CHAPTER-VII
Since the present thesis has been divided apart from Introduction and Conclusion, into five core chapters: Plot, Psychological Probe, Tragic Vision, Altruism and Social Confirmity and Art and artifice, it brings into being the theoretic norms of George Eliot. Among the novelists of Victorian era it is George Eliot who stands near to our contemporary writers. The text-based analysis of her novels have already been done in the core chapters. However it seems appropriate here to summarise, the theoretic, psychological, artistic, philosophical and patternal modes of the novelist. George Eliot as such did not codify any systematic treatise on the theoretic norms, yet her theoretic and artistic innovations can be read in her reviews, essays, letters and even in the text of her novels. To make some perceptual comments operate in the concluding remarks the theoretic statement meant for Victorian literature seems an apt example in our discussion about the visionary and theoretic norms of George Eliot:

"The theoretic faculty is concerned with the moral perception and appreciation of the ideas of beauty. And the error respecting it Aesthetic, degrading it to a mere operation of sense or perhaps worse of custom, so that the arts which appeal to it sink into a mere amusement ministers to morbid sensibilities, ticklers and fanners of the soul’s sleep."(1)

In the above citation of Ruskin reveals the theoretic and moralizing principles for the writers of the Victorian age. For example, the core word "moral" is linked with the phrases such as appreciation of ideas and beauty.
The moral points almost in all the novels of George Eliot decide the conduct and the personal beauty of any character. It is also linked with the “aesthetic” values and at the same time with the sensibilities and “the soul’s sleep”. The three core chapters, “Psychological Probe”, Tragic Vision” and “Altruism and Social Conformity” and its related effects on the characters. George Eliot’s aesthetic views are inseparable with the concept of morality-morality that binds of humanitarian view points. The central preoccupation of her aesthetic concept is to theorise the concept that enlarges his sympathies to man. She herself wrote to Clifford Allbutt:

“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 and more active admiration of those vital elements which bind men together and give a higher worthiness to their existence”.(2)

Now the leitmotif is: what is the element that binds men together? And the answer of this question lies in the organic role of society in which an individual takes birth and is nurtured by its norms. To George Eliot, it is beyond the level of any art to define the psychic phenomena unless they are defined by the total cultural properties of the organic inheritance from society for a man can be regarded in her scheme as the psychological developed being through sociological matter. Man is a product of both the animal kingdom and the social organism. The Altruism of the character results into the social conformity. Every action of an individual has its root in the past. The process of realization of duty presupposes the springing
up sympathy in the protagonist’s mind and involves the application of
disinterested intelligence to social problems. The concept of tragedy in
her novels is directly linked with the doctrine of retribution - a moral
cause that is related to the social binds, and the authority of the past.

Thus, in her novels everything centres round the problem of conduct
and trouble starts when her protagonists, misled by the indulgence of self
righteousness and wrong notion of life transgress the otherwise inviolable
laws of nature. Following on this violation the whole grim machinery of
retribution is energised by the impartial laws of life. These laws crush
those who violate the right social code of life. Here George Eliot comes
near to Indian vision of Karma under which it is said that each man is
responsible for his actions. The works of Indian art too emphasize the
utter objectivity in the delineation of artistic facts of life:

“It is important to remember that in the truly great Indian works of
art there are no private symbols, personal idiosyncrasies and personal
value patterns which the reader or beholder is called upon to decipher
and since there are shared assumptions enjoyment of the work that is to
those who share the tradition, should be easier than in much Western art
and literature.(3)

