CHAPTER-V
ALTRUISM AND SOCIAL CONFORMITY

In the fiction of George Eliot, the Concept of altruism is straightway linked with the social conformity. Society almost in all her novels, works as a protagonist in disguise for two major causes that society lets the characters to their full growth in its natural environment; and that society binds them with the consequences of the Law of Karma. Apart from these two reasons, society also becomes symbolic of their duties to family, to their past and to their social obligation. All the altruists in the novels of George Eliot swing between two polarities of life: nature and culture. There nature becomes suggestive of their inner natural tendencies and natural impulses. Culture denotes the social obligations and social responsiveness. These two things make George Eliot profess the philosophic principles of Herbert Spencer on the one hand, and the general trends of Victorian England on the other. Breaking the social code means to be a character self-wishfulfilment and this leads her/him to commit error after error; but when they remember their past ties & their social obligation, they comeback to adopt the altruistic motifs of life.

Apart from the "Self concept" and "self-image" in the personality, there also remain higher moral self in a man. A modern psychologist, Prof. Abraham Maslow believed that each person has an essentical nature that presses to emerge as a higher self. In his view;

"We all have higher level growth needs-Such as the needs for self actualization and understanding of ourselves but that these higher needs
only assume a dominant role in our lives after our more primitive needs are satisfied...... the human being is not a white rat. Man has a higher and transcendent nature.”

In George Eliot’s Fictional world, there emerge the person-situation controversy. It centers on one key question- To what extent is our behaviour caused by characteristics of the situation in which we find ourselves? It seems sometimes that in her novels, the female protagonists come into clash either with the higher norms of society or with the higher norms of any individual. Either of these two factors generates in them a new consciousness which can be called the growth of super consciousness leading one to the moral and higher principles of life. To quote Prof. Blum:

“Guilt or super ego has a host of reaction associated with it. Confession, the seeking of atonement, acts of reparation, all stem from unconscious forces related to moral standards. Seemingly self-destructive behaviour can serve to gratify a need for punishment and expiation of one’s sins. An individual may, without in a situation where an accident is likely to, befall them.”

George Eliot under the influence of Herbert Spencer and Comte regards society as an organic force. Any of her egoists surpassing the limits of the social code invites many problems and sufferings. Society as a representative will of all the individuals demands certain sacrifices from an individual. Self-regarding concept is disapproved and in place of it the other regarding vision is approved by the organic force of society. The
personality of an individual depends on mutual love and self sacrifice
done to other. Antecedent to the recognition of the great necessity of the
fellowship between man and man becomes “the principle of development,
social and moral”\(^{(3)}\) In Geroge Eliot’s novels, Almost all the main characters
are governed and geared up by blinding self-centredness which acts like a
cancerous cell in the social organism. Gradually, Geroge Eliot binds with
a strong tag almost all her female protagonists the assignment of certain
social obligation which also represent the moral height of sacrifice in a
protagonist. Thus the process of the realization of social duties springs up
of the sympathy in the mind of the protagonist. This process involves the
disinterestedness in protagonist’s approach for the service of the society.
Geroge Eliot also approves this disinterestedness in protagonist as she
writes in her letter written to John Chapman, “the mutual tolerance is the
only condition on which we morals can live together and we can also thus
add to the progress and happiness world around.”\(^{(4)}\)

Adam Bede is the best example of the altruists shown by the novelist.
The concept of beauty has emphatically been observed through observing
the principles of Evangelicalism which shows “that idea of duty, that
recognition of something to be lived for beyond the mere satisfaction of
self, which is the moral life what addition of a great central ganglion is to
animal life”\(^{(5)}\) And it is for the altruistic nature that David Daiches finds
Geroge Eliot “reaching out....... to some-thing more profound and universal
than any novel based on the merely English scene could achieve.”\(^{(6)}\)
George Eliot follows great sociologist August Comte regarding the society as a living entity. She makes man subservient to the greater cause of the society. The principle of altruism is very clear on the philosophic canons of August Comte. George Eliot herself acknowledges "that all legitimate social activity must be beneficial to others besides the agent". 

In Adam Bede, Hetty Sorrel and Dinah Morris, both the nieces of Mr. and Mrs. Poyser, highlight and bring into being George Eliot's purposiveness so far as the moral reflections of life are concerned. Mr. Poyser, an owner of a dairy at Hall farm, desires that Hetty should marry a gentleman from Hayslope. In his opinion, Adam is this gentleman and he also loves Hetty, but Hetty does not love him. Her matchless beauty and the egoism there in make her blind for her matrimonial choice. Hetty is really a speaking manifestation of George Eliot's belief that a character is not good as long as he proves his goodness by his intentions and inner motivations, if the goodness of intention is not there, a man may slip from righteousness at any time because;

"There have been evil doers among us who have sought to deceive the brethren, and some there are who deceived their own selves. But we are not without discipline and correction to put a check upon these things. There is a very strict order kept among us, and the brethren and sister watch for each other soul as they that must give account." 

