CHAPTER-IV
TRAGIC VISION

The term vision derives its inner motifs from Roman and Greek tragic vision. Thus, the tragic vision represents a dramatic representation of crime and punishment. There are the powers of Ate and Nemesys which hover around the actions of the social, moral and religious causation, and breaking the code of morality of the righteous code of human life. Evidently our ready made idea about the reign of justice need revision and fresh formulation. In tragic world “sin” and “crime” are the two aspects which run side by side for the total force of the tragic vision. Again there are two parallel series of terms: crime, punishment, forgiving and sin, damnation, redemption. “Sin” is the taint which infects the rational and moral qualities of a man. Crime is the tainted action and its consequences to others and to the common wealth at large.

The entire fictional world of George Eliot rotates between the two aspects of human thinking: sin and crime. The first pollutes the entire inner system of soul while other affects the life of others, making a disorderliness in society. Is evil, then without a beginning and therefore, without an end? Is it the dark magic of Maya? Is it no more than a temporary mist that clouds the human vision for a time, to disappear presently, revealing the clear sun of truth and felicity? Now, the question arises how can one dispel this veil of ignorance or the havoc that leads to the tragedy of life. So long as the higher knowledge that can alone pierce the dualities and touch transcendence is denied to us, one will be under the pressure of such
terms as sin, crime, punishment, damnation and redemption and forgiving. Prof. Iyengar defines the seed of tragic vision in the following words:

“One of the grandest achievements of all time Aeschylus’s trilogy, Oresteia, is in substance a study of crime and punishment. A crime is an evil act born of sin; and punishment takes the shape of infliction, of proportionate suffering on the evil-doer, such infliction being itself an evil action. But two spurts of evil action do not neatly cancel out each other; they only help to build up a fearful pile of cumulative evil achievements.”

George Eliot stresses forcefully on the ethical concept of retribution. The doctrine of retribution is directly related to the principle of cause and effect. Accordingly, cause is another name for effect in so far as deeds prefigure their appropriate effects. No one can violate his conscience with impunity; it is bound to degrade his character. Hence, the cause of individual tragedy in George Eliot’s fictional world is the degradation of individual as she points out in her letter of 5 May, 1845, written to Charles Bray that “sorrow follows wrong.”

She also exemplifies the truth of cause and effect in Janet’s Repentance when she says that “We reap what we sow.”

Thus, in her novels everything centres round the problem of conduct and trouble starts when her protagonist, misled by the indulgence of self righteousness and wrong notions of life, transgresses the otherwise inviolable laws of nature. Further the fatal repercussions of retributive justice spread in every direction and the reason why this essentially comes
in the novels of George Eliot, Geroge Eliot regards society as a living force and it affects the process of retributive justice, as usual, the cause weaves the structure of multiplicity and pounces upon an individual who easily becomes its prey. Therefore, the effect of the actions of one character harms as it spreads in widening circle touching even those innocent persons who have nothing to do with the perpitration of the deed. In point of fact, all through the protagonists’s terms of suffering “an inward teaching is going on.”(4)

This inward teaching is nothing, but it is a kind of emotional purification which gradually signifies the shtubhvava of human emotion, a psychological process that under goes in the mind of the protagonist. As a result of this experience the sufferer grows capable of inner understanding of the moral cause and the effects there in. In this way, when they are spiritually saved as it were by fire, they find them better fitted for duties arising from social obligations and thus attain to a higher stage of development and this stage represents the higher stage of Tragic Vision. The cause of tragedy in almost all the novels of George Eliot is social retribution - a cause that brings the tragic effect on an individual when she/he breaks the prescribed social/moral code. Adam Bede concerns-”Such general laws as may exist concerning human behaviour and its consequences.”(5)

Adam is the first example of suffering caused by the inevitable working of consequences. Unknowingly first the cause of Hetty’s suffering,
he too finally shares her suffering in his life. The other cause of his suffering lies in his obstinacy. Hetty has hollow and irrational relationship with Arthur. Adam also suffers because of the vanity of Hetty and Arthur. The novelist also presents such kind of example in Adam Bede.

“Nature, that great tragic dramatist, knits us together by bone and muscle, and divides us by the subtler web of our brains, blends yearning and repulsion; and ties up by our heart strings to the being that far us at every moment.”(6)

The linguistic and literary interpretation of the above textual citation brings some apparent contradiction that weave the entire tragic web in Adam Bede, Nature as the great tragic dramatist binds the various threads of society together and at the same it divides each and every individual through “the subtler web... of brains.” The subtler web becomes symbolic of nature or the inborn tendency of man. These inborn tendencies show “yearning” and repulsion- yearning for loveable object and repulsion to despicable object. The cyclic relationship of one does not limit to oneself only, but it goes beyond one’s limit and affects others. This expands the tragic effects in Adam Bede.

In Adam Bede, Hetty, the heroine faces the conflict between her emotions and passions and noble pursuits. Adam Bede represents all the traits of Hay Slope world, where Hetty grows young at the Hall Farm, working in a diary with her aunt Mrs. Poyser. Hall Farm has a symbolic significance for the tragic happenings in Hetty’s life:
“Yes, the house must be inhabited, and we will see by whom: for
imagination is a licensed trespasser. It has no fear of dogs, but may climb
over walls and peep in at windows with impunity. Put your face to one of
the glasspanes in their right hand window: What do you see? A large,
open fire place, with rusty dogs in it, and a bare boarded floor... And what
through the left hand window? Several clothes - horses, a pillion, a spinning
wheel and an old box wide open and stuffed full of coloured rags.” (7)

Here lies a spinning wheel which can spin the inner motivation of a
character. Hetty breaches the norms of Hay Slope society; She prefers the
fulfilment of her lower impulses. She prefers Arthur Donnithrone to Adam
Bede, due to “silly imagination” and “sleeping dreams”. She craves for
“a happy languor”8 with Arthur Donnithrone. This spinning wheel is to
come full circle. Hetty to check her way “Which it isn’t Gods” because we go
“astray and do wrong and bring ourselves to trouble with our fellow man.”9

