her that she had the sympathetic audience her temperament needed, upon the completion of each new book she waited anxiously for the testimonies of readers that her art had made a moral impression on their lives. Thus in 1871, when she was regarded by many as the greatest living English writer, Lewes explained to one of her faithful readers:

Unhappily the habitual tone of her mind is distrust of herself, and no sympathy, no praise, can do more than lift her out of it for a day or two; but by repetition the curing influences *tell*, for they become *massed*, and as we psychologists say they enable her to *apperceive* the fact that her books are something more than mere amusements.\(^6\)

Success itself gave rise to a new anxiety: her sense of responsibility to her readers, who assured her that her books were more than "mere amusements."\(^7\) She was aware of the problem posed by her need for such reassurance:

I am rather uncomfortably constituted; for while I am unable to write a sentence for the sake of pleasing other people, I should be unable to write at all without strong proofs that I had touched them.\(^8\)

Until the publication of *Scenes of Clerical Life*, she received such proofs from Lewes and Blackwood. Throughout her career,
Lewes was the ideal reader, who gave her the response she could take as a proof that she had not mistaken her work. But increasingly she needed a confirmation of her calling by a larger public. In a letter she asks Blackwood: "... how is it possible to put one's best heart and soul into a book and be hardened to the result -- be indifferent to the proof whether or not one has really a vocation to speak to one's fellow-men in that way?" To George Eliot, the work of the true artist was a religious calling prompted from within and confirmed by its effect on others. To Sara Hennell she wrote: "Writing is part of my religion, and I can write no word that is not prompted from within." And again: "Their books are written out of my deepest belief, and as well as I can, for the great public -- and every sincere strong word will find its mark in that public." An analogous need of vocational confirmation among Evangelical ministers is described by Dinah Morris in Adam Bede: after they receive a "clear call to the work...their ministry is owned by...the strengthening of God's people." But the moral influence of a great artist is wider and more permanent than "hundreds of sermons and philosophical dissertations."

The Evangelical belief that the influence of one individual on another is the source of moral progress underlies George Eliot's idea of the moral influence of literature. As she explained to Harriet Beecher Stowe, an author's
influence through his books proceeds slowly:

...its power over the social mind for any good, is after all due to its reception by a few appreciative natures, and is the slow result of radiation from that narrow circle...You can affect a few souls, and...each of these may in turn affect a few more, but no exquisite book tells properly and directly on a multitude however largely it may be spread by type and paper.15

In their letters, both Lewes and George Eliot refer to two audiences of the serious novelist: the "narrow circle" of cultured, receptive readers (Milton's "fit audience") and, in Lewes's words, "the incalculable animal, the general reader."16 George Eliot wrote to Edward Burne-Jones that an artist should not care only for the impression his art makes on those able to understand his methods but also for its effect on the less knowledgable: "Art works for all whom it can touch."17 Lewes happily reported the sales of Adam Bede, but he rejoiced in "its influence," for it obtained "the suffrages of the highest and wisest as well as of the ordinary novel reader..."18 Though George Eliot hoped that her books would be read widely, she was confirmed in her vocation by the sensitive readers who gave her "sympathy not praise" and comprised the "narrow circle" who would "in turn affect a few more..." What she wanted more than anything else from such readers was the assurance that they understood her books in their full complexity and shared her attitudes
toward her characters. Thus she wrote to Mrs. Gaskell:

... your letter... has brought me the only sort of help I care to have -- an assurance of fellow-feeling, of thorough truthful recognition from one of the minds which are capable of judging as well as of being moved.¹⁹

Despite this statement, she was encouraged by the response of readers capable only of "being moved": the working men who waited patiently to obtain her books from lending libraries or wrote to ask when a cheaper edition would be available. But she had no use for the panegyric so common in reviews of her books; she valued the "finger pointing to the right passage" as a sign that the critic shared her insights. Few critics received the praise and gratitude she gave to Emile Montegut for his article on Adam Bede: he showed "a justness that could never have been attained without the aid of a ready moral sympathy as well as of a subtle intelligence."²⁰

As she assured Richard Owen:

One likes to be read by the many... but there is another sort of encouragement in the sympathy of the few, which is very much needed as an assurance that one has not been writing down to the many.²¹

Some of the few who gave her such sympathy became permanent correspondents of George Eliot, whom they regarded as a spiritual master. The nature of such relationships with her disciples appears in many of her letters to them. To Alexander Main she wrote:

The value you attach to anything I may have said
In her fiction becomes all the more promising of results that may tell on other lives. To Elma Stuart, an ardent disciple whom she called her "spiritual daughter," she expressed her desire for the possession of a place in other minds through the writings which are the chief result of my life." Such a reader as Main, she wrote to him, took into his life the "spiritual outcome" of her own and thus widened her "spiritual existence." Proofs were never wanting that her books found such receptive readers sharing her moral beliefs.

The wider life she hoped to achieve through her influence had its counterpart in the nature of the influence she wanted to extend. By representing without sentimentality the lives of unheroic, morally mediocre people, she wanted to impart her belief that such people matter. Her primary aim was, in Booth's words, to make the reader "care about them as human beings." It is in the light of this aim that George Eliot should be regarded as a didactic novelist. Her best statement on the moral responsibilities of the writer occurs in her article on Riehl:

The greatest benefit we owe to the artist, whether painter, poet, or novelist, is the extension of our sympathies. Appeals founded on generalizations and statistics require a sympathy ready-made, a moral sentiment already in activity, but a picture of human life such as a great artist can give, surprises even the trivial and selfish into that attention apart from themselves, which may be called the raw material of moral sentiment. ... Art is the nearest thing to life; it is a mode of amplifying experience
and extending our contact with our fellow-men beyond the bounds of our personal lot.25

In many letters George Eliot stated that her own aim was to widen her reader's sympathies, for she believed that if art does not do that it "does nothing morally." Soon after the publication of *Adam Bede*, she wrote to Charles Bray:

...the only effect I ardently long to produce by my writings is that those who read them should be better able to imagine and to feel the pains and joys of those who differ from ourselves in everything but the broad fact of being struggling erring human creatures.26

Among her faithful readers she could assume a "sympathy ready-made," but for the unconverted, the general reader, she supplied through various means careful guidance of his response to her characters. She believed that it was her responsibility to supply such guidance. Because the *Times* reviewer of *The Mill on the Floss* felt no sympathy for the Dodson family, she expressed her alarm lest the critic's "misapprehensions" were due to her own "defective presentation" rather than to the reader's failure.27

George Eliot's most obvious means of controlling the reader's response is a direct appeal for sympathy for the mediocre characters she thinks the reader is likely to find unworthy of his attention. Such appeals as the following from "Amos Barton" are used most often in her first two books:

The Rev. Amos Barton, whose sad fortunes I have undertaken to relate, was, as you perceive, in
no respect an ideal or exceptional character; and perhaps I am doing a bold thing to bespeak your sympathy on behalf of a man who was so very far from remarkable. . . .28