Arthur Donnithrone is her choice only because of his richness. She can not find the realization of the marital life in the company of Adam.
Arthur too debates with his self in order to keep a distance between himself and Hetty but in vain. He thinks over the matter "till the twilight deepened almost to night under the great boughs and the hare looked black as it darted across his path"(130) Arthur is fully aware of his mental state for having affair with Hetty. Hetty as a girl has hardly any restrain on her egoistical implications of human nature. Geroge Eliot wants to show that the great end of the gospel is not merely the saving, but the education of man's souls, the creating within them of holy dispositions, the subduing of holy dispositions. Surrounded through her dream world (the process of day-dreaming included), Hetty flirts with Arthur and she gets pregnant. Being warned by Dinah, She does not think of meeting the misfortunes that may be caused due to her immoral deeds. Nor does Arthur care for morality. He must have married Hetty Sorrel as he spoils her chastity. Dinah, who knows this immoral act of Hetty, advises her to give up her day-dreaming. Dinah presenting the religion of Geroge Eliot's conception of humanity stands in sharp contrast with her:

"What a strange contrast the two figures made! visible enough in that mingled twilight and moon light, Hetty, her cheecks flushed and her eyes glistening from her imaginary drama, her beautiful neck and arms bare, her hair hanging in a curly tangle down her back and the baubles in her ears. Dinah covered with her pale face full of subdued emotion, almost likely a lovely corpse into which the soul has returned, changed with sublimer secrets and a sublimer love."(148)
The journey image unlocks the dimmer regions of Hetty’s mind. “On her way to Arthur’s house, she finds two ways to Scotland—one leading to the hedgerow which will, by and by lead her into the road again, the other across the fields which she will take her much farther...... which she will see nobody. She chooses this”. This road imagery in which Hetty chooses the farther way to loneliness comes to reflect the modern concept of literature where in the sinner desires to spend his sinful life in isolation and loneliness. She conceals at present and all concealments are egoism. George Eliot does not like concealment; She wants to reveal the confession that creates altruistic nature in man, In her journey, She constantly searches a “pool” - an image which is linked with altruistic nature of man - but she hardly finds one her way to search Arthur she gives birth to a child and murders it. She is thus arrested and put in a prision. The Prision Scene marks the climax of the tragedy and brings Hetty with the altruism of life. She suffers and suffering gives her enlightenment. At the same time Dinah visits Hetty in prison and consoles her. Adam, Mr. and Mrs. Poyser also arrive at the prison and suffer through the sufferings of Hetty. Dinah reminds her theory of Karma that links the past of any man with his present:

“Hetty, you are shutting up your soul against Him by trying to hide truth. God’s love can overcome all things—our ignorance and weakness, and all the burden of our past wickedness—all things but our wilful sin..... His pardoning mercy can’t reach you until you open your heart to Him and say I have done this great wickedness. God save me, make me pure from sins”.
Thus, she undergoes a constant process of soul nurture and gets the highest altruistic traits of human personality. Human love and the emotions of brotherhood become her religion. This gives better prospects from the deliverance of her sinful and wicked life. In the end, she confesses her guilt and becomes a pure altruist:

"I thought perhaps it wouldn’t die..... there might somebody find it. I didn’t kill it - I didn’t kill it myself. I put it down there and covered it up and when I came back it was gone..... oh it was so dreadful Dinah..... I was so miserable..... I wished I’d never been born into this world."(399)

Before confession Hetty is lovesick and does not deserve our pity and sympathy. But the confession of her guilt subdues all her egoism and relieves her from the suffering of her past actions. She invokes our sympathy because of her helplessness. She dies before the arrival of Arthur. Thus, she presents before the readers a life of altruist who confesses her guilt before her death.

George Eliot’s chief motif as a novelist lies in the gradual growth of the characters from egoism to altruism. Her next novel, The Mill on the Floss reflects the norms of the religion, of humanity and a deeper sense for the realization of duty. Maggie, the heroine, becomes a fine example for sense of duty and certain other social obligations. Maggie’s progress is like George Eliot’s measuring “life by a human horologue”(9) This novel weaves “a complex web” (10) Maggie shows a metamorphosis of her character and abides by the duties of society. It is on this ground that
Leslie Stephen speaks of Maggie as an example of feminine sensibility which "Occurs with important modifications in most of the other stories of George Eliot."\(^{(11)}\)

As an egoist, the chief protagonist to The Mill on the Floss, Maggie is disillusioned through the process of day-dreaming which shows deceit and deception. But as an egoist, she hardly gets regeneration. When she yields towards her social obligations, she understands the world in which she moves:

"Faithfulness and constancy mean something else besides doing what is easiest and pleasantest to ourselves. They mean renouncing whatever is opposed to the reliance others have in us - Whatever would cause misery to those whom the course of our lives has made dependent on us."\(^{(12)}\)

In this way, though only from the side of Maggie, she and Stephen are separated as it were "by duty and honour."\(^{(13)}\) Inspite of this clear bold stand, Stephen endeavours to make her see how impossible it will be for her to return to innocence. But heedless of his insinuations and determind to cause no more sorrow to those she loved, Maggie leaves Stephen and rushes downstairs and out into the street. Thus she obeys the Divine voice within her by making the supereme sacrifice in forsaking a materially assured future with Stephen for the sake of Lucy and Tom.