George Eliot regards society as a living force; and it weaves the
gossamer threads. There is hardly any one who can save himself from this
web. Each novel of George Eliot begins with the concept of altruism and
egoism. The characters such Dinah, Hetty, Adam, Arthur, Maggie Tulliver,
Silas Marner, Romola, Tito Melema, Felix Holt, Harold Transome, Dorothea Casaubon, Lydgate Gwendolen, Harleth and Grand Court suffer either from egoism or from breaking the social norms of society. Romola is an instance of altruism of life. Every one of Romola’s actions is determined by the authority of her feelings: this is the consistent principle that reconciles the apparent contradictions. Although each novel of George Eliot is dominated by the organic vision of society, but the better of the organic role of society can be given from Felix Holt. To begin with Adam Bede, Hetty Sorrel develops the entire likings and dislikings among the people of Hayslope. Silas Marner is deserted from Lantern Yard society and finally he comes to Reveloe, and here his insect like condition raises him to utter misery and finally he again associates with the norms of society. By the association with society he is redeemed and regenerated. The terms redemption and regeneration become important for they show too much egoism almost in all the protagonists of George Eliot. This egoism comes in the mind of Hetty, Arthur, Silas, Tito, Mrs; Transome Court and Gwendolen Harleth. The sole cause of its regeneration lies in developing the distance from the set social code. Society as a living force does not allow the free will to do what they like. If their liking breaks the principles of society it at once takes revenge and punishes the one who goes against its moral code. Finally they realize their duties and obligations to their past and the society by developing an altruistic mode and it brings to them the sense of redemption and regeneration.
George Eliot asserts repeatedly in her last three novels—Middle March, Felix Holt and Daniel Deronda, the positive and negative roles of the society. She presents the characters in their double roles: private and individual, public and reformer. She also brings forth their mutual dependence. Deronda’s larger aims appear to be bedevilled by his relationships with Gwendolen until the end of the novel. At the centre of Felix Holt, the weak hero, engages himself in private and public relationships. On his first appearance in the novel in chapter-V Felix reveals the deeper weaknesses of his character:

“T’m perhaps a little too fond of banging and smashing...... another man there who knew me laughed out and said I was the most blasphemous iconoclast living. “That says my phrenologist is because of his large ideality, which prevents him from finding anything perfect enough to be venerated.”

His iconoclasm is witnessed both in his relationship with Esther and with wider public reaction in society. The textual properties of this novel concentrate on the submission of the individual in search for a wider vision of past and present realities. Felix Holt is a novel about the organic nature of society. It does not allow any kind of egoistic assertion, but compels the protagonist for the deeper search of social ethics.

In the series of stories, George Eliot differs seriously from other Victorian novelists. The other Victorian novelists follow the straight way method of narrating the story while George Eliot because of the
psychological probings presents the various parts in the form of her plot. There is little logical unity in the narration of events; yet in her own way she has given in them, an over all unity of purpose. Her novels have unity of psychological display and moral considerations. Her tragic tales serve to express in the original sense of the word about the suffering of man.

Another core chapter is ‘Psychological Probe’ which we have analysed in the body corpus of this thesis. Apart from this analysis, a sketchy reference has also been made when the value of memory is assigned to linking the varied parts of time together. However, the concluding needs a special comment on this chapter, for the characters of George Eliot are the annals and pillars of human psychology. Considering her novels vis-a-vis the traditional English novel, we can complain against her for various loose threads, seemingly superfluous incidents and certain improbabilities. It will be fruitless to read her novels for enjoyment. Her novels are brain teasing in the sense that they bring forth the inner life of protagonist before our eyes. What George Eliot writes in Daniel Deronda is applicable fully for reading the inner and untrodden regions of her characters and story:

“Men like planets’ have both a visible and invisible history...... and the narrator of human action if he did his work with the same completeness, would have to tread the hidden pathways of feeling and thought.”