Hetty knows well that Dinah’s warning is apt. She invites the
impending danger in her life herself as:

“It is our habit to say that while the lower nature commands a complete
view of the lower. But I think the higher nature has to learn this
comprehension as we learn the art of vision, by a good deal of hard
experience, often with bruises and gashes incurred in taking thing up by
the wrong end, and fancying our space wider than it is,” (10)

Her egoism, an impulse to follow “pleasure seeking nature”, brings
her doom. She feels indignation against Dinah’s warning and questions
“Dinah, Why do you come to frighten me”\(^{(11)}\) Hetty, like a simple village girl, does not understand her lower nature. Nor is she able to understand Dinah’s warning of higher nature. She craves for having all that could satisfy her sensory life. She aspires for luxuries more than she deserves. Thus she breaks the code of conduct. In the chapter “Going to the Birthday Feast,” Hetty encourages Arthur for flirtation. She also intends to achieve trivial gains for which she slips from righteousness. Geroge Eliot makes Parson Irwine comment on her Conduct:

“It is too painful to think that she is a woman, with a woman’s destiny before her, a woman spinning in her young ingnorance a light web of folly and vain hopes which may one day close round her and press upon her a rancorous poisoned garment changing all at once her fluttering trivial butterfly sensations into a life of deep human anguish.\(^{(12)}\)

It is the vain hope or “Why should she have cared to have earrings rather than anything else.” because she has natural holes in her ears to fasten them...... like a listening bird.” The animal imagery refers to the deliberate ignnorance of Hetty to get all that she does not have, she is deaf to Dinah’s telling her the reality of life. She flirts with Arthur and gets pregnant. The crisis comes when Hetty receives an information that Arthur has gone leaving her alone to join his regiment. On getting Arthur’s letter in which a refusal is visible for their unity, She feels a sinner for her life in the past. The fine earrings presented to her by Arthur becomes a source of happiness. Once “they are the signs of the lifelong dreariness that was
to follow.” (13) She feels deep anguish but she tries to conceal her plight, which is another cause of suffering in her life, tears roll down from her eyes as she looks into her future but:

“She wiped them away quickly: She must not cry in the day-time: nobody should find out how miserable she was, nobody should know she was disappointed about anything: and the thought that the eyes of her aunt and uncle would be upon her, gave her the self-command which often accompanies a great dread..... they would think her conduct shameful; and the same was torture: that was poor little Hetty’s conscience.” (14)

All the concealment is for the worst, Hetty feels ashamed of her conduct. A fall in conduct breeds tragic life for Hetty. She feels that shame is torture. Through experience, she confessed her sin, She could be absolved. She starts her journey to seek Arthur. She finds two ways to Scotland - one leading by “the hedge row which will, by and by lead her into the road again; the other across the fields which will take her much farther..... Where she will see nobody. She chooses this.” (15)

This road imagery in which Hetty chooses the farther way to loneliness comes close to the modern conception of tragedy where the sinner desires to spend his sinful life in isolation and loneliness to atone for it: All the force of her nature had been concentrated on the one effort of concealment, and “she had shrunk with irresistible dread from every course that could tend towards a betrayal of her miserable secret.” (16)

She marches to Stratford-On-Avon by mistake in choice of the road.
She dreads, not death but life. Since the departure from Windsor five days back, she has been under cover. She makes her choice a second time. Again she marches on a road in search of Arthur. She is still day-dreaming. A constant mischief is brewing in her mind, because.

“She was among the fields and been dreaming of, on a long, narrow pathway leading towards a wood..... After a little while, Hetty started up again, feeling that darkness would soon come on; and she must put off finding the pool till tomorrow.” (17)

She is in constant search of a “pool” (18) but she does not find one. On the way searching Arthur, she gives birth to a child and murders it. She is seen by a man and she is arrested. The prison scene marks the climax of the tragedy. In prison, Hetty is not alone to suffer the punishment, but she provides suffering to all those who love her as;

“Men’s lives are as thoroughly blended with each other as the air they breathe; spreads as necessarily as disease.” (19)

Dinah visits Hetty in prison and consoles her. Adam, Mr. & Mrs. Poyser also arrives at the prison. They all suffer the pangs of Hetty’s sorrow. Dinah consoles her by saying:

“Hetty, you are shutting up your soul against Him by trying to hide the truth. God’s love and mercy can overcome all things - our ignorance and weak-ness, 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. O, God, save me,
make me pure from sin." (20)

Thus she undegoes a constant process of soul nurture and gets the highest purity of soul, adopting human love and fellow feelings as her religion. This gives better prospects for the deliverance of her sinful and wicked life. Hetty feels “My heart is hard yet the soul invoking advice of Dinah makes her cry. I will speak, I will tell... I won’t hide it more.” (21) In the end, she confesses her guilt which relieves her from all sufferings:

“I thought perhaps it would not 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.” (22)

The above tragic analysis of Adam Bede can be summed up in the words of Parson Irwine:

“There is no sort of wrong deed of which a man can bear the punishment alone...... Men’s lives are as throughly blended with each other as the air they breath; evil spreads as necessarily as disease.”(23)

An individual is not liable for an individual punishment; he spreads the germs of sin the same way as the infectious disease spreads them and affects others. The final self- schooling after tragic suffering gives a moral lesson to Hetty and she is regenerated being.

‘The Mill on the Floss’ brings into touch Gerege Eliot’s concept of irreversible law of retribution. Gerege Eliot’s concept of the working of
this force of retribution in human life is patiently expressed even in her maiden fictional attempt, The Scenes of Clerical life. Maggie with her inborn qualities of goodness, resolves to master her own weaker passions; but she even falls prey to many traumatic experiences inspite of her goodness. Jerome Thalle judge her as “a very confused young woman who never thinks of consequences until after she has acted and then it overwhelmed by extravagant self-accusation.”