Then, Maggie attains to the final stage of her struggle the outcome of which yields her the true sense of duty. She has a letter from Stephen in which he declares that he cannot live without her, and adds that he is
awaiting a letter summoning him to her side. After a terrible mental storm, in which she has slain the temptation to accede to his request, Maggie destroys the letter and finds the religion of humanity and exclaims: “O God, if my life is to be long, let me live to bless and comfort”.\(^{(14)}\) In this way her inner conflict is successfully resolved and she is all ripe for the severest test. This test came soon. It was in the midnight when Maggie was lost in rumination that she “felt a startling sensation of sudden cold about her knees and feet.”\(^{(15)}\)

She at once visualized a terrible flood and got reminded of her brother who had turned her out of his house. Maggie gets into a boat and after a long struggle in the dark, she reaches her goal. In no time she found that Tom had got trapped in the mill as the river had over flown its banks. It was critical moment in which as R.T. Jones points out. Maggie had chosen “the way of duty”\(^{(16)}\) in so far as she had decided to rescue of her brother Tom who represented the family and Maggie’s earlist memories. Soon the brother and sister strated rowing back but in no time they were engulfed by the angry waters. Notwithstanding this irretrievable tragedy, it was a great stage of attainment and development especially in case of Maggie. It should be taken as a stage of attainment because it is in such situation in Geroge Eliot’s world “which is the real world,” that a person like Maggie “triumphs over death”\(^{(17)}\) through love and sacrifice. And, it is for this reason that the epitaph on the graves of Tom and Maggie rightly signifies that “in their death, they were not divided,”\(^{(18)}\) As such, Maggie’s
ultimate union with Tom is a fulfilment in as much as it is the victory of the
love over estrangement and the consummation of the purpose of the novel
which is predominantly "the quest for unity - social, familial and personal,"(19)

Silas Marner brings forth intensely the remedial and pure effects of
human mind when the protagonist Silas, gives up the thoughts of his narrow
mindedess and submits his energy to his social obligations. In the words
of Derome Thale, Silas finally yields to a "Sense of integration" which
ends in serving "his fellow men"(20) This sense of intensity comes up through
the realization of his social duties. At his beginning, Silas earns and hoards
money just like an insect of silk cloth, but finally he comes to realize his
duties towards society & his fellow brothers when he comes in close
touch with Eppie.

Previously Silas had loved the purpose for which his money was
used but now when purpose had gone, money become an end in itself. His
love of accumulation money began to grow into a passion. He knew and
loved his coins and at night drew them out to enjoy their companionship.
But even this practice gives him no happiness because inspite of the change
of place and gain of pelf, here he feels afflicted with the curse of alienation.
Since his disaster Silas's work at the loom becomes for him a sterile
abstraction instead of a useful social function. For him, it serves no purpose
except to feed his own unhealthy obsession, Fredc. Thomson acutely
observes, "with each gold piece, the weaver recedes further from contact
with human society ad meaningful reality."(21)
Afterwards, Silas's life becomes all the more wretched when one evening he is deprived even of his hoard of gold. He becomes frantic with despair and would most likely have killed himself but for the strange incident that brought, perhaps in place of his treasure, the child whom he adopted and named Eppie.

Evidently, it was this foundling child that came, as John Blackwood puts it, "to be the medium of restoring the unfortunate Silas to a more Christian frame of mind,"\(^{(22)}\) because after her adoption, he ceased to feel solitary. From then on the texture of his life is re-woven, indeed. By way of working for the child as father and mother, Silas achieved reintegration into the community in as much as "he was...... led back...... into his relations to society." and "a fresh life was opened to him"\(^{(23)}\) In the estimate of John Bennet it is now that Silas "flowers again to full humanity"\(^{(24)}\) in as much as this development crystallizes the transfer of his affections from his sterile hoard of gold to Eppie. Now onwards Eppie plays a decisive role in giving Silas a new, wholesome and living relationship with people around him. It is in connection with the case of Eppie that Silas began visiting Mrs. Winthrop and the other Reveloe people as a result of which his estrangement with them is slowly replaced by intimacy. He is eager to do for the child what he was earlier uninterested in doing for himself as he tells Dolly Winthrop:

"I want to do everything as can be done for the child, And whatever’s right for it this country, and you think’ull do it good, I’ll act according, if you’ll tell me."\(^{(25)}\)
This gradual approach to comprehension between Silas and society traces the gradual healing of the breach in his life. This development was, in fact, significant because following on this the Marner's private case came to merge into the general one. In this way Silas Marner comes to have a true taste of life but only when he has realized his duty to the community with his social relations evened and his sense of love perfected. He comes to recognize that the great rife between past and present had existed more in his embittered imagination than in reality. There is much that he still can not understand, but he can again have trust in a benevolent unity of the world. After Dolly Winthrop's eloquently inarticulate musings on Providential design, he replies:

"There's is good I' this world-I've a feeling O' that now; and it makes a man feel as there's good more nor he can see, I' spite O' the trouble and wickedness, that drawing O' the lots is dark; but the child was sent to me; there's dealings with us - there's dealings."\(^{26}\)

It is for Silas's catching up this essential humanity in the essence of things around that in end he is brought to a kind of new paradise. So much so that even his gold for which he had ceased to care is restored to him after sixteen years, just in time to serve as the marriage portion of Eppie. After the recovery of his gold Silas and Eppie were sitting together in the cottage, the recovered gold was lying on the table in ordely heaps. He told Eppie now he used to count it every night and how her coming had freed him from love of money which, as he says "takes no hold of me
now."(27) And the last words of the book put in the mouth of Eppie: "I think nobody could be happier than we are"(28) clearly indicate the state of happiness that flow from their adaptability to their fellow being. Expression of this state of exultation is an echo of Geroge Eliot's thinking which points to the fact that this novel is a profound representation of the truth of feeling inherent in duty. Selfishness and lack of love had blighted Silas's noble nature and narrowed and constricted his relationship with society but the revival of love came to continually widen and deepen his connection with the social life around him. It was the strength of this remarkable achievement of George Eliot that Hutton labelled Silas Marner as a "permanent .....addition to the wealth of English literature."(29)

As the instance of other novels, George Eliot makes 'Romola' too a vehicle for professing the religion of humanity. At the intial stage Romola, the heroine, rotates between her two selves: the duties toward society and the passion of a young girl. For the time, She trusts and keeps her rejuvenated in the company of her husband Tito, but soon the spell of Tito breakout and she abides by the social duties that ends into the purposes of life. Tito is such a man who 'consistently chooses evil'\(^{(30)}\) in matters of human relationships. When she discovers that Tito has been deceiving her incessantly for a long time, she leaves his company and considers released from the secret vows of her marriage. At the outset of the novel Geroge Eliot presents case of the Victorian studies of human relationship and at the same the psychological requirements of a young woman.
At this Romola felt that she was violently rending her life in two but she stuck to her ground as she had come to feel for certain that "there could be no law for her but the law of her affections." And what made the religion of Romola's life now was "that tenderness and keen fellow-feeling for the near and the loved which are the main out growth of the affections."\(^{31}\)

Although so far Romola had known no obligations apart from personal longings, this perception of one of the great truths of life inspired her to decide that "all she had to obey now was the instinct to sever herself from the man she loved no longer."\(^{32}\)

Romola finally decides to leave Tito and at this resolution there welled up bitter tears at the belated breaking of the spell of delusion which had blighted her young years. After this bitter disenchantment Romola flies from Tito. On her way, Savonarola meets her and unfolds to her the plain duty to return to her husband. He pleads that the task of every individual is to take the burden of the community and his duty means staying put and remaining quiet. He further exhorted to her that it is sinful to break the bonds of life because they are like debts that must be paid. He explained that "such debts to society could be paid when we human beings "die at last by laying our bodies on the alter."\(^{33}\) of general good. This he did in the same way and as succesfully as he had admonished Romola to remember the need of her fellowmen when she had taken the cross from her dying brother Dino. Thus she feels guided by Savonarola and goes back to work
for her own distressed people fully knowing that she could do so little for her husband. Gradually Romola became clearer in her mind in respect of her duty not only to Tito but also to her teacher Savonarola. In point of fact, she attained to quite a complete understanding of the nature of things when Savonarola hesitated to save Romola’s godfather Bernardo from the capital punishment.

After the execution of Bernardo, Romola lost all trust in Savonarola and she came to see him only as an opportunist in as much as he cared for abstract principles and neglected real human beings. In this context, George Eliot’s observation about the loss of faith and its consequences gives us a clear peep into the thinking of Romola who must have realized that “with the sinking of high human trust, the dignity of life sinks too” in so far as” we cease to believe in our own better self, since that also is part of the common nature which is degraded in our thought.”

Following on this disillusionment Romola discerns a ring of egoism in her and “despairs of finding any consistent duty.” in this world that could bind her to a true mission.

