APPENDIX

REFERENCE GUIDE TO GEORGE ELIOT'S
CONCEPT OF DESTINY
...that idea of duty, that recognition of something to be lived for beyond the mere satisfaction of self, ... is to the moral life what the addition of a great central ganglion is to animal life.

(SCL, 339)

Blessed influence of one true loving human soul on another! Not calculable by algebra, not deducible by logic, but mysterious, effectual, mighty as the hidden process by which the tiny seed is quickened, and bursts forth into tall stem and broad leaf, and gloving tasselled flower .... they shake us like a passion, and we are drawn after them with gentle compulsion, as flame is drawn to flame.

(SCL, 393-94)

There are unseen elements which often frustrate our wisest calculations — which raise up the sufferer from the edge of the grave, contradicting the prophecies of the clear sighted physician, and fulfilling the blind clinging hopes of affection; such unseen elements Mr. Tryan called the Divine Will, and filled up the margin of ignorance which surrounds all our knowledge with the feelings of trust and resignation. Perhaps the profoundest philosophy could hardly fill it up better.

(SCL, 405-06)

Consequences are unpitying. Our deeds carry their terrible consequences, quite apart from any fluctuations that went before — consequences that are hardly ever confined to ourselves. And it is best to fix our minds on that certainty, instead of considering what may be the elements of excuse for us.

(AB, 160)

We are children of a large family and must learn, as such children do, not to expect that our hurts will be made much of — to be content with little nurture and caressing, and help each other the more.

(AB, 276)
Our deeds determine us as much as we determine our deeds. 

.... There is a terrible coercion in our deeds which may first turn the honest man into a deceiver and then reconcile him to the change; for this reason — that the second wrong presents itself to him in the guise of the only practicable right.

(AB, 295)

Deep, unspeakable suffering may well be called a baptism, a regeneration, the initiation into a new state .... Doubtless, a great anguish may do the work of years and we may come out from that baptism with a soul full of new awe and new pity.

(AB, 402-403)

.... that new sense which is the gift of sorrow — that susceptibility to the bare offices of humanity which raises them into a bond of loving fellowship, as to haggard men among the icebergs the mere presence of an ordinary comrade stirs the deep fountains of affection.

(TMf, 215)

.... young natures .... in the onward tendency of human things have risen above the mental level of the generation before them, to which they have been nevertheless tied by the strongest fibres of their hearts.

(TMf, 305)

.... the tragedy of our lives is not created entirely from within. 'Character', says Novalis, in one of his questionable aphorisms — character is destiny'. But not the whole of our destiny.

(TMf, 449-50)

If the past is not to bind us, where can duty lie? We should have no law but the inclination of the moment.

(TMf, 536)

Faithfulness and constancy mean something else besides doing what is easiest and pleasantest to ourselves. They mean renouncing whatever is opposed to the reliance others have in us — whatever would cause misery to those whom the course of our lives has made dependent on us.
We can't choose happiness either for ourselves or for another; we can't tell where that will lie. We can only choose whether we will indulge ourselves in the present moment, or whether we will renounce that, for the sake of obeying the divine voice within us — for the sake of being true to all the motives that sanctify our lives.

Perfect love has a breath of poetry which can exalt the relations of the least instructed human beings.

Under every guilty secret, there is hidden a brood of guilty wishes, whose unwholesome, infecting life is cherished by the darkness. The contaminating effect of deeds, often lies less in the commission than in the consequent adjustment of our desires, — the enlistment of self interest on the side of falsity; as, on the other hand, the purifying influence of public confession springs from the fact, that by it the hope in lies is for ever swept away, and the soul recovers the noble attitude of simplicity.

Our deeds are like children that are born to us; they live and act apart from our own will. Nay, children may be strangled but deeds never: they have an indestructible life both in and out of our consciousness.

It is only a poor sort of happiness that could ever come by caring very much about our own narrow pleasures. We can only have the highest happiness, .... by having wide thoughts, and much feeling for the rest of the world as well as ourselves; and this sort of happiness often brings so much pain with it, that we can only tell it from pain by its being what we would choose before everything else, because our souls see it is good.

There is seldom any wrong-doing which does not carry along with it some downfall of blindly-climbing hopes, some hard entail of suffering, some quickly-satiated desire that survives, with the life in death of old paralytic vice, to see itself cured by its woeful progeny — some tragic mark of kinship in the one brief life to the far-stretching life that went before, and to the life that is to come after, such as has raised the pity and terror of men ever since they began to discern between will and destiny.
.... there is no private life that has not been determined by a wider public life.

(FH, 51)

For what we call illusions, are often, in truth, a wider vision of past and present realities — a willing movement of a man's soul with the larger sweep of the world's forces — a movement towards a more assured end than the chances of a single life.

(FH, 189)

But any one watching keenly the stealthy convergence of human lots, sees a slow preparation of effects from one life on another, which tells like a 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.

(Me, 122)

.... character too is a process and an unfolding.

(Me, 178)

.... by desiring what is perfectly good, even when we don't quite know what it is and cannot do what we could, we are part of the divine power against evil — widening the skirts of light and making the struggle with darkness narrower.

