CHAPTER II
PLOT OF HER NOVELS

It has often been stressed that George Eliot has "rambling" plots in her novels. But the over all analysis of her stories bring the fact into light that inspite of the rambling plots, there lies a coherence and orderliness in her stories. This coherence and orderliness brings the structural unity in her novels. Before analysing the textual properties of her novels, there arises a question, how do these two contradictory modes figure in the structural plan of George Eliot? The question of rambling plots and the visionary unity appears in her novels. The motif behind her entire writings is; Intellectually, she was interested in bringing into being the inner feelings and the rational behaviour of the man. It seems appropriate here to quote George Eliot:

"The supreme social function of art she always held to be the communication of feeling which in turn depended upon the artist's own power to experience admiration, hope and love. In this sense prose as well as verse is not only determined by emotion but intended to express it." (1)

To George Eliot feeling or emotion does not mean the creative process of the author. Art means how one achieves success in expressing the emotions objectively for the realization of their universal validity. Thus, her definition in showing the range of feelings and emotions make her an intellectual artist in the Victorian era. On the one hand, she experiments with human life and on the other, she remains a staunch
Victorian for professing the Victorian sense of prudery and social status of man and woman:

"Holding with August Comte that the logical and metaphysical speculation have reached their limit, and that the only hope of extending man's sources of knowledge and happiness is to be found in positive science and in the universal application of its principles; they urge that the thinkers who are in the vein of human progress, should devote their energies to the actual rather that to the retrospective." (2)

There are three aspects of human life which George Eliot deals with in the structural plan of her novels: to extend the sources of happiness; the universal application to positive science irrespective of race and nation; and advocating the cause of human happiness. These are the principles which have given structural unity to the novels of George Eliot.

Her first novel, Adam Bede consists of six books. The book one introduces all the characters with a view of showing the structural plan. Both Hetty and Adam are introduced to the readers.

Adam, who has lost his father and his younger broth Seth, is anguished. Dinah, the methodist, visits the house of Adam. The book also brings into being the symbolic description of the Hall Farm. The history of the Farm carries suggestively the structural mode which is to be developed.

"The history of the house is plain now. It was once the residence of a Country Squire whose family probably dwindling down to mere
spinsterhood got merged in the more territorial name of Donnithrone. It was once the Hall; it is now the Hall, Farm like the life in some coast-town that was once watering place and is now a port where the genteel streets are silent and grass-grown and the clock and warehouse busy and resonant, the life at the Hall has changed its focus and no longer radiates from the parlour, but from the kitchen and the farm yard."

It is situated in the area of Hayslope where Adam also resides. Squire Donnithrone is its rightful owner. A dairy is being run by Mr. and Mrs. Poyser, uncle and aunt of Hetty. Mrs. Poyser’s niece is Dinah Morris, Adam loves Hetty but does not receive her love in equal proportion.

As a girl of day dreaming process, she hardly thinks of the grass root level of human relationships. The Book two shows the leaning of Hetty towards Squire’s nephew Arthur Donnithrone for realizing her day-dreams. At Hall Farm Hetty begins to flirt with Arthur. George Eliot brings the inner reel of her thoughts in the following words:

“And Hetty’s dreams were all of luxuries, to sit in a carpeted parlour and always wear white stockings; to have some large beautiful earrings, such as, were in the fashion; to have Nottingham lace round the top of her gown, and something to make hand kerchief smell nice like Miss Lydia Donnithrone’s when she drew it out at church; and not to be obliged to get up early or to be scolded by any body. She thought if Adam had been rich and could have given her these things, she loved him well enough to marry him.”

She flirts and gets pregnant. Adam has his doubt about the secret
affair of Hetty with Arthur. Arthur meets Adam. Arthur is hardly aware of Adam’s love towards Hetty. Both begin to fight over the issue and finally Adam convinces him of his victory. Arthur promises him for the non-interference between Hetty and Adam. Thus the two books, two and three, work out the egoistic reflections of Arthur.

“... No gentleman........ could marry a farmer’s niece. There must be an end to the whole thing at once. It was too foolish.”

Arthur finishes the entire episode when he departs to join his regiment.

Book four begins with the letter of Arthur for showing his inability to meet Hetty. He also begs her pardon for his wrong doings. Thus, Arthur gets off the main stream of thematic structure of the novel. Things come to a rise when Hetty becomes poor and helpless, Adam is still in her love, but Dinah foresees the peril to come in the life of Hetty. Hetty conceals her guilt and thus gets caught in the self woven vicious circle of human deeds. She is on the horns of a dilemma for her growing pregnancy.

Book Five displays the character in action which leads the story to its catastrophic end. Outward facts of Hetty are tolerable. Hetty keeps her inner sorrow a secret and sets out in search of Arthur Donnithrone to tell him about her black future. She runs after shadow leaving substance behind. Instead of Adam, she approaches Arthur for light. She gives birth to a baby on the road while journeying to look at the residence of Arthur. She is bewildered and in consideration of social dishonour, she murders her new born baby. She is arrested and imprisoned.
The prison-scene in Adam Bede reaches to its climax. It presents all the characters who are involved directly or indirectly with the guilt of Hetty. She becomes an experiment for the theory of Karma. Confessing her guilt, she earns the sympathy of all:

"I did it, Dinah......... I buried it in the wood......... the little baby....... I heard it cry...... ever such a way off...... all night..... and I went back because it cried...... oh it was so dreadful. Dinah ...... I was so miserable...... I wished I’d never been born into this world. I should never like to go into the green fields again."\(^{(6)}\)