Her first reaction was out right evasion of all responsibility and in this mood she felt that the clear waves of the ocean invited her and she wished death would come. She saw a small boat moored at a deep bend in the shore and developed a deep longing to glide away in the boat escaping to the sea in the hope “to be freed from the burden of choice..... to commit herself, sleeping to destiny which would either bring death or else new
necessities that might rouse a new life in her.” At Sunset when all had
gone, Romola got into the boat and sailes freely but unlike Maggie Tulliver
of The Mill on the Floss (1860), Romola does not find death by water,
The boat landed her in a village where everybody was dying of plague.
This plague ridden land yielded her a situation in which she could make
herself useful for her fellow creatures and there fulfil herself in service. It
is here that Romola put aside the ethics of stoicism for that of love and
unlike Tito, she “emerges form the particular intellectual tensions which
underlie her conception equally detached.” As a result of which Romola
got elevated to the status of blessed Madonna. She stayed there for months
like a good angel, nursing and comforting others. In this, she shifted from
living for self to living for others and derived satisfaction by directing, as
Richard Simson phrases it, “her noble....... impulses into the channel of
duty.”

By virtue of her selfless service in the plague ridden village, Romola
finds strength to return to Florence where, as John Morley states, “all the
nobleness of her character begins to appear” apparently free from any
wish for herself. Immediately after her arrival Romola adopts Tito’s
illegitimate chidern taking all obligations on her. By this time her notion
of duty had came to be mature.

Romola’s nobleness finds admirable manifestation in her conduct
towards Tessa. In no time, Romola won the confidence of this lady. Tessa
detailed her long tale of woe about sharing her lot with Tito and Romola
conceded to herself the worth of Savonarola’s teaching barring his opportunism. At this realization, though belatedly, Romola felt the sanctity of close relations and arrived at the conclusion that “the light abandonment of ties, whether inherited of voluntary, because they had ceased to be pleasant was uprooting of social and personal virtue.”

In this way Romola’s interest in other human beings takes its due place and proportions in her friendship with Tessa and patronising of her children.

Apart from Romola, “Felix Holt” is a such a novel which convinces one of George Eliot’s belief in social norms and high moral standards. The theme of duty is patronized through the character of Esther Lyon. She makes a comparison between two woman: Mrs. Transome Court, and Esther. The one who breaks all social and moral laws; the other abides by the higher norms of morality and the principles of life. Though Esther is beautiful, she loves in life all that is “unusual and ugly.” Her dream man Felix dislikes such apparent contradictions. As a conscientious and moral in following social obligations, he at the primary level of his relationship with Esther does not create any specific example for good human relationship. Esther regards him as a man who stresses the temper and he presents an example of a “very coarse and rude person”. With these emotions Esther takes quite a long time to understand the honest and moral courage of Felix Holt. But finally she sees in him her duties- her social obligation or altruistic norms of life.
At first Esther is highly scornful of Felix Holt for his angry pedagogy as he himself explicitly stressed that he “should like to see if she could be made ashamed of herself.” Notwithstanding this bearish treatment, in the hearts of heart she recognizes Felix, for what he is and feels attracted by him. Although in her house, Esther had treated Felix very sneeringly, she called on him later on the pretext of getting her watch doctored. There she told him that she was not offended by his plain questionings. In point of fact, Esther felt sure that Felix was much more kind, greater and better than she had imagined. Afterwards, she was seen walking with him along the river. Gradually Esther was on her way to knowing Felix more and more. There was a terrible riot on the election day and while trying to quell the rioters he accidently killed a constable and was arrested on the charge of man slaughter. Meanwhile, it is discovered that Esther is the rightful owner of Transome Court. Harold Transome and his mother invite Esther to come and stay with them with the apparent motive to settling the matter amicably. During her stay with the Transome every single day helped her get clearer in her imagination. Harold loses the election and within a week of Esther’s moving to Transome Court, he falls in love with her, Harold decides upon marrying Esther though, of course, without bothering to know her mind. However, Esther “was unusually abstracted in her manner” out of “Sympathetic anxiety” about the result of the trial. Evidently the girl worried because the fate of Felix depended on it. This agony of her parting from Felix, she had come to “look into the depth of
love.”\textsuperscript{(44)} This occasion seemed the moment of the parting of ways. Now, Esther “Felt that there was something pre-eminent in him.”\textsuperscript{(45)} She rose to give evidence in favour of Felix and as she stood there she felt “divested of all personal considerations whether of vanity or shyness.”\textsuperscript{(46)} and it looked as if Esther was””making a confession of faith.”\textsuperscript{(47)}

Esther who had so far “seemed most like a toy or ornament”\textsuperscript{(48)} had its desirable effect on Felix and the audience alike. It is another matter that Felix was awarded four years’ imprisonment. The very next day a meeting was held at Loamford when through the efforts of influential persons like Sir Maximum Debarry, a signed petition was got up and sent to the Home Secretary seeking Felix’s release.