Maggie’s minded can be personified with a divided house which is meant for two aspects: her own self-willed world and its relatedness to others. In other words the self-indulgent behaviour of Maggie does not spare any room for other. She has got so many relations such as Philip Wakem, Stephen Guest and Lucy. Moreover, there is one more relationship - the relationship of the water of the river with Maggie. This is that kind of relationship which weaves the inner threads of Maggie’s tragedy:

“Ripple flows with a lively current into the Floss. How lovely, the little river is with its dark changing wavelets! It seems to me like a living companion while I wander along the bank and listen to its low placed voice, as to the voice of one who is deaf and loving. I remember those large dipping willows. I remember the stone bridge.”

The imagery of the flowing “ripple” is linked with “a lively current,” “living companion.” This companion always follows each and every movement of Maggie Tulliver: As the river shows the waywardness in its flowing current, Maggie is also guided by nothing but “the wayward choice
of her own passions.”

“In this matter, she is as pure as the river is, Maggie, an egoist, is also disillusioned through the process of day-dreaming.” She rebelled against the St. Ogg’s society in which she passes her childhood and attains the age of a young lady. The Mill on the river Floss stands in the town of St. Ogg’s, it symbolizes certain norms of conduct and breaking those norms will mean incurring sufferings. The town of St. Ogg’s carries its importance to Tulliver’s family because a Mill owned by Mr. Tulliver is situated in this town:

“On this mighty tide the black ships - laden with the fresh scented - fir - planks with round sacks of oil bearing seed, or with the dark, glitter of coal- are born along to the town of St. Ogg’s which shows its aged, fluted red roofs and the brood nables of its wharves between the low wooded hill and lovely the little river is..... like a living companion.”

Certainly it is a living companion as it determines the future destiny of Tulliver’s family. The crisis in the family arises when the Mill is decreed by Lawyer Wakem. Tulliver’s family faces an economic crisis. Maggie making adolescent love with Wakem, the son of Lawyer Wakem, is so deeply hurt that she feels some “experience of struggle of conflict between the inward impulse and outward fact, which is the lot of every imaginative and passionate nature.”

Passionate and imaginative as she is, she feels rebellious for the poor lot of her family. Her constant strife accompanied with passionate
egoism finds its way in open rebellion:

"She rebelled against her lot, she fainted under its loneliness, and fits even of anger and hated towards her father and mother, who were so unlike what she would have them to be towards. Tom, who checked 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. Then her brain would be busy with wild romances of a flight from home in search of something less sordid and dreamy."^{30}

She thinks to become a demon...... She also thinks to have wild romances. Thus the feelings of a demon, the feelings for wild romance and an inner indignation brew in her mind. She is mentally prepared to stoop down to something "less sordid and dreary."^{31} Amidst such fluctuating state of her mind, she happens to meet Philip Wakem, her lover of an adolescent age and she refuses to meet him further. Their meeting could be possible in secrecy. She was afraid of being discovered in something that "if discovered must cause anger and pain and that the admission of anything so near doubtless would act as a spiritual blight."^{32} George Eliot describes her condition as:

"Character, says Novalis in one of his questionable aphorism is destiny. Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, was speculative and irresolute and we have a great tragedy in consequences, Maggie herself was ceasing to think, with her eager prefiguring imagination of her future lot; and her anxiety
about her first interview with Philip was loosing its predominance."

The tragedy of Maggie like that of Prince of Denmark Hamlet, happens due to her speculative and irresolute nature. Maggie, like Hamlet shows some signs of speculation and irresolution before coming to final catastrophe. She is ceasing to think. She comes to a party in her cousin Lucy’s house. She in her first interview with Stephen Guest, a village dandy, betrothed to her cousin Lucy, is attracted towards him; she wants to follow the ceaseless flights of her imagination. Though she is still true when she confesses Lucy to marry Philip yet she can not separate herself from her brother.

Maggie at first denies to dance with Stephen Guest but after some time she agrees to dance with him, Through the touch of Maggie an impulse seized on Stephen but Maggie on the next movement keeps herself away and “glared at him like a wounded war-goddess quivering with rage and humiliation.”(34) There goes a ceaseless war between good and evil and between heart and soul in Maggie. She is not as yet prepared solely to flirt with Stephen Guest because she feels a horrible punishment was come upon her for the sin of allowing a moment’s happiness that was treachery to Lucy, to Philip, to her own better soul.”(35)

Philip and Lucy’s absence gives a chance to Maggie to flirt with Stephen Gust. It is impossible for Philip to resist the conviction that “there was some mutual consciousness between Stephen and Maggie.”(36) Stephen flirts with Maggie in response. Now Maggie agrees to boat with Stephen, Maggie after four hours in flirtation on the boat resists the passionate
demand of Stephen;

"Let me go, she said in an agitated tone, flashing an indignant look at him, and trying to get hands free, you have wanted to deprive me of any choice, you know we were come too far you have dared to take advantange of my thoughtlessness. It is unmanly to bring me into such a position."[37]

Maggie accepts her condition of "thoughtlessness — a mental state of too much speculation, she allows Stephen for her momentary passions, and she knows it. Now she can not get rid of the consequence. The indignant fire of her eyes is quenched, She begins to look at Stephen Guest with timid distress - a distress which arises due to her own passionate longings for human weaknesses. She is so much tormented by that "dreamy gliding in the boat, which had lasted for four hours and had brought some weariness and exhaustion - the recoil of her fatigue sensations."[38]

After her return she sleeps and sees a suggestive dream which permanently relieves all her suffering.

