VOICING FEMALE AMBITION AND PURPOSE:

THE ROLE OF THE ARTIST FIGURE IN THE WORKS OF GEORGE ELIOT

by

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in English in partial
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Abstract

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This dissertation explores the role of the artist figure in the works of George Eliot, examining the connection between female "voice" and female ambition and purpose. By tracing the figure of the artist throughout the course of Eliot's works, two patterns are identified: the male artist who serves as a stand-in for women and gives voice to the heroine's issues, and the female artist/performer who speaks for herself. The artist figure is used as a somewhat subversive strategy on the part of Eliot and provides an alternative point of view from her mainstream ideas. This figure voices the larger concerns of all women, which I frame in terms of separate spheres ideology. Eliot casts these figures as "others," usually foreign, and endows them with gender attributes from both the feminine and masculine spheres; thus, they are marginalized characters, yet representative of a fuller humanity. Through the artist figure Eliot argues for a revisioning of society that is more just and balanced and that allows women more agency. The works and characters examined are: Caterina Sarti in "Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story," Dinah Morris in Adam Bede, Maggie Tulliver and Philip Wakem in The Mill on the Floss, Dorothea Brooke and Will Ladislaw in Middlemarch, Armgart in the poem of the same name, and the multiple artist characters in Daniel Deronda—Mirah Lapidoth, the Alcharisi, Julius Klesmer, Catherine Arrowpoint, and to a lesser degree Gwendolen Harleth and Daniel Deronda.

I dedicate this to my mother

Agnes Mandeville Mahkovtz

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Introduction

Although the importance of art in the life and oeuvre of George Eliot has been well documented, there is no comprehensive work that examines the figure of the artist in her novels and poems. Several works address the motifs of painting or music that run throughout her work, while others look at her performing figures; however, none looks specifically at the overall pattern of the artist figure. In this dissertation I will examine the role of the artist figure, which will comprehensively include both female and male artists, painters and musicians, dilettantes and professionals. I will argue that Eliot uses the artist figure to give voice to female ambition and purpose, which are part of the larger issue of female agency. By female agency I refer to the empowerment of women within a restrictive society and to the rebellion of women against lives of subordination, intellectual inconsequence, and limited action.

In introducing the artist figure, Eliot offers an alternative point of view from her mainstream ideas. Particularly with her female artists, Eliot explores and voices the tension found in the exceptional woman and her society, a society that doesn't allow for the expression of female ambition and purpose. By extension, the artist figure voices the larger concerns of all women, which I frame within the context of Victorian separate spheres ideology. Eliot never offers solutions to the problems she explores; rather, her strategy is to draw attention to these concerns by creating characters who can give voice to problematic issues. She presents different points of view that result in an ambiguous message, but one that is critical of the limitations society places on women. It is characteristic of Eliot that she gives these female figures a greater degree of agency but

then pulls them back into the restricted feminine sphere at the end. While Eliot has been criticized for not creating female characters with the freedom and success she herself experienced, her strategy is effective in that it portrays the common lot of women. There was little room for women to grow and expand in the conventional feminine sphere and the suppression they felt often resulted in anger and misery. In nearly all of her works associated with the artist figure, the endings evoke a sense of despair and loss. Eliot delivers her messages and creates powerful, influential women, but then camouflages this move by not having the women succeed to the end. In this way the artist figure provides a safe, though dissident strategy for the author. Gilbert and Gubar write that "for every glowing portrait of submissive women enshrined in domesticity, there exists an equally important negative image that embodies the sacrilegious fiendishness of … 'Female Will'" (28). Though not quite "madwomen in the attic," Eliot's artist figures are used subversively to criticize separate spheres ideology, to offer a more complex representation of women, and to counter the conventional story line of her heroines.

Although many of Eliot's works contain elements of the artist figure, the focus of my examination is on two patterns found in her work. The first is the dominant and most powerful use of the artist figure, that of the female performer. This pattern begins with Eliot's first fictional work, Scenes of Clerical Life (1857), in the character of Caterina Sarti, the talented but powerless singer in "Mr. Gilfil's Love Story." In Adam Bede (1859), Eliot's second fictional work, the character of Dinah Morris continues this pattern in the performance of her public preaching. The female singer-actress figure first appears in a subplot of Middlemarch (1871-72), in the character of Madame Laure, and reappears in the successful diva in the poem "Armgart" (1874), and in Eliot's last novel, Daniel

Deronda (1876), in the characters of Mirah Lapidoth, the would-be diva Gwendolen Harleth, and the Alcharisi. The other pattern in Eliot's work is that of the artistic male character who figures largely in the plot of the heroine. This pattern is first found in The Mill on the Floss (1860) in Philip Wakem and his relationship with Maggie Tulliver, and is developed in Middlemarch in the Will Ladislaw-Dorothea Brooke relationship. In Daniel Deronda this figure is more fully developed in Deronda and in the musician Julius Klesmer in their interactions with the multiple female performers. All of the artist figures are "others" in their society, usually foreign, and all possess gender attributes from both feminine and masculine spheres, resulting in more complexity of character. The importance of the artist figure is evidenced by the fact that its trajectory can be traced from Eliot's first work to her last. The first pattern develops from the vulnerable and largely silent girlhood of Caterina and culminates in the self-determined and voiced womanhood of the Alcharisi; the second pattern begins with Philip Wakem's private urgings to Maggie and ends with Klesmer's public declarations in which he defines the role of the professional artist.

Where the male artists in Eliot's works can be either painters or musicians, the female artists are exclusively connected to voice, singing, and music. Eliot uses the female voice as a metaphor and a channel for female "voice," that web of issues that encompasses self-expression, purpose, ambition, and agency. Gillian Beer writes that "voice" was an important issue for Eliot: "The channeling of utterance, and of outrage, is part of music's meaning for her heroines who would otherwise be doomed to silence…. The vehement connection between passion and utterance … is associated with women's desire for freedom" (206-07). Susan Leonardi suggests that "voice" also means "that one

participates in or has control over something" (66). Thus, the term "voice" presents certain complications as literal and figurative uses of the word overlap. When referring to female "voice" as self-expression and agency I will put the word in quotation marks. However, for the most part the term will encompass both its literal and figurative meaning, as Eliot intertwines the dual meaning of the word.

An interesting thread that accompanies this theme is the loss of voice. The fear of loss of voice can be interpreted in different ways but is always linked to Eliot's position as a female artist. Three of her artist figures lose their voices. In "Mr. Gilfils' Love-Story," Caterina's father loses his voice, from which point his career and health plummet until his premature death. Armgart also loses her voice at the height of her career and angrily blames her doctor and the patriarchal order in general for this silencing of her. The Alcharisi fears she is losing her voice and makes the choice to give up her career and marry, rather than await the dreaded loss. For both of these successful divas the loss of their voices brings about dramatic changes in their lives which they experience as disastrous. On one level it is easy to interpret this fear as a metaphor for the female body which often limits and determines a woman's fate. Beyond the metaphor, however, loss of voice represents actual loss of artistic expression for the artist figure. Eliot's journals and letters reveal the deep-rooted fear of physical incapacity that would prevent her from achievement. Her precarious health was a threat to the ambition and sense of purpose that writing provided her. There were several examples of physical loss resulting in artistic loss in Eliot's day, the most famous being Beethoven's tragic loss of hearing. Another relevant example was the diva Johanna Wagner, niece of Richard Wagner, who lost her

singing voice. For these artists, physical loss represented more than vocational loss; art was their "voice," their expression of self, their identity.

Writing about the artist figure allowed Eliot a means of expressing her concerns for women and provided a way to voice social criticism without offending her reading audience. By displacing potentially threatening messages onto her artist figures who are usually foreign, Eliot could weave in subversive threads while keeping her main plot aligned with conventional ideology. Along with many Victorian writers, Eliot believed that novelists had a responsibility to their readership and to society. She believed that the purpose of art was essentially a moral one and should be used for the good of society. In a letter she wrote, "It is my function as an artist to act (if possible) for good on the emotions and conceptions of my fellow-men" (Haight, GE's Letters 475). In her fiction Eliot rarely offers concrete solutions to problems; rather she advocates improvement by depicting the effects of societal injustices and human weaknesses and gives voice to those marginalized by society. All of Eliot's characters reveal something of this but her artist figures articulate the particular concerns of women, specifically those of ambition and purpose. Through the figure of the artist Eliot gives a voice to these concerns and looks at the conditions that hold women back. A large part of the problems relating to women resulted from the underlying separate spheres ideology that pervaded Victorian society. Part of the role of the artist figure is to criticize this ideology that restricted women's lives and in doing so, suggest a broader definition of traditional gendered roles.

Separate spheres thought pervaded Victorian culture and, as Phyllis Weliver explains, was "advocated by prominent figures like John Ruskin….His famous lecture 'Of Queens Gardens' (1865), suggested that a woman's unique power lay at home and

that gender differences complemented each other" (43). The ideology was further embedded into the culture symbolically in Coventry Patmore's popular poem "The Angel in the House" (1854) in which the heroine demonstrates the virtues of innocence, selflessness, and gracefulness. Gilbert and Gubar describe the poem as "a sort of anti-story" (23) in which the heroine's worth is "that her virtue makes her man 'great'" (22). Weliver states that such "angels" were "considered pure, devoted daughters who followed familial expectations … defined by the domestic sphere….Selfless and morally exulted, angels were suprahuman, but also defined and contained within the boundary of family and the limited sphere of the home" (6). While upholding some aspects of separate spheres thought, such as the maternal nurturing quality associated with women, Eliot highlights the injustices this system of thought perpetuated. Broadly speaking, men were associated with the public realm, with the making of money and the wielding of power. Theirs was the outside world of business, careers, education, politics, and law. The attributes associated with their sphere were individualism, ego, hierarchy, authority, control, production, responsibility, ambition, and purpose. Conversely, women's sphere was private and internal, their domain being the house and the family. Their purpose was associated with the "ideology of influence" (Booth, Greatness Engendered 28) which made them responsible for elevating their family, and hence society, through their supposed higher morality. This was to be accomplished through self-sacrifice, a life of service, nurturing, and caretaking, with emphasis on the emotions. Nina Auerbach writes that "Officially, the only woman worthy of worship was a monument of selflessness, with no existence beyond the loving influence she exuded as daughter, wife, and mother" (Woman and the Demon 185). As Alison Booth argues, rather than denouncing the

concept of separate spheres, Eliot "challenge[s] the hierarchy of the spheres, subverting the predominance of the masculine self, the public realm, and the ruling classes" (Greatness Engendered 4), and valorizes many attributes associated with the female sphere, such as caretaking, connection, and emotional support. Her ultimate argument is for balance, partnership between the sexes, and "commerce between the spheres" (Booth, Greatness Engendered 3). Eliot redefines femininity to include women of ambition and suggests a larger potential role women could play in society. Andre DeCuir argues that "Eliot urges revision of cultural codes concerning women whose voices are drowned out" (74).

Eliot criticizes the rigidity of the spheres' boundaries that restricted women's activity, which resulted in their economic and intellectual dependence on men and the thwarting of their potential. In particular she criticizes women's education, their financial dependence on men, and their limited vocational opportunities. Characters such as Caterina Sarti and Gwendolen Harleth suffer as a result of their ignorance of the world, in particular of the ways of men; other characters such as Maggie Tulliver and Dorothea Brooke attempt to overcome the limitations society places on them, only to be defeated in the end—whether by unforgiving societal attitudes towards women or inheritance laws that were created by and for men. In the depictions of Dinah Morris and Dorothea Brooke Eliot presents this limitation as a loss to society, as hampering the already slow move of societal change. These women could have effected great good through their capable and generous natures. By contrast, however, many of Eliot's performing female characters, as with Armgart and the Alcharisi, develop their potential and retain their independence—

that is, until conditions force them back into their prescribed spheres, making them among the angriest voices in all of Eliot.

While ambivalent about many issues regarding the Woman Question, Eliot always felt strongly about improving educational opportunities for women. In one of her letters she wrote that she felt strongly "that women ought to have the same fund of truth placed within their reach as men have, … the same store of fundamental knowledge" (Haight, GE's Letters 367). Separate spheres ideology excluded women from higher education and offered only a superficial education at best. In The Mill on the Floss Maggie Tulliver hungers for the education that is given to her brother Tom. In Middlemarch women's education is criticized in the limited education of Dorothea Brooke and in the even narrower education of Rosamond Vincy at the local finishing school. Lack of education goes hand in hand with ignorance of the ways of the world. The seclusion that separate spheres advocates for women breeds a type of ignorance that results in being harmful to men as well as women, and hence to society at large. In addition to thwarted personal development, the lack of education combined with the already reduced opportunities available to women, makes them financially dependent on the men in their lives. Eliot's female artists such as Armgart and Mirah and the Alcharisi briefly experience the freedom and financial independence that few women enjoyed. For most of her female characters, however, financial concerns shape a large part of their lives. Caterina has no money of her own and so is completely dependent on the Cheverels; Maggie suffers as a consequence of her father's financial ruin and tries to earn a living as a teacher; Dorothea has independent wealth but lacks the knowledge of what to do with it, and Will's mother becomes an actress to avoid her family's tainted money.

In Daniel Deronda Gwendolen marries for money rather than work as a governess when her family's finances change, and Mirah is "sold" by her father for her talent.

The strictures of separate spheres limit women on nearly every level, reducing them to marginalized figures in their own society. Eliot demonstrates that this unfair treatment and repression of women leads to acts of rebellion or to acts of despair. The acts of rebellion are located in her female artists: in Caterina, who attempts to kill her traitorous lover, Madame Laure who actually kills her husband, Armgart who rebels against the common lot of women, and the Alcharisi who abandons her child in order to pursue her ambitions. In other women this anger is turned in on themselves; in Maggie we see a series of self-destructive acts, and in the docile figure of Mirah we find the only suicide attempt in Eliot's works, though other female characters appear to consider it as a solution to their suffering.

In addition to writing about the conditions of women, Eliot's creation of the artist figure allowed her to articulate her own feelings about being a female artist. In "Ambition and Its Audiences" Rosemarie Bodenheimer writes

> Eliot projected her complicated sense of ambition in portraits of performing figures, primarily singers….Unlike negatively charged social "actresses" such as Hetty Sorrel or Rosamond Vincy, these artist figures are at least partially sympathetic characters, yet each of them raises a disturbance about ambition and performance that results in her removal from a stage, silenced … by the power of the narrative voice. (9-10)

Writing was a means of self-development, self-creation, and self-extension. Eliot's works depicted her society and its limitations, but also took her into the realm of the possible

where she could create capable, intelligent, and ambitious females. In Godiva's Ride Dorothy Mermin states that writing was one of the few careers that a woman could have without being perceived as a threat. It could be performed within her private sphere at home, alone, and often behind a male pseudonym. It was a merging of many qualities of the two spheres; the female writer could earn money, speak with authority, and assert her individuality, while at the same time embody the feminine ideals of performing in the private domestic realm and putting forth a moral message. Even so, as a career for women it was fraught with tension, for although writing was performed in the feminine sphere it fell under the larger rubric of Art. Art was man's field in which women served as muse, model, and inspiration. To some degree, at least in the beginning of her career, Eliot was able to skirt many of the issues that plagued the female writer. Eliot moved freely in intellectual circles and throughout her life maintained an active exchange with leading minds. The articles she published were done so anonymously, in accordance with the practice of the day. Her adoption of a male pseudonym for her novels further protected her from scrutiny and for her first two novels her identity was unknown. However, her relationship with the married George Henry Lewes compromised her reputation in a way that society found unpardonable. Perhaps to avoid further scrutiny and criticism, Eliot always kept her heroines in alignment with the dominant ideology of her day. Hence, we find in Dinah, Maggie, and Dorothea the qualities of self-sacrifice, nurturing, and generosity. Only in her last novel, Daniel Deronda, is her key heroine Gwendolen less aligned with traditional qualities, though she is pulled in that direction at the end of her travails. Many of Eliot's artist figures, on the other hand, exhibit the masculine sphere traits of ego, ambition, financial and emotional independence, and

unlike female writers, they perform in the public sphere. However, for the most part these figures appear in the arena of the subplot. The placement of the heroine in the main storyline and the artist figure in the subplot proportionately reflect Eliot's concerns. For the most part her ideology was mainstream and she valued traditional feminine qualities. However, the artist and intellectual in her also felt anger at being excluded from the world's stage. This part of Eliot finds expression in her female artist figures. As stated earlier, typical responses in women to suppression are despair and anger. However, in the female artist figure we often find another response—that of egotism, which Eliot always condemns. However, to some extent she portrays egotism as part of the problem created by the imbalance in society. Though their egotism isolates and exalts these female artists, sometimes at the expense of others, it is also a form of protection against, and a result of, a world that does not allow for them. They develop a hard shell in order to be able to function at all.

The creation of the female artist figure allowed Eliot to express herself, both as an artist and as a woman of ambition. Marcia Midler writes that although Eliot never wrote a "Portrait of the Artist as a Young Woman," she did create several female artists:

> Eliot's unconventional artists express her sense of art as an outlet for "unfeminine" female impulses toward anger and defiance—impulses which her personal letters show her striving to renounce. Like Eliot, her talented heroines resist the constriction of enforced domesticity, using their gifts to escape conformity to a narrowly circumscribed destiny. The collective impact of her angry and rebellious female artists is a haunting one, and suggests the author's covert imaginative identification with the

> singers and actresses whose passions sometimes leap at us from the printed page. In the extravagantly melodramatic treatment of her artist-heroines, the legendary intellectual found both emotional release and camouflage for unconventional and decidedly unwomanly feelings she might never otherwise have vented. (97)

That Eliot identifies with her female artist figures is further developed in Auerbach's Romantic Imprisonment. Auerbach explores Eliot's role not only as a writer, but as a performer and artist character in her own life. Among her various roles were Sibyl, Great Author, Intellectual, Daughter, Mutter, Madonna, and Wife. Auerbach writes that "with the help of Lewes, she arranged her life as a continual public presentation.… [with] her own self as her greatest creation and most powerful property. Descriptions of the artist and sibyl receiving audiences at the Priory exude theatricality" (254).

The act of self-making and the creation of artist figures place George Eliot in the larger tradition that began in the Romantic period with male writers such as Goethe, Blake, and Byron and flourished in the Victorian period. In particular Eliot can be viewed alongside the kunstlerroman tradition, or "artist as hero" novel or poem. These works, such as "Wordsworth's "Prelude," Thackeray's Pendennis, Tennyson's "In Memoriam," [and] Dickens's David Copperfield… [present a] paradigm of the artist as universal and unique, and is grounded in the notion that the artist is male" (Houston 213). The kunstlerroman deals with the development of a young person and his struggle to become an artist. This tradition "asserts that self-making is an art" (Houston 213) and depicts a "male quest pattern" (Hankins 392) in a tradition that predominantly reflects a white Western and middle-class experience. It is marked by individualism, linear development,

a monologic voice, and can be seen as a fusion of the love plot and bildungs plot (Hankins 392-394).

In many ways Eliot breaks away from or revises this tradition. Most notably, she steps outside the tradition of creating artist figures of the same nationality and gender as the author and makes her artists figures foreign and often, female. In addition, Eliot's artist figures exist mainly in the subplots or as secondary characters and she does not portray the development of their artistic careers. For example, when we meet Armgart, the Alcharisi, Mirah, and Klesmer they are already at or are past the pinnacle of their careers. Also, Eliot rejects the fusion of the love and bildungs plots. Her artist figures are driven by ambition—romantic relationships are viewed as obstacles, as we see in Madame Laure, Armgart, and the Alcharisi. Still, many of the kunstlerroman elements can be found in Eliot's works. In most of her artist figures we find "the conventional romantic notions of the genius, the person apart, who, because unique and gifted, could be released from social ties and expectations," (DuPlessis 243) as we see in Armgart, the Alcharisi, and Klesmer. In addition, her artists move in a single-minded linear progression, as far as they are able, and the focus is on their individualism and rebellious natures. As Gilbert and Gubar point out, Eliot is part of the tradition of female writers who "develop a subversive tradition that has a unique relationship to the Romantic ethos of revolt" (82).

In being part of the less developed female kunstlerroman tradition, Eliot builds on works that came before her by female artists that she greatly admired. The most influential of these are Germaine de Stael's <u>Corinne</u> (1807), George Sand's <u>Consuelo</u> (1842), and most importantly, in part because it was composed by a contemporary British

poet, Elizabeth Barrett Browning's "Aurora Leigh" (1857). Eliot read "Aurora Leigh" several times and wrote a glowing review of it in the Westminster Review in 1857. In all these works the central character is an artist heroine. Linda Lewis argues that there was a parallel development of the female kunstlerroman alongside the male kunstlerroman, largely developed by de Stael and Sand. She states that men had such myths as Adam, Pygmalion, Icarus, and Prometheus but women "lacked a major myth to establish her as creator" (Lewis 2), and that "even though she gave birth, for centuries she was considered as merely passive agent, a receptacle who incubated man's creation" (Lewis 3). Lewis writes that "Stael and Sand are important because they began to define the woman-as-artist at the very point in literary history when Romanticism was defining the hero-as-artist and when the woman writer was looking for foremothers" (9).