Before the success of Adam Bede assured her that her interest in the "weak things of the earth" was shared by at least some readers used to "cloudy eloquence and flighty romance," she felt it necessary to defend her subject. In "Amos Barton" she argues that her "commonplace people" deserve a hearing because there is a "pathos in their very insignificance,"

the common condition of most men:

'I wish to stir your sympathy with commonplace troubles -- to win your tears for real sorrow: sorrow such as may live next door to you. . . .29

Another rhetorical method used most often in the early works is the direct address to the inferior reader, such as Fielding uses in Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones:

'An utterly uninteresting character!' I think I hear a lady reader exclaim -- Mrs. Farthingale, for example, who prefers the ideal in fiction; to whom tragedy means ermine tippets, adultery, and murder; and comedy the adventures of some personage who is quite a 'character.'30

Here the effect depends upon the reader's siding with the author against Mrs. Farthingale and her ridiculous demands on the novelist. In the later works such hypothetical inferior readers do not appear; instead; fictional characters, who have their roles in the stories, serve the same purpose to guide our sympathies rightly. For example, by commenting
that the spectators at Felix Holt's trial are unable to appreciate fully the "moral elevation" of Rufus Lyon's testimony, George Eliot implies what the reader's response should be. In *Daniel Deronda* Grandcourt's permanent misunderstanding of Gwendolen's behavior is attributed to his lack of sympathy for people in general. Such inadequate responses of one character to another suggest George Eliot's view of the reader's responsibility in what Booth calls the contract between author and reader that "makes fiction possible."  

In her essay on Young she wrote:

> One's character may be very indifferently mirrored in the mind of the most intimate neighbor; it all depends on the quality of that gentleman's reflecting surface.

The reader's "reflecting surface" will likewise depend on his insight and experience. Auden's statement that a "real book reads us puts the same emphasis on the reader's attainments and capacities. George Eliot agreed with Lewes that insight depends upon sympathy, and that sympathy, in turn, grows with knowledge. Thus the characters in her books who are capable of the greatest insight into the feelings and motives of others are those with the greatest capacity for sympathy. These characters, the spiritual masters, serves as "reliable guides" to the reader. Tryan, Felix, Dinah, and Deronda do not appear merely to represent the possibilities of
of "imperfect human goodness." We are expected to admire their dedication and unselfishness and to sympathize with the limitations of their environments, but it is even more important that we follow their development, which takes the form of a growth in understanding and sympathy meant to be duplicated in our own responses. George Eliot wanted her readers to receive "deep impressions" from her books; Lewes thought that the publication of Middlemarch in eight monthly parts would be one means of "deepening the impression" on the reader's mind. I think that the slow and massive movement of George Eliot's books, the gradual unfolding of her characters and their destinies, and her practice of recapitulating early events in the later parts derive in part from her aim to deepen the impression of the whole work.

Much like the guidance provided by the spiritual masters, but more important, is the guidance given by George Eliot herself as analyst and interpreter of her characters. Throughout her works she is the reader's companion, and if we do not identify with the characters, we do and should identify with the omniscient narrator and share her views. When a reviewer of The Mill on the Floss in Macmillan's Magazine attributed to George Eliot a disdain for Tom Tulliver, she wrote to Blackwood: "...as if it were not my respect for Tom which infused itself into my reader -- as if he could have respected Tom, if
I had not painted him with respect..."36 Her respect for Tom builds up gradually during the course of the novel just as her sympathy for Maggie grows in response to Maggie's suffering and painful growth. It is important to note that George Eliot's response to her main characters changes as they develop. For example, in the early chapters of Daniel Deronda we view Gwendolen from the detached position of the author:

Always she was the princess in exile, who in time of famine was to have her breakfast-roll made of the finest-bolted flour from the seven thin ears of wheat, and in a general decampment was to have her silver fork kept out of the baggage.37

Such ironical commentary controls our response to the Gwendolen we have seen exercising her tyranny over the Davenant household by selfishly demanding her own way. At this point our knowledge of Gwendolen's conflict is insufficient to elicit our sympathy, and the author neither asks it of us nor gives it herself. As in comedy we are outside the character, as we must be to note the discrepancy between Gwendolen's view of herself and George Eliot's view. Bergson's statement that laughter "implies a complicity with other laughers" simply means, as Maynard Mack says, that there is a relationship between the comic artist and his audience as onlookers.38 In the early chapters of George Eliot's books, author and reader stand apart from the characters as detached observers. But this attitude gradually changes. Two hundred pages later in
Daniel Deronda, Gwendolen's suffering has begun: she has been humiliated during her interview with Klesmer and her encounter with Mrs. Glasher, and in her first despair imagines her future life in the subjugated condition of a governess. Her "unselfing" lies ahead, but her struggle with her conscience is already painful. Our growing knowledge of that struggle inevitably modifies our attitude toward her. Although we are still onlookers with the author, it is no longer as spectators of comedy:

To be a queen disthroned is not so hard as some other down-stepping: imagine one who had been made to believe in his own divinity finding all homage withdrawn, and himself unable to perform a miracle that would recall the homage and restore his confidence. Something akin to this illusion and this helplessness had befallen the poor spoiled child, with the lovely lips and eyes and the majestic figure -- which seemed now to have no magic in them. 39

Since Gwendolen is being forced by new circumstances to accept the unflattering truth (though her self-knowledge is far from complete), the discrepancy between her view of herself and George Eliot's view is not wide enough for ironical contrast. The reference here to the "queen disthroned" echoes of course the "princess in exile," but then both analogies are rejected as inadequate images of Gwendolen's feelings, and the author suggests a new one. The sympathetic attitude of the author toward Gwendolen's disenchantment and the direct invitation to the reader to share her knowledge brings us closer to
Gwendolen and arouses our concern. We are guided also by Deronda's response to the changes he sees in Gwendolen through his "ready sympathy," but author and reader see more than he does at this point. We may note here how George Eliot uses suspense to arouse sympathy through her portrayal of the master-disciple relationship. Being uncertain about the disciple's development, we wonder what Gwendolen will become; we are also uncertain about the master's attitude toward the character "in process" and wonder whether Deronda's response will be adequate.