She confesses her guilt. To George Eliot and to a Christian, confession is Divine, concealment is devilish. Hetty dies on the way while returning from Windsor to HayPP slope. After the death of Hetty, Arthur comes to know what Hetty had suffered. He comes to meet her, but it is too late. He himself confesses his guilt to Adam. Arthur says:

"I would do anything, there is no sacrifice I would not make, to prevent any further injury to others through me-through what has happened."\(^{(7)}\)

Now, Arthur has learnt that the essence of true life lies in being altruistic. He gives up all the claim to his property at Hall Farm and hand it over to Parson Irwine:

"And Mr. Irwine is to have the chief authority on the estate, he has consented to undertake that they will really be under no mean but one whom they respect and like. It would be the same with you, Adam; and it
could be nothing but a desire to give me worse pain that could incline you to go."(8)

Book six is devoted to the arrangement of a happy ending of the story by marriage of Dinah Morris with Adam Bede. The complete action of marriage takes place at the Hall Farm. George Eliot mocks at the fickle celebacy of a methodist, because she finally marries Adam. Dinah realizes the demand for the fulfilment of her womanhood. She has thus an illuminating realization of her personhood.

"What greater things is there for two human souls than to feel that they are joined for life to strengthen each other in all labour, to rest in each in all sorrow, to minister, to teach each other in all pain, to be one with each other in silent unspeakable memories at the moment of the last parting."(9)

Thus, the marriage of Adam with Dinah clears the various fragmentation of the story together. This marriage reveals a greater purpose—the purpose of love and renunciation.

George Eliot’s next novel in the continuity is ‘The Mill on the Floss’ (1860). The structural plan of this novel has been divided into seven books. The psychological norms, from childhood to young, are traced through the gradual growth of a single character, Maggie Tulliver. The first book deals with the social, economic and cultural history of Mr. Tulliver’s family. They own Darlcote Mill which is situated on the bank of River Floss. The Mill and the river are two greater symbols in the beginning of this novel.
“A wide plain where the bordering Floss hurries..... between its green banks to the sea and loving tide rushing to meet it, checks its passage with an impetuous embrace. On this mighty tide the blacks ships-lad with the fresh scented fir planks with round sacks of oil-bearing seed or with the dark glitter of coal are borne along to the town of St. Ogg’s which shows its aged, fluted red roofs and the broad gables of its waves between the low wooded hill and the river bank.”

The images such as “impetuous embrace”, “mighty tide”, “the town of St. Ogg’s” and “the low wooded hill” are functional and they prepare the foreground even for the inorganic forces for determining the flow of the story.

First, it is the Darlcote Mill which passes its judgement against Tom so far as his future is concerned. Tom is the elder brother of Maggie. Maggie, a freedom loving girl, develops some differences with other members of her family. Mrs. Tulliver belongs to the family of Dodsons. There are certain marked distinctions between Tulliver and Dodson so far as the social mannerism is concerned. Maggie a product of two cultures (Tulliver as father and Dodson as mother) reacts against the snobbish behaviour of Dodsons, because her behaviour reflects the clan of bourgeois:

“One would need to be learned in the fashions of those times to know how far in the rear of them Mrs. Glegg’s slate-coloured silk gown must have been; but from certain constellations of small yellow spots
upon it and a mouldy odour about it suggestive of a damp cloths-chest it was probable that it belonged to a stratum of garments just old enough to have come recently into wear.\textsuperscript{111}

Maggie feels disappointed in their company because their main motif behind any conversation is to talk of the latest fashion. She revolts against her family and one day she runs away and joins the company of gipsies.

The second books of this novel is devoted to the education and the general atmosphere in the family of Tullivers. Mr. Tulliver sends Tom in Jacob’s Academy for his education. The main plot of story is strengthened by merging the subplot in it. Though the introduction of Philip Wakem, the son Lawyer Wakem, has been worked out, yet he has been shown as the school fellow of Tom. One day, Maggie, occasionally visits her brother at Jacob’s Academy and she happens to meet Philip too. She is too much influenced by the intelligence of Philip. However, she comes back with her father, but after sometime, she again comes to the school of Tom. As an adolescent, she falls in love with Philip.

Book three brings the crisis in the story. It shows a quarrel between Mr. Tulliver and Lawyer Wakem. The Lawyer files a civil suit of against Mr. Tulliver. The case ruins the economic order of Mr. Tulliver’s family and it thus, causes a permanent enemity between the two families. Lawyer gets the Darlcote Mill decreed. Even the sub-plot of the novel joins the main stream that flows around Darlcote Mill. Amidst this economic pressure, Tom had to give up his schooling and came back to his home.
Maggie is also baffled by the unexpected economic crisis of her family:

“And if life had no love in it, what else was there for Maggie. Nothing but poverty and the companionship of her mother’s narrow griefs perhaps of her father’s heart cutting childish dependence. There is no helplessness so sad as that of early youth, when the soul is made up of wants and has no long memories, no superadded life in the life of others, though we who look on things lightly of such premature despair, as if our vision of the future lightened the blind sufferer’s present.”

Book four presents the social egoism of Dodsons: “to be honest and poor was never a Dodsons motto.” As the people of traditional approach, Mrs. Tulliver as a daughter of Dodsons used to love all that is fashionable. Maggie as a matured girl hardly digests the fashionable ways of her mother. Her revolt against the Dodsons becomes the revolt against the traditional ways of life. Maggie even revolts against her father because he feels a kind of inferiority before Dodsons. Among these differences, Maggie becomes aware of her personhood and at the same time, she too thinks of her own womanhood. Consequently:

“She rebelled against her lot, she fainted under its loneliness and fits even of anger and hatred toward 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 a sense that it was not difficult for her to become a demon.”
Book Five shows Maggie in her reminiscences of childhood life. Her adolescent love for Philip Wakem is once again stirred. She has a haunting longing to be with him as the company of Philip pleases her much. The overt hostility of the two families restrains her to meet Philip openly. Tom checks her from meeting him. Maggie meets Philip Wakem in concealment and asks him not to meet her. Philip protests her negation and says that resignation does not signify pleasure loving objects, but it signifies the willing endurance of pain. Overwhelmed, Maggie says to him:

"You would have loved me well enough to bear with me, and forgive me everything that was what I always longed that Tom should do. I was never satisfied with a little of anything. That is why it is better for me to do without earthly happiness altogether....... I never feel that I had enough music I wanted more instruments playing together I wanted voices fuller and deeper." *(15)*

As a young and a grown up lady, Maggie presents what and how she feels for her future actions.