De Stael's Corinne tells the story of the consummate performer who is improvatrice, poet, and musician. Consuelo is important because Sand's heroine is an opera singer, a move Eliot uses for several of her female performers. Ellen Moers writes that "In the novels women wrote after Mme de Stael, the actress did not become the principal descendant of her performing heroine" (189) because of the Victorian association of actresses with something depraved and immoral. Moers suggests that the solution to this problem was solved in the character of the opera singer:

> The prima donna justified the myth of Corinne; the miracle of operatic performance served as could no other to show off a woman's genius. For a great voice does indeed transport an audience to an ideal existence….the opera singer makes a heroine who is strong, willful, and grand; an international traveler; a solitary, but with a subservient entourage in

> attendance. Men adore her, but there is no other kind of heroine, not even the saint who can so plausibly be made a chaste as well as a mature and desirable woman. (189)

There were other female artist figures created by female British Victorian writers, demonstrating the emergence of an archetype that was finding expression in the growing number of female writers. An important part of Charlotte Bronte's creation of Jane Eyre (1847) is the artistic side of her. Her paintings serve to express her otherworldliness and her rich inner life. Anne Bronte's Helen Huntington in <u>The Tenant of Wildfell Hall</u> (1848) develops her love of painting into a career which serves to protect her and her child from her profligate and destructive husband. <u>Olive</u> (1850) by Dinah Mullock Craik tells the story of a young woman who becomes a professional painter, as does Charlotte Yonge's <u>Pillars of the House</u> (1873), in the character of Geraldine. However, with all these, the artist plot is secondary to the main plot, which is often a romance plot and always follows the traditional female story line of service to others and self-sacrifice. What is interesting about Olive and Geraldine in the aforementioned works is that they are both physically deformed or disabled. This resonates with Eliot's pattern of making her artists "others," less desirable figures according to the standards of their society. This characteristic puts them at odds with the role of woman as beautiful, desirable, and marriageable and opens up the artist plot through which they can earn money to help provide for others. Most of these characters are young, quiet, docile, and self-renouncing —nothing like Eliot's most successful female artists, Armgart and the Alcharisi, who are mature, voiced, rebellious, and self-determining. What makes Eliot's figures stand apart from other contemporary creations is that her characters become artists because they want

to, because it is their right, because they are ambitious. Even the foundational Corinne, Consuelo, and "Aurora Leigh" are largely about their love interests. Rather than focusing on romance or on the development of the artist, what Eliot chooses to portray in her female artists is the voicing of their anger at being diminished and excluded from the world of power and fame, and their desire for expression and self-fulfillment.

According to Auerbach's theory in The Woman and The Demon, Eliot's creation of angry female artists can be seen as part of a larger move found in Victorian literature that places the "demonic" woman, identified as either the angel/demon, old maid, or fallen woman, at "the source of a common cultural iconography of womanhood" (61). Auerbach states that these three types of women "are outcasts from domesticity, self-creating rather than selflessly nurturing, regal but never maternal" (61-62). Elements of these types of women are located in Caterina, Maggie, Dorothea, Armgart, Gwendolen, and the Alcharisi. To varying degrees they are queenly and powerful, possessing qualities that disturb and challenge the order of the day. While they may demonstrate fierce loyalty and protectiveness on behalf of others, they do not exhibit the gentle, maternal tenderness that is portrayed in other contemporary female artist figures.

While there were other writers creating female artist figures, for the most part the female kunstlerroman emerged post-Eliot in the novels of the 1890s. In addition, though not immediately relevant to Eliot's creations, there were American portrayals of the female artist also being created, as in Fanny Fern's Ruth Hall (1854), Nathanial Hawthorn's The Marble Faun (1860), Louisa May Alcott's Little Women (1868), Rebecca Harding Davis's Earthen Pitchers (1873), and Elizabeth Stuart Phelps's The Story of Avis (1877).

Eliot's use of the artist figure develops over the course of her work and shows a progression that reflects her growing confidence and interest in portraying artistic characters. Broadly speaking, the progression of the artist figure moves from male to female and from dilettante to professional, and is marked by greater maturity and status in the artist. For this reason the professional artists and most of the female artists appear in the later works of Eliot. The professionals have a larger stage in life and a larger audience. They have more agency, more opportunity of being heard, and more influence. Where Philip and Will are dilettantes, Klesmer is a consummate professional artist. A similar pattern is evident in the women artists. Where Caterina sings for the amusement of others in the Cheverel drawing room, Armgart, Mirah, and the Alcharisi are professionals who perform on the stages of Europe. The works of Eliot thus show a progression from the male artist who helps give voice to the female heroine, to the development of the female artist who can speak for herself; and from the tentative assertions of the dilettante to the powerful declarations of the professional artist.

Another mark of Eliot's development of the artist figure is that they become more contemporary. The action in "Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story" begins in 1788; Adam Bede takes place from 1799-1803; The Mill on the Floss and Middlemarch occur predominantly in the 1830s in the fictional past of Marian Evans' youth; and "Armgart" and Daniel Deronda presumably take place in the 1870s. This move towards Eliot's own time makes the issues more pertinent to her own society. Another mark of progression is that the endings are increasingly more open ended. Caterina and Maggie die young; Dinah, Dorothea, and Mirah marry at the end of the novels, though there is the suggestion that Dorothea and Mirah become involved in their husband's political missions. Armgart's

future as a teacher for women singers is roughly sketched out for us and Gwendolen's future is completely open-ended. This reflects Eliot's increasing move of creating possible futures for women.

Eliot uses the same basic strategies for all her artist figures, which are mostly those of displacement. She makes her artist figures "others" and uses them as secondary characters or in subplots, which provides cover for her subversive messages. In a similar manner, as Gilbert and Gubar point out, Eliot's titles, which "[insist] on the primacy of male spheres of activity" (491) often camouflage the real story of her novels, that of "female destiny" (491). Eliot camouflages her feminist messages in much the same way. Her works are thick with female disappointment and anger, which is a large part of her message—the status quo is not working because women are suffering from a state of subjection. Elements of this message are located in all her heroines but it is her female artists who give voice to this problem and the unfeminine anger and resentment that accompany it.

As stated earlier, Eliot has two patterns for her artists: male artists who are paired with her heroines and female artists who stand alone. Both patterns are used to voice the larger concerns of women. The male artists are paired with the heroines and mirror their struggle for self-determination, purpose, and identity, as in The Mill on the Floss with Philip Wakem and Maggie Tulliver and in Middlemarch with Will Ladislaw and Dorothea Brooke. Philip and Will are presented as artistic characters rather than as professional artists. They are dilettantes in drawing, music, and writing. When we first see them it is with their sketch pads and throughout the novels they try their hand at different arts. In their search for an art form they mirror the search for a purpose that we

find in Maggie and Dorothea. In Eliot's final novel, Daniel Deronda, the male artist is more fully developed in the character of Julius Klesmer. He mirrors the professional status of Mirah and Alcharisi but as a male he experiences none of their problems of being judged as a dutiful offspring or parent, of being sexualized, or of being forced to choose between a personal life and art. His larger role is to voice Eliot's position on the value of the artist as someone who can both critique and enrich society. To some extent Daniel Deronda fulfils this male artist role with Gwendolen; though both Deronda and Gwendolen are connected to art, neither become artists. Daniel has the potential of being an artist but suppresses his singing talent because of its link to the mystery surrounding his mother, and Gwendolen wants to become an artist but lacks the talent and necessary discipline. Most significant in comparing Eliot's male artists with her female artists is that the male artists don't experience the diminishment that her female artists do. Philip remains essentially the same through the novel, Will changes paths and becomes a successful politician, and Klesmer personifies the successful artist. On the other hand, Caterina dies young, Dinah gives up preaching, Armgart loses her voice and becomes a teacher, and the Alcharisi, fearing the loss of voice, gives up her art and marries. The female artists exist but briefly in the actual realm of the artist.

One of Eliot's key tactics is to define her artist figure as a socially marginalized figure, an "other." This is most commonly expressed in their being foreign—Italian, French, Polish, German, and Jewish. The exception is Philip Wakem whose "otherness" is expressed through his deformity. This "otherness" represents the general status of women who are also outsiders in their own society. Both foreigners and women were "lesser" citizens, at the mercy of a system that was set up for the benefit of Englishmen.

For these "others" their art form provides them with a powerful way of connecting to the world and expressing themselves, and sets them apart from others. Because of their status as outsiders looking in, they can critique and interpret the society in which they live. Alicia Carrol in Dark Smiles states that Eliot "revis[es] the extant traditions of Othering to address her own concerns about female agency….[She] practices reverse … discrimination where value is ultimately placed on the Other …" (xvi-xvii).

As mentioned above, Eliot places many of her subversive messages and characters in the subplot. The most notable of these are Madame Laure in Middlemarch and the Alcharisi in Daniel Deronda, who serve as dark doubles to the more conventional female characters in the novels. Their roles are minimal and yet their impact is great and their characters are memorable. These subplots counter the main storyline of the heroines and express alternative female qualities that challenge the status quo. Will Ladislaw's mother, who becomes an actress, also fulfills this role although she is cast in a positive light, as is Catherine Arrowpoint, who goes against her parents' wishes and marries the man of her choice. The subplot strategy offers Eliot a way to weave in rebellious strains in her female artist figures.

Another strategy Eliot uses for her artist figures is located in her treatment of gender. She challenges gendered stereotypes by sometimes giving traditional feminine qualities to male artists, as is evident in Philip and Will, and traditional masculine qualities to female artists, as in Armgart and the Alcharisi. Eliot presents separate spheres ideology as a static social construct that often negatively affects both women and men. However, her treatment of gender, also presented as a social construct but with greater fluidity, enables her characters to move between spheres. Thus we find many of her

characters "performing" in a sphere different from their appointed one. This is most evident in her artist figures but is also found in her heroines. From Dinah through the Alcharisi, these characters challenge the gendered expectations society imposes on them. Eliot contrasts these characters to those who adhere to their prescribed sphere and gender role, and who consequently suffer as a result and live smaller lives. Hence we find the combinations of Dinah/Hetty, Maggie/Lucy, Dorothea/Rosamond, Armgart/Walpurga, Gwendolen/Anna, and Alcharisi/Mirah, with the first and more complex character encompassing more of the gender spectrum. Though this is a practice Eliot frequently uses throughout her works, for example, she gives maternal qualities to Silas Marner and the Reverends Tryan, in "Janet's Repentance," and Lyons, in Felix Holt, her artist characters always embody traits associated with the other sex. The male artists are sensitive, nurturing, and understand and identify with women (opposed to the heavily masculine sphere types as Adam Bede and Felix Holt). They possess the positive feminine traits of being in touch with their emotions, which is communicated in their conversations with the heroine. However, the male artists are not portrayed as effeminate, for they also are given traditional masculine qualities. Will, Klesmer, and Philip to a lesser extent, embody qualities associated with the masculine sphere, as in their worldliness, wider experience, broader education, the liberty to travel, and the freedom to voice their anger. In a similar manner, the female artists are strongly marked by traditional masculine qualities: independence, power, ambition, acting in the public realm, and self-determination. However, as she does with her male artist figures, Eliot keeps her female artists aligned with the traditional sphere by giving them the prized feminine sphere attributes of beauty and/or youth and emphasizes their emotional natures.

Another gender strategy Eliot uses involving the artist figure is to use painting and music as metaphors for the treatment of gender issues. One way she symbolizes the rigidity of gender stereotypes is to associate painting with the masculine sphere where woman serves as object, muse, and possession. Painting is associated with stasis, tradition, and the past, with the artist's presence located behind the patron. Music on the other hand, is associated with women, with change and action, with voice and expression. Eliot valued both art forms and had women friends who were painters, as with Barbara Bodichon, and male friends who were musicians, as with Liszt. It's not that she believed painting was "masculine" and music "feminine," but she uses the two forms as a strategy to highlight gender differences.

I have divided my dissertation into three sections that reflect different stages of development in Eliot's theme of the artist figure. Each section is composed of two chapters which focus on the female protagonist and subplots involving the artist figure. The first section is titled "Emerging Voices" and looks at Caterina Sarti in "Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story" and Dinah Morris in Adam Bede. In these two works the heroine and the performing figure are one and the same. The issues of female ambition and purpose are expressed through the medium of their voice. For Caterina this takes expression in her singing; for Dinah it takes expression in her preaching.

The next section is entitled "Vicarious Voices" and explores the role of the artist figure in The Mill on the Floss and Middlemarch. The themes of female ambition and purpose are explored in depth in Maggie Tulliver and Dorothea Brooke. In these two works Eliot uses a different strategy to express female "voice." Rather than make her heroines performers, she casts them in more conventional roles and pairs them with male

artistic types. This allows her to keep her heroines in the more traditional model of Victorian womanhood and forces them to work out their issues within the confines of separate spheres ideology. It is left to the artist figures to give voice to many of their issues. In The Mill on the Floss many of Maggie Tulliver's issues are expressed by Philip Wakem; in Middlemarch Dorothea Brooke's struggles are voiced by Will Ladislaw. The subplot of the female artist surfaces for the first time in Middlemarch.

The final section is titled "Angry Voices" and examines the performing women in the poem "Armgart" and in Eliot's last novel, Daniel Deronda. The singer/actress is the focus in both works: Armgart, the Alcharisi, and Mirah Ladidoth are all professional singers. In Daniel Deronda many of the issues of ambition and purpose are worked out in the character of Gwendolen Harleth, who also sings and acts but in the domestic sphere. Other artist figures also figure in the novel: Julius Klesmer, Catherine Arrowpoint, and the Meyrick family. In both works there is increased female agency and a move towards theatricality and the expression of female anger.

Emerging Voices:

"Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story" and Adam Bede

Chapter I

Caterina Sarti as Eliot's Female Artist Prototype

The character of Caterina Sarti in "Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story," the second tale in Scenes of Clerical Life, is Eliot's first attempt at creating an artist figure. It is significant that her first creation is a female artist and that she appears in Eliot's first published work of fiction. The portrayal of the female artist serves as a way for women's concerns to be expressed and provides an outlet for female anger and despair. It also suggests the transformative power of art. In "Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story" Eliot creates a prototype that is to re-emerge again in various manifestations right through the end of her last novel. We can plot a trajectory that begins with Caterina Sarti and ends with the Alcharisi in Daniel Deronda.

Most of the action of "Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story" takes place in 1788, though the narrative is told largely through flashback many years later. Caterina Sarti is an Italian orphan that the aristocratic Cheverels adopt during one of their trips to Italy, intending her to be a sort of servant-companion for Lady Cheverel. However, when Caterina's talent for singing is discovered her fate changes. She receives formal training and becomes a fixture of the Cheverel drawing room. As Caterina grows older she falls in love with the heir to the Cheverel estate, the Cheverel's nephew Captain Anthony Wybrow. He leads her to believe that their love is mutual but he has no intention of marrying her. Maynard Gilfil is the local vicar of Shepperton who has loved Caterina since they were children. The story comes to a climax when Sir Christopher Cheverel arranges for the fiancée of Wybrow, Beatrice Assher, and her mother, who is an old love

of Sir Christopher's youth, to stay at Cheverel Manor. Caterina finally realizes that Wybrow does not love her and has merely trifled with her affections. In a fit of rage she determines to kill him but finds he has already died of heart failure. She flees the manor, is taken care of by Gilfil and his sister, and finally marries Gilfil. She never quite recovers and dies shortly thereafter in childbirth. Gilfil never remarries and continues to love Caterina into his old age. He keeps her room in his house locked, as a sort of shrine to her memory.

Eliot's first artist figure is not very developed as a character and remains basically a sketch. However, what is remarkable is that in Caterina Sarti are qualities that will be applied to all Eliot's later artist characters. Most notable is that the female artists are associated exclusively with music and voice, which provides a metaphor for the larger theme of female "voice" as self-expression. As with Caterina, the artists are "others" in their society, usually foreign, which puts them at odds with those around them. A sense of disapproval from their society hovers around these figures. Many of the female artists are angry at their lot in society. Caterina's passion, anger, and rebellion can be found in varying degrees in Eliot's future female artists. Certain threads and narrative conventions that reappear in later works also begin in this tale. For example, Caterina's father loses his voice, as Armgart and the Alcharisi do. The concept of gender as being performed and as a way for her characters to move beyond the confines of their prescribed spheres is introduced to some extent in Caterina, allowing her aspects of character that belong to the traditional masculine sphere. The pairing of contrasting characters that embody differing degrees of the gender spectrum is also introduced in this early story. The use of painting and music as gendered metaphors that emphasize Eliot's critique of separate spheres is

also begun in this early work. Finally, Caterina, like Eliot's future female artists, is ultimately silenced. In one way or another, Eliot's female performing figures either lose or renounce their "voice," the two meanings of the word inextricably intertwined. In the figure of Caterina Sarti, Eliot establishes a pattern that really doesn't change very much in her later works with artist figures. The fact that so many of the threads that run throughout Eliot's oeuvre are found in her first work indicates that the theme runs deep.

Midler defines the essential qualities of Caterina as Eliot's prototypical artist figure, writing that singing is "her escape from passive obscurity, providing artistic sublimation for a bitterness she has been conditioned to consider shockingly unnatural and unfeminine….Tina finds in artistic expression an alternative to repressive domesticity, and at least a transitory sense of freedom" (97-98). These words can also be applied to many of Eliot's non-artistic female characters, such as Maggie Tulliver and Dorothea Brooke, who struggle with their lot and have a desire to be something more than their society allows them. Eliot's female artists find expression for this conflict in voice—whether performing in the drawing room, on the village green, or on the stages of Europe.

In Eliot's first attempt at creating the artist figure, purpose and ambition are largely not addressed; rather their absence is. Caterina has no chance at "purpose" other than what her music provides her. She is extremely isolated, displaced from her origins, her destiny shaped by the Cheverels. She has minimal exposure to other people and other ways. Yet she is ambitious in the only way she can be—she falls in love with and pursues a relationship with the heir of the Cheverel's, Captain Wybrow. However, the Cheverels expect that she will marry Gilfil, Lord Cheverel's ward and the more appropriate choice

for Caterina. He has long been in love with her and is closer to her in social status. However, Caterina rejects Gilfil and is determined in her love for Wybrow, though she tries to accept the fact that he must marry according to the wishes of Sir Christopher. In this high-reaching ambition of hers she is like Eliot's future female artists. The little agency and self-assertion Caterina does express often comes as a result of her uncontrolled anger at being thwarted. This supports Carroll Viera's argument regarding Eliot's perhaps "unconscious fear that the artistic vision embodied destructive as well as creative forces" (764). When Caterina was a child "there were gleams of fierce resistance to any discipline that had a harsh or unloving aspect. For the only thing in which Caterina showed any precocity was a certain ingenuity in vindictiveness" (GLS 114-15). Mixed with the intensity of her loving nature is Caterina's willful, destructive behavior as seen when she rebels against her superiors. As a child, "she had revenged herself for an unpleasant prohibition by pouring the ink into Mrs. Sharp's workbasket; and once, when Lady Cheverel took her doll from her, … the little minx straightway climbed on a chair and threw down a flower-vase …" (GLS 115). This impulse towards anger and destruction is largely suppressed as she grows older but remains an integral part of her character, as is manifested later in her attempt to kill Wybrow. Although the attempt fails and she finds him already dead, her conscience haunts her and ultimately unhinges her. We see her brief and only attempt at somewhat constructive agency immediately after this incident, as she determines to flee Cheverel Manor, earn her own money, and become independent. She tells Gilfil, "I shall live poorly, and get my own bread" (GLS 187). When illness and despair overtake her, she turns to the protection of Gilfil and they marry, though from that point on Caterina seems to have lost any willpower and strength

that she had earlier possessed. In the end, Caterina's talent does not sustain her from the tumult of her emotions. The conditions of her life are antithetical to her artistic nature and it is suggested that she ultimately dies from debilitating despair.

As with nearly all her artist characters Eliot makes Caterina an "other" in her society. Caterina's most notable way of being "other" lies in the fact that she is foreign. Fifteen years before the current action, the Cheverels go to Italy so that Sir Christopher can pursue his interest in Gothic architecture and begin planning the renovation of his manor. At the same time Lady Cheverel pursues her own interest in singing and engages a singing teacher and a copier of music, Signore Sarti. When the impoverished copier dies, leaving his infant daughter Caterina an orphan, the Cheverels, who have no children of their own, decide to bring her back to England with them. Not that they

> had any idea of adopting her as their daughter, and giving her their own rank in life. They were much too English and aristocratic to think of anything so romantic. No! The child would be brought up … as a protégé, to be ultimately useful, perhaps in sorting worsted, keeping accounts, reading aloud, and otherwise supplying the place of spectacles when her ladyship's eyes should wax dim. (GLS 109)

In addition, they thought "it would be a good Christian work to train this little Papist into a good Protestant, and graft as much English fruit as possible on the Italian stem" (GLS 109). Except for music, Caterina is completely severed from the customs and beliefs of her homeland.

In nearly every way Caterina is contrasted with the Cheverels and their heir. In a description of Anthony Wybrow and Caterina they are physically contrasted: "he, with

his exquisite outline and rounded fairness, like an Olympian god; she dark and tiny, like a gypsy changeling" (GLS 104). Caterina is diminutive, dark, passionate, and powerless compared to Lady Cheverel who is statuesque, fair, and reserved, with the consciousness of her superior status. "The elder lady … is tall…She is nearly fifty, but her complexion is still fresh and beautiful, with the beauty of an auburn blonde; her proud pouting lips, and her head thrown a little backward as she walks, give an expression of hauteur which is not contradicted by the cold grey eye" (GLS 92). She speaks in a tone of authority to which Caterina obeys. Though initially intended as a sort of servant, the discovery of Caterina's singing talent elevates her status somewhat, although she is more of a decorative pet than anything else. We are told "She became the pet of the household, thrusting Sir Christopher's favourite bloodhound … into a merely secondary position" (GLS 114), and Wybrow tells his fiancé, Miss Assher, "she has always been the pet of the house …" (GLS 140). Animal imagery is often used to describe her, most often as "the little southern bird" (GLS 114), and "little monkey" (GLS 123), Sir Christopher's favorite epithet for her. These questionable terms of endearment highlight Caterina's ambiguous status in the Cheverel household; she is warmly regarded, especially by Sir Christopher, yet constantly made aware of her lower status. She is there to perform for the Cheverel's upon request. Sir Christopher tells her, "Come, come, more singing, more singing, little monkey" (GLS 130), to which she is conditioned to obey.