A still later passage from *Daniel Deronda* will indicate George Eliot's changing relationship with her heroine and its effect on the reader's response. After Gwendolen's marriage to Grandcourt, our "outside view" of her is largely limited to dramatic scenes which point up the contrast between her previous expectations and her present misery. Increasingly, George Eliot uses analysis (Booth's "inside view") instead of the commentary of an onlooker to deepen our knowledge and to make the heroine's point-of-view our own:

Any endurance seemed easier than the mortal humiliation of confessing that she knew all before she married him, and in marrying him had broken her word. For the reasons by which she had justified herself when the marriage tempted her, and all her easy arrangement of her future over her husband to make him do better than he might be inclined to do,
were now as futile as the burnt-out lights which set off a child's pageant. Her sense of being blameworthy was exaggerated by a dread both definite and vague. The definite dread was lest the veil of secrecy should fall between her and Grandcourt, and give him the right to taunt her. With the reading of that letter had begun her husband's empire of fear.40

In this passage, which occurs about half-way in the novel, our point-of-view is the protagonist's, as it must be in tragedy, though we do not cease to be aware of the author's presence, which by now has become wholly sympathetic. Now those comments George Eliot directs to the reader have the purpose not just of modifying our earlier judgment of the heroine but of increasing our sympathetic understanding of her. Thus, when we learn that Gwendolen imagines she has a larger place in Deronda's thoughts than she actually has, the author adds: "They must be rather old and wise persons who are not apt to see their own anxiety or elation about themselves reflected in other minds..." The author asks us to judge Gwendolen's egotism only after considering the isolation and suffering that egotism has caused her. Such generalizations serve to remind us of the universality of Gwendolen's experience just as much as does George Eliot's use of the traditional pattern of conversion to dramatize the "long-growing process" of Gwendolen's spiritual progress. Gwendolen's remorseful suffering, which begins her conversion, has made her worthier of our sympathy.
These changes in George Eliot's attitude from ironical detachment to sympathetic involvement based on greater knowledge of the character's suffering and consequent moral growth occur in all her books. If we follow her guidance (and also that of the spiritual masters) our own attitudes toward the characters who undergo conversion change gradually from relative detachment to intense sympathy. The distance between the author and her characters decreases progressively, and the effect is to bring us closer to her and to them. George Eliot's use of the "inside view" is important: as the sufferings of these characters increase, the author's analyses of their feelings become more authoritative and searching. She assumes that our sympathy will grow in proportion to our knowledge, and this assumption underlies her use of the "inside view" for those characters for whom she wants our greatest sympathy. As Booth says:

If the author wants intense sympathy for characters who do not have strong virtues...then the psychic vividness of prolonged and deep inside views will help him...When properly used, this effect can be of immeasurable value in forcing us to see the human worth of a character whose actions, objectively considered, we should deplore.41

These statements apply to Hetty and Gwendolen, as well as to Bulstrode and Casaubon, of whom we feel that no knowledge, finally, has been withheld. As Deronda tells Gwendolen, we should care more for those whose lives are enlarged by the
pain they must endure in their own consciences "than for the comfortable self-satisfied." But George Eliot knew that "inside views can build up sympathy for even the most vicious character."\(^{42}\) Perhaps her subtlest use of analysis appears in her treatment of Grandcourt, whose particular kind of malignant egotism is realized concretely but is never explored with the penetration devoted to Gwendolen. What appears to be the author's purposeful withholding of knowledge partly accounts for Grandcourt's being her most mysterious and most unsympathetic character.

George Eliot's most important means of communicating her moral beliefs by controlling her reader's response to her characters is the establishment of a harmonious relationship with him. Edward Dowden, in the first of two essays on George Eliot, was the first critic to note the great importance of her presence in her works as a "second self" who "writes her books, and lives and speaks through them."\(^{43}\) Although she inherited the omniscient author's point-of-view from Fielding and Jane Austen, two of her favorite writers, her individual use of it was determined by her Evangelical conception of the novel and of her relationship with her audience. The Evangelical assumption that the moral life begins with personal fellowship accounts for the personal relationship she attempts to establish with her reader. In
Chapter I we noted Wesley's method of establishing a sense of personal rapport with each of his listeners. I do not mean to suggest that George Eliot preaches in her novels -- as we shall see she condemned that practice in others. I do suggest that her conception of the novel as a work of art through which she could "speak to one's fellow-men" derives from her deepest moral beliefs and accounts for that personal presence in her novels which Dowden called the "second self."

In the book reviews she wrote before she herself began to write fiction, George Eliot attaches much importance to the "second self" of an author that is revealed to his reader. From these early reviews we learn her ideas of what the "second self" should and should not be. Her condemnation of Charles Kingsley's Western Ho! focuses on the image of Kingsley as a dogmatic preacher who harangues his reader as if from a pulpit while he extols the virtues of the characters who share his religious views and condemns the others. She suggests that Kingsley is liable to alienate any reader not already a militant Anglican like himself since he appears to be less an artist of generous sympathies than an intolerant special pleader. His characters become mere texts to preach from. Although she finds much to praise in Harriet Beecher Stowe's Dred, she criticizes the "argumentative suicide" in the polemical passages and the author's fanatical bias toward her Negro characters and against her white characters. Her
judgment of Charles Reade's presence in his novels is harsher: "...when he is speaking in his own person he lashes himself into a fury at human wrongs, and calls on God and man to witness his indignation, apparently confounding the importance of the effect with the importance of the cause."46 She objects also to the image of Fredrika Bremer in *Hertha* as a religious dogmatist with an "excessive confidence" that her religious theories offer final solutions to all earthly problems.47 In contrast with these criticisms, George Eliot's praise of Goethe and Carlyle is partly based on the impressions of the authors derived from their works. The "large tolerance" of Goethe apparent in *Wilhelm Meister* constitutes the moral superiority of that work.48 The sensitive reader will be guided by the author and "love the good in a Philina and...reverence the far-seeing efforts of a Lothario." Her response to Carlyle as he appears in his works is deeply personal.49 It does not matter, she says, whether a reader fully accepts Carlyle's social theories. What matters is the reader's discernment of a "nature that looks out on the world with so clear and loving an eye, that nature seems to reflect the light of his glance upon your own feeling."

He glances deep down into human nature, and shows the causes of human actions; he seizes grand generalizations and traces them in the particular with grand acumen. ...No novelist has made his creations live for us more thoroughly than Carlyle has made Mirabeau and the men of the French Revolution...50
The reader's discernment of a "great and beautiful nature" in Carlyle's works is the source of their deepest influence.