Consequently in Book six, The Great Temptation, young Maggie is left for her free will, she moves from one pleasure to another but she never gave up the root. Her root lies in hearing the voice of conscience. George Eliot makes Maggie face a great temptation. A new character, Stephen Guest is introduced for the experiments of Maggie. A village dandy, Stephen Guest is betrothed to Maggie’s cousin Lucy. Maggie as a young girl comes close to Stephen Guest. George Eliot portrays Maggie’s conditions thus:
“Perhaps one need to be nineteen against to be quite convinced of the feelings that were crowded for Maggie into those twelve days of the length is which they were stretched for her by the novelty of her experience in them, and varying attitudes of her mind.”(16)

Maggie is mentally prepared to yield to her incestuous desires in the company of Stephen Guest.

When Philip Wakem re-enters the scenario, Maggie finds it too difficult to break up her past ties with him. But the denial of Tom - never to meet and talk to Philip, is an obstacle in their unity. After this Philip fades away leaving an indelible impression on Maggie’s mind. She is alone now. This loneliness gives her a chance to slip. She flirts with Stephen Guest. However she realises her mistake soon after and she refuses to flirt with him. Stephen chases Maggie but she would not fall again. She remembers Philip Wakem. She thinks of her cousin Lucy whom Stephen is betrothed. She thus holds her own confidence and requests her seducer Stephen Guest:

“It is not so Stephen - I’m quite sure that is wrong - I have tried to think it again and again, but I see if we judged in that way there would be a warrant for all treachery and cruelty, we should justify breaking the most sacred ties that can ever be formed on earth. If the past is not to bind us, where can duty lie? we should have no law but the inclination of the moment.”(17)

In Book Seven, ‘The Final Rescue’, Maggie comes to Dr. Kenn, a Christian preacher and accepts her fault for slipping momentarily with
Stephen Guest. He suggests that she should marry Stephen but Maggie refuses to do so. Then, there is an unexpected inundation in the river Floss. Maggie along with her brother Tom comes forward to rescue the flood affected people. In a boat with her brother, she like a saint faces perils of the flood but saves the lives of the peple. She broods over her past while setting the sail boat:

"Ah now, she knew which way to look for the first glimpse of the well-known trees - the grey willows the now following chestnuts and above them the old roof all was faint and dim. More and more strongly the energies seemed to come and put themselves forth as if her life were a stored up force that was being spent in this hour unneeded for any future."(18)

Her fear - fear of society and even the fear of death - diminishes and she like a brave fellow sees life full and not in fragments. The essence of life lies in sacrificing the self for the sake of others. Such a person dying never dies and Maggie realizes this secret of life, Thus brother and sister at the final stage of life are united in "one supreme moment, the days when they had clasped their little hands in love."(19) Thus, this story begins and ends on the bank of river Floss.

The third novel, 'Silas Marner: The Weaver of Raveloe' was published in two parts. Part one depicts the unfavourable chances in the life of Silas Marner, and the second part, with the story of Silas Marner and his adopted daughter Eppie. The original idea comes through the early recollection of memories in the mind of George Eliot:
"In the days when the spinning wheels hummed busily in the farm houses and even great ladies clothed in silk and thread lace, had their toy spinning-wheels of polished Oak—there might be seen in districts far away among the denses or deep in the bosom of the hills, certain pallid undersized men, who by the side of the brawny country folk looked like the remnants of a disinterested race."(20)

Silas begins his life at Lantern Yard. As a young man he has some extraordinary traits of human personality. He goes to the church daily. One day, he becomes unconscious in the church. In his unconscious mood, his friend William Dane commits a theft. Silas is accused of it. The very next day, when he is working as usual on his loom, he suddenly receives a message that his betrothed Sarah was having her engagement with William Dane. Silas becomes gloomy. He leaves Lantern Yard and comes to Raveloe. He faces his first unfavourable chance. His life of Raveloe is dedicated only to weaving. He is cut off from human love and sympathy and weaves day and night like an insect:

"In this strange world made a hopeless riddle to him, he might if he had had a less intense nature, have set weaving-looking towards the end of his pattern or towards the end of his web till he forgot the riddle and everything else but the money had to come to mark off his weaving into periods and the money not only grew, but it remained with him. He began to think it was, conscious of him, as his loom was, and he would on no account have exchanged those coins, which had become his familiars for
other coins with unknown faces. He handed them, he counted them till their form and colour were like the satisfaction of a thirst to him.  "(21)

At Raveloe he is cut off from human love. Money becomes his prime motif. Human love has been replaced by hoarding of gold coins.