Esther felt sympathy with him but she requested a day’s time as a momentous decision was to be taken. That night she went to her bed-room but she had no desire to sleep as she had to make the final choice, She drew up the blinds of her bed-room and and looked out of her window in order to have a view of the largeness of the world and “she wanted the largeness of the world to help her thought.”\textsuperscript{(49)} Esther was undergoing “something little short of an inward revolution.”\textsuperscript{(50)} Esther recalled the moment when she and Felix kissed each other and she felt “as if memory lay on her lips like a seal of possession.”\textsuperscript{(51)} Esther realises that of the two possible course of action, “one has only a skin-deep illusory appeal, and the other is chosen for her by the sure and irresistible promptings of all that is most enduring in her nature.”\textsuperscript{(52)} Her love for Felix could no longer
be resisted and in the wake of this realization Esther "renounces the allurements of an easy pleasurable existence" with Harold Transome "for the higher satisfaction of....... a nobler ideal."(53) which she visualized in marriage with poor Felix. In the meantime Felix is released and on knowing Esther's decision, one April day he came to explain how she will be sharing "the life of a poor man."(54) and the set of people she live among. There upon Felix reminded her that "he was a rough, severe fellow"(55) and Esther rejoined that she felt herself to be weak and therefore her husband must be greater and nobler than her. They were married in May. Though it was a very simple wedding but it raised so much interest and debate in Treby Magna that even very great people such as sir Maximus and his family went to the parish church to have a look at the "bride," who had renounced wealth and chosen to be the wife of a man who said he would always be poor."(56)

George Eliot remarks at the out set of Felix Holt that "there is no private life which has not been determin'd by a wider public life."(57) This statement of George can be applied to the study of Middle March, for the mutual life of Casaubon & Derothea affects so many persons in the novel. To quote Mathilde Blind this novel, Middle March is a beautiful "dramatization of the inner-texture of of human lives"(58) Why it is a drama? perhaps, it is drama which brings into force the inner trepidations of psychic reality of two couples Derothea & Casaubon and Derothea and Will Ladislaw. Derothea experiments with and finally she realizes her duties
not in fickle idealistic pursuits but in broader and altruistic social life. She becomes a wonderful example for working out the relationship between man and society as a whole. In this novel from the beginning Dorothea Brooke has longings after a life of love and service. She is Infact, to borrow a phrase from Joan Bennett, “endowed with..... a passionate desire to serve her kind.”[59] She will not ride because all people cannot afford a horse and she takes no interest in art. Lydgate’s first impression of Dorothea was that as a virtuous and earnest lady, she sought to get more than other but without knowing what she was striving for. In his estimate Dorothea was one of those woman who are “too ignornant to understand the merits of any question.”[60]

In the first instance Dorothea visualizes the fulfilment of her duty in being able to become the wife of a real scholar. She resolves to choose Casaubon as her life companion in the hope of finding, through him, her opportunity to serve humanity. Governed by this notion Dorothea felt so enamoured of Casaubon that when her uncle Brooke characterised him as a mopping man who wanted a companion, she retorted that” it would be a great honour to any one to be his companion.”[61] Dorothea’s devotion to Casaubon can be clearly assessed from the novelist’s comment on his letter:

“Now she would be able to devote herself to large yet definite duties......All Dorothea’s passion was transfused through a mind struggling towards an ideal life.”[62]
Dorothea discovers her honeymoon visit to Rome that he is only a "Ponderous pedagogue" and finds it suffocating to be in his company. She feels intensely perturbed at the realization that Casaubon had not cared to offer her affection he promised in his letter of proposal, To Dorothea’s shock it becomes abundantly clear that she was mistaken in her devotion and metaphysical form of dutifulness in casting her lot with Casaubon. After her disappointing honeymoon trip Dorothea and Casaubon returned to Lowick Manor in the middle of January and on the very first morning Dorothea reflectes rather wistfully on the permarital dreams she had of a life of wifely help to strengthen her spouse’s scholarly researches. Dorothea judged her three months back as departed things “So much so that” each remembered thing in the room was disenchanted.\(^{(63)}\) when she came to know of the codicil in his will that she would lose her right to his property, if she married Ladislaw. This development yielded her a more perceptive view of her surrounding and her proper role in them. Dorothea came to see that her duty lay in marrying Ladislaw because she thought that she could complete her personality only by doing so. After their meeting in the library during the storm Ladislaw lamented that their love was a hopeless one because he would always be poor. Contrary to his feelings, Dorothea stressed that she did not mind poverty and hated her wealth:

“We could live quite well on my own fortune- it is too much-seven hundred a year- I want so little-no new clothes-and I will learn what everything costs.”\(^{(64)}\)
Perhaps labouring under such observations of these characters David Daiches also censored Dorothea’s marriage with Ladislaw accentuating that “the girl who married Casaubon to her friend’s astonishment is not very different from the girl who married Ladislaw to her friend’s disgust.” Dorothea married Ladislaw in response to the urgency of her new realized duty to society according to the laws of which a woman must complete herself with a male companion. With Ladislaw she had a life filled with beneficent activity.