As she is more concerned with the invisible history beyond human postures, gestures and actions, with hidden motives, with vacillation of sensibility, with retributive convulsions, with darks regions of the
subconscious and the unconscious, she uses more and more psychological tools and determines the behavioural pattern of her character. Although, their are certain other issues discussed and analysed in the core chapter, apart from the psychological issues, occupy an important and a main stream amongst all the novels of George Eliot. Most of her characters are caught in a state of mental strife and emotional crisis: and they think more than they act-feel more than they thinks. George Eliot has chosen to present the moral, intellectual and philosophical characters swayed by instinctive emotions and passions. Well read in Psychology, George Eliot allows her character a free will to err. Then journeying all alone amidst hellish miseries, a person having free will is shown making adjustment with social morality at the cost of life or overhauled existence.

Finding an excuse to enter human heart, George Eliot intrudes into its dine regions to bring forth the origin and the working of instincts, emotional and rational forces of human behaviour. She has studied not action so much, as the roots and fruits of an action as the psychological and intellectual fibre. Frame work of ‘The Mill on the Floss’ is important from the two aspects of the same thing - psychological probe of human heart and mind. The world this novel describes is entirely psychological and positive world of human relationship. The character of Maggie Tulliver justifies the concept of George Eliot’s thesis of action. Maggie needs to unify her desires with her intentions, to discipline her passions in keeping with an objective view of possibility “Knowledge of the irreversible laws
with - in and without her." For certain psychological issues of human personality, 'The Mill on the Floss' supplies an intellectual atmosphere. Here we take George Eliot's perception to the point of modern vision, here the only affirmation is personal, inward and isolated. We tend to believe that in honesty she needed to do the same thing.

George Eliot becomes quite modern, almost a contemporary of 20th century writers for her depiction of the characters from the inside, with her incisive vision she lays open the secrets of human heart and makes her way to the untrodden regions of human psyche. Through the working of the conscious mind she perceives the working of the sub-conscious and unconscious mind. Even in 'Felix Holt', George Eliot tries to depict the social ethics, but an inner struggle of the protagonist co-acts against it, because any attempt to reform or modify the social organism without due regard for, and commitment to, the individual is bound to fail from lack of reality.

George Eliot is Victorian because she writes under the influence of Victorian thinkers. However she sometimes appears non-Victorian for two reasons: applying the new concept of art on the basis of psychological norms, and advocating the cause of female sensibility though partially almost in all her novels. George Eliot’s novels are meant to grappling openly with the complications and contradiction inherent in the very idea of her social ethic. Perhaps, she knows and paints in her entire novels the mighty hands of society. Nobody dares to break the code of society. George Eliot
depicts a whole world in her novels and in all of them society is seen as Nemesis pursuing and punishing those individual who refuse its claims. One is the theme of worship and high endeavours, the other of sacrilege and punishment. The God is each case is society. This way, George Eliot proves herself a staunch Victorian, on the one hand, and on the other, an advocate for the cause of feminity or the freedom of women in such an age which is known to be against the freedom of women.

Too much dependence on experience gives yet less charms to the fictional and feministic vision in the novels of George Eliot. Almost all her characters break the code of her society- a God in disguise- for their psychological demand of the psychological world. On the question of marriage, she reflects her personal experience. The space marriage occupies in her novels also works out the female superiority. Beginning from Maggie Tulliver to Gwendolen Harleth, every heroine of her novels breaks the social code. If she continues in her breaking, she suffers before this might God- society, for example, the qualified doctor in Middle March is brought down by the domestic reality of Rosamond. The young and beautiful Dorothea marries the dry old book worm, Casaubon, in order to bring world- awakening thought to light and finally Dorothea triumphs when she marries Ladislaw after Casaubon’s death for sake of her womanhood. In ‘Silas Marner’, the protagonist is lifted out through the affection of a female baby. So are Dinah, Mrs. Transom Court, Maggie and Gwendolen Harleth. All these female characters are given a passport
to materialize their need-based life in a range which doesn’t exceed the limit.

Yet another core chapter in this thesis is George Eliot’s concept of art and its related aspects. George Eliot analyses that the form of art and the emotion of human beings are having inseparable relationships to her, the novelist has to select his own angle of vision in order to illuminate the hidden potentialities of the situation in which a character walks. George Eliot believes that the novelist should be at liberty in choosing the narrative technique which may serve as a means in the searching analysis of the particular behaviour of characters.