(Me, 427)

It always remains true that if we had been greater, circumstance would have been less strong against us.

(Me, 632)

There is no general doctrine which is not capable of eating out our morality if unchecked by the deep-seated habit of direct fellow-feeling with individual fellow-men.

(Me, 668)

Character is not cut in marble — it is not something solid and unalterable. It is something living and changing, and may become diseased as our bodies do.

(Me, 790-91)
The presence of a noble nature, generous in its wishes, ardent in its charity, changes the lights for us: we begin to see things again in their larger, quieter masses, and to believe that we too can be seen and judged in the wholeness of our character.

(M. 819)

.... there is no creature whose inward being is so strong that it is not greatly determined by what lies outside it.

(M. 896)

The growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs.

(M. 896)

It is one of the secrets in that change of mental poise which has been fitly named conversion, that to many among us, neither heaven nor earth has any revelation till some personality touches theirs with a peculiar influence, subduing them into receptiveness.

(P. 311)

Lives are enlarged in different ways. I daresay some would never get their eyes opened if it were not for a violent shock from the consequences of their own actions.

(P. 318)

Look on other lives besides your own. See what their troubles are, and how they are borne. Try to care about something in this vast world besides the gratification of small selfish desires. Try to care for what is best in thought and action — something that is good apart from the accidents of your own lot.

(P. 323)

.... what is it to be rational — what is it to feel the light of the divine reason growing stronger within and without? It is to see more and more of the hidden bonds that bind and consecrate change as a dependent growth — yea, consecrate it with kinship: the past becomes my parent and the future stretches towards me the appealing arms of children.

(P. 382-85)
APPENDIX - B

ABSTRACTS FROM GEORGE ELIOT'S NON-FICTIONAL WRITINGS

My books are a form of utterance that dissatisfies me less because they are deliberately, carefully constructed on a basis which even in my doubting mind is never shaken by a doubt, and they are not determined, .... by considerations of momentary expediency. The basis I mean is my conviction as to the relative goodness and nobleness of human dispositions and motives. And the inspiring principle which alone gives me courage to write is, that of so presenting our human life as to help my readers in getting a clearer conception and a more active admiration of those vital elements which bind men together and give a higher worthiness to their existence; and also to help them in gradually dissociating these elements from the mere transient forms on which an outworn teaching tends to make them dependent. (GEL IV, 472)

.... my books .... have for their main bearing a conclusion without which I could not have cared to write any representation of human life — namely, that the fellowship between man and man which has been the principle of development, social and moral, is not dependent on conceptions of what is not man; and that the idea of God, so far as it has been a high spiritual influence, is the ideal of a goodness entirely human (i.e., an exaltation of the human). (GEL VI, 98)

I can just now grasp nothing as truth but the principle that that which is best in ethics is the only means of subjective happiness, that perfect love and purity must be the goal of my race, that only, while reaching after them I can feel myself in harmony with the tendencies of creation. (GEL I, 143)

Heaven help us ! said the old religions — the new one, from its very lack of that faith, will teach us all the more to help one another. (GEL II, 82)
I believe that religion too has to be modified — "developed", according to the dominant phrase — and that a religion more perfect than any yet prevalent, must express less care for personal consolation, and a more deeply-awing sense of responsibility to man, springing from sympathy with that which of all things is most certainly known to us, the difficulty of the human lot.... As healthy, sane human beings we must love and hate.... love what it good for mankind, hate what is evil for mankind.

(GEL III, 111)

Never to beat and bruise one's wings against the inevitable but to throw the whole force of one's soul towards the achievement of some possible better, is the brief heading that need never be changed however often the chapter of more special rules may have to be re-written.

(GEL IV, 499)

One trembles to think how easily that moral wealth may be lost which it has been the work of ages to produce, in the refinement and differencing of the affectionate relations.

(GEL V, 55)

My own experience and development deepen everyday my conviction that our moral progress may be measured by the degree in which we sympathize with individual suffering and individual joy.

(GEL V, 405)

With regard to the pains and limitations of one's personal lot, I suppose that there is not a single man, or woman, who has not more or less need of that stoical resignation which is often a hidden heroism, or who, in considering his or her past history, is not aware that it has been cruelly affected by the ignorant or selfish action of some fellow-being in a more or less close relation of life. And to my mind, there can be no stronger motive, than this perception, to an energetic effort that the lives nearest to us shall not suffer in a like manner from us.

The progress of the world — which you say can only come at the right time — can certainly never come at all save by the modified action of the individual beings who compose the world, and that we can say to ourselves with effect, "There is an order of considerations which I will keep myself continually in mind of, so that they may continually be the prompters of certain feelings and action", seems to me an undeniable as that we can resolve to study the Semitic languages and apply to an Oriental scholar to give us daily lessons.

(GEL VI, 99)
I am very fond of that old Greek saying that the best state is that in which every man feels a wrong done to another as if it were done to himself.