Her demonstrative nature elicits affection from Sir Christopher who seems to adore his "little monkey" but is looked down on by Lady Cheverel as theatrical and excessive. After Caterina sings one evening for the group, she prepares the table for their card game. Still in an emotional state from her singing, she arranged the table

> then, with her rapid fairy suddenness of motion, threw herself on her knees, and clasped Sir Christopher's knee. He bent down, stroked her cheek, and smiled.
>
> "Caterina, that is foolish," said Lady Cheverel. "I wish you would leave off those stage-players' antics."
>
> She jumped up, arranged the music on the harpsichord, and then … quietly glided out of the room. (GLS 101)

The men—Sir Christopher, Gilfil, and Wybrow—are responsive to her charms, and her openness and affection win over the servants, who initially are prejudiced on account of her foreign origins. However, Lady Cheverel and Beatrice Assher perceive her passionate nature as contrary to how an English woman should behave and view her charms as suspect.

In making Caterina Italian, Eliot uses the established convention of contrasting the passion and artistry of Italy with the reserve and coldness of England. Caterina's southern temperament is the stereotypical one of passion, hot-temperedness, and sensuality. Eliot obliquely suggests Caterina's sensuous nature in the opening description of old Gilfil's locked room that he keeps preserved, in an action that takes place thirty years later. The room is full of feminine accoutrements and in the miniature of Caterina, she wears a "little cap, with a cherry-coloured bow, … a coquettish head-dress, but the eyes spoke of sadness rather than of coquetry" (GLS 89). Throughout we are told of her large, expressive fawn-like eyes, and the narrator tells us that "the ground tones of poor little Caterina's nature [were] intense love and fierce jealousy" (GLS 102), and "love, anger, and jealousy were struggling in that young soul.…Poor Tina was the slave of

[Wybrow's] voice and touch" (GLS 103). Caterina is presented as both passionate and vulnerable, explosive and self-contained.

Eliot's choice in making Caterina an Italian-English combination builds on the few earlier representations of the artist-heroine as defined by Lewis: Madame de Stael's Corrine, George Sand's Consuelo, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning's "Aurora Leigh." The earliest of these works, Corinne, is the prototype Eliot used for her fictional female artist. De Stael's Corinne is half Italian, half British, and is orphaned as a youth. She is a famous performer in Italy who falls in love with Lord Nelvil, who represents the cold British stereotype—emotionally inaccessible, reserved, and austere. Where Corinne flourishes in the warmth of Italy, she slowly declines after her visit to England. Moers writes of the "fantasy of the independent woman's life, called Corinne, which Mme de Stael first located in an Italy of dreamland, that feminine somewhere else …" (204), from which Eliot and others were to draw.

Similarly, George Sand's Consuelo is a poor orphan reputed to be of gypsy blood. She too is a talented performer who reaches fame in Italy but who flees to Germany to escape love intrigues and dishonorable designs on her. Her music teacher arranges a teaching position for her with an aristocratic family, where her identity as a famed diva can be concealed. In the cold north she hides her talents and the story shifts from her public role of performer to her private life and her relationship with the heir, Count Albert Rudolstadt. Only when she returns to Italy does she resume her role as a prima donna. As with Corinne, the openness and artistry of Italy stimulate her talent, and the repressive North suppresses it.

However, the strongest association of the female artist with Italy is with "Aurora Leigh." Moers writes that "In the history of Victorian Italophilia no name is more prominent than that of Elizabeth Barrett Browning….[She places] Italy as *the* place for the woman of genius …" (201). Though not a singer but a poet, Aurora Leigh is nonetheless associated with voice and performance. Caterina's story in particular resonates with that of Aurora. Louise Hudd writes that in "Aurora Leigh" "Italy and England are contrasted as lands of repression and passion respectively. Like Aurora, Caterina Sarti is transplanted from her native Italy….Unlike Aurora, however, she is always kept on the margins of English society, perpetually foreign" (69). For Aurora, England squelches her talents, whereas Italy nourishes them. As with Lady Cheverel, Aurora Leigh's aunt is of the same cold nature and acts as a repressive, constraining influence. The North holds no place for these female artists of southern temperament. Their exuberant, public talent has no opportunity for expression. In Corinne, Lord Nelvil's friend Edgermond tells him, "only Englishwomen are right for England….home is everything in our country, everything for a woman at least….in our country where men have active careers, women have to stay in the shadow, and it would be too bad to put Corinne there" (de Stael 133). It becomes repressive for Corinne, as it is for Caterina. Caterina's passionate nature is constantly suppressed and forced into a small conformity that finds freedom and expansion only in her singing.

Eliot follows de Stael, Sand, and Barrett Browning in portraying the Italian culture as feminine. DeCuir writes that "Eliot imparts an organic quality to Caterina's talent, implying that it is something indigenous to the Italian culture" (71). DeCuir points out that Lady Cheverel develops her talent for singing while she is in Italy but that once

she returns to England no further reference is made to her singing. "The implication is that without the nourishment of Italy, the feminine realm, the talent will wither away and die" (DeCuir 71). This is supported by Lady Cheverel's hiring an Italian singing master for Caterina, under whose tutelage she blossoms.

In the prototype presented by Caterina we can see the foreshadowing of Eliot's future female artists. Even in this first creation Eliot breaks away from the earlier representations of the female artist by adding anger and rebellion to the character. Unlike Corrine and Consuelo, Caterina is self-sacrificing only up to a certain point. Unlike Aurora Leigh, who is governed by a level head and firm vision, Caterina is driven by her passions. She is willful and rebellious with a potential for destructive, violent actions. This reflects society's fear of the female artist who was often perceived as a threat. One way Eliot emphasizes this is by linking Caterina to revolution. Hudd points out that "Caterina is singing in the summer of 1788 and her disturbed state is equated by the narrator with that of pre-Revolutionary France …" (69). Eliot makes us aware of the parallel actions in the opening scenes: "In that summer … the great nation of France was agitated by conflicting thoughts and passions, which were but the beginning of sorrows. And in our Caterina's little breast, too, there were terrible struggles" (GLS 105). Citing a passage where Gilfil tells Caterina that "the peace of the whole family depends on your power of governing yourself" (GLS 145), Hudd notes that the references to revolutionary France

> widen the consequences of the repression of feminine self-expression into a specifically political issue for the nation, as well as a personal curtailment of freedom….Caterina's self-control within the family is thus

> equated with the peace of the nation of which the family forms a fundamental unit. These are the arguments of the England of the 1850s as much as the 1780s and 90s. It was believed that if women forgot the importance of their morally exemplary roles as wives and mothers, then society would be riven. (70)

The suggestion that female repression can lead to anger and violence is explored by Eliot in later works involving the artist figure, but it is first expressed in Caterina. Caterina's rebellion is, however, largely silent and short lived. Hudd notes that "Although 'Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story' raises the revolutionary potential of women, it avoids a direct confrontation with the issue….[It] broaches the subject of female discontent only to contain it, but the relationship between domesticity, revolution, and singing is readdressed in [Armgart]" (71) and in Daniel Deronda.

Eliot links Caterina with Italy to bring attention to the limitations society places on women and identifies Italy as an idealized place for the woman of talent. However, Eliot also brings her cultural critique down to the individual level and finds fault with a weakness she perceives in women—their susceptibility to their emotions. She suggests that women's limited sphere of action results in an imbalanced nature. In a letter to her friend Mrs. Robert Lytton, Eliot writes that "we women are always in danger of living too exclusively in the affections; and though our affections are perhaps the best gifts we have, we ought also to have our share of the more independent life—some joy in things for their own sake" (Haight, GE's Letters 379). In the introduction to Corinne, Avriel Goldberger posits that one reason for Corinne's downfall, which also applies to Caterina, can be found in "Stael's essay 'On the Influence of the Passions' of 1793: the destructive

force of emotional dependence on another person" (xxxviii). Though less so for Aurora Leigh, all these early artist heroines—Corrine, Consuelo, and Aurora—are largely defined by their love interests and the accompanying emotional dependence. Caterina's story both falls into this plot line and resists it. The frame for Eliot's tale is Gilfil's life-long love for Caterina; however, for Caterina's story Eliot moves away from the love plot and subtly shifts the focus to female dissatisfaction with her lot. Music becomes the means of expression for this and becomes representative of the desire for something greater than life offers her. One of the arias Caterina sings expresses a deep sense of loss and rebellion against fate, <u>Orfeo's</u> "che faro." Wendy Bashant writes that for Caterina this aria "arise[s] from a rebellion against her status as a woman" (228), which Caterina sings again after her recovery. Caterina's story is really that of music and how it serves as an antidote to her narrow existence. Eliot presents music as more powerful to Caterina than her love for Wybrow. When he wraps his arm around her waist she feels an "electric thrill" (GLS 102). However, as critics have noted, when the chord on the harpsichord is struck Caterina feels an even stronger "electric shock" (GLS 190). Caterina might have been able to give up Wybrow for Sir Christopher's sake, but she could never have given up music and retained her identity.

In the character of Caterina Eliot first uses singing as a metaphor for female "voice"—for being heard, for expressing oneself, for speaking one's mind. One thing that distinguishes Caterina from Eliot's future female artists is that Caterina never voices her feelings and anger in words, as we find in the strong denunciations of Armgart and the Alcharisi. Caterina is largely silent and she seems to speak more with her eyes than with words; it is her singing that provides her "voice." The parishioners who knew Caterina

remember her eyes and her singing: “Mrs. Gilfil looked like a ‘furriner wi’ such eyes … an’ a voice as went through you when she sung at church” (GLS 89), and “an’ Mrs. Gilfil sung, you never heard the like….her voice seemed sometimes to fill the room; an’ then it went low an’ soft, as if it was whisperin’ close to your heart like” (GLS 90). We are told that her speaking voice is also beautiful. Along with her physical grace, her voice “in its low-toned tenderness, recalled the love-notes of the stock-dove, [and] gave her a more than usual charm” (GLS 116). The only time we really hear her speak is when she is alone with Wybrow; to all others she gives only brief responses or is silent. Yet even with Wybrow she holds back what she really feels, suppressing her rebellious voice: “There was a voice speaking in Caterina’s mind, to which she had never yet given vent. That voice said continually, ‘Why did he make me love him—why did he let me know he loved me, if he knew all the while that he couldn’t brave everything for my sake?’” (GLS 103). When the unsuspecting Sir Christopher teasingly refers to Wybrow’s charming fiancé, Gilfil sees that it wounds Caterina and takes her aside from the group, but with him she is silent. He sees that she is fighting back the tears and suggests she walk with him, but “She made no answer….Caterina complied silently….Their walk was perfectly silent …” (GLS 99). Caterina uses silence to hide her feelings. We are told of her “habitually quiet mouse-like ways” (GLS 148). It is only when she sings that she expresses the depths and complexities of her feelings. “Her singing was what she could do best; it was her one point of superiority, in which it was probable she would excel the highborn beauty whom Anthony was to woo; and her love, her jealousy, her pride, her rebellion against her destiny, made one stream of passion which welled forth in the deep rich tones of her voice” (GLS 101). Singing strengthens Caterina in her most trying

moments. It is the one thing that connects her to her origins and to her innermost self. In the depths of anguish and despair, it is only her singing that brings her some relief. Singing was

> the one thing in which she ceased to be passive, and became prominent…. She sometimes wondered herself how it was that, whether she felt sad or angry, crushed with the sense of Anthony's indifference, or burning with impatience under Miss Assher's attentions, it was always a relief to her to sing. Those full deep notes she sent forth seemed to be lifting the pain from her heart—seemed to be carrying away the madness from her brain. (GLS 148)

Singing allows Caterina expression and elevates her above the others. She embodies and becomes something far greater than her anger and soars above the insignificance of her lot. In addition to providing a release for her pent up emotions, music connects her with the operas of the outside world, the beauty created by the composers, and the mythologies they drew from. In this way Caterina briefly leaves the confines of Cheverel Hall and connects to the larger world. In this larger sphere the amplitude of her emotions find the room and freedom to express itself. Caterina's talent is larger than the Shepperton community can accommodate. Lewis writes of Caterina, that "although she never aspires to perform on stage—is a gifted contralto with the temperament and imagination of an artist" (168). Unfortunately, Cheverel Hall is the only stage she will ever know and it is far too small for her potential to be realized.

Although Caterina is emotionally close to Sir Christopher, it is Lady Cheverel she is most like. Lady Cheverel too is largely silent. We rarely hear her speak and never get

to know her. We are told only of her appearance, mannerisms, and a few details such as people wondering why she didn't take a separate house while the dusty renovation of the manor was taking place. We are told that "though Lady Cheverel did not share her husband's architectural enthusiasm, she had too rigorous a view of a wife's duties, and too profound a deference for Sir Christopher, to regard submission as a grievance" (GLS 115). Lady Cheverel is a product of the same separate spheres ideology that limits Caterina. Henrietta Cheverel represents the dutiful wife whose sole object is to please her husband. However, Lady Cheverel loves music and is a talented singer herself who had "not only fine musical taste, but a fine soprano voice" (GLS 105). It is she who employs Caterina's father Sarti and tries to assist him in his illness. After adopting Caterina and giving her a rudimentary education, it is she who recognizes and develops Caterina's talent:

> When the fact that Caterina had a remarkable ear for music, and a still more remarkable voice, attracted Lady Cheverel's notice, the discovery was very welcome both to her and Sir Christopher. Her musical education became at once an object of interest. Lady Cheverel devoted much time to it; and the rapidity of Tina's progress surpassing all hopes, an Italian singing-master was engaged, for several years, to spend some months together at Cheverel Manor. This unexpected gift made a great alteration in Caterina's position … [and] endeared her to Lady Cheverel, who loved music above all things…. (GLS 117)

After Caterina performs for the group at Cheverel Manor we are told that "She had a rare contralto, which Lady Cheverel, who had high musical taste, had been careful to preserve

her from straining. 'Excellent, Caterina,' said Lady Cheverel …'I never heard you sing that so well'" (GLS 101). Just as architecture and the restoration of the manor is Sir Christopher's passion, music is Lady Cheverel's. This is the one area in which she expresses her own interests and asserts herself as an authority.

Lady Cheverel is responsible for establishing Caterina as a singer. Caterina becomes a kind of ornament of the manor, still a subservient role, though much less so than the servant role she was intended for. In this she is like the future Julius Klesmer in Daniel Deronda, whom the Arrowpoints hire for a similar purpose. As a man he is able to earn a living from his talent and develop it into a career, freeing himself from dependency on the Arrowpoints. Caterina has no such means of freeing herself. She is entirely dependent on the Cheverels. However, her singing affords her meaning, freedom of expression, status, and value.

Music is also presented as healing and transformative to such a nature as Caterina's. As Gilfil suspected, it would be music that would bring Caterina back to life, after her flight and illness. Caterina's recovery is negligible at Gilfil's sister's house until one day the sister's little boy strikes a key on the harpsichord:

> The vibration rushed through Caterina like an electric shock: it seemed as if at that instant a new soul were entering into her, and filling her with a deeper, more significant life….her soul was floating in its true familiar element of delicious sound….An active power was reawakened, and must make a new epoch in Caterina's recovery. (GLS 190)

Singing cannot be separated from Caterina's identity. It supports her when she is at her lowest and is the only thing that reawakens her to life. Although it is Gilfil who provides the environment for Caterina's healing, it is music that brings it about.

Related to the use of female singing as a metaphor for female "voice" is Eliot's use of painting and music to symbolize the rigidity of the gender based separate spheres ideology. Painting is associated with the masculine sphere where woman serves as object, muse, and possession. Painting is associated with stasis, tradition, and the past. Music, on the other hand, is associated with women, change, expression, and "voice."

For example, Caterina is first presented to us in the miniature portrait in the chamber that Gilfil keeps sealed off. The miniature speaks of possession and objectification. Though there is also a miniature of Gilfil, we have already been introduced to Gilfil and he has been established as a person of consequence in his community. Caterina is introduced to us as a silent possession and remains one throughout the tale, belonging at different stages to the Cheverels, to Wybrow, and lastly to Gilfil.

The motif of painting with its objectification of women is suggested in the flashback set at Cheverel Manor when Caterina's story begins. We are presented with an afternoon scene in which Caterina and Lady Cheverel are seated on the lawn of Cheverel Manor. There are several allusions to paintings and the two women are portrayed through the eye of an imaginary painter. They are first described in a painterly manner as objects in a pleasant scene by a presumably male narrator. Lady Cheverel "treads the lawn as if she were one of Sir Joshua Reynold's stately ladies, who had suddenly stepped from her frame to enjoy the evening cool" (GLS 92). Lady Cheverel and Caterina

> sat down, making two bright patches of red and white and blue on the green background of the laurels and the lawn.…And a charming picture of Cheverel Manor would have made that evening, if some English Watteau had been there to paint it….and on this lawn our two ladies, whose part in the landscape the painter … would represent with a few little dabs of red and white and blue. (GLS 92-93)

These two women are reduced to dabs of paint by the male narrator and his imaginary male painter. The scene then shifts from the painter's gaze of the women to the three men inside the manor who also watch, and desire, the two women: "all three had a personal interest" (GLS 93) in the women.

The men, in particular Sir Christopher and Wybrow, are repeatedly identified with the portraiture of the manor, representing their lineage and the patriarchal powers identified with the manor. Sir Christopher is first introduced in relation to his portrait and the identification with the manor: "Sir Christopher Cheverel was a splendid old gentleman, as any one may see who enters the saloon at Cheverel Manor, where his full-length portrait … hangs side by side with that of his wife, the stately lady seated on the lawn" (GLS 94). The portraits in Cheverel Manor are family portraits, symbolizing the unchanging status quo, which is rooted in history and pervades society and represents tradition and hierarchy. The paintings are about the people who commissioned them, the long line of the Cheverels, rather than about the artists who painted them.

One of the first conversations we hear is about the portraits of Cheverel Manor. Sir Christopher discusses the hanging of the paintings with his wife and the placement of their portraits by Reynolds. He says to his heir Wybrow, "You see, Anthony, I am

leaving you no good places on the walls for you and your wife" (GLS 98). There follows a description of the drawing room: "the walls hung with full-length portraits of knights and dames….Here hung the portrait of Sir Anthony Cheverel, who in the reign of Charles II was the renovator of the family splendour …" (GLS 100) and a portrait of his wife, "a fit mother of 'large-acred' heirs" (GLS 100).

The gallery where Caterina and Wybrow secretly meet in the evenings is full of art objects and "queer old family portraits" (GLS 102), acquisitions of the Cheverels. One moonlit evening Caterina expresses to him her anger and frustration at what she believes is their mutual situation of being in love. He, however, has a different interpretation, which he keeps to himself. After they kiss, he thinks to himself, in a patronizing manner, "Poor little Tina! It would make her very happy to have me. But she is a mad little thing" (GLS 104). Like the art objects in the gallery, Caterina is there also as an acquisition for the amusement of Wybrow. She is something to derive pleasure from, to consume even. In Wybrow's mind she is "comparable to smoking the finest Latakia …" (GLS 120).

Throughout the tale, painting is identified with the masculine realm of acquisition, objectification of the female, and possession. It underscores the patriarchal structures that shape the world Caterina finds herself in. Music, on the contrary, is representative of the feminine. It is associated with Caterina and Lady Cheverel, and more generally, with feminine Italy and its associations of warmth, love and passion, and the enabling of female talent. Later in the story music is also associated with Gilfil's sister, with the harpsichord in her house, and with the feminine nurturing of Gilfil whose idea it is to provide the harpsichord. Where painting is passive and static, representing the past,

music is active, an expression of the moment, and by contrast, represents the future—perhaps a different future for women. Jennifer Uglow writes that "Cheverel Manor is full of stiff ancestral British portraits....To this artificial plastic world of art and architecture … Caterina brings the mobility and emotion of the theatre …" (87).

In addition to contrasting music and painting as gendered metaphors, Eliot also plays with the gendered attributes assigned to the two spheres. In all her depictions of the artist figure Eliot bestows qualities on them that are associated with the opposite sphere. This results in the artist embodying more of the gender spectrum. This serves two purposes: it allows for more action on the part of the artist, particularly for the female artists, and it is an argument for a fuller definition of masculine and feminine. This occurs to a greater degree in Eliot's later works but it can be found in an incipient form in this tale as well. For example, Caterina appears docile and meek until her anger is roused. At these times Caterina briefly steps into the masculine sphere of action, power, independence, and violence—all viewed as unfeminine in Victorian separate spheres ideology.

Although Wybrow has some qualities that are ostensibly feminine, such as being passive and weak, they are used to criticize the effete and moribund aristocracy he represents, which is symbolized by his weak heart. This is contrasted to Gilfil's robust health and vitality. However, Gilfil's most salient qualities, and the ones that Eliot most valued, are those of nurturing and self-sacrifice, typically associated with the female sphere. He puts Caterina's needs before his own and though it pains him he supports her and provides a cover for her in her love for Wybrow. When she is ill he provides a healing environment and tends to her.

Although Eliot employs the reversal of separate spheres attributes, at the same time Gilfil and Caterina are in many ways stereotypically masculine and feminine. This keeps them both appealing and familiar. Eliot sets this up in the opening pages in the description of old Gilfil in his rectory, in which he is firmly ensconced in the male sphere: "the bare tables, the large old-fashioned horse-hair chairs, and the threadbare Turkey carpet perpetually fumigated with tobacco, seemed to tell a story of a wifeless existence that was contradicted by no portrait, no piece of embroidery, no faded bit of pretty triviality, hinting of taper-fingers and small feminine ambitions" (GLS 88). This is contrasted to the description of Caterina's room in which everything is diminutive, delicate, and feminine: "on the little dressing-table there was a dainty looking-glass … a little black lace kerchief; a faded satin pin-cushion … a scent bottle, and a large green fan, … and a pair of tiny red slippers, with a bit of tarnished silver embroidery on them" (GLS 88). Gilfil is described as large and strong, Caterina as tiny and fairy-like. By keeping them traditionally masculine and feminine, Eliot keeps them aligned with separate spheres ideals, while layering them with attributes from the other sphere. In this way she expands the definition of what it means to be masculine and feminine.