George Eliot’s conception of form goes with the unifying principles of the unity of various parts. By form of art, she means the proximity of different parts into one for wider vision of life. The various sets of relations which cross one another serve as mere particles which, in turn, compose a whole. The artist has to have the knack of adjusting these realities in such a manner so that they may sustain one another. Every particle, no doubt pulsates with life but it acquires a meaning of its own only when it comes into contact with others. That is why “the highest form” means “the highest organism”. George Eliot has frequently employed organic metaphors to convey her conception of form. She regards the primary concern for the artist for assimilating the intuitive power with the experience of his sensibilities. George or the instance of Coleridge evolves a theory that form takes place itself out of the creative process. The more the
divergent relations are bound and knitted together into an inter-related complex or a whole, the more triumphant a work of art becomes. Every relation, every situation, every action grows as naturally as the leaf of a plant but still it partakes of its necessity of existence with the whole.

George Eliot places her deep faith in the “imaginative power”, because she considers it to be “among the very rarest because it demands as much accurate and minute knowledge as creative vigour.” In fact a great novelist develops his powers of projecting a rare vision of life so efficaciously in order to portray the dramatised tension that grips a character’s consciousness.

Mr. Farebrother in ‘Middle March’ observes:

“Character is not cut in marble it is not something solid and unalterable. It is something living and changing, and may be come diseased as our bodies do.”

For George Eliot, the novel is no longer an atavistic form of storytelling, it is much more than that she favours a form for the fiction, that is full of aesthetic values of art. Employing only the technique of the fictional mode is not the entire success of a novelist; but success lies in expressing the freshness of the vision. A great novelist possessed by his creation, lives in his/her characters. To George Eliot the real examination for a novelist lies in exploration and absorption of the various possibilities of life through the medium of art.

As a theorist of fiction, George Eliot tried to render the subtle nuances
of aesthetic, moral, social and political experience. George Eliot, in fact, subscribed to the organic conception of imaginative realism.

Yet another core chapter that forms the part of this thesis is the Tragic Vision. In almost all the novels of George Eliot the growth of egoism in characters creates the problem of inner conflict with the sense of tragedy. There goes the progress in all the characters who undergo a metamorphosis in the novels of George Eliot. This characteristic process involves the socialization of the ego consummated through self-knowledge. The knowledge awakens the protagonists to the insignificance of their ego, making them avoid subjective expiation and judgement of facts. In each of George Eliot novels, the antagonist is the individual ego, viewed as lawless and narrow if not "bind". (5)

Thus, the mechanism of the dissipation of moral blindness presupposes a movement from that almost animal sensibility of the conscience of "troglodyte". This transformation involves a process in the realization of how a man exploses his sense of himself where by he attains to that stage of vision which is the reward of self schooling process that takes places through burning of inside from suffering.

An egoist undergoes after some times an inner conflict between his/her duties towards society. Thus, the conflict becomes a conflict between the two selves of an individual his personal self (egoism) and his higher self (altruism). Consequently, human heart and brain become the sense of battle, and the concern of both the writer and the reader becomes
psychological, therefore, these three streams come in close-knit meant for an inseparable fabric of the woven cloth. Since the person whose heart and brain are being x-rayed is a social animal, he is all the time concerned with the questions of right and wrong (egoism and altruism). As we have seen in the core chapters of this thesis, the protagonist ships because of his/her choice and at the egoistic instinct which also becomes the cause of his/her sufferings. The suffering school gives a new awakening through self analysis. This awakening becomes the root of altruism a psychological process that goes inside the mind and heart of the character.