"She was in a boat on the wide water with Stephen and in the gathering darkness something like a star appeared that grew and grew like the Virgin seated in St. Ogg's boat, and it came nearer and nearer, till they saw the Virgin was Lucy and the boatman was Philip, no not Philip, but her brother, who rowed past without looking at her and their own boat turned over with the movement and they began to sink."[39]

She dreams in which she realizes her duties towards St. Ogg's society, towards Lucy, towards Philip and towards her brother, Tom.
Although she perceives a movement and vision, "soon the whole terrible truth urged itself upon her." Stephen is no more temptation. She is pure by heart. She realizes her duties. After the perception and realization of her conscience, she returns to St. Ogg's where Dr. Kenn passes his judgement on behalf of St. Ogg's society. Maggie was discarded because her affairs with Stephen Guest have most contemptible kind. She was in the words of Dr. Keen, "the world's wife." And therefore she should leave St. Ogg's society, for maintaining its purity. Maggie is in deep suffering as she cries: "Oh, I do-I begin to see, said Maggie unable to repress this utterance of her recent pain. I know I shall be insulted: I shall be thought worse than I am."

She learns after intense suffering that moral good lies in performing duties and creating a wide fellow feeling with all that is human. Intent upon saving the life of common brethren from the havoc of the flood, she invites death by sailing on the river in flood:

"For the first time Maggie's heart began to beat in an agony of dread. She sat helpless - dimly conscious that she was being floated along more intensely conscious of the anticipated clash. But the horror was transient; it passed away before the oncoming warehouse of St. Ogg's."

River as a companion teaches Maggie the lesson of social obligation. She errs many times, but her errors are nullified when she meet her death through the waters of the River Floss. The community works its retribution on Maggie for breaking its laws but in death Tom and Maggie became part of the long river of tradition "of human love and pain, hope and struggle,
that flows into the future with an ever increasing benificent power.” ¹¹

The theme of social retribution becomes the leitmotif for weaving the tragic scene in Silas Marner. In the opinion of Fredc. Thomson, Silas Marner is the first unique “study of alienation anticipating the subtler, more complex treatments of the theme in such characters as Harold Transome and Dorothea Brooke.” ¹⁴⁵

Showing Silas in alienation and isolation from the rest of the society of Lanternyard, George Eliot makes him a protagonist who shows the contemporary issue of psychology. Moreover she has a foresight for weaving new thread which come to full swing in the tragic life of Harold Transome and Dorothea Brooke. From the very beginnig of the novel, Silas is eager and innocent in social affairs, he has been shown as a defenceless and trustworthy man. Virtuous by nature as Silas is, he is easily betrayed by William Dane, his childhood friend. In this way, he comes in the category of other protagonists such as Adam Bede and Maggie Tulliver. In the end there was nothing in his life. He is left alone with his earned gold. In this way Silas is completely cut off from the sustaining sources of life in society and in the church for which he never cared too much after being robbed of his real property. Thus Silas becomes a victim of injustice. He can not be exonerated for his moral lapse in at once rejecting and renouncing his native place to which he was devotedly attached. George Eliot wrote to John Blackwood on 24 February 1861, that Silas Marner is “intended to set in a strong light the remedial influences of pure natural
human relations. The Nemesis is very mild one. Silas Marner's is a case of a person who moves from desperation to self-illumination. He is regenerated through human love and fellow feeling.\textsuperscript{46}

He brings his own tragedy by following his choice of future action. Having an exemplary life and an ardent faith, Silas passes from life of innocence to a life of experince. He is credulous. His friend William Dane puts the charge of theft of church property on him. He also robs him of his betrothed Sarah. These events shake his faith; he keeps himself aloof from the company of his fellow beings. He loses faith in God; his belief is that "there is no just God that governs the earth righteously, but a God of lies that bears witness against the innocent."\textsuperscript{47}

His innocence and his credulity are the root causes of his miseries:

"Silas knelt with his brethren relying on his own innocence being certified by immediate divine interference but feeling that there was sorrow and mourning behind for him even then that his trust in man had been cruelly bruised. He was solemnly suspended from church membership and called upon to render up the stolen money."\textsuperscript{48}

Amidst such suffering and sorrows, he is so much disillusioned that he leaves Lanternyard and arrives at Raveloe to lead a solitary life, All alone, he works on loom. He is now cut off from the society in which he is rooted, He weaves like an insect, His heart aches:

"Minds that have been unhinged from their old faith and love, have perhaps sought this Lethean influence of exile, in which the past becomes
dreamy because it is linked with no memories..... Nothing could be more unlike his native town, set within sight of the wide spread hill-sides than this low wooded region, where he felt hidden even from the heavens and hedge-rows."\(^{(49)}\)

A fear-psychosis is inherent in his mind as he always keeps himself cut off from the society- a cause for his intense suffering. He hoards money and feels elated in himself when he counts the hoarded gold guineas. He further faces a cruel chance. The young son of Squire Dustan in a fit of his drunkeness steals all the hoarded gold of Silas and hides in a pit near the hut of Silas Marner. Silas feels hurt after this theft; but he still has hope of human love. He hopes that some day, he will get his lost treasure back. Dolly Winthrope finds Silas sad, yet she does not find him totally a lovesick man. She observes that,

"The fountain of human love and divine faith had not yet been unlocked his soul was still the shrunken rivulet, with only this difference that its little groove of sand was blocked up, and it wandered confusedly aganist dark obstruction."\(^{(50)}\)

George Eliot observes the possibility of regeneration in the heart of Silas, She finds him still craving for human love and sympathy. His heart is not dry, but it is like "shrunken rivult." The only thing required is to flow a current of water in it. The flow of water comes when Molly Farren, the first wife of Goldfrey Cass, dies near the hut of Silas leaving her female baby to an unknown fate. This child becomes a flowing current of
the shrunken rivulet of Silas’s heart. Finding this child, Silas is linked with his deserted past and feels exhilarated in the present:

“It was very much like his sister. Silas sank into his chair powerless, under the double presence of an explicable and hurrying influx of memories...... he had never been beyond the door. But along with that question, and almost thrusting it away, there was a vision of the old home and the old streets leading to lanternyard and within that vision another of the thoughts which had been present with him is those far off scenes.”(51)

The replacement of his lost gold by this golden haired child, Eppie and his union with Dolly Winthrope for proper nourishment of this child bring a new dawn for him. Feeling of reconciliation with society thrills him. He realizes that the fulfilment of life can be had through human love and fellow feelings. This little child brings redemption of the suffering soul of Silas Marner. Eppie links him;

“Once more with the whole world. There was love between him and the child that blent them into one, and there was love between the child and the world.”(52)

As such Silas is emotionally healed of his fear psychosis. He submerges his selfish motives to a wider vision of society. He is thus, regenerated by the touch of human love and fellow feelings. It is through social retribution, the nemesis works out in this novels. All the agony and embarrassment come to Godfrey to the ultimate end of his regeneration. Through his suffering, Godfrey had an inward teaching and felt convinced
of the unrelenting power of retribution believing that consequences of evil deeds come like the orderly sequence by which the seed brings forth a crop after its kind. With this realization Godfrey found himself a chastened man and as if to make amends for whatever lapses, Godfrey and his wife went to the weaver with the request that Eppie may be reclaimed to them. This way Godfrey desires to do some parental duty by the child and thereby “retrieve his error as far as the time was left to him.”\(^{(53)}\)

But Eppie does not yield before Godfrey and finally follows her fostering father Silas.

Law of social justice and retribution creates the theory of cause and effect in Romola, and this theory of cause and effect becomes the main reason for the tragic reflections in this novel; Robert Speaight observes that in this novel George Eliot’s theory of “cause and consequences has been perfectly realized.”\(^{(54)}\)

George Eliot’s theory of cause & effect is enacted successfully through the character of Romola. A beautiful, sensitive and high minded young girl of Florentine distinguishes herself from the herd of her sex. But she hardly presents an ideal model of feminity. Born and brought up in an atmosphere of fake humanism, she hardly witnesses the traits of high will power, she is a lady who shows intense faith in common weal. The novelist sums up the virtue of this young girl in a very few words:

“Romola’s ardour had been concentrated in her affection.”\(^{(55)}\)

In spite of all these qualities of an innocent girl, Romola is swayed by
selfish motives. She is easily succumbed to the covetousness when Tito enquires about the happiness of a nymph. As a selfish lady, she responds negatively, but confesses that she has “dreamed it often” in his presence.

Tito is introduced to Romola by Nello, a barber, when he is saved from a shipwreck. Before deceiving Romola, there is constant inner struggle in mind whether he should be true to his foster-father, Baldassarre and pay ransom for his release from the custody or not. He could sell the jewels of Baldassarre and use them for his ransom. He realizes the baseness of his conduct and hopes that “the precise facts of his conduct should not remain forever concealed.”

Tito’s source of tragedy lies in the clash of his inward and outward life. Inwardly, he feels a necessity for the search of his father; but outwardly he tries to live luxuriously. Treachery is deeper rooted in his blood; it propels him to an inward flux. It makes him suppose that “his father was dead or that at least search was hopeless.”

As a measure of wish fulfilment he chooses to live in a fool’s paradise of self-deception. He marries Romola although he has illicit relations with a peasant girl, Tessa. He desert her too. Then he comes to Bardo, Romola’s father and deceives him:

“This happiness was too strong to be marred by the sense that Romola was deceived in him; nay, he could only rejoice in her delusion; for after all concealment had been wisdom. The only thing he could regret was his needless dread if, indeed, the dread had not been worth suffering for the
sake of this sudden rapture.”

He thus marries Romola and after his marriage, he sells the library of Bardo, Romola’s father. Then there is the turn of the tide. Amidst such happy achievements, Tito comes to know that Baldassarre, his foster father, is alive and staying in Florence, knowing this fact Tito feels as if a serpent had begun to coil round his limbs. He knows that Baldassarre will not rest until he crushes his prey. Still there remains a hope for Tito to accept his guilt and to beg pardon. This will save him from being crushed for his deliberate evil deeds. But Tito-

“Never thought of that the repentance which cuts off all moorings to evil, demands something more than selfish fears. He had no sense and safety in truth; the only strength he trusted to lay in his ingenuity and his dissimulation. Now that the first shock, which had called up the traitorous signs of fear, was well part, he hoped to be prepared for all emergencies by cool deceit and defensive armour.”

He feels what is right but coil of his evil action reaches a point from where Tito finds it impossible to come back again to normalcy of his choice. Therefore, he does not admit to Romola even his illicit relations with Tessa. Nor has he a moral courage to face his lost father though he knows that his father is in Florence. Tito’s practice of deception to Romola comes to light when he asks Romola to allow him to sell the library of Bardo. After this narrow mindedness of Tito, Romola comes to know the treachery of Tito against Tessa. She is so much bewildered that she gives her
wedding ring back to Tito and tries to run away from Florence. Thus Tito deliberately piles wrong actions which become his cruel fate. Tito still had a chance to accept his godfather and repent for his past but he does not know any repentance. He denies Baldassarre’s claim on his foster fatherhood and says to Messer Bernardo “I believe this man is mad. I did not recognize him the first time he encountered me in Florence, but I know now that he is the servant who years ago accompanied me and my father to Greece and was dismissed on account of misdemeanours.”

Now the wheel has come full circle. He has to drink the cup of his deservings to the lees. He deceives Tessa and she does not accompany him in his trouble. He deceives Baldassarre and Baldassarre becomes an enemy to him and he becomes the cause of Tito’s death. Tito deceives even noble and tender-hearted Romola and she breaks her relationship with him as a result of an irreversible change.