At Raveloe, Squire Cass is the great and rich man. He has two sons; elder one is Godfrey Cass and Dunstain Cass is the younger one. In the engagement feast of Godfrey Cass, Dunstain develops differences with Godfrey and leaves the feast in a fit of anger. Godfrey’s first secret marriage with drug-addict, Molly Farren, makes to bear all unusualness of Dunstain’s behaviour. Dunstain Cass in a heavy intoxication leaves the party and arrives near the cottage of Silas. He steals all the gold of Silas. By chance he happens to fall in a pit of stone and dies. Molly Farren, the first wife of Godfrey Cass, is one her way to the residence of Squire Cass. She wanted to reveal the secret of her pregnancy before him. That day, she takes an over dose of opium and she too dies near the cottage of Silas. But dying, she leaves her baby, Eppie there. Silas finds it and thinks of it as a compensation for the lost gold. She finds now golden haired Eppie:

“He had a dreamy feeling that this child was somehow a message came to him from that far off life; it stirred fibres that had never been moved in Raveloe old quiverings of tenderness old impressions of awe at the presentiment of some power presiding over his life."(22)

The adopting of Eppie gives a sort of rejuvenation to Silas. For the
care of this child, he gets related to Dolly Winthrope—a humane and a
gentle lady who lives at Raveloe. She teaches Silas how to nourish the
child. Mrs. Winthrope remains in regular touch with Silas. Thus for the
nourishment of Eppie, Silas comes in touch with other families at Raveloe.
The other thread of the story deals with the family of Godfrey Cass.
Godfrey’s recurrent visit to the weaver solves the secret of Dunstain’s
death. In a pit of stones, the skeleton of Dunstain along with a bag of gold
coins, is found. With this, Molly’s visit to the cottage of Silas has also
been revealed. The real identity of Eppie thus comes to revelation. Godfrey
persuades his second wife Nancy to take this girl to their house. Nancy
agrees to this proposal as she has no issue.

The real parents of Eppie come to Silas’s cottage and lay claim for
their child. Silas is bewildered when he comes to know of Godfrey’s
natural claim on Eppie. The revelation of Dunstain’s death provides Silas
with money. This does not however pleases him much. What he feels
degrading is a fading hope for the claim of Eppie by the statement of
Godfrey Cass. He undergoes inward suffering even at the very idea of his
separation from Eppie. He is unable to reply but fortune favours him.
Eppie herself denies the natural fatherhood of Godfrey Cass. Thus, Eppie
becomes instrumental in the regeneration of Silas and union of two threads
of the plot. Finally, Eppie decides to live with Silas forever. He is her
father and he is her mother. At the end of the novel, Eppie is shown married
to Aron - a son of Dolly Winthrope. Thus joining two threads of the plot
successfully, Eliot also blends the sub-plot of Dolly Winthrope and her son with the main story of Silas Marner.

Romola was published in 1863. This novel has been divided into three books. The two themes of the novel - one moral and other political have fused into one story. Romola, the heroine of the novel, extends the range of moral theme while political theme is worked out by Tito and his mentor Savonarola. George Eliot’s remarks in one of her letters written to John Blackwood on 28, August, 1860, become important to be quoted here:

“I think I must tell you the secret though I am distrusting my power to make it grow into a published fact. When we were in Florence, I was rather fired with the idea of writing a historical romance-scene, Florence period, the close of the fifteenth century which was marked by Savonarola’s career and martyrdom.” (23)

The first book of the novel opens with shipwreck in which Tito, a Medicean youngman, is saved. He is separated from his father. Tito does not know whether he is alive or dead. Nello, a barber, playing a pivotal role in the beginning, introduces Tito Melema to a Florence scholar, Bardo.

The first book narrates the treacherous innate nature of Tito. After sometime, he comes to know that his father, Baldassare, is in the possession of some enemy pirates. They have demanded ransom for his release. Romola remains in constant touch with Tito as he becomes his father’s friend. Before him, she had not seen a scholar so young as Tito. But Tito as the readers know had illicit relations with a poor peasant girl-Tessa.
Again, he begins to love Romola for his sensuous pleasures. Romola also falls in love with him. Romola’s monk-turned brother comes to know the evil intentions of Tito. In his dying message, he warns Romola against her marriage with Tito, yet Romola marries him. Romola also comes to know about the treachery of Tito when he sells the library of the blind scholar Bardo, Romola’s father.

Book two deals with the political activities of Savonarola. Tito is also shown to be having knowledge of Baldassare’s presence in Florence. He is in a dilemma and finds himself in utter misery. If he accepted his foster father publicly, all the secrets concealed till now, would come to light. Thus, he will be in danger. Tito in such circumstances -

"Feels as if a serpent had begun to coil round his limbs... there was still one resource open to Tito. He might have turned back, sought Baldassare again, confessed everything to him - to Romola - to all the world. But he never thought of that. The repentance which cuts off all moorings to evil demands something more than selfish fear. He had no sense that there was strength and safety in truth; the only strength he trusted to lay in his ingenuity and his dissimulation, allow that the first shock, which had called up the treacherous signs of fear, was well past, he hoped to be prepared for all emergencies by cool deceit and defensive armour."(24)

Tito’s heart is laid open thread-bare. Again, he sees such situation in which he can choose either all good or all evil. He yields to all evil wearing defence armour of deceit and cunning. Tito treats Baldassare, his
foster father, as mad and refuses to recognize him. Tito had already deceived Tessa and Romola one by selling her father’s library and the other by making sinful love to her. Romola is disillusioned before long and decides to return her wedding ring. She also decides to leave Florence to lead a life of spirituality and piety. The timely intervention of Savonarola saves Romola and brings her back to her domestic duties. She obeys Savonarola because he is her spiritual guide. With the advice of Savonarola to Romola, The Book two comes to its close.