Dowden's conception of George Eliot's "second self" (what Booth calls the "implied image of an author" discernible in any novel) is much like the image of Carlyle that George Eliot perceived. Dowden perceived in the novels a "great nature, which has suffered and has now attained, which was perplexed and has now grasped the clue... possessed of something which makes self-mastery possible."\textsuperscript{51}

Such a second self of an author is perhaps more substantial than any mere human personality encumbered with the accidents of flesh and blood and daily living. It stands at some distance from the primary self, and differs considerably from its fellow. It presents its person to us with fewer reserves; it is independent of local and temporary motives of speech or of silence; it knows no man after the flesh; it is more than an individual; it utters secrets which all men of all ages are to catch; while, behind it, lurks well pleased the veritable historical self secure from impertinent observation and criticism. With this second self of George Eliot it is, not with the actual historical person, that we have to do.\textsuperscript{52}

Throughout her career George Eliot was concerned to protect her "historical self" from observation and to present to the public only the image of herself derived from her books:

"... just my works and the order in which they have appeared is what the part of the public which cares about me may most usefully know."\textsuperscript{53}

This image of George Eliot as a person who has passed through suffering comparable to that of any of her characters
and has come to understand the human condition determines her final attitude toward her characters and establishes a sympathetic relationship with her readers. The character of the "second self" unfolds as gradually in the novels as do the characters "in process." As we read we feel increasingly that the author's compassionate understanding and her deep insight -- her moral vision -- derive from her own experience. The confidence and trust which is part of our response to the "second self" rests on our recognition that her hard-won wisdom has been gained through personal suffering. What she said of Goethe's "second self" in Wilhelm Meister exactly fits her own implied image: ". . . a few are taught by their own falls and struggles, by their experience of sympathy, and help and goodness in the 'publicans and sinners' of these modern days, that the line between the virtuous and the vicious, so far from being a necessary safeguard to morality, is itself an immoral fiction." In George Eliot's "second self" appears her own "large tolerance" of human error, her reverence for human goodness, her recognition of dignity in the "weak things of the earth," and her faith in the possibilities of moral awakening and growth. Her books were the outcome of her search for "that which is basic in man beyond all differences of class, race, wealth, or formal education. . . ." The "second self" is present in the novels to persuade the reader
to sympathize with the common lot of all men.

The rapport that she maintains with her readers has its clearest analogue in the relationships between masters and disciples in the spiritual autobiographies and in her own books. As we have seen in Chapter II, the master's ability to sympathize with and understand the experiences of others, which constitutes his authority to interpret and counsel, derives from a wisdom gleaned from his own suffering. The disciple's acceptance of the master rests on the recognition that the master has travelled the same path earlier. In *Daniel Deronda*, the "second self" says: "Our guides, we pretend, must be sinless: as if those were not the best teachers who only yesterday got corrected for their mistakes."

The "second self" that Mrs. Carlyle responded to in *Scenes of Clerical Life* speaks in all George Eliot's books:

> ... a human book -- written out of the heart of a live man, not merely out of the brain of an author ... a book that makes one feel friends, at once and for always, with the man or woman who wrote it! 56

Mrs. Carlyle's praise anticipates George Eliot's description of the "second self" of Thomas a Kempis in the *Imitation of Christ*:

> It was written down by a hand that waited for the heart's prompting: it is the chronicle of a solitary, hidden anguish, struggle, trust, and triumph. ... and so it remains to all time a lasting record of human needs and human consolations: the voice of a brother who, ages ago, felt and suffered and renounced ... 57
Maggie Tulliver's "felt response" to "Thomas's old book" suggests the response George Eliot wanted to elicit from her readers. We may recall her statement that her books were "written out of Her own worst suffering," but we need not turn to the letters for evidence that her "hand waited for the heart's prompting. . . ." The evidence is everywhere in the novels, especially in such passages as this one from Adam Bede, in which we hear the voice of a person who has "felt and suffered and renounced. . . ."

It would be a poor result of all our anguish and wrestling, if we won nothing but our old selves at the end of it -- if we could return to the same blind loves, the same self-confident blame, the same light thoughts of human suffering, the same frivolous gossip over blighted human lives, the same feeble sense of that Unknown towards which we have sent forth irresistable cries in our loneliness. Let us rather be thankful that our sorrow lives in us as an indestructible force, as forces do, and passing from pain into sympathy -- the one poor word which includes all our best insight and our best love.58

Although all the great resources of her art shape finally our response to her books, our acceptance of her "second self" as a wise and compassionate "companion in the struggle of thought" does most to determine our submission to a presence that has the force of a personal influence. The encounter with a richer soul is the deepest appeal of the Evangelical artist's invitation to a wider life.
Notes

All quotations from George Eliot's stories, poems, novels, and the vignettes and essays included in Theophrastus Such are taken from the Warwickshire Edition of The Writings of George Eliot (Boston, 1907). As an aid to readers using other editions, I have given book and chapter numbers, as well as volume and page numbers, for all the novels except Silas Marner and Felix Holt. For those two works and for the stories in Scenes of Clerical Life, I have given volume, chapter, and page numbers. Quotations from George Eliot's book reviews and essays are taken from Essays of George Eliot, ed. Thomas Pinney (New York, 1963). Quotations from the letters and notebooks are taken from The George Eliot Letters, ed. Gordon S. Haight (New Haven, 1954).
Notes

Chapter I, Part I


5. Ibid.


9. Ibid.


11. Ibid., III, 485.

12. Ibid., IX, 327.


Quinlan, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-27

Ibid., pp. 9-39.

Wesley, *op. cit.*, IV, 279


Evangelical reading habits and the periodicals that helped shape them are studied fully by Quinlan in *Victorian Prelude*, Chapters IX and X. I am indebted to his discussion.


Ibid.

Christian Observer (1860), LX, 14 ff.

Quinlan, *op. cit.*, pp. 224-27

Ibid., p. 229.


Wesley, *op. cit.*, IV, 183.

Ibid., VI, 217.

36 See Cameron, op. cit., pp. 74 ff; Hartley, op. cit., p. 17.

37 Cited by Warner, op. cit., p. 68.

38 Wesley, op. cit., V, 212.

39 See Cameron, op. cit., p. 59.


41 Zabriskie, op. cit., p. 117.


43 McConnell, op. cit., pp. 236-38, discusses fully Wesley's preaching methods, as well as those of Whitefield and others. See also James Pratt, The Religious Consciousness (New York, 1920), p. 300 on Protestant preaching in general.

44 But John T. McNeill, the Protestant theologian, has surveyed the "cure of souls" through world religions in A History of the Cure of Souls (New York, 1951), a book that first introduced me to this subject. His extensive bibliography has been especially useful to me.


47 Ibid., p. 74.


52. Ibid., p. 59.

53. See Elliott-Binns, Early Evangelicals, pp. 415 f.


Notes

Chapter I, Part II

1 Basil Willey, Nineteenth Century Studies (New York, 1950), pp. 204-205.


4 Scenes of Clerical Life, I, I, I, 120.

5 Deakin, loc. cit.

6 Ibid. See also J. W. Cross, George Eliot's Life as Related In Her Letters and Journals (Boston, 1884), I, 3, 8-10.

7 Wolff, op. cit., emphasizes this aspect of George Eliot's moral development.

8 Daniel Deronda, I, I, V, 49.


10 Cross, op. cit., p. 18.


12 To Samuel Evans, 2 October 1841, Ibid., I, 113.

13 To Mrs. Samuel Evans, 6 February 1839, Ibid., I, 14.

14 To Maria Lewis, 12 August 1841, Ibid., p. 102.

15 Haight, op. cit., lxxiii:

16 To Mrs. Samuel Evans, 6 February 1839, Letters, I, 14.


In this passage she is quoting II Corinthians 5, 14-15. (Haight's note.)