“Tito, my love for you is dead and therefore so far as I was yours I too am dead. Do not try to put in force any laws for the sake of fetching me back: that would bring you no happiness. The Romola you married can never return. If you supposed them to be words of transient anger, you will know that they were sign of an irreversible change.”

Thus Tito stands exposed to the world and to his own self. He remembers his past. He is mentally prepared to face his death because it is death which can relieve him of his hideous past, and Baldassarre kills him in a fit of fury.
Almost in every character of George Eliot, there comes a gradual awakening through sufferings. In the later stage of her life, it becomes evident that “there was a placidity in Romola’s face which had never belonged to it in youth” she finally realizes the goal of life and understands narrow boundaries of selfishness. Thus she dispels the darkness from her life and comes to the final way that leads her to the brightening way of social obligations.

Social retribution once again forms for the nuclei even in George Eliot’s Felix Holt. The head line of the chapter XLVII of the novel brings forth the Law of Retribution and the theory of Karma. “The devil tempts us not, it is we tempt him, beckoning his skill with opportunity”. This citation becomes indicative of two things: That suffering and misfortune are not subjected to any fashion of a bolt from the blue but these are the essential outcome of one’s own deeds. They rather represent the theory of Karma which professes that every one has to meet the result of higher doings in life. For example, right from her first appearance on the scene of the novel, Mrs. Transome is seen struggling for good ends.

Even at her fifty, she has a charming beauty and she also desires to make the world of her own convenience. As a young girl she has been regarded “wonderfully clever and accomplished” and just for the sake of her family she leads “the monotonous narrowing life”.

She has been let down in society because of her weak and disabled husband. Thus she has become prey to the complex of standing out as a
high born lady proudly proclaiming that her family is as good as anybody else's. The novel presents the genealogical defect of Harold Transome Court, the protagonist, Mrs. Transome Court has weak and an insect like husband who is unable to look after the affairs of the estate of Transome Court. She had a feeble son by her husbands who died after sometime. She develops liaison with her family lawyer Jermyn and has a son, Harold Transome. Harold's return after fifteen years of higher studies gives thrills of unprecedented joy to Mrs. Transome Court:

"She sat still quivering and listening, her lips became pale, her hands were cold and trembling. Was her son really coming? She was going to reap an assured joy to feel that the doubtful deeds of her life were justified by the result, since a kind providence had sanctioned them? To be no longer tacitly pitied by her neighbours for her lack of money, her imbecile husband, her graceless, eldest born and the lonliness of her life; but to have at her side but a rich, clever, possibly a tender son."(64)

And yet she is not happy due to fear of her past illicit relations with lawyer Jermyn, Harold comes and he behaves in opposition to the wishes of Mrs. Transome Court. Mrs. Transome Court desires that Harold should behave politely with lawyer Jermyn. Harold is an egoist, Jermyn himself is an egoist and thus two egoists meet to quarrel with result there begins a constant strife between Harold Transome and lawyer Jermyn. The battle field of this strife is the heart of Mrs. Transome Court.

The tragedy of Mrs. Transome Court attains its climax when Felix
Holt is arrested for the murder of a constable and Esther’s identity as the real heiress to Transome estate is revealed. Esther comes to inherit the estate to Transome and leaves it in a few days. Though Harold begins to love her because loving her means inheriting the estate of Transome Court, yet Esther refuses to stay there. Meanwhile, lawyer Jermyn threatens Mrs. Transome for the old behaviour of Harold. Jermyn realizes the mistake committed in his derogatory remark he has passed upon Mrs. Transome Court. He departs and feels ashamed, Yet his remarks reach the nadir of selfishness:

“And a man may reach a point in his life in which his impulses are not distinguished from those of hunted brute by any capability of scruples, our selfishness is so robust and many clutching, that well encouraged, it easily devours all sustenance away from our poor little scruples.”\(^{(65)}\)

An animal impulse overpowers him. He says to Harold in a grating voice; I am your father..... He turned them to the same face in the glass with his own beside it and saw the hated fatherhood reasserted.”\(^{(66)}\)

Harold at once arrives to his mother. His eyes were unusual and expressed the depth of his emotions. He passes a moment and then asks “Who is my father? He has said-said it before others that he is my father.”\(^{(67)}\)

She is helpless and her son runs away from her and leaves her. She could embrace even harder punishment, if her son were to sympathize with her wounds. She feels God had not pity else her son could not have been so hard. What dreary future was there after this dreary past. She is
motionless, she is reticent. And she is motiveless. Her life was meaningless as she did not have the love of her son. Her heart is very heavy, when Esther suddenly appears.

“She has never yet in her life asked for compassion, had never thrown herself in faith on an unpreferred love. And she might have gone on pacing the corridor like an uneasy spirit without a goal, if Esther’s thought leaping towards her, had not saved her from the need to ask admission”.

Esther resigns all her claim on the estate of Transome Court. She also persuades Harold to be sympathetic to his ailing mother. Thus, her liaison with Jermyn corrupts her life. Corrupting her life, this liaison affects and corrupts the life of others too. The sin of one becomes the punishment of others. Mrs. Transome suffers incessantly because of her past misdeeds which she has taken as a young girl. In the early stages, Mrs. Transome felt hurt when she had to lose her tight dignity in talking to others, so much so that the very assurance of loyalty by her personal servant becomes a source of envy. Finally the old hardened lady renounces her rigidity and comes to see that to fulfill, “the need of someone else in the only sure way of ful-filling one’s own”.

George Eliot has analysed the cause of tragic reflections through the theme of social retribution in her next novel the Middle March. The novelist through the characters of Dorothea and Bulstrode laid out to show the gradual action of ordinary causes rather than exceptional ones in the direction of punishment that flows from lapses. Right from girlhood,
Dorothea appears on the line of puritanism and yet she is full of noble intentions in her life. Her attitude is reflected in the choice of her husband. She hardly shows eroticism in her choice. Besides Dorothea was “usually spoken of as being remarkably clever.”(70) but in point of fact, She lacks the practical wisdom and this is the reason why she crops up the seeds of suffering in her life.