Book three deals with the treachery of Tito spying in Florence for Medecean people. Romola’s devotion to Savonarola is over. Romola’s godfather Barnardo del Nero is accused falsely of certain political crime. Romola begs pardon of Savonarola for her godfather. Savonarola for his political reasons shows double standards of Machiavellian outlook. Barnardo is not saved by him and he is punished. This breaks the spiritual spell of Romola towards Savonarola. She now decides to leave Florence as she finds everywhere double standards of life. She drifts in a boat to an unknown region of water. At times the idea of suicide steals into her mind, but she soon finds herself in an unknown village, where she becomes a Madonna. She serves the people of the plague-stricken village selflessly.

The political plot of the novel also reaches its climax in Book Three. Tito is found guilty of political crimes. Therefore, a revolt against him is witnessed. He feels no safety for himself and therefore, he runs to leave Florence immediately. Baldassare is not a man who forgets any deceit
easily. While running, Tito has to cross a muddy river. On the other side of the river he faces his foster-father Baldassare whom he has been deceiving on all occasions. He has been waiting for Tito on the other side of the river and when he sees Tito coming, he strikes a heavy blow to him. Tito can not bear the stroke and dies.

Romola serving in the plague-stricken village comes to waking and regains her spiritual strength. She now decides to come back to Florence. She gets strength from her own soul.

“If every thing else is doubtful, this suffering that I can help is certain. If the glory of the Cross is an illusion, the sorrow is the only true. While the strength is in my arm, I will stretch it out to the fainting. While the light visits my eyes, they shall seek the forsaken”. (25)

As Tito is discovered earlier to be guilty, Savonarola is also found guilty. The angry mob is in revolt against him. He gets warning to leave Florence within twelve hours or else he might be killed by the mob for political treachery. He is arrested. Romola, after gaining spiritual strength comes back to Florence. She meets Savonarola and finds him in jail for a false. The moral plot intermingles with the political plot. Savonarola confesses to Romola that whatever he did, was not treachery. It was of course a result of his over-ambition. The only fault of Savonarola is that he has defied the supreme papal authority. In the end he receives his death warrant and attains martyrdom. After this political punishment of Savonarola, Romola decides to spend her life with Tessa and her children.
George Eliot at the end of the novel successfully blends the moral with the political theme, driving Romola to altruistic motifs of life.

Felix Holt (1866) deals again with the issues of double plots: moral and political ones through working out the character of Mrs. Transome Court and Esther Lyon; the political plot is materialized through the radical philosophy of Felix Holt and its opposition by Harold Transome Court. This novel has not been divided into books. The two streams—moral and political—are distinct and yet they are inseparable. The political string can not be worked out without the assistance of the moral one. For realizing the true and moral fibres of human relationships, the political theme forms its core.

The rightful claimants for the estate of Transome Court are the Bycliffes. But since there remains no Bycliffe to inherit the estate of Transome Court, it comes under the possession of Durfly who are known to the name Transome. The author at the outset informs the readers that in the hands of Transome, the estate is not properly run and managed. Due to his imbecility, Mr. Transome depends entirely on his wife, Mrs. Transome for the management of the estate. Mrs. Transome had only a son who is handicapped and after sometimes, he died. In the longing of a son, Mrs. Transome develops illicit relationship with her family lawyer, Jermyn. She has a son by Jermyn. He has been sent out side the Transome Court for his higher studies. His name is Harold Transome. As a mother, she craves for the comeback of her son after fifteen years. At the same time a reel of unconscious acts of her relationship with Jermyn goes inside her mind.
Still she recovers from it as soon as her son steps in the palace. Harold’s presence pleases the heart of a mother. Her motherly affection moves her.

It is the authority of George Eliot that she skilfully links the past with the present in order to develop a character fully. Mrs. Transome’s present and past meet in her son-Harold. She lives on hopes from him and also sees in him the genealogical sin. She tries her best to set her son with her lover Jermyn amicably. But Harold Transome fails her plan as he opposes lawyer Jermyn over the management of Transome Court, there arises a perpetual difference between Harold and Lawyer Jermyn. Harold shows his radicalism in social and political ideas.

Among these developments of the story, the real hero, Felix Holt is introduced in the run of the story. He visits Mr. Lyon, dissenting Minister and father of Esther Lyon, the heroine of the novel. Mr. Felix is the son of a widow Mrs. Holt who earns her livelihood by selling medicines as the quack practitioner. Felix Holt returns after completing his education. He in the remaining part of the story becomes central character for the political stringe of the story. He is a radicalist. He forbids his mother to sell a quack’s pills as they are harmful for the health of the people. Felix Holt’s radical ideology is in opposition to the monopolists, whom he holds responsible for scarcity of goods:

“We know what that comes to: in some countries a poor can’t afford to buy a spoonful of salt and yet there’s salt enough in the world to pickle every-thing in it. That is the sort of benefit monopolists do to mankind.
And these are the men who tell us we’re to let politics alone: they will govern us better without our knowing anything about it... But I tell them this: the greatest question in the world is how to give every man a man’s share in what goes on in life.\(^{26}\)

Infact, Felix represents all that is ideal. He becomes synonymous to idealism in politics. It is because of Felix’s idealism, Esther Lyon gets attracted towards Felix. She begins to love him secretly. But her egoism hardly allows to love him openly until the revelation of Felix as the right heir to the estate of Transome Court.

The story of the estate of Transome Court attains climatic complication by the revelation of Esther’s identity. It was entailed from John Julius Transome to Thomas Transome that inheritance would stand unless any claim from the real heir were made to succeed it; if the real claimant arrived, the possession of Transome (Durfly) would cease to exist. Ultimately Esther’s identity as the last Bycliffe is revealed. She is not the daughter of Mr. Lyon. She is the daughter of Annett Ledru, who is the wife of Mr. Maurice Christian Bycliffe. He is an officer in French Army. He had been taken for being killed in the war and Ledru had been in search of him. She comes to Rufus Lyon- a simple minded dissenting Minister. He marries Annett and becomes a foster- father to Esther. After the death of her mother, Mr. Bycliffe’s locket comes in the possession of Esther. Maurice Bycliffe’s own locket is found. When Maurice Bycliffe comes from prison to England, he dies on the way leaving his personal
note-book and locket. Felix Holt gets them when he is going to the work-
house. He hands over these things to Mr. Rufus Lyon. Mr. Lyon with the
help of lawyer Jermyn proves Esther as the real descendant of the estate
of Transome Court. She is proved to be the last Bycliffe.