To further highlight the differences in the artist figures Eliot contrasts them with a conventional character of the same sex who personifies the gender expectations of the day. For Caterina this is Wybrow's fiancée, Beatrice Assher. She is pretty, coquettish, acquiring a husband her only ambition. She exhibits both female vanity and female jealousy. Though she is presented as clever and perceptive, she is diminished by her role as husband-hunter. There is the suggestion that she will probably grow to be like her mother who is intellectually dull and uninteresting. Lady Assher's only topic of

conversation is her deceased husband and what his tastes were like in food and clothes. Her speech is compared to "dribbling like a leaky shower-bath …" (GLS 129). By contrasting Caterina to Beatrice, Eliot highlights Caterina's uniqueness and places her conflict into sharper focus.

In the representation of Caterina Sarti Eliot begins an argument that continues through all her works. It addresses the unfairness and imbalance manifested by separate spheres ideology, particularly as experienced by women. All the women in the tale show signs of the limitations placed on them by society. The difference is that as an artist Caterina gives expression to this through her singing and later actively rebels against it in her murderous intentions towards Wybrow. Like most women, part of Caterina's limitations is the result of the paltry education she has had. Until Caterina's singing talent is discovered she had only the most rudimentary of educations—reading, writing, catechism, and needlework. We are told that "for a long time, there was no thought of giving her any more elaborate education. It is very likely that to her dying day Caterina thought the earth stood still, and that the sun and stars moved round it" (GLS 116). The narrator makes clear that if it weren't for Caterina's unique voice she would have remained at the level of a servant. There is the suggestion that girls turn into superfluous women if they are not somehow exceptional. "After those first years in which little girls are petted like puppies and kittens, there comes a time when it seems less obvious what they can be good for, especially when, like Caterina, they give no particular promise of cleverness or beauty" (GLS 117). The discovery of her talent "associated her at once with the pleasures of the drawing-room. Insensibly she came to be regarded as one of the

family, and the servants began to understand that Miss Sarti was to be a lady after all" (GLS 117).

For most women, as for Caterina, their only opportunity for substantially improving their lives lay in marriage. This could best be brought about through the cultivation of drawing room values—beauty, coquetry, and superficial skill in the arts. Failure to master these could result in the stigma that is associated with remaining single. When Caterina tells Sir Christopher that she does not wish to marry Gilfil, he replies, "I can't have you withering away into an old maid. I hate old maids. They make me dismal to look at them" (GLS 160). Caterina does not wish to marry Gilfil and cannot marry Wybrow, leaving her with virtually no other options. To complicate the issue, Eliot also seems to portray marriage as antithetical to art, a theme she is to develop in her later works. DeCuir writes, "After Caterina's marriage to Maynard Gilfil … there are no further references to the continuation of her art … [and] childbirth … drains her of vitality and kills her" (74). The loss of one's voice is followed by either literal or figural death in Eliot's female artists. Marriage is equated with silence for her exceptional women.

Although Caterina is the focus of the imbalance of societal values, the overarching result of this is that it hurts everyone involved. Caterina isn't the only one to suffer. Sir Christopher is also brought into the ring of pain and Gilfil is represented as the one who suffers most. After Caterina's convalescence at Gilfil's sister's home where Caterina comes to love him, he "tasted a few months of perfect happiness….[but] Tina died, and Maynard Gilfil's love went with her into deep silence for evermore" (GLS 192-93). In the epilogue we find that Gilfil never fully recovers from his loss. "It is with men

as with trees: if you lop off their finest branches, into which they were pouring their young life-juice, the wounds will be healed over with some rough boss, some odd excrescence; and what might have been a grand tree expanding into liberal shade, is but a whimsical misshapen trunk" (GLS 193).

Eliot's argument is for more balance between the sexes, between what is valued in the spheres, and for a larger conception of humanity. She argues against the brittle ego and judgmental harshness associated with Sir Christopher and the patriarchal order. Sir Christopher tells Gilfil, "I lay my plans well, and I never swerve….A strong will is the only magic" (GLS 165). Sir Christopher is kind but unforgiving and rigid in his ideas, as is revealed in his relationship with his sister. After Wybrow's death, Sir Christopher tells Gilfil, with "the first tears he had shed since boyhood …'I'm very weak, Maynard—God help me! I didn't think anything would unman me in this way; but I've built everything on that lad. Perhaps I've been wrong in not forgiving my sister. She lost one of *her* sons a little while ago. I've been too proud and obstinate'" (GLS 175). We are told that Wybrow became Sir Christopher's heir as a result of "an implacable quarrel with his elder sister; for a power of forgiveness was not among Sir Christopher's virtues" (GLS 119). Eliot includes this detail to show that it is in men's power to disinherit their sisters and their offspring (or wives, as happens in Middlemarch and Daniel Deronda). When Gilfil tells Sir Christopher that Caterina did love Wybrow and that Wybrow encouraged it, Sir Christopher says, "God help me! I thought I saw everything and was stone blind all the while" (GLS 176). The servant's opinion of Sir Christopher reflects the rigidity and willfulness of his character: "My lady knows better than cross Sir Cristifer in what he's set his mind on.…Sir Cristifer'll hev his own way, *that* you may tek your oath. An' i' the

right on't too. He's a gentleman born, an's got the money" (GLS 113). His neighbors consider him "An obstinate, crotchety man" (GLS 115). The narrator says of him, "Dear old gentleman! He had gone through life a little flushed with the power of his will …" (GLS 123).

Eliot subtly argues for a different kind of male in the character of Gilfil. He is perceptive, sensitive, and nurturing. The narrator says of him, "In the love of a brave and faithful man there is always a strain of maternal tenderness …" (GLS 180). Gilfil exhibits the unconditional love of a mother. He understands Caterina's predicament and tries to protect her. He understands her well enough to know that music must be a necessary part of her recovery.

Conversely, with many of Eliot's performing females, their ego and ambition, associated with the masculine sphere, often sever them from human connection. While it might enable their talent initially, and offer some protection against their lot, it ultimately works against them. We see the first example of this in Caterina. Caterina is always ready to sing—in part because it is required of her to do so and because she loves it, but also because "while she was singing she was queen of the room …" (GLS 130). When she sings the first time for the Asshers and she perceives Beatrice's jealousy, she began "to know the fierce palpitations of triumph and hatred" (GLS 130). Caterina's focus is really on herself. As Lewis writes, Caterina "is rather indifferent to Gilfil's suffering, paying no heed that the music speaks to his heart as well" (174). Just as Caterina walks to Mosslands for "relief from her feverish excitement …" (GLS 136) Gilfil takes to hunting when he "had *his* fits of jealousy and sadness to get rid of …" (GLS 136). Gilfil suffers acutely but Caterina is too absorbed in her own feelings to care. Caterina does not have

the maternal, nurturing qualities that Gilfil does. While Eliot valorizes maternal love, it is often lacking in women and found in her more developed male characters. It is associated with the feminine sphere but portrayed as non-biological, a trait that is possible for all.

A large part of the argument for balance is for the valuing of feminine qualities, such as nurturing, tenderness, and self-sacrifice. When these are apparent in men, we get characters like Gilfil. When these are apparent in women the dynamics become more sisterly, less threatening. We see this in Caterina finding refuge first with her old nurse Dorcas, who always indulged and loved Caterina, and then with Gilfil's sister, Mrs. Heron. We are told that her "mild manners were very soothing to the poor bruised child—the more so as they had an air of sisterly equality, which was quite new to her" (GLS 188). Bashant writes that Caterina's relation to both these women "begin to underline the importance of a female community in Eliot's novels" (230), a theme that gets more fully developed in her later works.

On the other hand, when woman-as-object values prevail, women's relationships with each other suffer. For example, the presence of Mrs. Assher is an affront to Lady Cheverel, as Beatrice's is to Caterina. They are expected to tolerate the presence of these other women who represent either past or future love interests of the men they love. When Sir Christopher tells Wybrow that he hopes "Beatrice has her mother's tenderness as well as her mother's beauty," (GLS 98) we are told that "Lady Cheverel … seemed to wince a little under her husband's reminiscences" (GLS 98) of his earlier love. "She was further sobered by a little jealousy at Sir Christopher's anticipation of pleasure in seeing Lady Assher, enshrined in his memory as a mild-eyed beauty of sixteen …" (GLS 123). But on seeing his old flame, who is greatly changed by age, Lady Cheverel was "serenely

radiant in the assurance a single glance had given her of Lady Assher's inferiority …" (GLS 124). Beatrice is also affronted at Wybrow's duplicity and the false position he has put her in. She tells him, "I decline any share in the affection of a man who forfeits my respect by duplicity" (GLS 141). She too feels jealousy and animadversion towards Caterina for she perceives that there is something between them. And Caterina, comparing herself to the beautiful Beatrice, "seemed to feel, for the first time, all the folly of her former dream" (GLS 125), and "the sense of her own insignificance" (GLS 138). All these women are on stage, so to speak, vying for the attention of the males.

Eliot's subversive elements are usually located just under the surface—in subplots, dark doubles, and in details. In this short tale there is no subplot or dark double. Caterina is the dark element, representing both rebellion and despair. Although the narrator is portrayed as male and upholds tradition, subtle subversive elements percolate up through the text. For example, the scene with the Widow Hartopp has no direct relation to the rest of the story. It seems to be inserted as an indictment against the unfair treatment of women and the biased authority granted to the patriarchal system that Sir Christopher represents. In this scene one of Sir Christopher's recently widowed tenants begs for an interview with him so that she can plead her case to run the farm herself, as her husband desired. Sir Christopher shows a callous, condescending behavior throughout. He tells her, "You are about as able to manage the farm as your best milch cow. You'll be obliged to have some managing man, who will either cheat you of your money or wheedle you into marrying him" (GLS 96). She defends her character but he counters, with "A woman's always silly enough, but she's never quite as great a fool as she can be until she puts on a widow's cap" (GLS 97). She puts forth a convincing

argument of her ability and experience in farming and sites an example as support: "I know a deal o' farmin', an' was brought up i' the thick on it…An' there was my husband's great-aunt managed a farm for twenty year, an' left legacies to all her nephys an' nieces …" (GLS 97). Sir Christopher's faulty logic is subtly exposed as first he accuses this great-aunt of being "a woman six feet high, … a man in petticoats" (GLS 97), then, when the widow says that this aunt had had several marriage offers, he falls back on, "Aye, aye, that's what you all think. Every man that looks at you wants to marry you" (GLS 97). The widow has had the more convincing argument but he puts an end to their discussion by telling her, "it is useless to talk and cry. I have good reasons for my plans and never alter them" (GLS 97). He quickly ushers her out, perhaps sensing that he has been out argued. Though he shows a kinder side by securing her a cottage, he is portrayed as patronizing, dismissive, and rigid in his ideas towards women. Worst of all, he prevents the widow from performing two of the most valued separate spheres duties for a woman—taking care of her children and honoring her husband.

The imbalance of the values in the spheres results in the diminishment of women. Even the high-born Lady Cheverel is diminished. She does not like Beatrice's "occasional air of authority towards Captain Wybrow. A proud woman who has learned to submit, carries all her pride to the reinforcement of her submission, and looks down with severe superiority on all feminine assumption as 'unbecoming'" (GLS 147). For the widow, Caterina, Lady Cheverel, and Beatrice and her mother, diminishment is imposed on them by the littleness of their sphere.

The dominance of the patriarchal system and the smallness of the female sphere breeds despair in women, as is shown in Caterina. When Wybrow openly woos Beatrice

in front of Caterina, all her resolve and pride in singing desert her and she is left in despair. Caterina acutely feels her insignificance. The narrator locates her tiny place (and women's in general) in the larger masculine sphere of action:

> The astronomer was at his telescope; the great ships were labouring over the waves; the toiling eagerness of commerce, the fierce spirit of revolution, were only ebbing in brief rest; and sleepless statesmen were dreading the possible crisis of the morrow. What were our little Tina and her trouble in this mighty torrent, rushing from one unknown to another? Lighter than the smallest centre of quivering life in the water-drop, hidden and uncared for as the pulse of anguish in the breast of the tiniest bird that has fluttered down to its nest with the long-sought food, and has found the nest torn and empty. (GLS 132)

Even with an extraordinary talent, Caterina is virtually of no consequence to her world. The weight of this insignificance and frustration almost breaks Caterina. She thinks "when that rage and anger comes into me, I don't know what to do….I only feel my head and heart beating, and it seems as if I must do something dreadful....I must be very wicked" (GLS 150). She blames herself for the outrage she feels at her position in life.

Caterina does rebel. All her rage at the unfairness of her life gets directed at Wybrow in her attempt to kill him. He represents the oppressive forces in her life—he is part of the patriarchal system, is wealthy, aristocratic, and English. However, even her rebellion is futile and the evil of her wish to kill Wybrow ultimately leads to deeper despair and the life goes out of Caterina. Although she wishes to die, she "never thought of suicide. No sooner was the storm of anger passed than the tenderness and timidity of

her nature returned, and she could do nothing but love and mourn" (GLS 170). Her only solution is in flight and obscurity. She decides to leave the manor and thinks, "They will think I am dead … and by-and-by they will forget me, and Maynard will get happy again, and love some one else" (GLS 170-171). She cannot imagine that her absence will matter to anyone.

On finding Caterina gone the next morning, Gilfil fears the worse—that "Caterina had destroyed herself" (GLS 173). He has the gardener drag the waters, having "the fatal conviction that Caterina's body would be found in the water.…The pool … looked black and cruel under the somber sky, as if its cold depths held relentlessly all the murdered hope and joy of [his] life" (GLS 174). This description of the pool foreshadows Hetty's attempts to drown herself in Adam Bede, and Mirah's attempt in Daniel Deronda. The fear that Caterina might drown herself gestures towards the despair that future female characters will experience.

As she does with nearly all her female characters, Eliot pulls Caterina into the traditional female plot at the end. Caterina has been crushed by her circumstances and Gilfil is the only welcome option. Though she marries him and seems to reconnect with her music, it is not enough and in the end it does not sustain her. Caterina dies young and so there is no resolution; rather, there is the depiction of female restrictions and the rebellion and despair that accompany it.

Eliot's first creation of the female artist betrays a fear that the artist might be seen as self-absorbed exhibitionist. Bodenheimer writes that in her next reworking of the performing figure, Eliot uses a different strategy: "the treatment of Dinah Morris

preaching on the village green, expresses … the possibility of a performance that is not an act of self-display" (The Real Life of Mary Ann Evans 171).

After Caterina Sarti, Eliot pulls back from a female artist as heroine and never again makes her key female character an artist figure. The problematic angry female artist is suppressed but resurfaces later in subplots and in the poem "Armgart." In her next work, Eliot attempts to locate female agency through a more traditional and British character, Dinah Morris in the novel Adam Bede. Eliot develops the connection of agency and female "voice" and weaves in a stronger sense of purpose and ambition.

Chapter II

Ambition Sanctified: the Voice of Dinah Morris

Although there is no artist figure in Adam Bede, the trajectory of the female performer continues through the character of Dinah Morris. The theme of female agency, ambition, and purpose is again addressed through the medium of female voice. Dinah's performance is as closely associated with voice as is Caterina's singing, although Dinah's "voice" takes the form of preaching. As others have pointed out, the figure of Dinah can be seen as a performing figure. Auerbach writes, "From our first sight of her picturesque presence on the Green …, Dinah Morris … is incontrovertibly an actress" (Romantic Imprisonment 260-261). Although not as obvious as with the Italian Caterina, the influence of Corinne can be found in Dinah. Moers writes: "That the heroine of [Eliot's] first novel is a Methodist preacher rather than an opera singer hardly disguises the fact that Dinah Morris … is a true descendant of Corinne" (192). Though outwardly so different from one another, what links these two characters is that their passion and purpose takes the form of public "performance," through which they give something valuable to their audience: for Corinne it is the pleasure and inspiration of her art, for Dinah it is the salvation of the soul. Even though they are both beautiful women, they lose their self-consciousness once they connect to their performance. The preaching scene of Dinah in Chapter 2 in some ways echoes the crowning scene from Corinne. From Corinne:

> Bareheaded, she went forward, her gaze brightened by a sense of pleasure and gratitude she in no way sought to hide….She had just spoken, filling

> her soul with the noblest thoughts, and through the power of enthusiasm she was not timid anymore. No longer a fearful woman, she was an inspired priestess, joyously devoting herself to the cult of genius. (32)

And from Adam Bede, the anonymous traveler who watches Dinah was:

> struck with surprise … not so much at the feminine delicacy of her appearance, as at the total absence of self-consciousness in her demeanour….Dinah walked as simply as if she was going to market, and seemed as unconscious of her outward appearance as a little boy….the eyes … had the liquid look which tells that the mind is full of what it has to give out, rather than impressed by external objects. (24)

Like Corinne, Dinah can be seen as an inspired priestess, her enthusiasm being for the cult of Christian love rather than that of genius. In both there is the becoming one with their performance, though Corinne more clearly enjoys the attention and fame that accompanies her art, of which her beauty is an integral part. For Dinah, too, her beauty is part of the attraction of watching her preach. Village local Wiry Ben "couldn't help liking to look at her and listen to her …" (AB 30), though he was afraid her words will "haunt him somehow" (AB 30). From the beginning she is never mentioned without allusion to her beauty, referred to as "the pretty preacher woman" (AB 24), "that pretty Methodist preacher" (AB 275). However, once Dinah begins to speak, her external self recedes as her internal self finds expression in her voice, suggesting that women need not be objectified by performance in the public sphere.

In the same way that Caterina Sarti loses herself in her singing and connects with something greater than herself, Dinah becomes her words and enacts the passion of her

purpose. Perhaps the greatest difference between Caterina and Dinah lies in the nature of their stage. Caterina's is limited to Cheverel Manor. She is entertainment for the Cheverels and another of their Italian acquisitions they so love. Though Dinah inhabits a small world, her performance takes her throughout the extent of it. She performs within the thirty mile distance from Snowfield to Hayslope and in cities such as Leeds. She preaches to anyone who has need of her words, both privately and publicly. Her preaching allows her to reach far more people than Caterina's singing does. In the character of Dinah Morris, Eliot expands the audience and importance of the female performer. Dinah's performance can change and ameliorate the difficult lives of the people in her world, whereas Caterina's function is decorative. However, one crucial similarity in Caterina and Dinah lies in the fact that they largely perform at the bidding of someone above them – for Caterina it is the Cheverels, for Dinah it is her belief in a higher being who "has called [her] to speak his word …" (AB 37). It will not be until later manifestations of the female performer that Eliot has her female artists perform because they desire it for themselves and see it as their right.

While some critics view Eliot's performing figures negatively, as attention hungry exhibitionists, Auerbach takes a different view. She believes that "For George Eliot, the capacity to perform is a mark of the true heroine: since there is nothing grand they are allowed to do, through acting alone her women transcend incarceration in the private, domestic sphere" (Romantic Imprisonment 260). This is true for Caterina as well as Dinah. Performance is what sets them apart from the others in their worlds, what makes them exceptional, and what frees them from the constriction of the traditional feminine sphere. It provides them with a larger realm in which to engage their talents. While there

is always the suggestion of exhibitionism in public performance, what drives Caterina and Dinah is something from their internal self that finds expression through their unique voices.

In order to convince the reader of Dinah's sincerity and the power of her preaching, Eliot devotes nearly all of Chapter 2, "The Preaching," to the portrayal of Dinah's sermon on the village green. Bodenheimer writes that this "is a highly theatrical scene, with the whole wide landscape elaborately established as a backdrop …" ("Ambition" 17). Most of it is seen through the eyes of the unnamed traveler who is passing through Hayslope. It is a sophisticated outside person who provides us with the perceptive interpretation of Dinah's preaching. At the end of the novel we find that he is the same magistrate who assists Dinah in seeing Hetty in prison.

In some ways Dinah Morris is the embodiment of Eliot's typical heroine. Dinah is traditional, self-sacrificing, and modest, a stereotypical Victorian female ideal. Hers is a life of duty and service, just the opposite of Eliot's future rebellious female artists. Dinah is in keeping with Eliot's practice of having her heroines embody traditional values. However, viewed from another perspective, Dinah can be seen as the most transgressive of Eliot's performing figures. Dinah is the only female figure to perform in a traditionally male role—that of the preacher, the man who represents God, the person who offers salvation of the soul, warns against the evils of sin, and advises people how to conduct their lives. Dinah is the only female performer with such a degree of authority and influence. Moers writes of preaching that as a career it offered "the most obvious opportunities for public performance of an inspirational nature; the one most absolutely closed to women" (193). We know there were a few exceptions of female preachers and

that Eliot modeled Dinah after her aunt who was also a Methodist preacher in her youth. Dinah tells the rector Mr. Irwine of the example of Miss Bosanquet, the first Methodist woman to preach: "Mr. Wesley approved of her undertaking the work. She had a great gift, and there are many [women] now living who are precious fellow-helpers in the work of the ministry" (AB 90).

Though Dinah performs in the masculine sphere, what keeps her aligned with the feminine sphere is that hers is a vocation, not an occupation. Her preaching does not provide her with a livelihood, as it does for Eliot's male preachers. Dinah preaches because it fulfills her purpose of helping others, but her meager income comes from working in the cotton mills. When Dinah goes to comfort Mrs. Bede in her grief, she notices Dinah's hand: "it was not white and delicate, for Dinah had never worn a glove in her life, and her hand bore the traces of labour from her childhood upwards" (AB 110). Dinah supports herself with mill work and on her own time preaches and helps the poor. She is presented as a ministering angel and a positive influence for many, always ready to help the neediest.

> From her girlhood upwards she had had experience among the sick and the mourning, among minds hardened and shriveled through poverty and ignorance, and had gained the subtlest perception of the mode in which they could best be touched, and softened into willingness to receive words of spiritual consolation or warning. (AB 114)

Because she fulfils her vocation in the traditional female manner of service, it is easy to overlook the fact that at the same time she pursues her sense of purpose and does what she wants. What exonerates her is that her purpose serves the good of many. This

combination grants her perhaps the greatest degree of agency of any of Eliot's heroines. Dinah doesn't answer to anyone. Stripped of her vocation, her words sound just like those of Eliot's future and most egotistical female artists, Madame Laure, Armgart, and the Alcharisi; Dinah declares, "I desire to live and die without husband or children" (AB 37). Like Eliot's later female artists, Dinah wants no interference in her purpose and ambition. In her letter to Seth Bede she says, "My work and my joy are here among the hills, and I sometimes think I cling too much to my life among the people here, and should be rebellious if I was called away" (AB 330). She acknowledges a potential rebellious response, yet she says it is God's will she follows, rather than her own. When Seth speaks of marriage to her she answers, "Our marriage is not God's will—he draws my heart another way" (AB 37). Seth, in his desire to marry Dinah, like Adam at the end of the novel, is up against an ideal that he cannot argue against.