"... in most cases it requires more of a martyr's spirit to endure with patience and cheerfulness daily crossings and interruptions of our petty desires and pursuits, and to rejoice in them if they can be made to conduce to God's glory and our own sanctification ... ."

As in this passage from a letter to Charles Bray, May, 1849, *Ibid.*, pp. 283-84, written a few days before her father's death: "Strange to say I feel that these will ever be the happiest days of my life to me. The one deep strong love I have ever known has now its highest exercise and fullest reward -- the worship of sorrow is the worship for mortals."


She is quoting Hebrews 6, 12. (Haight's note.)


36 To the Hon. Frederick Ponsonby, 10 December 1874,
*Ibid.*, VI, 98. Mrs. Ponsonby wrote to George Eliot for
spiritual counsel because she thought that the famous author
had somehow learned to combine "sympathy for modern scientific
thought with 'approval for moral greatness' and beauty and
purity in the high ideals you would set before us." (Haight's
note, *Ibid.*, p. 97.) In this long reply to Mrs. Ponsonby,
George Eliot asks: "... on a closer examination of your
feelings, should you find that you had lost all sense of
quality in actions -- all possibility of admiration that
yearns to imitate?"


38 "Evangelical Teaching: Dr. Cumming" (October,
1855), *Essays of George Eliot*, ed. Thomas Pinney (New York,
1963), p. 174. The later article is "Worldliness and Other-
Worldliness: The Poet Young" (January, 1857), also included
in Pinney's new edition of the essays.

39 To Maria Lewis, 30 March 1840, *Letters*, I, 45.

40 George Henry Lewes wrote to Edward Dowden: "She
has been pained to find many dear friends and some of her
most devoted readers, utterly dead to all the Jewish part."

41 Quoted from *Daniel Deronda*, II, V, XXXVI, 227.

42 To Mrs. Samuel Evans, 5 March 1839, *Letters*,
I, 19.


44 To Maria Lewis, 3 - 4 September 1841, *Ibid.*,
p. 107.


47 To Maria Lewis, 16 March 1839, *Letters*, I, 21-23.
This letter states her earliest views most fully.

To Maria Lewis, 16 March 1839, *Letters*, I, 22.

No single work led to her break with orthodoxy. Her scientific and historical studies prepared her mind for Charles Christian Hennell's *Inquiry concerning the Origin of Christianity* (1838), "which merely precipitated a revolution that had been long in preparation . . . ." (Haight, *Letters*, I, xlv.) How long "in preparation" we do not know. George Eliot herself, when asked years later what writer did most to unsettle her orthodoxy, replied: "Walter Scott." (See *Letters*, I, 21.)


In his introduction to this article, *Ibid.*, p. 212.

To Maria Lewis, 30 October 1839, *Letters*, I, 32.


65 To Mrs. Charles Bray, 24 June 1855, Ibid., II, 215.
66 To Francis Watts, 13 May 1842, Ibid., I, 144-45.
67 Quoted by Haight, Ibid., I, 151, n. 2.
68 To François D'Albert-Durade, 18 June 1859, Ibid., III, 230.
69 Ibid., p. 231
70 To Sara Sophia Hennell, 7 November 1849, Ibid., I, 249. George Eliot never lost her interest in the methods of preaching.
71 To Sara Sophia Hennell, 9 March 1859, Ibid., III, 175.
72 Ibid.
74 Adam Bede, I, I, III, 50.
75 Scenes of Clerical Life, II, X, 113.
Notes

Chapter II


2 Ibid., p. 318.

3 Ibid., p. 319. Margaret M. Maison identifies the author of The Old Grey Church (1856) as Lady Caroline Scott. (The Victorian Vision [New York, 1961], p. 102.)

4 When Renan's Vie de Jesus appeared in 1863, George Eliot wrote to François D'Albert-Durade: "I have not seen Renan's book. He is a favorite writer of mine, but I care less about this 'Vie de Jesus' than I should have cared years ago. It consists, as I gather from the notices I have seen, of conclusions, without any statement of the process by which they have been arrived at; and the conclusions, I imagine, have nothing novel in them for people who have been long acquainted with the results of modern criticism. But I am surprised to hear that there is anything 'cavalier' in Renan's treatment of religious belief: he has always seemed to me remarkable as a French mind that is at once 'scientific' (in the German sense) and eminently tender and reverent towards the forms in which the religious sentiment has incarnated itself." (The George Eliot Letters, ed. Gordon S. Haight [New Haven, 1954], IV, 93-94.) In December, 1866, the Leweses met Renan in Paris. (Letters, V, 328.)

5 Acts of the Apostles IX, 3-7; XXVI, 12-18, 6-11.


7 Acts IX, 3-6.

8 I Corinthians IX, 1 and XV, 8.


12 Ibid., p. 173.

13 Ibid., pp. 173-74.

14 Ibid., pp. 178-79.

15 Ibid., pp. 185-86.


20 Ibid., p. 116.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid., p. 117. See Ephesians V, 14.

24 Ibid., p. 119.

25 Ibid., p. 126.

26 Battenhouse, op. cit., p. 36.


28 Tindall, op. cit., p. 231.


31 Ibid., p. 15.


34 Ibid., p. 29.

35 Ibid., p. 36.


40 Wesley, *op. cit.*, p. 466.


42 Wesley, *op. cit.*, p. 471.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid., p. 472.

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid., p. 476.


48 Ibid., p. 481.

49 Ibid., p. 483.


52 Ibid., I, 90.
53 Ibid., p. 88.
54 Ibid., p. 131.
55 Ibid., p. 112.
56 To Maria Lewis, 6 - 8 November 1838, Letters, I, 12.
57 To Maria Lewis, 12 August 1840, Ibid., p. 63.
59 Ibid., p. 16.
60 Ibid., p. 18.
Notes

Chapter III


3 To John Blackwood, 11 June 1857, Letters, II, 347.

4 "Janet's Repentance," Scenes of Clerical Life, II, XII, 128.

5 Ibid., p. 129.

6 The image of the "direct glance" is important in the scenes between Dorthea and Ladislaw in Middlemarch (contrasting with the evasiveness and withdrawal of Casaubon); in most of Dinah Morris's scenes in Adam Bede; and in the scenes between Gwendolen and Deronda in Daniel Deronda.

7 To Charles Bray, 5 July 1859, Letters, III, 111.

8 Scenes of Clerical Life, II, XV, 148-49.

9 Middlemarch, II, III, XXVIII, 3.

10 Scenes of Clerical Life, II, XVI, 156.

11 Ibid., pp. 157-58.

12 Ibid., p. 158.

13 Ibid., II, XVIII, 165.

14 Ibid., p. 169.

15 Ibid., p. 168.
To the Hon. Mrs. Robert Lytton, 8 July 1870, Letters, V, 106.

Scenes, II, XVIII, 173.