For the political scenario all the characters are shown involved in
the election of Treby Magna. Harold Transome opposes the radical
candidate of Felix Holt. During the canvassing, there breaks a riot in which
the involvement of Felix Holt is suspected. He is accused and arrested
falsely and finally in the case of the murder of a police constable, he is
sent to prison. As for moral issues, a permanent enmity is shown between
Jermyn and his illicit son, Harold Transome. Mrs. Transome Court is in a
dilemma. She swings between the man whom she has loved and the son
whom she desires to flourish. She tries to solve these social issues but
there was no easy solution of the problem. After the revelation of Esther
as the legal heiress to Transome Court, Harold begins to love her. He
knows that to marry Esther means to be legal possessor of Transome Court.
But Esther leaves Transome Court because she is fed up of its artificial
life. Resigning all the claims on the estate, Esther comes to the prison and
opts to witness in favour of Felix Holt. She compares the luxury of Harold
Transome with the poverty of Felix Holt. She prefers Felix to Harold as
her life partner. She desires to have the poor lot because, “she wanted the
largeness of the world to help her thought. This young creature had under
gone something little sort of inward revolution.”

(27)
She develops a largeness of heart due to the influence of Felix’s noble nature. She has sympathy with Mrs. Transome Court because Mrs. Transome becomes a tragic figure. Lawyer Jermyn reveals the fact of his liaison with her before Harold. The lawyer opens the secret that Harold is his own son, when Harold asks this question before her mother, she becomes a burning log and her past hovers around each and every action. The revelation of the fact about the genealogical defect of Harold becomes the prime cause of Mrs. Transome’s burning. In the end even her son does not support her. Only Esther comes to Mrs. Transome Court and sympathises with her. Afterwards, both mother and her son meet and Esther goes back to Felix and lives with him to attain the higher objectives of life. Living with Felix, she feels happy as “the morning thrush.”

Thus, all the hopes of Mrs. Transome come to an end. Harold declares himself against family’s Toryism as a Redical. Mrs. Transome becomes only a showpiece in this splendorous mansion. Harold stands for Parliament in Election from Treby Magna. He loses in Election, loses Esther and at last comes to know about the meanness of his birth, that he is the son of Jermyn whom he hates wholly. He leaves Treby Magna with his mother and comes only at the time of her death.

Middle Mach was published in 1871-72 in four volumes of Edinburgh Review. The full title of the novel makes it clear that it is a study of “Provincial Life”. It is an odyssey of human relationships. It is such a novel in which different kinds of relationships, such as the
relationships between two indifferent persons and the relationships between two ladies of different temperament, are exhibited. The entire contents of the novel has been divided into eight full length books. There are four distinct streams for its plot structure: Dorothea-Casaubon, Lydgate- Rosamond, Bulstrode and Fred Vincy and Mary Garth family. The main interest in the novel lies in the presentation of Theresa - Complex. This complex is materialized by the character of Dorothea Brooke, the heroine of the novel and a pseudo scholar. The passage taken from the Prelude of the Middle March brings into being the main motif behind its structural plan:

"Many Therresas have been born who found for themselves no epic life where in there was a constant unfolding of far - resonant action; perhaps only a life of mistakes, the offspring of a certain spiritual grandeur ill-matched with the meanness of opportunity; perhaps a tragic failure which found no sacred poet and sank unwept into oblivion........ for these later-born Therresas were helped by no coherent social faith and order which could perform the function of knowledge for the ardently willing soul. Their ardour alternated between a vague ideal and the common yearning of womanhood; so that the one was disapproved as extravagance, and the other condemned as lapse."(29)

There are two major ideas which are hinted at in this passage: vague ideals and the common yearning of womanhood. The entire structural plan rotates around these two things.
The Book one opens with Dorothea’s aspirations for an idealistic life. Full of yearnings, she gives up Mr. Brooke’s estate. If Dorothea married and had a son, he would inherit Mr. Brooke’s estate. But she refuses it and marries Casaubon a person who is of her father’s age. She sees in him some prospects of “Judicious Hooker and John Milton.”

Casaubon claims that his scholarly works hold a “key of all Mythologies” and this attracts young Dorothea and finally she marries Casaubon. Dorothea accompanies him to Rome. He depresses Dorothea in his honeymoon tour. Dorothea misses in her husband not only manliness but the intellectual calibre also. After three weeks of her marriage, she is disillusioned. Dorothea errs and she is herself responsible for her unhappy marriage. Dr. Lydgate, a young innovator of medical science, faces the same lot as he also errs in his marriage with Rosamond. The intelligent surgeon, Dr. Lydgate after completing his education at convent settles at Middle March for serving the people. He is an egoist, his distinguished mind is a little spotted with commonness. George Eliot brings out his weakness:

“Lydgate’s spot of commonness lay in the complexion of his prejudices which were half of them such as are found in ordinary men of the world: that destruction of mind which belonged to his intellectual ardour did not penetrate his feelings and judgement about future, or women or desirability of its being known (without his telling) that he was better born than other country surgeon.”