Dinah's ambition is sanctified and so is in alignment with the feminine ideal. To underscore this Eliot identifies Dinah with the Madonna and saints. The first time Arthur Donnithorne sees Dinah he says he was "quite ashamed of having spoken so abruptly to her. She looked like Saint Catherine in a Quaker dress" (AB 64). When Seth thinks of Dinah at Arthur's majority celebration, he compares her with the other women there and "feels the beauty and the greatness of a pictured Madonna …" (AB 281), and when Lisbeth first sees Dinah she thinks, "perhaps it *was* an angel" (AB 110). Throughout we are told of "Dinah's seraphic gentleness of expression …" (AB 75). Other evidence of this sanctification is the way Dinah's physicality is portrayed. Though described as beautiful, it is a spiritual beauty that never interferes with her preaching: "It was one of those faces that make one think of white flowers with light touches of colour on their

pure petals" (AB 25). Her hair is described as forming a halo around her face: the "rays of the early sun … made a glory about her pale face and pale auburn hair …" (AB 491). Although for the viewers the attraction begins with the awareness that she is a young and attractive woman, it fades away as she begins to speak. Bodenheimer writes, "This body is neither a sexual nor a performing body….Only the face and the voice are the sources of Dinah's power …" ("Ambition" 18). Dinah's feelings about this are made clear when Mr. Irwine asks whether her youth and beauty cause her embarrassment when she speaks before men. To this she replies, "I've no room for such feelings …" (AB 92). Compared with the salvation of souls, such concerns appear trivial to her and elevate her sensibility above his as a preacher. Bodenheimer writes that the character of Dinah "moves not toward the 'self-performing heroine' but toward the notion of a direct channel linking emotion and audience through the musical powers of voice, while the consciously performing body virtually fades away….If preaching responds to a necessity, it cannot be regarded as a display of inappropriate ambition" ("Ambition" 18). Dinah's internal self is much more prominent than her sense of external self. It is her ambition that compels her inner self to find external expression through preaching.

However, as Eliot is ever cautious about portraying female ambition, she constructs Dinah's ambition so that it appears unambitious. Dinah explains to Mr. Irwine that she had never thought of preaching and that it only came about because of a situation that arose when a fellow preacher was unable to speak. Not wanting to disappoint the people who had come from far to hear him, Dinah steps us and fills the need. As she recounts her first time preaching, she says "speech came to me without any will of my own, and words were given to me …" (AB 91). Although the word ambition often

connotes negative qualities, with Dinah it is aligned with positive purpose and agency that allows her to help others.

Dinah's ambition is represented as enabling true vocation. Her calling outweighs all other needs and pleasures in her life. She explains to Seth that "God has called me to minister to others, not have any joys or sorrows of my own, but to rejoice with them that do rejoice, and to weep with those that weep.…He has called me to speak his word.…My life is too short and God's work is too great for me to think of making a home for myself in this world" (AB 37). We don't see this degree of devotion anywhere else in Eliot (unless perhaps in Romola). Especially when compared to other ministers in Eliot, Dinah stands out alone. As with Amos Barton (SCL), Maynard Gilfil (SCL), Mr. Irwine, and Mr. Lyons (FH), most men of the church are portrayed as the gentlemanly, good-natured sort who do no harm and are generally well-liked, amiable men. The only one of them who resembles Dinah in her hands-on, self-sacrificing ministry to the needy is the Reverend Tryan in "Janet's Repentance" (SCL). However, with him it is in part to expiate a former sin. In his youth he was responsible for the seduction, fall, and ultimate death of a young woman, the guilt of which continues to haunt him. Of all the church figures in Eliot's oeuvre Dinah is represented as having the purist and most active drive in her vocation to serve God and mankind.

The fact that Dinah's ambition and purpose are of a religious nature separates her from the other female performers in Eliot. In other ways as well, Dinah is least like the others. She does not sing, is not angry at her lot, and is not ego-driven. Unlike Eliot's future artists, Dinah is not a foreign outsider, but an integral part of her community. Yet in some ways she can be viewed as an "other" in her society. This is predominantly due

to her being so different from any other character in the novel and from choosing to perform in the masculine sphere. Dinah lives in a rarefied world of her own, deeply connected to the poor and suffering and hearing the voice of God directing her in her mission.

Dinah is self-sufficient in the way she lives her life. She makes a paltry income but says it is more than she needs. In addition, she is an orphan, which emphasizes her solitariness. This makes her somewhat of a loner, as are many of Eliot's artist figures. Though Dinah interacts with many people, she lives alone most of the time and has no family ties other than the Poysers. Dinah is from Snowfield in Stonyshire, "a bleak, dreary place" (AB 89). As she explains to Mr. Irwine, "I had an aunt there once; she brought me up, for I was an orphan. But she was taken away seven years ago, and I have no other kindred that I know of, besides my aunt Poyser" (AB 89). In "Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story" people are suspicious of Caterina's "otherness." Although Dinah is as British as the people she preaches to, she too is perceived by some to be a threat. Joshua Rann, the parish clerk, is uncomfortable with the crowds Dinah draws. He warns the rector Mr. Irwine that "the Methodisses as is like to get th' upper hand i' th' parish" (AB 59), and urges him to do something about it. Dinah represents a vague threat of female power operating within the masculine sphere, but a threat that is difficult to denounce.

Dinah is willing to risk the disapproval her preaching brings with it. It is disapproved of by the established church, and increasingly by her own. In her conversation with Mr. Irwine about women preaching she tells him, "I understand there's been voices raised against it in the Society of late …" (AB 90). Her discussion with Mr. Irwine reveals the patronizing attitude of her church. She continues, "but I cannot but

think their counsel will come to nought. It isn't for men to make channels for God's spirit, as they make channels for the water-courses and say, 'Flow here, but flow not there'" (AB 90). Dinah's unorthodox behavior puts her at odds with much of her society and she is disapproved of by many, including the only family she has. One of the villagers explains to the traveler that Dinah is "a-visitin' here.…She's own niece to Poyser's wife, an' they'll be fine an' vexed at her for making a fool of herself i' that way" (AB 18). Earlier Seth tells Adam he will walk Dinah home in the evening after her preaching since "There's nobody comes with her from Poyser's …" (AB 13). Mrs. Poyser thinks that Dinah's preaching will be offensive to others and she fears the opinion of Arthur Donnithorne and Mr. Irwine when they visit her cottage. Mrs. Poyser reprimands Dinah saying "where's the use o' talking, if you wonna be persuaded, and settle down like any other woman in her senses, istead o' wearing yourself out, with walking and preaching, and giving away every penny you get" (AB 79) and "I've said enough a'ready about your bringing such disgrace upo' your uncle's family….to think of a niece o' mine being cause o' my husband's being turned out of his farm …" (AB 80). Dinah tries to allay her aunt's fears by telling her no harm will come because she "didn't preach without direction" (AB 80).

What most connects Dinah to the other female performers in Eliot's oeuvre is the connection of her voice to agency, a theme which continues from Caterina. In addition to expressing purpose and ambition, Eliot presents the female voice as potentially both powerful and transformative. Whereas Caterina's singing was mostly self-transforming, Dinah's voice is shown to be transformative to others, as well as to herself. This is largely due to the extraordinary quality and impact of her voice. Beginning with "Mr. Gilfil's

Love Story" and continuing through Adam Bede we find the identification of voice with the quality of the individual and the elevation of music above the other arts. In her article "The Language of the Soul: George Eliot and Music" Alison Byerly writes that "music's unique ability to convey an inexpressible content without the intrusion of rational form may explain why Eliot considered music the perfect metaphor for Dinah's almost mystical power of communication" (6). Throughout the novel we are given examples of the power and uniqueness of Dinah's voice. When she speaks of her preaching history to Irwine it is "in her usual simple way, but with that sincere, articulate, thrilling treble, by which she always mastered her audience" (AB 92). When she consoles Adam's mother after the loss of her husband, we are told "The old woman listened, and forgot to be fretful, unconsciously subject to the soothing influence of Dinah's face and voice" (AB 112). It is as if Dinah's soul is located in her voice.

The most convincing evidence of the power of her voice comes from the point of view of the aforementioned traveler, who describes her performance and compares her voice to the music of an instrument:

> Hitherto the traveler had been chained to the spot against his will by the charm of Dinah's mellow treble tones, which had a variety of modulation like that of a fine instrument touched with the unconscious skill of musical instinct. The simple things she said seemed like novelties, as a melody strikes us with a new feeling when we hear it sung by the pure voice of a boyish chorister…. (AB 28-29)

Dinah's preaching is presented as spontaneous and from the heart. We are told that "She was not preaching as she heard others preach, but speaking directly from her own

emotions, and under the inspiration of her own simple faith" (AB 29). Dinah does not take credit for her words or the power of her delivery. She sees herself as an instrument of God. And yet as Auerbach points out, "The spiritual triumph in this scene is clearly the performer's rather than God's….[her voice] expresses less her spiritual message than the art of her own nature" (Romantic Imprisonment 261-62). It is this fact that places Dinah's sermons in the category of performance art and aligns her with Eliot's other performers.

Dinah is a true individualist and a natural performer. She completely controls her audience, though it is done unselfconsciously. She changes her tone and pace and alters her expressions. She makes direct eye contact with her audience, moves some to tears, instills terror in others, and by the end of her sermon makes them all aware of their spiritual state and the presence of God in their midst. The narrator refers to her sermon as a drama. We are told "Dinah had been speaking at least an hour….The stranger … had been interested in the course of her sermon, as if it had been the development of a drama—for there is this sort of fascination in all sincere unpremeditated eloquence, which opens to one the inward drama of the speaker's emotions" (AB 33-34). Dinah's sermon is dynamic, dramatic, and captivating. It is a piece of village art. The villagers watch and listen and are affected as if they are watching a drama. Yet Eliot leaves us in no doubt as to the sincerity of the motivation of Dinah. In the character of Dinah the artist and the message are one and the same.

In "Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story" female voice is linked with female agency not only in Caterina but in secondary characters as well, as we find in the Widow Hartopp and in Lady Cheverel. Her musical interests and abilities are voiced in the otherwise silent Lady Cheverel. In this one area she is granted some degree of authority and agency. Eliot also

reinforces this concept of voice and agency in Adam Bede in other female characters. She makes the powerless victim Hetty Sorrel largely silent and grants Mrs. Poyser an unusual amount of verbal ability, which corresponds to their degrees of agency. Not only does Mrs. Poyser have an answer for everything, phrased in her own colorful manner of expression, but she is aware of her skill. When Arthur Donnithorne asks her if she is pleased with her husband's speech she answers,

> "O, sir, the men are mostly tongue-tied—you're forced partly to guess what they mean, as you do wi' the dumb creatures."
>
> "What! You think you could have made it better for him?" said Mr. Irwine, laughing.
>
> "Well, sire, when I want to say anything, I can mostly find words to say it in, thank God." (AB 270)

Mrs. Poyser is honored when Arthur visits her farm and praises the neatness and cleanliness of it. However, the pressing needs of the farm loosen her tongue and she gives him a full account of everything that needs fixing. "Mrs. Poyser, once launched into conversation, always sailed along without any check from her preliminary awe of the gentry. The confidence she felt in her own powers of exposition was a motive force that overcame all resistance" (AB 83). Voice is Mrs. Poyser's most salient quality and underscores the association of female voice with agency.

To emphasize Mrs. Poyser's power of speech, Eliot devotes a whole chapter to her speaking, much as she does with Dinah's preaching. In the chapter entitled "Mrs. Poyser 'Has Her Say Out'" the old Squire hints that he wants someone else to take over their farm that they've made such a success of and that they will have to move. Outraged

at the unfairness of the idea and unable to hold herself back, Mrs. Poyser says to him, "Then, sir, if I may speak—as, for all I'm a woman, and there's folks as thinks a woman's fool enough to stan' by an' look on while the men sign her soul away, I've a right to speak, for I make one quarter o' the rent, and save th' other quarter …" (AB 347). In one sentence she connects voice to women and their souls, her right to speak, and her ability to earn. Her verbal lashings discomfit the Squire who hurries out of the house as she continues to assail him with her words:

> You may run from my words, sir, and you may go spinnin' underhand ways o' doing us a mischief … but I tell you for once as we're not dumb creatures to be abused and made money on by them as ha' got the lash i' their hands….An' if I'm the only one as speaks my mind, there's plenty o' the same way o' thinking i' this parish and the next to 't, for your name's no better than a brimstone match in everybody's nose. (AB 348)

He quickly mounts his horse to leave, much to the amusement of the farm hands. She has stood up to the most powerful man in her world, refusing to bow to his mistreatment and unfair usurpation of their hard-earned livelihood. The news of her verbally defeating the Squire travels fast and is appreciated by the community who lack the courage to stand up to him. When Mrs. Irwine, the rector's mother, hears of it she says, "I like that woman even better than her cream-cheeses … she has the spirit of three men….and she says such sharp things too" (AB 351). Her son Irwine replies, "Sharp! Yes, her tongue is like a new-set razor. She's quite original in her talk, too: one of those untaught wits that help to stock a country with proverbs" (AB 351). Mrs. Poyser's repulse is compared to that of Napolean's; she has successfully put down a tyrant with nothing but her words.

Conversely, Hetty is portrayed as largely silent and uncomfortable with speech. When she first meets Arthur in the woods, "She didn't know one bit how to speak to a gentleman like Mr. Arthur, and her very vanity made her more coy of speech" (AB 130). The only times we hear her speak is in brief responses when others address her and only rarely does she initiate speech herself.

Throughout the novel Dinah is contrasted to her cousin Hetty. This is most effectively done through the juxtaposition of painting and music, or in this case voice. In much the same way as was used in "Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story" Eliot uses painting to represent the patriarchal realm of the Donnithornes and society's objectification of woman as a thing to be possessed. Conversely, when voice is used it is to reflect the depth and quality of the person described and the degree of agency they have. As Byerly points out, "In Adam Bede Eliot openly discusses the representation capacities of visual art and music, then consistently associates one with Hetty and the other with Dinah, contrasting the two characters by using the two arts to illustrate their different modes of perceiving themselves and the world" ("Language of the Soul" 7), and to illustrate the way their society perceives them. Whereas Dinah is all about voice, Hetty, who is largely voiceless, is strongly associated with painting. The first mention we have of Hetty is that she liked to admire herself, to catch her reflection in the polished surfaces and mirrors in the Poyser's house. She perceives herself as a visual object and is perceived by others as something pretty to look at. "Hetty was quite used to the thought that people liked to look at her" (AB 97). It is a condition of her life, something that she takes for granted. Everyone seems to participate in this view of Hetty, the women as much as the men. Even her harshest critic, her Aunt Poyser, "continually gazed at Hetty's charms by the

sly, fascinated in spite of herself" (AB 85), and after scolding her thinks "the naughtier the little huzzy behaved, the prettier she looked" (AB 85).

Hetty is perceived by all to be pretty, but when men look at her it often has a more proprietary air, as if she is something to be captured and possessed. When Arthur lingers in the dairy to admire and flirt with Hetty, Mr. Irwine asks him what so interested him. Arthur replies, "I went to look at the pretty butter-maker … and if I were an artist, I would paint her" (AB 102). When he sees her at their first meeting in the woods, he continues to perceive her as a painter would: "Ah, there she comes: first, a bright patch of color, like a tropic bird among the boughs" (AB 129), which echoes Caterina and Lady Cheverel being referred to as "dabs" of paint. When Hetty enters the woods the second time, anticipating a meeting with Arthur, the trope of painting is again invoked. We are told that Arthur's coming "was the foreground of Hetty's picture" (AB 135). Once Hetty begins her relations with Arthur she consistently imagines herself pictorially. She imagines herself as one of the ladies she sees in the paintings at the Manor who represent an ideal of society that she tries to imitate.

The identification of Arthur with the realm of painting is reinforced throughout the novel. On the celebration of his twenty-first birthday Arthur and Mr. Irwine go up to the "long gallery above the cloisters, a gallery where all the dusty worthless old pictures had been banished for the last three generations" (AB 256). Arthur says, "If I'm ever master here, I shall do up the gallery in first-rate style" (AB 256). Again, this strongly echoes the scene in "Mr. Gilfil's Love Story" in which the Cheverels' discussion of the arrangements of portraits is linked to the next heir of the estate and the continuation of

the masculine order. Painting again represents patriarchy, tradition, possession, and stasis.

Hetty is linked with possession and even consumption. Adam, no less so than Arthur, falls for the external charms of Hetty. When he sees her at the Poyser's farm, we are told, "there was Hetty, like a bright-cheeked apple hanging over the orchard wall, within sight of everybody, and everybody must long for her!" (AB 209), similar to Wybrow's thinking of Caterina as a good cigar. When Adam disapproves of Hetty placing the rose he gives her in her hair, he says "that's like the ladies in the pictures at the Chase … but somehow I don't like to see 'em; they allays put me i' mind o' the painted woman outside the shows at Treddles'on fair" (AB 224), an even more extreme linking of painting with women as commodities to be bought and used. This association is borne out when the pregnant Hetty seeks refuge at an inn during her search for Arthur. The landlord and his wife quickly perceive the nature of her trouble and connect it with her looks. The landlord says, "I never saw a prettier young woman in my life … she's like a pictur in a shop-winder" (AB 379).

The strongest association of Hetty with painting, and perhaps the strongest contrast between Dinah and Hetty, is in the chapter entitled "The Two Bed-Chambers." Here we see Hetty and then Dinah alone in their rooms at night. Both are described as performing their "religious rites"—Hetty's is a drama of self-admiration and play-acting, Dinah's is one of introspective thought and prayer. Hetty's is secretive, needing to hide what she does. What motivates her is her desire to look as much as possible as pictures she has seen at the manor house. She looks into her mirror trying to "make herself look like that picture of a lady in miss Lydia Donnithorne's dressing-room" (AB 149).

Throughout she is framed by her mirror. She becomes a living picture in which she enjoys the idea of being on view by “an invisible spectator whose eyes rested on her” (AB 149). Hetty objectifies herself, as she has been objectified by others. The narrator then contrasts this external show with her internal poverty and her lack of connection to the only family she knows. We are let into her thoughts and see her annoyance of “middle-aged people … and … those tiresome children” (AB 153). She seems to have no attachment to the place or people she has been raised with. “Hetty could have cast all her past life behind her and never cared to be reminded of it again” (AB 153).

Hetty’s looking at herself in the mirror is contrasted to Dinah’s looking out from within. In the same chapter, Dinah finds pleasure in seeing the beauty outside her window—“the peaceful fields beyond which the large moon was rising” (AB 155-56). The landscape puts her in mind of Snowfield and its people who so need her. She worries about Hetty and goes to see her, but Dinah’s words frighten Hetty and her voice annoys her. “‘I knew you were not in bed dear,’ [Dinah] said, in her sweet clear voice, which was irritating to Hetty, mingling with her own peevish vexation like music with jangling chains” (AB 158).

Hetty is portrayed as shallow and self-absorbed, deaf to the concern and affection of her cousin. Dinah’s internal wealth is represented by the richness of her voice. In an earlier scene Hetty is told of the drowning of Adam’s father. However, she is not much affected the tragic news, her head being too full of the admiration she has just received from Arthur. In this scene the comparison of voice and inner beauty with empty external beauty is evoked through the metaphor of a musical instrument. The narrator says, “some of those cunningly-fashioned instruments called human souls have only a very limited

range of music, and will not vibrate in the least under a touch that fills others with tremulous rapture or quivering agony" (AB 97). Hetty is like a beautiful instrument without strings, whereas Dinah is all strings and music.

Throughout the novel, Dinah is associated with voice. However, at the end there is a telling example of Dinah being associated with painting rather than music. Adam and his mother look at a picture of an angel in Adam's Bible and Lisbeth says, "'That's her—that's Dinah.' Adam smiled, and looking more intently at the angel's face, said, 'It *is* a bit like her; but Dinah's prettier, I think'" (AB 499-500). In this scene Adam sees Dinah for her beauty and she becomes associated with the masculine metaphor of painting, associated with tradition. This foreshadows her move into the feminine sphere and the relinquishing of her role as a preacher and the new roles she will have with Adam as wife and mother.

As noted before, Eliot gives attributes belonging to the opposite sphere to the artist and the love interest associated with them. There are tentative beginnings of this that can be located in Adam Bede. Both Seth and Adam are paired with Dinah in their love for her—Seth in the beginning of the novel, Adam at the end. Adam is much like Gilfil—masculine and strong, protective of those he loves. Also like Gilfil, he is good with children, always willing to take Totty when he visits the Poysers. While Adam exhibits some of the nurturing qualities associated with the feminine sphere, it is Seth who embodies more. Seth is much more sensitive and self-forgetting of the two. There is gentleness and tenderness in him that Adam does not have and has to learn to acquire.

Although there are some feminine attributes associated with Adam and Seth, it is in Dinah that we have a character possessing attributes of the other sphere. Much of what

she does is contrary to the female ideal and is associated with the masculine sphere. She has a driving ambition and absorption in her work, earns her own money, lives on her own, and travels alone as her vocation takes her from town to town. She is extremely independent and doesn't seem to need anyone. When Seth walks Dinah home we are told "Her very walk … had that quiet elasticity that asks for no support" (AB 35) and "Dinah seemed almost to have forgotten Seth's presence …" (AB 35). This seeming indifference to Seth (much like Caterina's to Gilfil) and her preoccupation with her "career" are forgivable only because she believes someone else needs her more than Seth. She explains to Seth that her thoughts are with "sister Allen, who's in a decline …" (AB 35). Seth, who wants to marry her, tells her "I know you think a husband 'ud be taking up too much o' your thoughts….[but] I'd make a shift, and fend indoor and out, to give you more liberty …" (AB 36) to do her preaching. Her response is that God has called her to do his work. His tears and self-sacrifice fail to move her from her purpose.