Romola, II, XL, 45.

Ibid.

Ibid., II, XXV, 227.

Ibid., p. 229.


Scenes, II, XXV, 229.

Feuerbach, op. cit., pp. 281-82.

To Mrs. Nassau John Senior, 13 March 1870, Letters, V, 82.

To Clifford Allbutt, August 1868, Letters, IV, 472.

Notes
Chapter IV


2 For representative contemporary reviews, see Athenaeum, 26 February 1859, p. 284; Westminster Review, 71 (April 1859), 486-512; Revue des Deux Mondes, 15 June 1859, pp. 867-897; Bentley's Quarterly Review, I (July 1859), 433-56; Edinburgh Review, 110 (July 1859), 223-46.


7 This statement is applied to Tertius Lydgate in Middlemarch: "... character too is a process and an unfolding. The man was in the making, as much as the Middlemarch doctor and immortal discoverer, and there were both virtues and faults capable of shrinking or expanding." (L, II, XV, 214).

8 Gregor, op. cit., p. 25.

9 Henry James, "The Novels of George Eliot, "Views and Reviews (Boston, 1908), p. 24."
10 Van Ghent, op. cit., p. 179.

11 But this is not to say that "Christianity in Hayslope is bankrupt." (Thale, op. cit., p. 20.)

12 Both Tryan and Dinah have all the characteristics set forth by William James in his description of saintliness: "The saintly character is the character for which spiritual emotions are the habitual centre of the personal energy; and there is a certain composite photograph of universal saintliness, the same in all religions. . . . A feeling of being in a wider life than that of this world's selfish little interests; and a conviction, not merely intellectual, but as it were sensible, of the existence of an Ideal Power. . . . A sense of the friendly continuity of the ideal power with our own life, and a willing self-surrender to its control. An immense elation and freedom. . . . A shifting of the emotional centre towards loving and harmonious affections. . . . These fundamental inner conditions have characteristic practical consequences, as follows: - a. Asceticism [and] b. Strength of Soul." (Varieties of Religious Experience [New York, 1915], pp. 271-73.)


15 Ibid., p. 219.

16 Adam Bede, I, I, II, 28.

17 Ibid., pp. 28-29.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid., I, I, II, 27.

20 George Eliot reports her high admiration of Richardson's Clarissa and Sir Charles Grandison in several letters. See Letters I, 240; II, 65, VI, 320.

21 James, op. cit., p. 22.

23 Adam Bede, I, I, VIII, 128

24 Gregor, op. cit., p. 16.

25 Professor Haight notes that George Eliot devoted the first eight pages of the "Arts and Belles Lettres" section of the Westminster Review, 65 (April 1856), pp. 625-650 to the third volume of Ruskin's Modern Painters. He adds: "The influence of Ruskin on her novels should not be underestimated." (Letters, II, 228, n. 3.)

26 Adam Bede, I, II, 22.

27 This fact is made explicit by Irwine's and Dinah's statements in Chapter VII. Dinah says, "... I've noticed, that in these villages where the people lead a quiet life ... there's a strangeness to the Word, as different as can be from the great towns ... ." Irwine replies, "Why, yes, our farm labourers are not easily roused. They take life almost as slowly as the sheep and cows." (I, I, VIII, 130).

28 Adam Bede, I, I, II, 40.

29 Ibid., I, III, XXII, 362.

30 John Bunyan, The Pilgrim's Progress, ed. James Blanton Wharey (Oxford, 1928), p. 94. "Therefore at this Fair are all such Merchandize sold, as Houses, Land, Trades, Places, Honors, Preferments, Titles, Countries, Kingdoms, Lusts, Pleasures, and Delights of all sorts, as Whores, Bawds, Wives, Husbands, Children, Masters, Servants, Lives, Blood, Bodies, Souls, Silver, Gold, Pearls, Precious Stones ... ."

31 Thomas Carlyle, Sartor Resartus (London, n. d.), Chapters IV - IX.

32 To Maria Lewis, 6 - 8 November 1838; Letters, I, 12.

33 See F. R. Leavis, The Great Tradition (New York, 1954), pp. 143-44. Leavis says of this symbol: The first glimpse we have of Gwendolen in public after her marriage, she is wearing the diamonds. We are told that her "belief in her power of dominating had utterly gone." And again and again, with inevitable naturalness, they play their pregnantly symbolic part. They come to represent Nemesis: they are what Gwendolen married Grandcourt for, and her punishment is having to wear them. James's use of symbols,
famous as he is for it, looks weak in comparison with George Eliot's. They are thought out independently of the action and then introduced. . . . The introduction of George Eliot's diamonds arises naturally from the social drama, and they play a natural part in the action. The turquoise necklace that represents Gwendolen's relations with Deronda is a symbol of the same order."


36 Ibid., p. 213.


38 Adam Bede, I, III, XXV, 397-98.

39 W. J. Harvey makes this point in his perceptive discussion of Hetty's jewelry: "... the jewellery does not, like the handkerchief, function simply as a means of hinting at that part of the story which cannot be explicitly told; it also allows, by extension, for contrasts of character. It is perhaps significant that Arthur gives Dinah no ornament but his watch and chain which he knows she will use." (See The Art of George Eliot [London, 1961], p. 233.)

40 Adam Bede, I, I, XII, 183.


42 Adam Bede, II, IV, XXV, 108.

43 See Lynd, op. cit., pp. 20-43. In her sociological study of shame and guilt, Mrs. Lynd takes some key illustrations from George Eliot's novels, but none from Adam Bede.

44 To Mme Eugene Bodichon, 26 December 1860, Letters, III, 366.

45 See Leavis, op. cit., pp. 24-25, n. 18.
46 Lynd, op. cit., p. 23.


48 Adam Bede, II, V, XXXVII, 136.

49 See Harvey, op. cit., p. 233.

50 Adam Bede, II, V, XXXVII, 132.

51 Ibid., p. 144.

52 Ibid., II, V, XLII, 202.


54 Ibid., II, V, XLV, 233.

55 Ibid., p. 235.

56 Ibid., p. 238.

57 Ibid.

58 Ibid., p. 239.

59 Ibid., p. 240.


61 Adam Bede, II, V, XLVI, 242-43.

62 Van Ghent, op. cit., p. 179.

63 Adam Bede, II, V, XLVI, 247.

64 Ibid., II, V, XLIII, 206.

To Charles Bray, 5 July 1859, *Letters*, III, 111.

Adam Bede, II, V, XLVI, 248-49.

Ibid., II, V, XLII, 203-204.

Ibid., II, V, XLVIII, 255.

Ibid., p. 257.

To John Chapman, 5 July 1856, *Letters*, II, 258

Adam Bede, II, V, XLVIII, 261.


Ibid., 191.