As an ideal girl she desires to know “the truth of life”(71) by following the extremes of life. In this novel George Eliot shows how a private life must work in unison with a wider public life. Lydgate, a foreigner, comes to Middle March for serving the people and for trying medical discoveries. He is a young man full of vanity. He has to live among the common people of Middle March and to serve them for the new medical reforms. The newness of his medical practice is against the established code of Middle March world. It is the beginning of the trouble. He is one against indifferent lots of people:

“But any one watching keenly the stealthy convergence of human lots, sees a slow preparation of effects from one life to another which tells like calculated irony on the indifference or the frozen stare with which we look at our unintroduced neighbour. Destiny stands by sarcastic with our dramatis personae folded in her hand.” (72)

Lydgate has decided to settle in this old provincial society, this society has its norms and has decided the fate of many new comers. Those who shift the bundaries of social intercourse and begetting “new
consciousness of inter dependence.” Lydgate is in all respects a goodman, his original thinking becomes a wonder in this primitive society.

He is caught in a vicious circle: his egoism changes in his feeling of eroticism. He considers women as good as furniture. His marriage with Rosamond Vincy, the daughter of the Mayor of ‘Middlemarch’, is the fruition of his erotic pursuits. Rosamond is an egoist herself. She is hardly embarrassed by any inner complexity.

This marriage with Rosamond become a hard destiny of Lydgate. For the whims of Rosamond, Lydgate is always busy with earning labouriously to fulfill her personal desires. Rosamond represents an all around destruction of Dr. Lydgate. Before long, his dream is broken. He proceeds towards an alienation from the society of Middle March. Other new comers threaten the professional dignity of Lydgate. Mr. Bulstrode is there and is preparing the plan for establishing a new Hospital. A rumour spreads at Middle March that Dr. Lydgate was an arrogant young fellow and yet ready for the sake of ultimately “Predominating to show a crawling subservience to Bulstrode”.(73)

Lydgate becomes poorer day after day, he is unable to recoup the financial deficit of his house. His wife Rosamond “accustomed from her childhood to an extravagant household”(74) thinks that good house keeping consist in having the best of everything. Lydgate, who is an honest practitioner and helps the poor by giving cheap medicines, finds it difficult to satisfy the whims of his wife. Anxiety sits heavy on his heart. Only his
misery finds an outlet in a question and in a statement spoken in utter despondency “would she kill me because I wearied her? and then it is the way with all women”.

As a result of his ignominy, Lydgate is discarded by Middle March society though at this juncture Dorothea enters the matrimonial ties just for the sake of her idealistic approch towards life. Similarly, She had little sense of the exigencies of the practical world. The total impression one forms is that George Eliot portrays Dorothea on the idealistic pattern. The Middle March society and even her close relations felt that by marrying Ladislaw, Dorothea had fulfilled her youthful dreams. Ever after Dorothea led a life full of beneficial activity as she had always craved for and come to be “a perfect woman.”\(^{(75)}\) as Ladislaw had seen her much earlier. However, it took her quite sometime before she could deserve this rating.

George Eliot analyses in detail the retributive law of social justice in her last novel ‘Daniel Deronda’. Gwendolen is a middle class young girl, has charming wit and beauty. She is pet and the pride of her beauty. As a young girl, she possesses some weaknesses too. Her first weakness consists in her ambition even at the cost of her social obligations. Similarly, Gwendolen as an egoist and a narcissus character, has many confusing ideas. “What she was clear upon was, that she did not wish to lead the same sort of life as ordinary young ladies did.”\(^{(76)}\)

Gwendolen has no fortune but she expects to marry someone who
can give her the position. In this respect Gwendolen may be compared with a girl “who can not perceive herself as anything else than a lady, or as in any position which would lack the tribute of respect”.(77)

Gwendolen is no doubt heartless and yet she is positively selfish. She has also the jealousy of a woman. She assumes that the whole world lies for her personal benefit.

Gwendolen is an egoist who wants a life of complete freedom, she is not a woman who desires to belie her separate existence other than a wife. Her tragic suffering starts with the economic downfall of her family. Mrs. Devilow, her mother, writes to her-

“In any case you were to come home at the end of September and I must now entreat you to return as quickly as possible, for if you spent all your money, it would be out of my power to send you any more.”(78)

This economic downfall shatters all her dreams, she is now in no choice but to marry either Hanleigh Mallinger Grandcourt or to stay at Swayer’s cottage. Ultimately Gwendolen is ready to accept the proposal of her marriage with Grandcourt. Mr. Grandcourt has illicit relations with another woman Lydia Glasher. He has children from Miss Lydia Glasher. Gwendolen knows this secret marriage of Mr. Grandcourt. But once she gambled on the gambling table, she now gambles in the choice of her marriage. She gives a thought to her future prospects:

“That unhappy faced woman and her childern kept repeating themselves in her imagination like the clinging memory of a disgrace and
gradually obliterated all other thought. Her long wakefulness seemed a
delirium; a faint, faint light penetrated beside the window-curtain; the
chillness increased. She could bear it no longer and cried, Mamma.”

Before she marries, she is aware of her fate. She knowingly commits
an ethical crime. She breaks her promise to Lydia Glasher and mars a
chance for Lydia to be a legal wife of Mr. Grandcourt. She has erred and
according to George Eliot’s law, She must have convulsive retribution.
Gwendolen opens the box of Jewels and find a letter in it, she reads it and
finds, “You had your warning. You have chosen to injure me and my
children. You will have your punishment, I desire it with all my soul.”