(GEL VI, 112)

.... every fresh morning is an opportunity that one can look forward to for exerting one's will. I shall not be satisfied with your philosophy till you have conciliated necessitarianism — I hate the ugly word — with the practice of willing strongly, willing to will strongly, and so on....

(GEL VI, 166)

I think it would be possible that men should differ speculatively as much as they do now, and yet be 'of one mind' in the desire to avoid giving unnecessary pain, in the desire to do an honest part towards the general well-being .... in the resolve not to sacrifice another to their own egotistic promptings. Pity and fairness — two little words which, carried out, would embrace the utmost delicacies of the moral life — seem to me not to rest on an unverifiable hypothesis but on facts quite as irreversible as the perception that a pyramid will not stand on its apex.

(GEL VI, 407)

.... the best proof of a real love of the truth — that freshest stamp of divinity — is a calm confidence in its intrinsic power to secure its own high destiny, — that of universal empire.

(Cross I, 79)

Creation is the superadded life of the intellect; sympathy, all embracing love, the superadded moral life. These given more and more abundantly, I feel that all the demons, which are but my own egotism moping, and mowing and gibbering, would vanish away .... Evils, even sorrows, are they not all negations? Thus matter is in a perpetual state of decomposition, — superadd the principle of life, and the tendency to decomposition is overcome. Add to this consciousness, and there is a power of self-amelioration. The intellect by its analytic power restrains the fury with which they rush to their own destruction; the moral nature purifies, beautifies, and at length transmutes them.

(Cross I, 133)
Where thought and love are active, — thought the formative power, love the vitalising, — there can be no sadness. They are in themselves a more intense and extended participation of a divine existence. As they grow, the highest species of faith grows too, and all things are possible. (Cross I, 141)

The day will come when there will be a temple of white marble where sweet incense and anthems shall rise to the memory of every man and woman who has had a deep Ahnung, a presentiment, a yearning, or a clear vision of the time when this miserable reign of Mammon shall end, — when men shall be no longer "like the fishes of the sea" — society no more like a face one half of which — the side of profession, of lip-faith is fair and God-like, the other half — the side of deeds and institutions — with a hard old wrinkled skin puckered into the sneer of a Mephistophelis. (Cross I, 143)

I have really felt all the old commonplaces about the equality of human destinies, always excepting those spiritual differences which are apart not only from poverty and riches but from individual affections. (Cross I, 173)

I am beginning to lose respect for the petty acumen that sees difficulties. I love the souls that rush along to their goal with a full stream of sentiment, — that have too much of the positive to be harassed by the perpetual negatives, — which, after all, are but the disease of the soul, to be expelled by fortifying the principle of vitality. (Cross I, 177-78)

The utmost approach to well-being .... is through large resignation and acceptance of the inevitable, with as much effort to overcome any disadvantage as good sense will show to be attended with a likelihood of success. Any one may say, that is the dictate of mere rational reflection. But calm can, in hardly any human organism, be attained by rational reflection. Happily we are not left to that. Love, pity, constituting sympathy and generous joy with regard to the lot of our fellow-men; comes in, — has been growing since the beginning, — enormously enhanced by wider vision of results by an imagination actively interested in the lot of mankind generally; and these feelings become piety, — i.e., loving, willing, submission, and heroic Promethean effort towards high possibilities, which may result from our individual life.
There is really no moral "sanction" but this inward impulse. The will of God is the same thing as the will of other men, compelling us to work and avoid what they have seen to be harmful to social existence .... doing duty in blindness as to the result is likely to deepen the substitution of egoistic yearnings for really moral impulses. We cannot be utterly blind to the results of duty since that cannot be duty which is not already judged to be for human good.

From "Notes on The Spanish Gypsy and Tragedy in general". (Cross III, 31-37)

The divine yea and nay, the seal of prohibition and of sanction, are effectually impressed on human deeds and aspirations .... by that inexorable law of consequences, whose evidence is confirmed instead of weakened as the ages advance; and human duty is comprised in the earnest study of this law and patient obedience to its teaching.


---

... a delicate sense of our neighbour's rights, an active participation in the joys and sorrows of our fellowmen, a magnanimous acceptance of privation or suffering for ourselves when it is the condition of good to others, in a word, (the extension and intensification of our sympathetic nature, .... ) conceivable that in some minds the deep pathos lying in the thought of human morality — that we are here for a little while and then vanish away, that this earthly life is all that is given to our loved ones and to our many suffering fellow-men — lies nearer the fountain of moral emotion than the conception of extended existence.


Community of interest is the root of justice; community of suffering, the root of pity; community of joy, the root of loves.


No doubt the passionate inspiration which prompts and sustains a course of self-sacrificing labour in the light of soberly estimated results gathers the highest title to our veneration, and makes the supreme heroism. But the generous leap of impulse is needed too to swell the flood of sympathy in us beholders, that we may not fall completely under the mastery of calculation, which in its turn may fail of ends for want of energy got from ardour.

We see the moral education of our race proceeding in the more and more rational classification of actions as right or wrong, towards the final identification of the Divine Will with the highest ascertainable duty to mankind and in the continual elevation of public opinion towards the highest mark of Feeling informed by Knowledge.