\(^{[30]}\)

\(^{[31]}\)
Lydgate's fault is that he is careless about small objects of life. He has his share of human virtues and weaknesses. Dr. Lydgate's marriage sets the stage for an unhappy drama. Rosamond spoils the life of this young doctor. Before George Eliot unites Lydgate- Rosamond story with Dorothea- Casaubon story by bringing the two egoists of similar outlook towards life together, Dr. Lydgate comes in direct touch with Dorothea Brooke because he treats her husband for an internal disease. Both Casaubon and Featherstone show similar egoism as they write their codicil wills depriving their heirs of their property if they went against their wishes after their death. A specific mention is made in the codicil will of Casaubon that if Dorothea married Will Ladislaw, she would forfeit all the claims on his property. Casaubon and Featherstone work in a similar way. Both Dorothea and Riggs renounce the claim on their property in a similar way. So far as the remaining characters are concerned they are also introduced and linked with the main plot. Riggs sells his property to Banker Bulstrode. Dorothea renounces all her claims. Her imposed marriage with Will Ladislaw, as husband of Dorothea Brooke, is closely linked with the main stream of the novel.

The subplot which introduces Garth family, plays its role in the development of the main plot. Garth family accordingly finds considerable place in the novel. They are static characters with the exception of Rosamond Vincy. This is because they represent conventional moral conduct. In a way the Garth family establishes the norms of behaviour for
the world of the novel. The sub-plot of the novel is linked through Fred Vincy with the main plot; as the Banker Bulstrode gets his friend Raffles murdered. His wife, who is honestly pious, is much baffled. Moreover this guilt of Bulstrode further complicates the plot as Bulstrode’s wife belongs to Vincy family. The Garths and Vincy are mutually related and thus link themselves to the action of the main plot. Lydgate is accused of the murder of Raffles because he has taken bribery while facing economic crisis in his family. Thus, there is a systematic presentation of linkage among all the groups of the characters. Dorothea hears the accusations against Lydgate: reportedly he had a hand in the murder of Raffles. She rushes to Lydgate’s help. She gives him heart telling that it “is not brave to give up the fight.”

She further meets Mrs. Rosamond and convinces her of the impending economic crisis of Lydgate. In this way the novelist establishes relation between Dorothea and Rosamond because Dorothea hints Rosamond of her affairs with Will Ladislaw. George Eliot portrays Will Ladislaw as Dorothea’s materialization of womanhood. There are two selves in Dorothea: One that goes in Casaubon for her idealism, the other that meets its fulfilments in Ladislaw. Goerge Eliot sees the inner thought reel of Dorothea and accordingly she paints her meeting with Ladislaw in the following manner:

“They stood silent not looking at each other, but looking at the ever greens which were being tossed and were showing the pale underside of
thick leaves against the blackening sky, Will never enjoyed the prospect of a storm so much: it delivered him from the necessity of going away. Leaves and little branches were hurled about and the thunder was getting nearer. The light was more and more sombre, but there came a flash of lightening which made them smile. Dorothea began to say what she had been thinking of.\

Rosamond admits that she has no relations that can destroy her happiness. The way for the marriage of Dorothea Brook with Ladislaw is thus cleared. This marriage of Dorothea with Will prepares the ground to several another aspects of Dorothea’s character that ends in the fulfilment of her womanhood. She faced failure in the fulfilment of her lofty aims with Casaubon but she fulfils her idea of womanhood by marrying Ladislaw. Lydgate leaves Middle March for the whims of his wife-Rosamond Vincy. And in this way the novel ends with the marriage of Dorothea Brooke with Will Ladislaw.

Dorothea bails out Lydgate with money to pay Bulstrode back. Finally Will comes to see her, though she can not marry him or else lose her propriety. She decides she does not want to loose him. Dorothea gives up all of Casaubon’s money and property to marry Will. Celia and Sir James are shocked, though she has made a right decision. Sir James continues to think badly of the marriage; but Will and Dorothea go to London. Will is elected to parliament and they are very happy. Here ends the story of modern Theresa...... Theresa who sees life on fronts: idealism and realism.
‘Daniel Deronda’ was serially published in four volumes of ‘Edinburgh Review’ in 1876. Like Middle March, it is also in eight books. The plot has two stories running with and into each other: one consisting of the history of Gwendolen Harleth, the heroine of the novel and the other of the discovery of Daniel Deronda as a Jew. The first story deals with English life that comprises Gwendolen Harleth, Sir Hugo Mallinger and his nephew Hanleigh, Grand Court and the others, Daniel Deronda, Mordecai and his sister Mirah Cohen.

Book One deals with the psychological traits of Gwendolen’s personality. Though she is a gambling girl, she is beautiful. The audience are informed about her when she is standing near the gambling table and playing the game. Deronda, the hero and the nephew of Sir Hugo Mallinger, first meets among the people who are at gambling table. He had been sent to Cambridge for higher education but has left his study as he did not like the general environment of the place. He is sent by Hugo to meet her son who is in London. Deronda finds good English in the speech of Gwendolen. Her super beauty is a fine blend of coquettishness. Her cousin, Rex begins to love her. She responds to his love in a way of mere entertainment. She does not mean to bind herself permanently in marriage bonds. She loves Rex, not for any future plan but simply to pass her time in Pennicote during her stay there. Squire Hanleigh Mallinger’s nephew, Mr. Grandcourt is himself interested in Gwendolen.

His nephew is handsome and rich and wholly hopes to be richer.
His uncle, Mr. Mallinger has no issue and it is supposed that Mr. Grandcourt would inherit all the property of his uncle after his death. Gwendolen does not care much about Mr. Grandcourt. An economic crisis faced by the family of Mrs. Fanny Davilow. Gwendolen’s mother forces Gwendolen to come back home to Offendene; they had to leave even Offendene:

“I must now entreat you to return as quickly as possible, for if you spent all money it would be out of my power to send you any more, and you must not borrow of the Laugens, for I could not repay them. This is the sad truth, my child I wish I could prepare you for it better-but a dreadful calamity has befallen us all..... we must get some hut or other to shelter us, and live on your uncle Gascogene’s charity until I see what else can be done.”