Gwendolen “Screamed again and again with hysterical violence,
was it a fit of madness.” Hysterical violence of Gwendolen is the secret
of the realization of her fault. She gives up her narrow vision. She hates
her husband, but she does not become an object of our sympathy. She is
herself the agent of all her sufferings. She leans upon the Deronda for her
moral guidance. Once she knew no fear, now she is afraid of herself.
Gradually, Gwendolen develops such a hatred and a fear of Grandcourt
as she wishes him to die. Deronda only advises her in a disinterested
way. She is in her helplessness:

“This hidden helplessness gave fresh force to the hold Deronda had
from the first taken on her mind as one who had an unknown standard by
which he judged her. Had he someway looking at things which might be a
new footing for her an inward safeguard against possible events which she
dreaded as stored-up retribution."(82)

Gwendolen sees Grandcourt’s dead face everywhere. One day when Gwendolen accompanies Grandcourt in a sail boat, he goes over board and he is not able to swim and dies in this sail boat accident, Gwendolen before the death of her husband had wished him to die. And now he dies. Though Gwendolen is not reponsible for his going overboard, she has only failed to throw him the rope that was available with her. She feels this act as crime- the crime of murdering her husband. This guilt weighs heavily on her soul. She attains a stage of a confessor. She has undergone sufferings and realizes like the modern tragic protagonist herself-deluding soul. Unlike, Derothea Brooke in Middle March, She is not idealized for her suffering, but she is left alone. She is alone not for any teaching and she stands alone for the repentance of her past. She experiences her life and she is prepared for a peaceful melancholy which comes from the renunciation of selfish motives in life, and leading a life for others. George Eliot’s remark on a general nature sums up the tragedy in such a case:

"Those who have a self-knowledge prompting such self accusation as Hamlet’s, can understand this habitual feeling of rescue. And it was felt by Gwendolen as she lived through and through again the terrible history of her temptation, from their first from of illusory self-pleasing when she struggled away from the hold of conscience."(83)

Thus Gwendolen suffers and through her suffering experience, she learns the call of her conscience. She is helpless in the crisis of her life and her helplessness
creates in her a strength to face life-to face it boldly for the suffering of other.

In the light of our study, we find out that first there is a uniformity in the tragic scheme of George Eliot. A typical George Eliot’s tragic story is a revelation of personal egoism leading first to convulsive retribution. Secondly, the tragic flaw is invariably a breach of some code of morality generally speaking the arrogance of an individual selfish norms of social behaviour is foredoomed to end tragically.

Thirdly, intense suffering and not death marks the catastrophe in these tragedies: Death is in The Mill on the Floss, Adam Bade, Romola, Daniel Deronda the terminus as it is in the conventional tragedy. But in Felix Holt, as it is in Silas Marner and Middle March, the tragic protagonists are allowed to live.

Fourthly, Since George Eliot’s tragic concept involves moral issues, the conflict mostly is inward. Even villains have visitation of good. The erring tragic protagonists essentially good are shown with deadly strife with their evil egoistical and self indulgent nature.

Gwendolen invites suffering because of her wrong doing and fallacious thinking. Edward Dowden thinks that Gwendolen is not regenerated “Until her soul is repeased from bond and forfeiture”\(^\text{[84]}\)

Her bitter experience infact proves a blessings in disguise because it awakens in her a desire for a purer life. Before this, She also realizes the moral and spiritual bonds towards the society she belongs to. Her self submerges and becomes ready for the wider social cause.
Reference


(3) Janet’s Repentance, P.291.


(7) Adam Bede PP. 74-75.

(8) Ibid. P.99.

(9) Ibid. P. 149.

(10) Idem.

(11) Ibid, P. 150.


(13) Ibid, P. 198

(14) Ibid, P. 298

(15) Ibid, P. 323.

(16) Ibid, P. 324.
(17) Ibid, P. 342

(18) Water imagery in George Eliot like T.S Eliot signifies the spiritual regeneration (see infra PP. 130-151)

(19) Adam Bede. P. 375.

(20) Ibid, P. 397

(21) Ibid, P. 399.

(22) Idem.

(23) Adam Bede. P. 407.


(26) Geroge Eliot, The Mill on the Floss, P. 49


(29) Ibid, P. 349.

(30) Ibid, P. 349


(33) Ibid, P.P. 488-89.

(34) Ibid, P. 498.

(35) Ibid, P. 538.

(36) Ibid, P. 562.

(37) Ibid, P. 567.

(38) Ibid, P. 567.

(39) Ibid, P. 573.

(40) Ibid, P. 573.

(41) Ibid, P. 599.

(42) Ibid, P. 605.

(43) Ibid, P. 634.


(48) Ibid, P. 16.

(49) Ibid, P. 18-19
(50) Ibid, P. 121.

(51) Silas Marner. P. 158.

(52) Ibid, P. 187.

(53) Silas Marner. P. 228.


(55) Ramola. P. 240.

(56) Ramola. P. 151.

(57) Ibid, P. 152.

(58) Ibid, P. 234.

(59) Ibid, P. 1287-288

(60) Ibid, P. 422.

(61) Ibid, P. 398.

(62) Ramola. P. 564.


(64) Ibid, P. 89.

(65) Ibid, P. 520.

(66) Ibid, P. 580.

(67) Ibid, P. 583.

(68) Ibid, P. 596.

(70) Middle March P. il.

(71) Ibid, P. 4

(72) Middle March, op. cit P. 97.

(73) Ibid, P. 483.

(74) Ibid, P. 628

(75) Ibid, P. 5

(76) George Eliot, Daniel Deronda, P. 3

(77) George Eliot, Daniel Deronda, P. 44

(78) Ibid, P. 43

(79) Ibid, P. 385

(80) Ibid, P. 406.

(81) Ibid, P. 425.

(82) Ibid, P. 707.

(83) Ibid, P. 866.

(84) Edward Dowden: “Daniel Deronda.” Contemporary Review, XXIX

(Feb. 1877) P. 349.