Despite the mutual interest in the Methodist church in Dinah and Seth, the narrator symbolically aligns Dinah with Adam. There is an initial linking of them in early chapters where they are both compared to biblical figures. The narrator says Mrs. Poyser and her niece Dinah "might have served a painter as an excellent suggestion" for the sisters Martha and Mary (AB 75), and later Irwine compares Adam to "the patriarch Joseph" (93). However, what most links them is a combination of voice, which is associated with the feminine, and work, which is associated with the masculine. The first chapter, "The Workshop," is about Adam and his work; the second chapter, "The Preaching," is about Dinah and hers. Adam's relation to his work is expressed in terms that resemble Dinah and her attitudes: "His work … had always been part of his religion,

and from very early days he saw clearly that good carpentry was God's will…" (AB 489). They are similarly linked through the quality of their voices. In the first and last pages of the first chapter, we are told of Adam's singing while he works and the narrator comments on his voice and his tendency to "preach." As Wiry Ben tells him, "Ye war a-finding faut wi' preachers a while agoo—y' are fond enough o' preachin' yoursen …" (AB 13). We are told that Adam has a "strong baritone" (AB 7) and that "Such a voice could only come from a broad chest…" (AB 7). By contrast, Seth's voice is never alluded to. Adam, like Dinah, stands out from the others in the community: "he was not an average man. Yet such men as he are reared here and there in every generation of our peasant artisans…. Their lives have no discernible echo beyond the neighborhood where they dwelt" (AB 213), but their fine workmanship can be found generations after them. Not an artist but an artisan, Adam and his work are linked to Dinah and hers. They are both functional artists, their products those which serve their community, while providing a sense of purpose to themselves.

Adam's voice, like Dinah's, is heard both privately and publicly. In the whole novel Adam and Dinah are the only ones we hear singing individually, both while they work. The pleasure Adam takes in his labor finds expression at times in his singing, "the strong barytone voice bursting every now and then into loud and solemn psalm-tunes…" (AB 212). He sings to himself while he works and sings in public with the church choir. Throughout, the narrator associates him with music and his deepest emotions are expressed through the language of music. As he listens to some fellow workers, the narrator comments that, "The sound of tools to a clever workman who loves his work, is like the tentative sounds of the orchestra to the violinist" (AB 212).

Adam perceives both Hetty and Dinah in terms of music, which points to his susceptibility to beauty. The narrator excuses his blindness to Hetty's faults by linking it with the higher emotions associated with music. Nobility of mind, music, and voice are all linked in the narrator's comment: "Is it any weakness, pray, to be wrought on by exquisite music—to feel its wondrous harmonies searching the subtlest windings of your soul....For the beauty of a lovely woman is like music….that has come near to us, and made speech for itself there …" (AB 353-54). Later, Adam also perceives Dinah in terms of music. At the end of the novel we are told that Adam had grown used to Dinah and liked "to listen for her voice as for a recurrent music …" (AB 490). It is a mark of Adam's growth that the external beauty he valued in Hetty is replaced by a more profound beauty represented by Dinah's voice.

Adam and Dinah think of one another, and respond to each other through voice. While tidying up Lisbeth's home, Dinah is startled by Adam's voice, thinking it was Seth behind her. She hears "a deep strong voice, not Seth's. It was as if Dinah had put her hands unawares on a vibrating chord; she was shaken with an intense thrill, and for the instant felt nothing else; then she knew her cheeks were glowing …" (AB 492). Though their physical attraction to each other is made clear, it is the mutual recognition of nobility of spirit, expressed through voice, that finally brings Adam and Dinah together. Adam and Dinah are subtly linked through the metaphors of music and voice throughout the novel, particularly at the end, when their paths more closely converge.

As Caterina is contrasted with Beatrice Assher, Dinah is contrasted to Hetty. Comparison between the two is intentional and unavoidable. The contrasts between Dinah and Hetty are composed of the traditional polarities of saint/sinner, light/dark,

heroine/victim and spirituality/sensuality and are largely the contrasts of the external self with the internal self. These correspond to Eliot's use of painting (external) and voice (internal). Hetty is Dinah's counterpoint throughout the novel. As Mermin writes, "Dinah has a shadow side, a dark double: her earthbound, trivial-minded cousin, Hetty Sorrel, who is schematically presented as Dinah's opposite" (33). In many ways they are two sides of the same coin. They are both orphans, essentially alone, emotionally independent, and beautiful. As Auerbach points out, they are "disapproved of because they are unsettled wanderers by nature and vocation. Mrs. Poyser laments Dinah's similar, though more high-minded, indifference to settled family virtues" (Woman and the Demon 175). In addition, they are both ambitious. In their own ways, and according to their individual natures, both Dinah and Hetty strive for the highest that they believe is attainable in their world. For Dinah this is her service to God; for Hetty this is Arthur Donnithorne and the dream of being a lady. Dinah's vision is for the common good, whereas Hetty's is for herself.

The differences between Dinah and Hetty are obvious and can be attributed to various causes. Auerbach attributes Dinah's success and Hetty's downfall directly to their ability to perform, performance serving as a metaphor for the way they interact with their world. She writes that "Dinah's transcendence of the commonplace lies in her ability to move an audience….Hetty's secret self-worshipping rituals before the mirror are condemned in contrast to the public drama of Dinah's sermon" (Romantic Imprisonment 262). Eliot upturns the separate spheres ideal here. According to its ideology, women are supposed to act in the private sphere and shun the public. Eliot demonstrates that isolation in the feminine sphere can be harmful, leading to stunted growth and ultimate

harm to society. Conversely, Dinah's public performance is in alignment with the feminine sphere attributes of modesty, nurturing, and service to others.

Auerbach points out that Eliot makes both Dinah and Hetty attractive. In response to some critics interpreting Eliot's depiction of Hetty as vindictive, Auerbach instead relates it to the larger issues of separate spheres:

> since Dinah is also pretty, we might consider a more radical defect of Hetty's mirror: like woman's traditional sphere, it is self-defeating in its privacy, its lack of an audience.…Hetty's solitary affectations are self-defeating by nature, while Dinah's public performances show the self enlarged beyond domesticity, taking possession of public life.…Hetty's story reveals her crippling incapacity at public performance. (Romantic Imprisonment 262-63)

The description of their ride to the execution is a dramatic one. Once again, Dinah draws a crowd, and once again she is indifferent to the attention: "All Stoniton had heard of Dinah Morris, the young Methodist woman who had brought the obstinate criminal to confess, and there was as much eagerness to see her as to see the wretched Hetty. But Dinah was hardly conscious of the multitude.…Dinah did not know that the crowd was silent, gazing at her with a sort of awe" (AB 462).

Eliot criticizes not the concept of separate spheres, but what is valued in each and the limitations it places on men and women, particularly women. As with Caterina, we are told that Hetty had little education. "Hetty was quite uneducated—a simple farmer's girl" (AB 101). Her vulnerability and impressionability are linked to her limited knowledge. "Hetty had never read a novel: if she had ever seen one, I think the words

would have been too hard for her: how then could she find a shape for her expectations?" (AB 135). Her extent of knowing anything else from her life seems to come from the paintings she sees at the manor. In these, she gets a glimpse of what is valued in that other world and she desires to be a part of it. We're not told of Dinah's education but apparently she has more learning than Hetty, as her letter to Seth indicates. Seth tells Adam that "she writes wonderful for a woman" (AB 327), alluding to the fact that for most working class women education is not available. In another such comment, we are told that a particular minister wrote books, but "as for math'matics and the nature o' things, he was as ignorant as a woman" (AB 182). Bartle Massey's school provides some education to the men in the community, but for the most part, education is difficult to come by. We can assume that Dinah's education is largely self-taught through her study of the Bible. Hetty is at a loss when she travels out in the world, whereas Dinah has learned how to navigate in it. Dinah's self-instruction, the practical knowledge gained from exposure to many different lives, and her self-assertion in preaching all contribute to her increased agency. Hetty's opportunities are as limited as her education: "what could Hetty have been but a servant elsewhere, if her uncle had not taken her in …" (AB 99). The only paths available to her are to be a servant, a wife, or a dependent on her family. Aside from Mrs. Poyser and the servants, we don't see other women working. They are either wives or dependents. These examples of the limited opportunities available for women make Dinah's vocation all the more remarkable.

As in "Mr. Gilfil's Love Story," Eliot shows that the imbalance manifested in separate spheres ideology hurts not only individuals but society at large. Hetty is largely a product of her society. Her vanity and ignorance lead her to believe in a future that can

never be hers. The result of this leads to her seduction, which leads to charges of infanticide, her near escape from death by hanging, and banishment from the only place she has ever known. As in "Mr. Gilfil's Love Story," men are also shown to suffer from the results of the imbalance created by the dominance of the masculine sphere: Arthur never fully recovers from the disaster; Mr. Poyser and his father suffer acutely from the shame of the ordeal; Adam is stricken by the situation, and his family suffers on his behalf. The whole community is brought into the pain of the tragedy. As Mr. Irwine tells Adam, "every sin cause[s] suffering to others besides those who commit it" (AB 425).

Conversely, there is an argument for more balanced humanity, in which men and women more fully embody aspects of the other sphere. When this balance is achieved in a person we find capable, compassionate characters. Both Mr. Irwine and Dinah have this balance and it is demonstrated in "their talent for comradeship and compassion" (Uglow 101). Mrs. Poyser has the masculine attributed quality of pride in her ability to run the dairy. She reminds us of the widow in "Mr. Gilfil's Love Story" who was denied the pleasure and satisfaction of running her farm. Mrs. Poyser is extremely competent, has a reputation for her good work, and commands respect.

However, it is the valuing of the feminine sphere qualities of nurturing, self-sacrifice, and caretaking that Eliot most portrays. This is exemplified in Dinah's unflagging support of Hetty, who, like Caterina, has no other female sister figure or mother. Dinah also helps Lisbeth in her time of need, and many others. Although Mrs. Poyser seems harsher than her husband, it is she who more readily sympathizes with Hetty at the end. Mr. Poyser, who had shown some affection to Hetty, now utterly condemns her, as does his father, and they refuse ever to see her again.

The presence of positive feminine qualities is most salient, perhaps, when it is portrayed in the male characters. Mr. Irwine has more maternal qualities than his mother. He didn't marry so that he could take care of his mother and sisters: "perhaps he was the only person in the world who did not think his sisters uninteresting and superfluous…" (AB 69). This is compared to his mother's lack of interest in her daughters. We are told that it "was his large-hearted indulgence that made him ignore his mother's hardness towards her daughters …" (AB 69). Seth's gentleness is in stark contrast to the selfish nature of his mother. Though she continually finds fault with him and favors Adam, he is devoted in his attentions to her. As both these women exemplify, Eliot never portrays women as inherently "maternal." Rather it is a quality associated with the feminine sphere but can be located and developed in all. As Uglow states, "Eliot makes clear that this profound empathy is a gift which comes most naturally to women and is essentially feminine, a distillation of their traditional caring, nurturing role" (112), but one that is equally valuable in men. Previously harsh at times, Adam is shown to have learned this type of "maternal" love by the novel's end. When he goes to see Hetty in prison he sees her as he always had: "Others thought she looked as if some demon had cast a blighting glance upon her, withered up the woman's soul in her….But the mother's yearning, that completest type of the life in another life which is the essence of real human love, feels the presence of the cherished child even in the debased, degraded man" (AB 433). Adam is able to see the good in Hetty, to still see her as she was before. In the beginning of the novel, the narrator says that "Adam had too little fellow-feeling with the weakness that errs" (AB 210), especially with his alcoholic father, but that he grows through his

suffering in Hetty's ordeal. Eliot attributes this to something akin to unconditional maternal love, though it is a trait Adam had to develop.

As addressed earlier, Eliot almost always keeps her heroines aligned with the ideal of the self-sacrificing woman and places her challenging notions onto dark doubles or in subplots. While there is no subplot in this novel, there are elements of subversive displacement. For example, although the narrator harshly criticizes Hetty's shallowness and vanity, the real subversive message more closely involves Mrs. Irwine, who can be viewed as an adult version of Hetty, albeit of a different class. Hetty's love of finery is equaled if not surpassed by Mrs. Irwine's. We are told that her hands are "laden with pearls, diamonds, and turquoises; and a large black veil is very carefully adjusted over the crown of her cap….It must take a long time to dress that old lady in the morning!" (AB 57). Although their situations are very different, they both abandon their children, in one way or another. While the narrator makes no excuses for Hetty, we are aware that she is only seventeen years old, eighteen by novel's end. Her reason for abandoning her child is not just that her illegitimate pregnancy is seen as shameful and sinful, but that she is "frightened to death" (AB 455) and mentally and physically exhausted after her two week's search for Arthur. For Mrs. Irwine's conduct, there are no excuses. Nothing prevents her from attending to her sick daughter but her own self-centeredness. We are given no reasons for her unmotherly conduct, except the narrator's comment that "Splendid old ladies, who take a long time to dress in the morning, have often slight sympathy with sickly daughters" (AB 58). We are told she largely ignores her daughter and even tries to dissuade her son from visiting her. She is like a queen, expecting and receiving homage from those around her. Eliot criticizes the society that condemns the

same fault in one person and forgives it another. By mirroring Hetty's faults of selfishness, vanity, and pride in Mrs. Irwine, Eliot highlights society's hypocrisy. The blame that should be attributed to Mrs. Irwine is all displaced onto Hetty.

In "Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story" the darker elements are located in Caterina. In Adam Bede they are displaced onto Hetty. The subversive element lies in the fact that in many ways Hetty conforms to society's view of what a woman should be—she is young and beautiful. In separate spheres ideology female beauty is one of the most highly valued attributes. Ironically, perhaps the most highly valued attribute, motherhood, is the condition that leads to Hetty's greater crime of infanticide and nearly results in her being hanged. If her society objectifies her as thing of beauty, it follows that she will view herself in the same way. In this ideology, there is an assumption that beauty will be rewarded. Arthur tells Hetty as she works in the dairy, "I'm sure your pretty arms were never meant for such heavy weights" (AB 87). All the messages Hetty gets from those around her is that her life could be better because of her looks. Her beauty is what people first see, and we never see anyone attempt to get past that, except Dinah, who alone seems to see the vulnerability and danger that awaits Hetty.

As in "Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story" and in Eliot's later works, the female artist is the one who rebels against her lot. Since Dinah is the heroine and aligned with separate spheres feminine attributes, she cannot rebel; therefore, dissatisfaction is displaced onto others. Rebellion and anger are located in Mrs. Poyser, despair in Hetty. They are polar expressions of the same anger and futility at woman's lot. Mrs. Poyser's "having her say" is directed at the Squire who represents the old patriarchal order. It is a humorous rebellion, but produces one of Eliot's most powerful expressions of female rebellion

connected to voice: Mrs. Poyser says, "There's no pleasure i' living, if you're to be corked up for iver …" (AB 349). Despair at the female lot is located in Hetty. It is most poignantly portrayed in her repeated attempts to drown herself when she realizes she is pregnant. It is through Hetty's despair that we are able to participate in the greatest function of art, which Eliot describes as "a mode of amplifying experience and extending our contact with our fellow-men beyond the bounds of our personal lot. All the more sacred is the task of the artist when he undertakes to paint the life of the People" ("Selected Writings" 263-63). Dinah comes to us pure and ethereal, a model of exemplary humanity, but Hetty is needed to make the reader experience the lows of life. The contrast between them is needed to "amplify" our experience and to increase our identification with others.

Hetty and Dinah have been described as two sides of the same coin—light and dark, humility and vanity, connection and isolation, the one side highlighting the aspects of the other. The middle of the novel is largely about Hetty. Dinah disappears from this part. At the very end of the novel the two characters seem to merge in a manner to become one. When Hetty is in prison, Dinah comes to her unbidden, understanding Hetty's need of human compassion in her darkest hour. The two women become a sort of blended figure. Hetty will not speak in prison and refuses to give her name. In her pocket they find "a small red-leather pocket-book in her pocket, with two names written on it—one at the beginning, 'Hetty Sorrel, Hayslope,' and the other near the end, 'Dinah Morris, Snowfield'" (AB 410). Hetty will not say which one is her name. There is the sense that Dinah and Hetty are merged in an impression of light and dark, and voice and silence, in mirror images of one another. When Dinah goes into the dark cell, "The two pale faces

were looking at each other: one with wild hard despair in it, the other full of sad, yearning love….The light got fainter as they stood, and when at last they sat down on the straw pallet together, their faces had become indistinct" (AB 448-49).

Dinah and Hetty find what they are looking for in each other, their needs complete each other. Dinah convinces Hetty that if she can confess her sin, the darkness and despair will leave her. However, Hetty is unable to speak and brokenly pleads, "Dinah … help me … I can't feel like you … my heart is hard" (AB 451). Dinah then prays aloud and finally does what no one else has been able to do—she gets Hetty to speak, to voice her feelings, to confess. Dinah gives Hetty voice. For the first time in the novel we hear Hetty express what is inside her. It is the need to speak her mind that brings her relief from her fear and dark despair. From this point on Hetty rises out of her despair and accepts her fate. Just as Mrs. Poyser speaks her mind to the Squire but "shall be th' easier for 't all [her] life" (AB 349), so Hetty gives voice to her feelings and is able to be at peace. In the remaining images of Hetty, she is placed close beside Dinah. When Adam goes to see her on the morning of the execution, "She was clinging close to Dinah; her cheek was against Dinah's" (AB 460), and as they ride to the execution site Hetty "clutched Dinah convulsively" (AB 462). Hetty's pardon arrives just before her execution, from which point she effectively disappears from the novel. The novel begins and ends with Dinah and her goodness. She comes to us from first to last articulating spiritual love and human connection and is at the last able to pass it on to Hetty.

While there is some degree of resolution at the end of Adam Bede, many readers find the ending to be disappointing. The sense of resolution comes from the fact that Hetty and Arthur are punished (though many feel Arthur gets off too easily), Adam and

Dinah are united, and perhaps the community is wiser for the collective suffering they undergo. The disappointment is felt in Dinah's giving up her preaching—her sense of purpose, her ambition, her "voice." One senses that Eliot has skirted the issue with the convenient coincidence of the Methodist ban on female preachers. Lewis observes that Dinah, "soon after the wedding is 'silenced' from public proclamation when the Wesleyan convention decides that the practice of allowing women to preach is not in the best interest of the faith" (144). Bodenheimer explains Eliot's actions by saying of Dinah, "To her George Eliot metes out the invariable alternative: either performance or marriage, but not both" ("Ambition" 18-19). However, there is also a subversive message implied. Dinah's exclusion from preaching is a metaphor for women's larger exclusion in society. The poor and needy in society will suffer a loss from the masculinist prohibition that prevents Dinah from preaching.

We do not really know Dinah's feelings for they are expressed through Adam rather than by her. It is significant that we don't hear Dinah's voice on this subject. Seth thinks Dinah should have "left the Wesleyans and joined a body that 'ud put no bonds on Christian liberty" (AB 538), but Adam tells him he is wrong and Dinah is right: "Most o' the women do more harm nor good with their preaching—they've not got Dinah's gift nor her sperrit; … and she thought it right to set th' example o' submitting, for she's not held from other sorts o' teaching. And I agree with her, and approve o' what she did" (AB 538). It is phrased as if it is Dinah's idea and Adam supports her in her choice, but we infer that this conforms to Adam's wishes and to the status quo of women submitting.

There are different interpretations regarding Dinah's giving up her preaching. Lewis thinks that "Dinah is not quite reconciled to the silencing of her prophetic voice"

(147), and that although “Dinah pleads to the masses in a public form….[she] is at the end restricted to acts of charity and impromptu teaching on the small scale” (Lewis 161). Dorothea Barrett, like Lewis, sees the ending as a diminishment of Dinah: “In the early part of the novel, Dinah is monumentalized by images of incorporeality. She is an angel, a ghost, a risen Christ” (42). However, at the end, “The mode of description makes one feel that some essential individualizing and elevating quality has been lost and that she who formerly seemed unique has now joined the undifferentiated herd of mothers …” (Barrett 42). Yet Eliot does prepare us for this ending. As Uglow points out, after Dinah’s initial preaching scene, “the novel presents her generally in the domestic sphere. Here her actions bring as much comfort as her rhetoric. She soothes, touches, calms, feeds and her physical presence is vital….George Eliot depicts Dinah not as a bodiless saint but as warm, sensuous being” (111). It can be argued that both views of Dinah are presented, one of incorporeality and one of flesh and blood. Dinah is a saintly, warm-blooded woman, particularly at the end of the novel as we become aware of her attraction to Adam. She blushes and starts and cries at her dilemma of loving him. This is suggested at the beginning of the novel when Adam looks at her she blushes, suddenly self-conscious. Except for these times with Adam, Dinah is presented as a ministering angel, but one who understands the necessity of bodily comfort and a human touch. Even though after her marriage Dinah still ministers and preaches on a small scale, the ending does present us with a diminished Dinah.

Dinah has been given an unusual degree of agency and in her character Eliot has expanded the role of female ambition and purpose through the medium of voice. The ambiguity at the end as to Dinah’s feelings leaves the ending somewhat open and the

issues unresolved. The conflict and unresolved issues continue to find expression in future performing females. It is as if an impulse, an issue that Eliot needed to work out for herself makes its way into her works and finds expression in the image of the frustrated female performer. Although its earliest manifestations are located in the characters of Caterina Sarti and Dinah Morris, Eliot continues to rework this image of the female artist in an attempt to better understand and more fully express the troubling impulse.