Dorothea’s development in terms of her adoption of sympathy for others is completed when, at Featherstone’s funeral, she lookes out from an upper window seeing on the road, a man with a bundle on his back and a woman carrying her body. Dorothea could see figures moving and far off in the bending sky she saw pearly light and this scene made her feel the largeness of the world. At this, sympathy grows in Dorothea and her perception is enlightened. Dorothea overcomes her anguish born of jealousy and despair against Rosamond. She goes back to Rosamond and gives her an opportunity to escape from her world of blind egotism. She endeavoured to elevate her morals as governed by her sense of the welfare of two other individuals, Will Ladislaw and Lydgate besides Rosamond. Thus, Dorothea came to understand the inevitability of the reciprocity of man and learnt to think in terms of the welfare of mankind as a whole.

George Eliot’s Last novel ‘Daniel Deronda’ becomes comparatively more important for social obligations in the sense that it deals with cross
-cultural issues: Jews and Christians. Thus the central motif of this poetical novel rotates around the analyses of the interior regions of human psyche and thus bringing forth the universal emotions of humanity therein. Based on the racial background of the Jews and the Christians novel becomes an instance of the altruistic motifs and the social obligations. In this novel the conception of duty becomes synonymous to the higher level of social consciousness wherein one find the laws of moral life written. George Eliot presents society as an organic force which decides an individual’s progress vis-a-vis its own set rules to ‘be followed’. The entire social norms and altruistic principles of human behavior are exemplified through the characters of Daniel Deronda and Gwendolen Harleth. At the initial stage, the novelist shows some inner distance between Gwendolen and Deronda but finally Gwendolen gives up her egoistic leanings and yields to Deronda. This becomes a device for showing the universal elements in human relationships.

Gwendolen always moves towards other people in selflessness. She is “an egoist who wishes to have the world at her feet”(72) but the sudden economic downfall in her family disturbs her luxurious life. Mrs. Davilow, her mother, informs her to discontinue her study because of the economic downfall of the family. She feels sorrow as she must either move at Sawyer’s cottage or to marry Hen Leigh Maliners Grandcourt as rich landlord, ultimately she consents to marry Grandcourt. Thus an egoist meets another egoist. Like Tito Melema, Grandcourt deceives Gwendolen
as he has already established his illicit relations with Lydia Glasher and has children by her.

On her wedding Gwendolen gets a box of Jewels from Lydia Glasher at the instance of Grandcourt in which she finds a letter. Mrs. Glasher rebukes Gwendolen for the sin she has committed by marrying her lover and curses her to be ready to face the consequences arising from their union.

Deronda was always on the look out for some external event or inward light which would help him out of his stalement and urge him into a definite course of action because he longed to be “an organic part of social life instead of roaming in it like a yearning disembodied spirit.”(66) In this connection, he is succoured first by Hans Meyrick who felt as did Mordecai that “a whole Christian is there - fourth of a Jew.”(67) and Mirah speak to him “as if he were a Jew.”(68) Unexpectedly, Daniel received a letter from his unknown mother urging him to reach Italia in Genoa with the caution that he must wait for her over there as her health was shaken and she wanted to deliver what she had long withheld. She revealed how she was a singer and an actress and was forced by her father to marry Danial’s father. She further told Danial that as she herself hated the bondage of being a Jew, she longed to relieve her unwillingly born son from the bondage of having been born a Jew. Deronda explained to the lady that he had every wish to comprehend her because:

“What I have been most trying to do for fitten years is to have some understanding of those who differ from myself.”(69)
Afterwards, it was a moment of great happiness for Deronda when he returned and communicated to Mordecai that he was a Jew. Deronda further told that he had been able to get the preserved manuscripts that his grandfather Daniel Charisi who wished to pass them into the hands of his grandson. After her husband’s death Gwendoloen sought refuge in Deronda and he also recognized the worth of his role in giving direction to her life. This consciousness yields Deronda an opportunity, as C.B. Cox perceives into “move towards a fuller life meanwhile, Deronda assimilates the ideas he was destined to propagate in the years to come. Therfore “to delight in doing things because our fathers did them is good if it shuts out nothing better” and “enlarges the range of affection” because affection is the broadest basis of good in life.” (70)

Deronda’s sympathetic attitude to Gwendolen and other being what it is, he is still not clear about his ultimate mission. Inspite of his best intentions, so far Deronda has not been able to secure that point of compass. All the same, in the course of his attempts to find an altruistic relationship to society Deronda comes to see that “a too reflective and diffusive sympathy was in danger of paralysing in him that indignation against wrong and that selectness of fellowship which are the conditions of normal force.” (71)