The egoistic leanings of the character can further be sub-divided thus: complete egoists, partial egoist and regenerated egoists. Again, the sub-division of egoism brings into being symbolic of an inner change in the psyche of the protagonist. The external factors do not cause the tragic reflection in the novels of George Eliot. The internal factors, factors of the breaking of social code, make the character form his/her inside, causing a tragic conflict. Hetty and Mrs. Transom Court are two examples for the complete egoist. They commit mistake after mistake and finally embrace the consequences of their doings.

Egoism in general terminology breeds in man/woman a kind of behaviour which exhibits the self-willed or the process of self-actualization. The person in dominance of egoistic traits acts in such a way to bring certain marked traits in his personality. Such men/women can be placed under two dominant traits of human selves: the real and
ideal self. She real self symbolizes the realistic mode of human behaviour which is being measured through the egoistic mode of human behaviour while ideal self exhibits the growth of super-consciousness or altruistic mode of human behaviour. In psychology the ego comprises the personality’s executive functions. Thus, ego performs the paramount role. Self concepts are central to humanistic theories - theories which focus upon the individual’s subjective perception of self, the problem of the lack of insight and the day - dreaming process. As usual in human nature, the lack of insight or myopia breeds in man the day - dreaming process which leads man to commit moral mistake and thus inviting the tensions in his/her body and mind. There are three characters who exhibit the egoistic reflections: Adam Bede, Arthur Donnithrone and Hetty Sorrel. The dominance of ego in them makes them avoid subjective explanation and a rational attitude towards life. Thus the blindness to see or to experience the rationalistic principle of life makes them animal like so far as the brighter and higher views of life are concerned.

There are some partial egoists in almost all the novels of George Eliot. The partial egoist are such example who stand between the personal self and wider self that lies in the wider vision society. Maggie, Romola, Esther Lyon, Dorothea Brooke and Gwendolen Harleth are to be regarded as the partial egoists. Finally, the individual feels his own limitations only because he is conscious of infinity and perfection not in himself but in species. The species is the creation of society. Thus society becomes
an organic force which finally gives a chance to an individual to come to its norms. Coming to the norms of the society means to adopt the objective pattern of behaviour and one thus finds this kind of metamorphosis almost in all the partial egoists of George Eliot.

The third kind of egoists who were analysed in the text of the present thesis is the regenerated egoists. All the partial and regenerated egoist under go a kind of change that occurs through the sense of ‘piety and duty’ The partial egoist such as Maggie, Romola, Esther, Dorothea and Gwendolen attain even the status of the regenerated egoist, regenerated in the sense that they realize the true value of life, the important thread that makes an egoist attain the status of regenerated egoist. At the instance of Wordsworth, George Eliot’s wandering or exiled characters come to the final opinions that the final realization of life consist of distrusting or abstract schemes and in the reverence of the life of the past as a guide to the present.

Along with the core analysis of the egoist and altruists, there lies an importance of the rebellion against the traditional authority of an accomplished code of Victorianism (sailing against the current). Old and familias objects and associations are cherished not because they have drawn to them selves those affection which supply all the meanings of life. Theoretically affections lead one to the backward side of life. For this reason of too much affection the characters invite our sympathy and piety even towards their rebellion for following the law of affection and
for breaking the code of society, it seems appropriate to quote a few lines from Romola, because it gives a typical example of the feeling of affection and these feelings blind the protagonist finally to her past and even to her past memories:

“Again she felt that their could be no law for her but the law of her affection. The tenderness and keen fellow feeling for the near and the loved, which are the main out growth of the affections, had made the religion of her life.” (Chapter-36)

Due to this law of affection, moral revolts against the law of duty, against the law of society and against the law of human conduct. Romola is an especially clear illustration of the religion of feeling action. It is because of George Eliot’s working on the law of momentary choice for the present ignoring the authority of the past, it is a principle which makes her a writer beyond and above the established codes of society. Every one of Romola’s actions is determined by the authority of her feeling. This is the consistent principle that reconciles the apparent contradictions between George Eliot and her age in which she writes.
References