Ibid., p. 275.
Notes
Chapter V


5 The Mill on the Floss, II, IV, III, 30.

6 Ibid., p. 34.

7 Middlemarch, I, II, XXI, 306.


10 The Mill on the Floss, II, IV, III, 33.

11 Ibid., p. 38.

12 Ibid., II, V, II, 61.

13 Ibid., II, V, I, 53.

14 Ibid., II, V, III, 90.

15 Ibid., p. 93.

16 Ibid., II, VI, VII, 225-26.

17 Ibid., II, VI, III, 178.
To María Lewis, 6 - 8 November 1838, Letters I, 13.

The Mill on the Floss, II, VI, XIII, 304.

Ibid., 308. George Eliot creates the same sense of languor and dreaminess in Adam Bede when she describes the meetings of Hetty and Arthur in the wood: "It was a still afternoon -- the golden light was lingering languidly among the upper boughs . . . ." (I, I, XII, 184). Her portrayal of passion as the "sleep of thought" emphasizes by contrast her idea of the arduousness of moral action and decision. Jewsbury's novel Constance Herbert (Westminster Review, 1855), George Eliot defines the "true doctrine of renunciation": "It is not the fact that what duty calls on us to renounce, will invariably prove 'not worth the keeping'; and if it were the fact, renunciation would cease to be moral heroism, and would be simply a calculation of prudence." (Essays of George Eliot, ed. Thomas Pinney [New York, 1963], p. 134.)

Ibid., II, VII, V, 376.

Ibid., p. 377.

Joan Bennett, George Eliot: Her Mind and Her Art (Cambridge, 1962), p. 130. Mrs. Bennett's view of Maggie's decision is typical: "Maggie can refuse to go forward to marriage with Stephen and the enjoyment of a selfish happiness; but she cannot go back and save Lucy and Philip from the misery of knowing that they are not loved. Ultimately they may think better of her because of this sacrifice she is making, but for themselves it cannot bring happiness nor much alleviate pain. It is therefore hard for the reader to believe that this sacrifice of her own and Stephen's happiness is worth while." (Ibid., p. 127). The point I would make in reply to this view is that it misunderstands George Eliot's idea of moral action (and also her heroine's). Because marriage to Stephen would be selfish, it would never bring Maggie happiness. Maggie knows this, but it is not her motive for renouncing Stephen. To George Eliot, Maggie's renunciation is an act of moral heroism (See note 21 above) partly because it does not calculate results. The hope of being thought better of by Lucy and Philip is not Maggie's motive. Maggie's sacrifice is worthwhile because it places the claims of others above her own: "... the immediate impulse of love or justice ... alone makes an action truly moral." (Pinney, op. cit., p. 135.).


28 Ibid., p. 378.
Notes

Chapter VI


3George Eliot's Life as Related in Her Letters and Journals, arranged and edited by her husband, J. W. Cross (3 vols., Edinburgh and London, 1885) is still the official biography. Professor Haight's new biography is in progress.


6Felix Holt, VI, 118-19.

7Ibid., VIII, 160-61.

8Ibid., XX, 296.


10Henry James, "The Novels of George Eliot," Views and Reviews (Boston, 1908), p. 36.


13"Evangelical Teaching: Dr. Cumming" (October, 1855), Pinney, op. cit., p. 186.

Ibid., p. 381.

Ibid., p. 379.

Middlemarch.

Haight, op. cit., p. ix.


Ray B. West, Jr., Katherine Anne Porter, University of Minnesota Pamphlets on American Writers No. 28 (Minneapolis, 1963), p. 41.

In his review of Ship of Fools in The New York Times Book Review (April 1, 1962), p. 1, Mark Schorer paid his final tribute to Miss Porter's novel by suggesting that we call it a latter-day Middlemarch.)


Adam Bede, I, I, VIII, 128.

Felix Holt, I, V, 88.

Ibid., II, XXVIII, 34.

Ibid., XXVIII, 36.

Ibid.

"German Wit: Heinrich Heine" (January, 1856), Pinney, op. cit., p. 218.

31 Felix Holt, II, XXVII, 36-7.

32 Ibid., I, X, 180-81.


34 "Janet's Repentance," Scenes from Clerical Life, II, XXII, 308.

35 Felix's values underlie his Address to Working Men, an essay which George Eliot wrote in 1867 at the request of John Blackwood for publication in Blackwood's (January, 1868). See Pinney, op. cit., 415-30.

36 See Maurice J. Quinlan, Victorian Prelude (New York, 1941), pp. 49-51, 54.

37 Pinney, op. cit., p. 424.


40 Daniel Deronda, III, VII, LIII, 127.

41 Ibid., II, VI, XLVIII, 57.

42 See Yvor Winters, Maule's Curse (Norfolk, Conn., 1938), p. 27, on James Fenimore Cooper's mistaken belief that such a relationship was possible.

43 The best statements of George Eliot's "conservation radicalism" occur in Felix Holt and in the "Address to Working Men, By Felix Holt."

44 For an acute analysis of the fear of mob violence as reflected in the novels of these English writers, see Raymond Williams, Culture and Society (London, 1959), pp. 87-109. For Fenimore Cooper see Yvor Winters, op. cit., pp. 25-7.

46 "The Natural History of German Life" (July, 1856), Pinney, *op. cit.*, 271-72.


48 Felix Holt, I, VI, 110.


54 To Maria Lewis, 12 August 1840, *Letters*, I, 63. "Mr. Finney in his Lectures on Revivals . . . says that the whole of religion is, simply to submit to God. The phrase is common enough but I doubt whether the idea, still less the act be fully comprehended and carried out by the majority even of professing Christians."


56 Felix Holt, II, XLVI, 302.


60 *Ibid.*, II, XXVII, 44.


Notes

Chapter VII


9 To François D'Albert Durade, 18 October 1859, *Letters*, III, 186-87.


11 "Prelude" to *Middlemarch*, I, 1.

12 I base this statement on my own teaching experience. In my literature classes at Oberlin College, students almost unanimously chose *Middlemarch* as the most valuable (i. e., relevant) novel they had ever read.

14Ibid., I, III, XXIV, 363-64.
15Adam Bede, I, I, I, 9-10.
21Daniel Deronda, III, XXI, 178.
22Calhoun, op. cit., p. 89.
23To Mme Eugene Bodichon, 27 July 1859, Letters, III, 123.
24To Alexander Main, 13 May 1874, Letters, VI, 49.
30Nicholas; loc. cit.
31Middlemarch I, II, XIV, 208.
32 Ibid., p. 216
33 Ibid., p. 219
34 Ibid.
36 Middlemarch, I, III, XXI, 296.
37 Ibid., I, I, XII, 169.
39 Middlemarch, II, LII, 362.
40 Ibid., I, III, XXV, 368.
41 Ibid., III, VI, LVI, 44.
42 Ibid., p. 27.
43 Ibid., I, I, II, 21.
45 Middlemarch, I, II, XX, 283.
46 Ibid., p. 286.
48 Ibid., I, II, XX, 290.
49 Ibid., I, II, XXI, 305-06.
51 Ibid.