Vicarious Voices:

The Mill on the Floss and Middlemarch

Chapter III

Maggie Tulliver's "Poetry of Ambition"

In the character of Maggie Tulliver in The Mill on the Floss, Eliot combines the passion and artistry of Caterina Sarti with the purpose and ambition of Dinah Morris. However, unlike Caterina and Dinah, Maggie never finds a medium that she can claim and make her own—neither a talent, as with Caterina, nor a vocation, as with Dinah. Instead, Maggie's story is predominantly her search for purpose and meaning in her life, which takes expression in her yearning for knowledge, her wish to be independent, her search for a philosophy by which to live, and, above all, it takes expression in her artist-like nature. Throughout the novel we are presented with Maggie's impressionable nature and her responsiveness to and longing for beauty. However, rather than develop Maggie as an artist or performing figure as she does with Caterina and Dinah, Eliot displaces Maggie's artistic potential onto the character of Philip Wakem who actively pursues the arts. This strategy allows Eliot to continue to develop the artist figure as someone who gives voice to women's position, while keeping her heroine aligned with the Victorian ideal of female duty and self-sacrifice. Maggie struggles with her role of dutiful daughter and submissive woman. All the things Maggie loves and desires she ultimately gives up in the name of duty. Philip, on the other hand, never gives up his search for fulfillment. In many ways Philip functions as a sort of double of Maggie, in much the same way as Hetty does for Dinah, though Philip is not a dark double, but rather a mirror image of Maggie. Both Philip and Maggie are aesthetic figures who search for a medium in life through which they can find meaning; they are sensitive and impressionable; they are

emotional beings who long for love in their lives; they both suffer from the situation of their families; and they are both "others" in their society. Because of these similarities, Philip can be seen as a stand-in for Maggie and can speak for her; because of his status as "other" and his frustration at achievement, he serves as a stand-in for women in general who are marginalized by society. As a male, Philip can articulate ideas and feelings that would be considered unfeminine behavior for the traditional heroine to voice.

Maggie's sense of purpose and ambition is first demonstrated in her as a child. She has a strong sense of self that refuses to be shaped by the gender expectations of her day. Unlike her passive, doll-like cousin Lucy, Maggie is rebellious, strong-willed, and determined. She rebels against her mother's domesticity and forms her own opinions about the world around her. Maggie's desire for agency is demonstrated in her artistic sensibility and her intellectual aptitude. She is precocious, curious, and imaginative. Lewis writes, "Maggie is not an artist and not in the strict sense an intellectual because deprived of access to education….She is, however, the material of which artists and intellectuals are made because she is brilliant, curious, studious, creative, and skeptical" (149). Eliot describes Maggie describing as

> a creature full of eager, passionate longings for all that was beautiful and glad: thirsty for all knowledge: with an ear straining after dreamy music that died away and would not come near to her: with a blind, unconscious yearning for something that would link together the wonderful impressions of this mysterious life and give her soul a sense of home in it. (MF 247-48)

As a child, Maggie's life is a sort of artist's story. Her nature tends towards the beautiful. A sense of the aesthetic shapes her young life and gives her world richness it would otherwise lack. Maggie's frequent bouts of anger and dejection are usually relieved by her impressionability to some external sensuous or beautiful thing. For example, when she is distressed that Tom's rabbits have died from her neglect, the mill hand Luke brings her home to see his wife, Mrs. Moggs. "Maggie actually forgot that she had any special cause of sadness this morning" (MF 35) as she examines a series of pictures on the wall. Another time, Tom's harshness towards Maggie reduces her to bitter tears. Taking refuge in the attic where she bitterly sobs, "a sudden beam of sunshine" (MF 32) and its promise of cheerfulness proves "irresistible" to Maggie and she runs outside and forgets her troubles. On another day, she feels miserable after Tom berates her and favors Lucy. As the three make their way to their aunt's house we are told of Maggie's perceptions:

> the morning had been made heavy to Maggie, and Tom's persistent coldness to her all through their walk spoiled the fresh air and sunshine for her….Still, the sight of the peacock opportunely spreading his tail on the stackyard wall, just as they reached Garum Firs was enough to divert the mind temporarily from personal grievances. (MF 93-94)

When she listens to her uncle's musical snuff box we get a glimpse of Maggie's future self: "her face wore that bright look of happiness, while she sat immovable with her hands clasped, which sometimes comforted her mother with the sense that Maggie could look pretty now and then …" (MF 100). While the music box is played for her, "she quite forgot that she had a load on her mind—that Tom was angry with her; and by the time

'Hush, ye pretty warbling choir,' had been played," (MF 100) she is quite happy and delighted. The fact that Maggie experiences such highs and lows as a child are not unusual, but that her highs are due to aesthetic responses mark her as artistic. Beauty is the balm for her emotional wounds and the door to a more meaningful existence. Music in particular allows Maggie a way to enter the realm of the beautiful and magical, a world that more closely reflects her inner self and contrasts with the dull, restrictive world of St. Ogg's. When Tom comes home for the Christmas holiday, Maggie's attitude towards the carolers is contrasted with Tom's:

> There had been singing under the windows after midnight—supernatural singing, Maggie always felt, in spite of Tom's contemptuous insistence that the singers were old Patch, the parish clerk, and the rest of the church choir: she trembled with awe when their caroling broke in upon her dreams, and the image of men in fustian clothes was always thrust away by the vision of angels resting on the parted cloud. But the midnight chant had helped as usual to lift the morning above the level of common days.... (MF 162)

Other than the beauties of nature and her occasional exposure to music and pictures, Maggie's primary access to the aesthetic lies in books. Her father appreciates her curious nature and aptitude for reading and provides her with them. Books provide her a creative outlet, intellectual stimulation, companionship, and a vision of a kinder, more beautiful world. Her creative nature is particularly stimulated by the images in the books. She writes stories to accompany the pictures and becomes a storyteller herself. Mr. Riley, the auctioneer who visits her father, criticizes the subject matter of her book,

The History of the Devil by Defoe. She shows him a picture of a witch but expresses her perplexity at the illogical and unfair system of justice it portrays: “if she’s drowned—and killed, you know—she’s innocent, and not a witch, but only a poor silly old woman. But what good would it do her then, you know, when she was drowned?” (MF 20). Either way the witch loses. This historical unfairness with which society judges women foreshadows Maggie’s later unfair treatment by her society and, like the witch, the series of events which lead to her death by drowning. Maggie defends her interest in the book by explaining to Riley, “I know the reading in this book isn’t pretty—but I like the pictures, and I make stories to the pictures out of my own head, you know” (MF 21). Maggie’s mother and brother don’t appreciate her cleverness. Her mother is wary of it and Tom is openly disdainful of her abilities. However, her cousin Lucy falls under the spell of Maggie’s storytelling: “Lucy had a delighted semi-belief in Maggie’s stories … [and] for the life of her, could not help fancying there was something in it, and at all events thought it was very pretty make-believe” (MF 106). One day when Tom is particularly harsh to Maggie, she “could think of no comfort but to … fancy it was all different, refashioning her little world into just what she should like it to be. Maggie’s was a troublous life, and this was the form in which she took her opium” (MF 52). Her storytelling and make-believe brings the aesthetic into her narrow existence and softens the hardness of her world. However, after her father’s downfall, Maggie’s life becomes much more difficult and the difference between her inner world of books and the outside world becomes even more pronounced: “everybody in the world seemed so hard and unkind to Maggie: there was no indulgence, no fondness, such as she imagined when she fashioned the world afresh in her own thoughts. In books there were people who were

always agreeable or tender….The world outside the books was not a happy one, Maggie felt …" (MF 247).

As she grows older she learns to distance herself from the romance of books. She shifts from craving the beauty and fantasy of books to desiring the knowledge that books could provide. When her "sense of loneliness and utter privation of joy had deepened" (MF 297), she first thinks of fleeing to "some great man—Walter Scott, perhaps, and tell him how wretched and how clever she was, and he would do something for her" (MF 300). Her first impulse is to escape to a like-minded artist who might understand and help her. She later is to find this type of person in Philip Wakem. Until then she turns to the books she has at hand for an answer:

> Maggie thought she could have been contented with absorbing fancies: if she could have had all Scott's novels and all Byron's poems!—then perhaps she might have found happiness enough to dull her sensibility to her actual daily life. And yet … they were hardly what she wanted. She could make dream-worlds of her own—but no dream-world would satisfy her now. She wanted some explanation of this hard, real life … some key that would enable her to understand and, in understanding, endure, the heavy weight that had fallen on her young heart. (MF 298)

Maggie's connection with books reflects the stages of her ambition and her search for purpose. Her early craving for images, romance, and poetry gives way to her studies of "masculine wisdom" (MF 299) as she grows older. She tries to learn Latin, geometry, and logic from her brother's books. She eventually stumbles on the writings of Thomas á Kempis whose asceticism seems to offer her a way to cope. She learns to deny beauty

and pleasure and disciplines her will into quiet submission. Her suppression of the aesthetic results in a dry self-renunciation that brings her little pleasure but which fills her need for a purpose and makes her sense of feminine duty more palatable. It will be the artist figure Philip Wakem who reawakens her to the beauties so important to her earlier self. Maggie has the sensibility and drive of an artist but without an art form through which to express herself.

Throughout Eliot's works, representation of the artist figure includes some expression of anger, rebellion, and resistance. This aspect in particular aligns Maggie with Eliot's later rebellious female artist figures. However, in Maggie they are never expressed in words; rather they are expressed in her passive-aggressive actions as a young adult, and vicariously, through the words of Philip Wakem. As a child, Maggie's anger is expressed openly, as it is in Caterina Sarti. Much of Maggie's rebellion is against the domestic sphere and the disapproval she meets concerning her physical appearance, her hair in particular. Her hair symbolizes the feminine sphere and its limitations that Maggie rejects. The first time we hear Maggie speak it is in opposition to this. Her mother asks her to do some patchwork for her Aunt Glegg who prides herself on her domestic abilities. "'It's foolish work,' said Maggie, with a toss of her mane, 'tearing things to pieces to sew 'em together again!'" (MF 16). Maggie's rejection of the feminine domestic is accompanied with a toss of her hair. Maggie's hair becomes an arena for her rebellion. To her mother's dismay, Maggie's hair is thick and won't curl as she thinks it should. Maggie uses her hair to rebel when she becomes angry that she is not allowed to go with her father to get Tom from school: "when her mother was in the act of brushing out the reluctant black crop, Maggie suddenly rushed from under her hands and dipped

her head in a basin of water standing near, in the vindictive determination that there should be no more chance of curls that day" (MF 30-31). This act leads to another expression of her anger. After her mother scolds her for being "naughty" Maggie takes refuge from her pain and anger in the attic. Here she takes out her frustration on a doll,

> a Fetish which she punished for all her misfortunes. This was the trunk of a large wooden doll … now entirely defaced by a long career of vicarious suffering. Three nails driven into the head commemorated as many crises in Maggie's nine years of earthly struggle; that luxury of vengeance having been suggested to her by the picture of Jael destroying Sisera in the old Bible. (MF 31)

Characteristic of Maggie's contrary nature, she takes a Biblical image to inspire her to a pagan practice. Maggie takes from books the things that she can apply to her own life for her own use. The allusion to the Biblical wife Jael, who kills Sisera by driving a spike through his head, is perhaps a continuation of the same urge that Caterina has to kill Wybrow with a dagger, and foreshadows later acts of female violence found in Madame Laure in Middlemarch and Gwendolen Harleth in Daniel Deronda.

Maggie's hair is frequently criticized by her mother and aunts. Her Aunt Pullet says "I think the gell has too much hair. I'd have it thinned and cut shorter, sister, if I was you: it isn't good for her health. It's that as makes her skin so brown …" (MF 67). One trying day, tired of the insults and being constantly compared to the blonde, curly headed Lucy, Maggie runs upstairs and cuts off her hair in defiance. Her first response to this act is one of freedom: "Maggie stood cropped in a jagged uneven manner, but with a sense of clearness and freedom, as if she had emerged from a wood into the open plain" (MF 69).

However, she doesn't get the result she expected. Tom laughs at her and says she looks "queer," like "the idiot we throw our nutshells to at school" (MF 69). Maggie's acts of rebellion are often directed at herself and result in her further suffering. However, her acts first provide her with an initial sense of power over her life. We are told that her anger "gave her a transient power of defiance" (MF 73-74).

Maggie's next act of vengeance is directed against her fair cousin Lucy. After a day of cruel treatment by Tom, and humiliated in front of all her aunts and uncles, Maggie takes her anger out on Lucy by pushing her into the mud. Before she commits this act we are told "Maggie lingered at a distance looking like a small Medusa with her snakes cropped" (MF 106), and after the act, "Maggie sat on the roots of the tree and looked after them with her small Medusa face" (MF 109). Her hair is associated with both the power and the horror of the Medusa who is, like Jael, a female figure associated with vengeance.

Maggie's boldest act of childhood rebellion directly follows this episode. Now in the disfavor of everyone, she determines to run away to the gypsies. She believes they "would gladly receive her and pay her much respect on account of her superior knowledge" (MF 112). Part of the reason Maggie runs away to the gypsies is because "she had been so often told she was like a gypsy and 'half wild'" (MF 112). After Maggie cuts her hair her aunt says, "She's more like a gypsy nor ever…it's very bad luck, sister, as the gell should be so brown …" (MF 73). When Maggie goes to the gypsies she looks into the face of a young gypsy woman and thinks "the rest were right when they called her a gypsy, for this face with the bright dark eyes and the long hair was really something like what she used to see in the glass before she cut her hair off" (MF 115). Maggie has

an affinity with the gypsies of her imagination and her impetuosity leads her to seek refuge with them. At first she thinks, “It was just like a story” (MF 116). She explains to them “I’m come from home because I’m unhappy, and I mean to be a gypsy. I’ll live with you, if you like, and I can teach you a great many things” (MF 116). Then she suggests that when the queen of the gypsies dies she could be the new queen. However, she soon discovers, as she is to do later in life, that the real world falls far short of the world of imagination and books.

As with her mistaken ideal of the gypsies it seems that Maggie’s attraction to the imaginative and aesthetic often results in trouble for her. It stirs her into a passion that she can neither control nor channel into expression. It is while she is at her Aunt and Uncle Pullet’s house with all her relatives that Maggie begins the chain of unfortunate events that lead to her running away to the gypsies. First she is “fascinated, as usual, by a print of Ulysses and Nausicaa” (MF 99), so much so that she drops the cake she is eating and steps on it. It is such a “conscious disgrace to Maggie that she began to despair of hearing the musical snuff-box” (MF 99), the highlight of her visit there. She has Lucy ask to hear it, knowing no one would refuse the docile and pretty Lucy. Maggie is so enraptured by the music that she runs and hugs Tom, making him spill his wine. After everyone scolds Maggie, the children are sent outside where Maggie rebels against them all. Her fascination and passionate response to the painting and music foreshadow the disastrous outcomes she is to experience with Philip Wakem, who is associated with painting, and Stephen Guest, who is associated with music. Without a medium for self-expression, Maggie’s artistic nature leads her to trouble.

Maggie's impassioned and hypersensitive nature often finds refuge in the attic, a space often associated with the artist. We are told that the "attic was Maggie's favourite retreat on a wet day, … here she fretted out all her ill humors, and talked aloud to the worm-eaten floors …" (MF 31). Another time after Tom is cruel to her she runs "up to her attic, where she sat on the floor and laid her head against the worm-eaten shelf, with a crushing sense of misery" (MF 40). As a child, Maggie is associated with high, private places. The uppermost story is her favorite part of the mill, the place where she converses with Luke about books. "The mill was a little world apart from her outside everyday life" (MF 32).

Gilbert and Gubar write on the importance of the attic for nineteenth-century women writers. Building on their argument, Hsin Ying Chi, in "Artist and Attic" defines the attic[1] as a secluded, private space where the female artist can freely express herself: "The invisible nature of the attic provides women with a place for refuge, an escape from any roles that society circumscribes for her….the attic is a private arena where a woman can cast off her role at home in order to be herself, an imaginative world in which she can escape from reality" (12-13). The representation of Maggie can be seen as part of this tradition. The high, private spaces of the attic and mill provide a space where the artistic Maggie can be herself and escape from criticism.

The only other time Maggie finds refuge from being misunderstood and appreciation of her unusual nature is when she encounters Philip Wakem. Maggie first

[1] Barrett writes that The Mill on the Floss "is riddled with madwomen images and their historical association: attics, fetishes, witches, gypsies, demonic possession" (73) and says they are used to "describe a psychological landscape for which psychology had yet to find a descriptive vocabulary….[resulting in a] heavily metaphorical language designed to communicate ideas that disrupt and subvert the assumptions of Victorian … society, both as to gender politics and as to human possibilities" (73).

meets Philip at Tom's school, when she is nine years old and Philip is fourteen. We quickly see the similarities in their natures. Maggie and Philip are combinations of pride and insecurity—pride in their abilities, insecure about their appearance and their place in the world. They are very much mirror images of the other, especially at this stage in their lives.

Philip is immediately identified as artistic. The first time we see him he is the new boy at Stelling's school where he is "drawing absently first one object and then another" (MF 169). He was "at once too proud and too timid to walk towards Tom. He thought, or rather he felt, that Tom had an aversion to looking at him …" (MF 169). This is very much like Maggie's thoughts when she visits Tom at school: "Mrs. Stelling, she felt, looked at her as if she thought her hair was very ugly because it hung down straight behind" (MF 158). Also like Maggie, Philip takes pride in the few things he is good at. He tells Tom, who is impressed with his drawing, that he largely taught himself. He says that school comes easy to him and he will gladly help Tom with his schoolwork: "I daresay I can help you. I shall be very glad to help you if I can" (MF 171). This recalls Maggie's generous and proud nature. When she and her father first visit Tom he hints at the difficulty he is having with school. Though years younger, Maggie is sure of her superior ability and sincerely wants to help him: "*I'll* help you now, Tom,' said Maggie, with a little air of patronising consolation" (MF 152).

At this stage in their lives, it is perhaps their affinity for storytelling that marks Maggie and Philip as similar. Like Maggie's identification with the gypsies, Philip tells Tom that he "'should like to have been a Greek and fought the Persians, and then have come home and have written tragedies, or else have been listened to by everybody for my

wisdom'….(Philip, you perceive, was not without a wish to impress the well-made barbarian with a sense of his mental superiority)" (MF 173), much like Maggie wishing to impress the gypsies with her superior knowledge. Tom is eager to hear the Greek stories of battles and complains to Philip that his sister "Maggie is always wanting to tell me stories—but they're stupid things. Girls' stories always are" (MF 173). Before they even meet Maggie and Philip are linked by their creative natures. Philip is only too happy to accommodate Tom and is delighted to have an audience, much as Maggie has Lucy to tell her stories to. "Philip in his happier moods, indulged Tom to the top of his bent, heightening the crash and bang and fury of every fight with all the artillery of epithets and similes at his command" (MF 175). For both Philip and Maggie storytelling is a creative expression for their artistic natures and a sublimation of their pain and anger at being different and being excluded by others.

Philip is also drawn to music, as Maggie is, but is able to more actively pursue it. It is a pleasure he enjoys purely for the richness it brings him. One day Philip "was enjoying his afternoon's holiday at the piano in the drawing-room, picking out tunes for himself and singing them. He was supremely happy … sending forth, with all his might, impromptu syllables to a tune …" (MF 182). Tom proves as antithetical to Philip's emotional artistic nature as he is to Maggie's. He abruptly interrupts Philip's singing to invite him to see some sword exercises. "Philip shuddered visibly as he paused from his music. Then turning red, he said, with violent passion, 'Get away, you lumbering idiot! Don't come bellowing at me—you're not fit to speak to anything but a carthorse!'" (MF 182). Tom cuttingly insults Philip as he leaves and reduces Philip to bitter tears, in much the same way he does with Maggie.

When Philip and Maggie meet there is a guarded, though mutual interest in each other. Tom had written to Maggie about Philip's storytelling and Maggie "was convinced now from her own observation that he must be very clever: she hoped he would think *her* rather clever too …" (MF 186). Philip is equally curious about Maggie and thinks her "a nice little thing, quite unlike her brother: he wished *he* had a little sister" (MF 187). Philip's and Maggie's life experiences are also similar. After Tom hurts himself with sword playing Philip is deeply concerned and asks Mr. Stelling if Tom will be lame, something Tom also fears. Philip now feels that he and Tom "were being drawn into a common current of suffering and sad privation….he had only lived fourteen years, but those years had … been steeped in the sense of a lot irremediably hard" (MF 191). Maggie has an immediate sympathy for Philip, in part because she has a "tenderness for deformed things" (MF 186). Like Maggie, Philip identifies with the wounded and hurt. Happy on hearing that Tom will not be lame he rushes to tell him and they begin a new phase of friendship with Philip entertaining Tom and Maggie as Tom recovers. From this point on, Maggie and Philip develop their friendship. Philip asks Maggie if she had a brother like him would she love him as much as Tom. When she says yes, in part because she would be so sorry for him, she immediately feels her mistake, "her own keen sensitiveness and experience under family criticism sufficed to teach her this" (MF 193). Maggie convinces him that she wishes he was her brother because he is "so very clever … and … can play and sing," (MF 193) and he could teach her everything. Philip fills Maggie's need for learning, the aesthetic, and affection, just as she fills his need to be loved.

In their brief time together they have recognized each other as kindred souls. Years later Philip writes to Maggie, "If every one else has misconceived you, remember that you have never been doubted by him whose heart recognized you ten years ago" (MF 524). From the beginning of their relationship until the end, they find in each other recognition, comfort, and enrichment.