Eventually he gets possessed with the idea of “restoring a political existence” to his people and make them a nation again by giving “them a national centre” (72) parallel to the English. But then, circumstances being what they were, this serious decision of Deronda, of necessity, entails
enormus sacrifice and he comes to be confronted with the exaction of conscience and duty because he has to make his choice about marrying the Jewish girl and to serve his community. For some, Deronda is caught up in this conflict but he resolves it by analysing the ideals of personal affection on one side and of wide sympathy and fellow feeling on the other. Besides, he was helped out of this predicament, by Mordecai, the selfless Zionist prophet, who insists that Deronda has a mission and that he was put on earth to fulfill the dreams and aspirations of the Jewish people. All the more inspired and enthused with such an encouragement, the task seemed urgent enough to Deronda and he decided to undertake it, one might say, as a duty. He was happy to adopt” the generous reasonableness of drawing shoulder to shoulder with men of like inheritance.”(73)

The inherited sense of a larger life made Deronada what he was and developed in him qualities not found in Gwendolen. Eventually, he comes to recognize the exactions of conscience and duty. Consequently “Deronda is delivered” as Edward Dowden observes, from vagueness in as much he comes to be “made one with his nation and race. And there is confided to him the heritage of duty bound with love which was his forefather’s.”(74)

In the begining Gwendolen lives for her own happiness and has no moral ideal, no generosity. In the estimate of Gerald Bullett “she is a sophisticated Hetty Sorrel.”(75) Gwendolen received her mother Fanny
Davilow’s letter summoning her home explaining her helplessness in sending any more money as the family had sustained a heavy financial loss.

Gwendolen’s first experiment with truth comes about in the event of her marrying Hen Leigh Grandcourt. She consents to marry him not out of maidenly attachment but from motive partly mercenary but wholly misguided. She plans to marry him. As a result of the long chain of bitter experiences, there came a moment, as the novelist comments, when “something like a new consciousness was awakened”\(^{(76)}\) in her. All this while Gwendolen undergoes a sort of discipline resembling conversion that bends half the self with a terrible strain and exasperates the unwillingness of the other half. She, In fact, yields to the sense of a larger world beyond her, though of course, it takes her quite some time to attain to the final stage of duty.

Gwendolen is going on her final stage of duty when after her husband’s death, she comes under the influence of Deronda who was blessed with qualities of empathy and was instinctively heading towards altruism. When Gwendolen went to him, her greatest conflict centred round her feeling that she felt herself guilty of Grandcourt’s death. In physical terms she has nothing to do with his death because he was drowned when he had a cramp; only she could not be instrumental in saving him. Deronda generalised the issue giving her many shades of caution but Gwendolen enquired to him as to what better she should do. He added in a tone of exhoration:
"Many thing. Look on other lives besides your own. See what their troubles are and how they are born. Try to care about something in this vast world besides the gratification of small selfish desires."\(^{(77)}\)

At this Gwendolen did not turn away her glance or let her eyelids fall, but a subtle "change came over her face" which clearly betrayed "the subsidence of self-assertion."\(^{(78)}\) However, the development of Gwendolen had turned to Deronda in the hope that he will love and protect her but later on she found that he had roles and destinies in a world, of which she knows nothing. Deronda for himself, gives her what help he can, even at some risk of involving himself in scandal. For quite long, he seemed to promise her every thing but then after a serious conflict he decided to marry a young Jewish girl, Mirah Cohen and planned to go to the fast in a decided bid to canvass for and to restore political existence to his people. As such, Gwendolen is, "left high and dry"\(^{(79)}\) to use Gerold Bullett's words but at the same time she is chastened. She is free to marry if she chooses, a hearty handsome cousin, whose addresses she had slighted in her unregenerate days. What is more, her victory lies in accepting the situation and in submitting to reality, As a result of this reconciliation "the world seemed getting larger round..... Gwendolen."\(^{(80)}\) Soon after, Daniel and Mirah were married. They received many greetings but the most precious of them all was a letter from Gwendolen Grandcourt saying:

"Do not think of me sorrowfully on your wedding day. I have remembered your words - that I may live to be one of the best women,
who make others glad that they were born ....... I only thought of myself, and I made you grieve, It hurts me now to think of your grief. You must not grieve any more for me. It is better- it shall be better with me because I have known you.”

The analysis put forth in the text of George Eliot’s novels from Adam Bede to Daniel Deronda makes the issue of the religion of humanity crystal clear. She is of the view that full development of an individual can not be realized only on her/his personal efforts, but in association with the social norms. Society as a living force affects the judgement of man on each level. George Eliot takes up her staunch principle that the unity and cooperation between man and man, between man and society, between personal religion and the religion of humanity brings forth the progress which benefits both society and an individual.

To George Eliot the binding self centredness becomes a cancerous disease. Apart from it, the novelist too decides the morals of an individual with the social scale. The process of the realization of duties takes out all the egoisitc dross of individual and thus he becomes at the instance of The Bhagavad Gita, the one who can be called a man of disinterested intelligence or “Udaseen.” This then is the idea that is being professed by George Eliot in the thematic contents of her novels.
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