55 *Adam Bede*, I, I, III, 46.

56 *I Corinthians* 7:20.
Notes

Chapter VIII

1 Daniel Deronda, II, IV, XXXV, 186.


3 Daniel Deronda, I, I, I, 1.

4 To John Blackwood, 1 May 1857, Letters, II, 324. "Conclusions are the weak point of most authors, but some of the fault lies in the very nature of a conclusion, which is at best a negation."

5 F. R. Leavis, The Great Tradition (New York, 1954), pp. 108 ff. "... Henry James wouldn't have written The Portrait of a Lady if he hadn't read Gwendolen Harleth (as I shall call the good part of Daniel Deronda)..."

6 Daniel Deronda, II, V, XXV, 225.

7 Ibid., I, I, I, 23.

8 Ibid., II, IV, XXIX, 75.

9 These metaphors have been studied by Barbara Hardy. See The Novels of George Eliot (London, 1959), pp. 227-9.

10 Daniel Deronda, III, VI, XLVIII, 72.

11 To John Blackwood, 18 November 1875, Letters, VI, 188. Blackwood had written: "The witch will I hope be saved ultimately but you alone must decide." 10 November 1875, Letters, VI, 183.

12 Daniel Deronda, XXX, II, V, XXXVI, 239.
John Blackwood to George Eliot, 17 November 1875, Letters, VI, 186. "The interest goes on and on mounting and then it is a series of perfect little dramas."

Daniel Deronda, II, IV, XXIX, 76-7.

Ibid., II, V, XXV, 190.

Ibid., III, VI, LXIV, 23.

Ibid., II, V, XXV, 197.

Ibid., II, V, XXV, 199.

To Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, 16 December 1876, Letters, VI, 318.

On 1 November 1874, Lewes wrote to Elma Stuart: "Much the he [Arnold] says on Religion we both think very good, and likely to have a yeasty effect on that strange fluid Public Opinion. I, myself cannot see how the Bible 'makes for righteousness' though I profoundly agree with him that righteousness is salvation -- and is not to be sought in metaphysical refinements about a 'personal God' but is to be found in our idealization of human relations and human needs." Letters, VI, 87.


Ibid., III, VI, XLV, 27.

Ibid., II, V, XXV, 198.

Ibid., III, VI, XLVIII, 64.

Ibid., p. 69

Ibid., p. 72.


Ibid., p. 149.
29 Daniel Deronda, III, VII, LIV, 186-7.


32 Ibid., III, VII, LVI, 220.

33 Ibid., p. 221.


35 Daniel Deronda, III, VII, LVI, 220.

36 Jung, op. cit., p. 238.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid., p. 241.

39 Ibid., p. 242.

40 Daniel Deronda, II, V, XLIV, 25.

41 Ibid., II, V, XLIV, 31.

42 To Mrs. Nassau John Senior, 13 March 1870, Letters, V, 82.
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Chapter IX


4 Burke, loc. cit.

5 To John Blackwood, 2 June 1857, Letters, II, 335.

6 To Alexander Main, 20 December 1871, Letters, V, 228.


8 To Joseph Munt Langford, 27 March 1861, Letters, III, 393.

9 See George Eliot's letter to Mme Bodichon, 5 May 1859, Letters, III, 64.


12 To Alexander Main, 9 November 1871, Letters, V, 213.

13 Adam Bede, I, I, VIII, 124.


16 See Lewes's letter to Blackwood, 17 March 1859: "It [the sales of Adam Bede] -- not merely as success -- but in a purely moral and literary point of view -- showing that truth will move even the unthinking public as well as the thoughtful and feeling public." (Letters, III, 35-36.)


19 To Mrs. William Gaskell, 11 November 1859, Letters, III, 198.

20 To Émile Montégut, 2 July 1859, Letters, III, 109-110.

21 To Richard Owen, 22 January 1861, Letters, III, 373.

22 To Alexander Main, 9 November 1871, Letters, V, 213.

23 To Elma Stuart, 1 February 1872, Letters, V, 244.


26 To Charles Bray, 5 July 1859, Letters, III, 111.


28 Scènes of Clerical Life, I, V, 61.

29 Ibid., p. 62.
30 Ibid., p. 61.

31 Booth, op. cit., p. 52.


35 Several critics have studied George Eliot's use of the omniscient narrator. The best study is W. J. Harvey's chapter "The Omniscient Author Convention" in The Art of George Eliot (London, 1961), pp. 64-89. The most important statement in this chapter is this: "The omniscient author [in George Eliot's fiction] is the bridge or link between the two worlds [of fiction and reality] . . . . The implications of this process are important for our view of the kind of fiction George Eliot is writing . . . . The 'illusion of reality' aimed at in this kind of fiction is not that of a self-contained world, a fictional microcosm intact and autonomous as in the Jamesian mode, but a world conterminous with the 'real' world, with the factual macrocosm. The author bridges the two worlds; we accept her opinions about the real world (i. e., her aesthetic argument) on the same level and in the same way as we accept the opinions of Adam Bede from within the novel." [Ibid., p. 71]. See Also Richard Stang, The Theory of the Novel in England, 1850-1870 (New York and London, 1959), pp. 104-05.

36 To John Blackwood, 4 April 1861, Letters, III, 397.

37 Daniel Deronda, I, I, IV, 53.


40 Ibid., II, V, XXXV, 217.
Booth, op. cit., p. 378.

Ibid.


Pinney, op. cit., p. 123.

Ibid., p. 327.

Ibid., p. 329.

Ibid., p. 332.

Ibid., p. 147.


Ibid.

Dowden, op. cit., 241.

Ibid.

To George Bancroft, 15 July 1874, Letters, VI, 68.

Pinney, op. cit., p. 147.

Booth, op. cit., quotes without reference this question by Ralph Ellison: "How does one in the novel (the novel which is a work of art and not a disguised piece of sociology) persuade the American reader to identify that which is basic in man beyond all differences of class, race, wealth, or formal education?" (p. 118).


The Mill on the Floss, II, IV, I, 34. In The Victorian Sage, John Holloway refers to this passage as

58 Adam Bede, II, VI, L, 287-88. Ian Gregor quotes part of this passage in The Moral and the Story, but I cannot agree with his view of it: "The situation is analogous to that of a professor giving a lecture, and commanding attention not so much because of what he actually says, but because of the position he holds." (p. 252.) The analogy of the professor in the lecture hall misses the sense of the personal presence that develops in the novels in the same way that the fictional characters develop. In the same way, C. M. Young's phrase "moralist of the age" is an inaccurate description of the "second self" as it appears in the novels.
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