Book Two becomes repetitive as it repeats the incidents of the first book. Grandcourt proposes to marry Gwandolen. The story of Daniel too runs parallel. Daniel meets Mira Cohen, a Jewish girl. Mira is so much exhausted by the circumststances as she thinks of committing suicide. Deronda saves her life. Mira Cohen narrates her sad story before Deronda. He sympathizes with her and makes her shelter in the house of Mayrick. Mira’s arrival on the scene serves the motif of Jewish plot in the novel.

Book Three is important in the sense that it shows the efforts of Deronda for the search of lost parents of Mira Cohen. Mira tells about the slaughter of the Jews in the war by the Christians. The scene shifts to the
economic downfall of Gwendolen. She has no option except to marry Grand Court. We get a glimpse of her sorrow stricken heart:

"Mamma don’t speak to me now. It is useless to cry and waste our strength over what can’t be altered. You will live at Sawyer’s Cottage, and I am going to the Bishop’s daughters. There is no more to be said. Things can not be altered, and who cares? It makes no difference to any one else what we do. We must try not to care ourselves. We must not give way. I dread giving way. Help me to be quiet."

In Book Four, Gwendolen subdues her egoism and consents to marry Grandcourt. Deronda once again happens to meet Gwendolen. She desires to speak to him. When Gwendolen agrees to marry Grandcourt, she comes to know of the duplicity of his character. Grandcourt like Tito has another wife and children by her. After knowing it, Gwendolen is much baffled. She feels hysterical compunction after receiving this letter. Being unable to express her grief, even the sight of Grandcourt brings her a nervous shock. Dorothea occasionally meets Gwendolen, gives her guidance. He is restless in search of Mirah’s brother. Ultimately, he meets Mordecai in Rain’s Book stall.

In Book Five and Book Six two things are important: the influence of Deronda and Mordecai on general public. For Deronda, Mordecai is a seer and a prophet. Gwendolen depends on Deronda for guidance because his influence had entered into the current of that self-suspicion and self-blame which awakens a new consciousness. Gwendolen is so dependent on his guidance that Sir Hugo Mallinger has to forbid Deronda to develop
any serious relations with her. Mordecai had been in search of a young man who could take his mission of Judaism and Deronda is the man of his search. Book Six establishes the identity of Mordecai as the father of Mirah Cohen. Thus this book prepares in a clear manner the plot which deals the interest of Judaism.

Mordecai is shown rejecting on an extension of Judaism. He desires to get an independent state for Jews. He selects Danial for this purpose. The obstacle lies in the revelation of Daniel’s real parentage. It is found that Daniel does not come from an English family. Sir Hugo Mallinger hands over a letter to Daniel to meet a lady at Geneoa in Italy. Grandcourt’s evil intentions are also revealed. He like Casauban in Middle March, makes small Haenteigh his heir in case there is no son from Gwendolen Harleth. Daniel arrives at Italy where he meets his mother. She tells him that he is a jew, she had placed him under the care of Sir Hugo Mallinger.

In the light of the analysis so far made about the plot structure of George Eliot’s novels, a few characteristics deserve to be focused here. Henry James’s charge “She has no sense of form” \(^{(36)}\) is a sweeping remark about the art of an artist. Seemingly her plots appear disorderly, because the art of George Eliot is meant for objectifying the universal characteristics of literary art. Her novels have unity of psychological motifs of human psyche. Her tragic tales serve the purpose of expressing the suffering in order to relieve the effects of evils. After suffering, her character undergoes a sea-change. It is relevant here to express the remark of V.S. Pritchett:
“Despite the virtues of intelligence and the English gift of drawing from nature, George Eliot was really a frustrated prude, incapable of understanding her own repression, jealous of girls prettier than herself, and sadistic in her treatment.”

Pritchett reads too much the personal element in her novels, which should at least be avoided. To seem up, therefore, the fact remains that George Eliot has her own conception of plot and form of the novel. She presents different fragments therefore, achieving a particular object as she thinks:

“Form, as element of human experience, must begin with perceptions of separateness derived principally from touch (of which the other senses are modification) that things must be recognized as wholes composed of parts of larger whole.”

The plots appear as rambling but they are well-knit and properly shaped. According to George Eliot the “highest form then is the highest organism that is to say, the most varied group relations bound together as a wholeness.”
References


(4) Ibid, P. 98.


(6) Ibid, P. 399.

(7) Ibid, P. 413.

(8) Idem.

(9) Adam Bede, P. 469.


(11) Ibid, P. 68.

(12) Ibid, P. 286.

(13) Ibid, P. 345.

(14) Ibid, P. 349.

(15) Ibid, P. 399.

(16) Ibid, P. 489.
(17) Ibid, P. 579.

(18) Ibid, P. 634.


(22) Ibid, P. 158.


(27) Ibid, P. 591.

(28) Ibid, P. 603.


(30) Ibid, P. 5.

(31) Ibid, P. 212.

(32) Ibid, P. 495.
(33) Ibid. P. 867.


(35) Ibid, P. 309.

(36) Henry James, Daniel Deronda: A Conversation Partial Portraits.

(37) V. S. Pritchett,”The Pangs of others” New statesman, LXX (12 Nor.
    1965), PP. 737-738.

(38) George Eliot “Notes on form in Art” Essays of George Eliot, Thomas

(39) Ibid, P. 433.