Part of their mutual recognition lies in the fact that Maggie and Philip are very much "others" in their society. They are both portrayed as visibly different, Philip because of his deformity, Maggie because she is different from what is expected of a young girl. There are several references to her being dark and gypsy-like and her passions, desires, and rebellious nature set her apart from others. Like Dinah she is British, but in appearance she is more like the foreign Caterina who is also described as dark and gypsy-like. Both physically and temperamentally Maggie is constructed as an "other." Throughout the novel Maggie is compared to her fair brother Tom and her docile, blonde cousin Lucy. This is a way of linking Maggie to the South, and to her fictional artistic predecessors Corinne, Consuelo, and Aurora Leigh. Lewis notes that "Similarities between the 'gypsy' Maggie and 'zingarelle' Consuelo were noticed by Eliot's contemporaries" (151). Tom is described as having "blue-grey eyes….light brown hair, [and] cheeks of cream and roses" (MF 36) and Maggie is "dark-eyed, demonstrative, rebellious" (MF 37). Tom is dependable and ploddingly responsible; Maggie is impulsive, "wild," and extreme in her emotions. One day, not knowing where Maggie is, Mrs. Tulliver speculates that she is probably "wanderin' up an' down by the water, like a wild thing" (MF 15). When Maggie then comes in we are told that she was "incessantly tossing her head to keep the dark heavy locks out of her

gleaming black eyes" (MF 16). Another time Mrs. Tulliver remarks that Maggie's ways and looks don't run in her family: "no more nor a brown skin as makes her look like a mulatter" (MF 15). Her black eyes, black hair, and brown skin are referred to throughout the novel, used to mark her as different and are often in connection with her rebellion. Deborah Epstein Nord explains this "othering" of Maggie is Eliot's way of pointing out a fundamental difference in Maggie, part of which is her "unconventional femininity" (99). Nord writes that Maggie

> is an outsider in the very community into which she was born, and she is evoked by the narrator, her family, and herself through persistent association with a racially distinct group….Maggie's parents lament her anomalous femininity—her dark complexion and straight, unruly hair, her tomboy ways and lack of decorousness—as a sign of insanity, genetic mutation, or racial otherness….Her idiosyncrasies of appearance and temperament separate her not only from …[the] community that insists on conformity to gender norms as well as to other forms of unexceptionable behavior. (103)

The harshest part of the judgment on Maggie's looks is the association of her physical difference with mental unsoundness. When Mr. Tulliver praises Maggie's cleverness, her mother answers, "You talk o' 'cuteness…but I'm sure the child's half an idiot i' some things, for if I send her upstairs to fetch anything, she forgets what she's gone for, an' perhaps 'ull sit down on the floor i' the sunshine an' plait her hair an' sing to herself like a Bedlam creatur'" (MF 15). After she cuts her hair Tom tells her she looks

like an “idiot,” and even after her hair has grown he tells her to stop shaking it as if it were still in her eyes: “It makes you look as if you were crazy” (MF 153).

As Maggie becomes a young woman her color and difference remain suspect. When she tries on an evening dress Lucy comments that Maggie’s arms are beautiful. Mrs. Tulliver agrees but again refers to her color:

> “They’re like mine used to be, only mine was never brown.…when I was young a brown skin wasn’t thought well on among respectable folks.”
>
> “No,” said uncle Pullet …”Though there was a song about the ‘Nut-brown Maid’ too; I think she was crazy lie—crazy Kate—but I can’t justly remember.” (MF 399)

Again and again allusions are made to Maggie being mentally as well as physically lesser by those who don’t understand her. Though she has intellectual pride and knows her own worth, it is the artist’s eye of Philip who first understands her unique nature and who first appreciates her physical allure.

Philip, too, is completely judged by his physical difference, due to an accident in infancy that makes him look humpbacked. Except for Maggie, no one seems to be able to see past it. He is referred to throughout the novel by different people as “that crooked young Wakem” (MF 354), and “a poor crooked creatur” (MF 194, 366). Tom cruelly insults Philip when he realizes he has been meeting Maggie clandestinely. Tom tells him, “A love for a deformed man would be odious in any woman—in a sister intolerable” (MF 353). He refers to Philip’s “puny, miserable body” (MF 359), and asks, “who wouldn’t laugh at the idea of *your* turning lover to a fine girl?” (MF 359). Like Maggie, his physical difference makes others think it must extend to his mental capabilities as well.

Aunt Pullet says of him, "There's that mismade son o' Lawyer Wakem's— … they say he's very queer….I shouldn't wonder if he goes out of his mind, for we never come along the road but he's a-scrambling out o' the trees and brambles at the Red Deeps" (MF 352).

The acceptance and appreciation Maggie and Philip have for each other solidifies their early friendship. As they grow older they continue to fill in the gaps in each other's lives. Philip's key role is to speak out against female self-denial that Maggie learns to embrace. He gives voice to the rebellious, angry part of Maggie that she has learned to suppress. Lewis writes that "Philip is sensitive, artistic, talented both in drawing and in music, and an intellectual as well" (150). Uglow notes that "Maggie is an artist without a voice. But she is an artist nonetheless, with a responsive imagination" (128).

Though Maggie learns to be silent as she grows older, as a child she is fairly outspoken. However, this is met with disapproval from her family. When Maggie speaks too freely to Mr. Riley, her mother tells her: "Hush, Maggie! for shame of you, asking questions and chattering….Come and sit down on your little stool, and hold your tongue, do" (MF 27). Her father, who is usually proud of her verbal abilities, also checks her in front of Mr. Riley when she goes too far in her familiarity with stories of the devil: "Go, go!….Shut up the book, and let's hear no more o' such talk" (MF 22). Her brother Tom constantly belittles her into silence.

It is the artist figure Philip who perceives that Maggie has been silenced. When he first meets Maggie at Tom's school he senses that there is something in her that is denied expression, a suppressed voice: "What was it, he wondered, that made Maggie's dark eyes remind him of the stories about princesses being turned into animals? … it was that her eyes were full of unsatisfied intelligence, and unsatisfied, beseeching affection" (MF

187). When Maggie asks Philip why he likes her eyes, he says, "I don't know….They seem trying to speak—trying to speak kindly" (MF 193). Like Caterina Sarti, Maggie's eyes speak for her. They express a part of her nature that goes unexpressed in words.

As Maggie grows older and moves into the female sphere she learns to "hold her tongue" and suppress her emotions and longings. Her world becomes narrower due to her family's financial troubles, and as a female her actions become more restricted. Where Tom can go to school and engage in the outside world of earning a living, Maggie must submit to the life of indoor domesticity. She becomes silenced, teaching herself resignation and acceptance, embracing the asceticism of Thomas á Kempis. The result is that Maggie becomes even more conflicted and more at odds with her world. Inwardly she longs for beauty and love and life, outwardly there is only "poverty and the companionship of her mother's narrow griefs …" (MF 247). Maggie learns to suppress the "volcanic upheavings of imprisoned passions" (MF 306) as she applies herself to her sewing, amazing her mother who wonders that "this once 'contrairy' child was become so submissive ..." (MF 306). From her thirteenth year when she discovers á Kempis to her seventeenth year, Maggie learns to deny her desires and interests. By the time Maggie is seventeen, the suppression of her passions have become acutely conflicted with her "resistant youth" (MF 311). Her "slow resigned sadness" (MF 310) and "hushed expression" (MF 311) conceal the tension within her. As she walks through the Red Deeps, which is the one enjoyment she allows herself, we are told that "one has a sense of uneasiness in looking at her—a sense of opposing elements, of which a fierce collision is imminent …" (MF 310-11).

It is at this point in the story that Philip enters into her life again. Janice Carlisle writes that "Philip enters the novel to become the voice of rebellion and desire once Maggie herself embraces submission and denial. Philip personifies Maggie's longing for the world of books, music, and art" (183). Philip is able to express his anger and give voice to his feelings in a way that Maggie cannot. Philip speaks his mind to Tom, expresses his feelings to Maggie, and confronts his father, whereas Maggie has learned silence and submission. Philip actively pursues his passion for painting, music, and ideas whereas Maggie denies this side of her. Carlisle notes "By the time that Maggie is seventeen, all the traits of the would-be artist, all the rebellion and imaginative storytelling, have been drained out of her and have become embodied in Philip" (184). Philip carries on her story and encourages her longings, being the only person who understands her aesthetic needs and can give voice to what is suppressed.

When they meet in the Red Deeps, Philip helps Maggie to reconnect with the beauty and passion of her earlier life, before she learned resignation. Carlisle writes that Philip "represents the activity and survival of that part of herself that she has attempted, unsuccessfully, to annihilate" (183). At this stage the artist's story shifts from Maggie to Philip and he continues in the role that Maggie had begun. One sign of this shift is that Philip now becomes associated with the attic, with the high, private space of his artist's studio. Philip refers to this space as his "sanctum" (MF 440) where he keeps his sketches and paintings. His friend Stephen Guest refers to the "countless stairs to that painting-room" (MF 432) of his. Maggie no longer finds refuge in the attic or mill. Her only outlet now is in her walks, in particular the Red Deeps where she encounters Philip. This place is contrasted to the inner domestic world that Maggie now inhabits. The Red Deeps

symbolize nature, and Maggie's true inner nature. It is the secret world of romance and aesthetic pleasure. The Red Deeps is the sublimation of illicit love into the love of art and the striving for something better. Here Maggie and Philip have conversations about books, music, and painting. He listens to her when no one else does. He encourages her "voice" and with him Maggie feels free to express herself with "the certainty that Philip would care to hear everything she said, which no one else cared for!" (MF 338). Philip plays the role of teacher and mentor to Maggie, instructing her and trying to dissuade her of her asceticism. Now that she has learned to suppress herself, she is predominantly a listener and Philip becomes the speaker.

Although Maggie is associated with anger and rebellion, she does not articulate her feelings as do Eliot's later female artists. Maggie has a "voice" but once she reaches young adulthood it is largely suppressed. In addition to leading their conversations, part of Philip's role is to give voice to Maggie's anger and conflict. At this point in the story Maggie is her most submissive, her most domestic, her most silenced. She represents the self-sacrifice and the conformity that is expected from the feminine sphere. Maggie professes to find comfort in this position. Eliot reserves the angry role of speaking out against such a position for the artist figure Philip. He acts as stand-in for both Maggie and for all women imprisoned by the doctrine of self-denial. His delivers an impassioned and angry denouncement against the limitations that Maggie places on herself.

Katherine Hayles discusses the suppressed vocalization in <u>The Mill on the Floss</u>, writing of "Eliot's understanding of the limitations inherent in the female ethic of care" (24), a key component of the feminine sphere. "Maggie is placed in a world where her anger at her unequal treatment is silenced or distorted" (Hayles 27). Maggie readily

embraces the ethic of care but resents the accompanying limitations of it, though she never articulates this. Hayles writes that "women's anger must be suppressed because it cannot be spoken in the only female voice that a male world will authorize" (24). Maggie has learned to suppress her desires, opinions, and resentment. She rarely vocalizes what she feels for herself. Philip, on the other hand, as a male, risks nothing in speaking his mind. He loses his temper with Tom and insults him, speaks freely to his father about Maggie, even though he knows it is going against his father's wishes, and freely speaks his mind to Maggie. Eliot thus gives the angry voice to Philip, who can speak without incrimination, and not to Maggie. Hayles points out that "Her anger, however, is not absent, only unexpressed" (33).

Philip speaks most freely to Maggie in the Red Deeps phase of their relationship. They largely speak of the arts and books and Philip tries to dissuade Maggie from her denial of them. He tells her, "There are certain things we feel to be beautiful and good, and we *must* hunger after them. How can we ever be satisfied without them until our feelings are deadened?" (MF 314). Maggie, however, after years of disciplining herself in self-denial clings to her position of asceticism. She refuses a book he offers, explaining that "It would make me in love with this world again, as I used to be; it would make me long to see and know many things—it would make me long for a full life" (MF318).

Philip understands how important books and painting and music are to Maggie and tries to dissuade her from her course: "But you will not always be shut up in your present lot: why should you starve your mind in that way? It is a narrow asceticism—I don't like to see you persisting in it, Maggie. Poetry and art and knowledge are sacred and pure" (MF 318). Maggie, however, sees no other way to live and responds to his

urging saying, “But not for me … I must wait—this life will not last long” (MF 318). Philip sees it as unnatural and a form of self torture. He thinks of “the pity of it that a mind like hers should be withering in its very youth” (MF 320). Frustrated at her insistence in giving up all that she loves and that gives meaning to her life, Philip speaks to her in his angriest tone. Eliot uses Philip to speak for all women who sacrifice the best of themselves in order to adhere to a narrow notion of femininity:

> “you are shutting yourself up in a narrow, self-delusive fanaticism, which is only a way of escaping pain by starving into dulness all the highest powers of your nature…. Stupefaction is not resignation: and it is stupefaction to remain in ignorance—to shut up all the avenues by which the life of your fellow-men might become known to you” (MF 340); “Don’t persist in this willful senseless privation. It makes me wretched to see you benumbing and cramping your nature in this way. You were so full of life when you were a child—I thought you would be a brilliant woman—all wit and bright imagination. And it flashes out in your face still, until you draw that veil of dull quiescence over it….you can never carry on this self-torture….no one has strength given to do what is unnatural. It is mere cowardice to seek safety in negations” (MF 342); “You want to find out a mode of renunciation that will be an escape from pain. I tell you again, there is no such escape possible except by perverting or mutilating one’s nature.” (MF 430)

The language Philip uses—“deadened, shut up, narrow, withering, privation, starving, resignation, stupefaction, senseless, benumbing, cramping, unnatural, deafening,

perverting, mutilating" describes a state of the denial of life itself. Elizabeth Ermarth writes that "Years of such denial teach Maggie to repress herself so effectively that she cannot mobilize the inner resources that might have saved her....In place of a habit of self-actualization she has learned a habit of self-denial which Philip rightly calls a 'long suicide'" (587). Philip puts into words the loss and waste of such a philosophy for someone like Maggie whose nature craves and is nourished by the aesthetic. Philip can speak for Maggie because he is in a similar marginalized position. He can freely speak out against such a state in impassioned, angry language that gestures towards Eliot's later angry female artists. Maggie as heroine must remain wedded to self-sacrifice, or at least remain in conflict about it, and so cannot voice anger at women's position.

We know Maggie is capable of strong speech and of standing up for what she believes in. However, after childhood, there are only a few times when Maggie voices her anger and it is always on behalf of the pain she feels for another, in accordance with the female ethic of care. In three consecutive scenes, we see Maggie loosening control of her repressed silence. It is in these bursts of "voice" that Eliot portrays Maggie's passion and violence, though she is reprimanded by Tom for her outspokenness. The first is when her mother complains about her household items being sold. Maggie is outraged that her mother worries about her things as her father lays insensate: "She burst out, at last, in an agitated, almost violent tone, 'Mother, how can you talk so? As if you cared only for things with *your* name on, and not for what has my father's name too. And to care about anything but dear father himself! ..." (MF 215).

Soon after, she is similarly outraged at her aunts and uncles' treatment of her father. Her anger is perceived by Tom who fears she will speak: "'Be quiet, Maggie,' he

said authoritatively, pushing her aside" (MF 224). However, Maggie's "trembling indignation" (MF 226) finally bursts out in an invective against them all:

> Maggie suddenly started up and stood in front of them, her eyes flashing like the eyes of a young lioness.…"Keep away from us then, and don't come to find fault with my father—he was better than any of you—he was kind—he would have helped you if you had been in trouble. Tom and I don't ever want to have any of your money, if you won't help my mother. We'd rather not have it! We'll do without you." (MF 226)

Tom reproves Maggie's outburst later telling her, "You ought not to have spoken as you did to my uncles and aunts—you should leave it to me … and not put yourself forward" (MF 246).

The third time Maggie speaks out is on Philip's behalf after Tom cruelly humiliates and insults him in the Red Deeps. Though she is unable to say what she wants in front of Philip, after they leave him Maggie finally "burst[s] into utterance" (MF 360):

> "Don't suppose that I think you are right, Tom, or that I bow to your will. I despise the feelings you have shown in speaking to Philip—I detest your insulting, unmanly allusions to his deformity. You have been reproaching people all your life—you have been always sure you yourself are right: it is because you have not a mind large enough to see that there is anything better than your own conduct and your own petty aims.…You boast of your virtues as if they purchased you a right to be cruel and unmanly, as you've been to-day. Don't suppose I would give up Philip Wakem in obedience to you." (MF 360-61)

This last outburst comes after the series of Red Deeps talks with Philip when her old passions have been stirred to life by him. Philip has enabled Maggie to speak out by stirring her back to life. This marks the end of Maggie's stage of self-renunciation. After this, Maggie becomes less resigned to submission and more accessible to her emotions.

However, except on behalf of others, Maggie does not speak out. Her "voice" remains locked inside her, tied up in her passions and desires and search for meaning. Eliot repeats the strategy she used in Adam Bede of associating female agency with female voice. This can be seen in Maggie's Aunt Glegg—one of the most outspoken and articulate females in the novel. In many ways she is reminiscent of Mrs. Poyser in Adam Bede in her prickly nature and sharp tongue. Besides their acerbic articulation, what Mrs. Poyser and Mrs. Glegg have in common is their financial status, which, coupled with their assertive personalities, gives them status in their households and in their communities. In Eliot's works female agency goes hand in hand with female "voice," and female agency is often given to women who have attributes associated with the masculine sphere, such as earning or managing money. In Adam Bede these qualities are located in the vocation and financial status of Mrs. Poyser and in the vocation and independence of Dinah Morris. In The Mill on the Floss they are located in Maggie's Aunts Glegg and Pullet, both "saving money unknown" (MF 46). Conversely, the women with the least degree of agency are Maggie, particularly after her father's financial ruin, and her Aunt Moss, her father's impoverished sister. Their financial struggles further curtail their already limited agency.

As in her earlier works, Eliot uses the genres of painting and music to highlight gender inequities—painting being associated with the masculine order and music

associated with the feminine and with female potential. Though Maggie doesn't sing as Caterina Sarti does or is strongly identified with voice as Dinah Morris is, she is very much associated with music, particularly as she enters adulthood. Her ardent nature responds to the beauty and immediacy of music. In this novel the medium of painting is less identified with the patriarchal order than in "Scenes of Clerical Life" and Adam Bede but it still represents the gendered dynamics of female as muse and possession and the male as the creator, viewer, and possessor.

Painting and printed images are used to reflect separate spheres ideology and shed light on Maggie's development. The paintings at the house of Mrs. Moggs that Maggie views as a child foreshadow her future as the picture of the witch does. "Maggie … stood on a chair to look at a remarkable series of pictures representing the Prodigal Son in the costume of Sir Charles Grandison" (MF 35). Maggie later becomes a sort of prodigal daughter, but when she returns home she is not welcomed but remains an outcast. The painting also provides an example of the fuzziness that the medium of painting can take on, mixing eras, genres, and messages and further supports the reason why Eliot values the immediacy of music. This fuzziness also occurs with the print of Ulysses and Nausicaa that Maggie admires as a child, which her uncle Pullet had "bought as a 'pretty Scripture thing'" (MF 99). This is a subtle way of pointing out that the masculine order, to which Maggie must defer, is often mistaken. Music, on the other hand, is portrayed as having a direct influence on the listener.

The genre of painting is used to critique the gendered aspects of Maggie's society whereas music represents Maggie's inner self and her yearning for something greater. As with instances from her childhood, music transforms Maggie and her world. The

everyday becomes magical and Maggie becomes an active participant of that world. As Maggie enters adulthood music plays an even greater role for her, while at the same time, the people around her increasingly identify her with the realm of painting. As she grows older, she loses the awkwardness of youth and blossoms into a beauty, becoming an object of attention. Because of this and her age, she steps more solidly into the feminine sphere. She becomes objectified as a woman, a move emphasized by linking her with paintings and pictures.

With her brother's old friend Bob Jakin this takes the form of the highly gendered concept of chivalry. He remembers how distraught Maggie was over the loss of her books when they were auctioned. In a tribute to the affection and admiration he has for Maggie, he purchases books for her when he is older. He explains to her that, " I'n niver forgot how you looked when you fretted about the books bein' gone—it's stuck by me as if it was a pictur hingin' before me" (MF 294). He presents her with books that have pictures: "six or seven numbers of a 'Portrait Gallery'" (MF 294). Bob remembers Maggie as a picture and pays tribute to her with pictures. The narrator comments that "the days of chivalry are not gone….Bob … had as respectful an adoration for this dark-eyed maiden as if he had been a knight in armour …" (MF 297). In an earlier scene with Bob, in which he and Tom argue as boys, the narrator specifically states: "Poor Bob! he was not … a chivalrous character" (MF 57). That Maggie brings out something higher in his nature is an early indication of the potential transformative power Maggie has on others, which is a mark of the artist.

Lucy, firmly ensconced in the female sphere, is able to see Maggie in the same light in which she herself is cast. When Maggie visits her we are told, "Cousin Maggie …

should have Lucy's best prints and drawings in her bedroom … she was so fond of pretty things!" (MF 384). When Maggie arrives at the Deane's house, Lucy views Maggie as an artist's model. She places Maggie in a chair and "holding her pretty head on one side, as if she had been arranging Maggie for a portrait and wished to judge of the general effect" (MF 387), she comments on her beauty. Later when Maggie's evening dress is discussed and Mrs. Tulliver laments over Maggie's coloring, Lucy declares, "Nonsense, aunty! ... you don't understand those things. A painter would think Maggie's complexion beautiful" (MF 399).

The shift in Maggie's becoming objectified and placed in the gendered role of object and muse occurs nowhere more prominently than in her interactions with Philip in the Red Deeps. As Bob Jakin has carried a picture of Maggie in his head, Philip has carried around an actual portrait of Maggie from his time at school with Tom. When they first meet in the Red Deeps Philip tells Maggie, "I made a picture of you as you looked that morning in the study when you said you would not forget me" (MF 312). He shows her the picture of herself as a girl: "Philip drew a large miniature-case from his pocket….Maggie saw her old self leaning on a table, with her black locks hanging down behind her ears, looking into space, with strange, dreamy eyes. It was a water-color sketch, of real merit as a portrait" (MF 312). Continuing in the vein of his seeing her as muse and love object, he tells her, "You are very much more beautiful than I thought you would be" (MF 312). When he discusses his dissatisfaction with himself as a painter, he slips into the language of male-female relationships and confides that "there are many other things I long for … things that other men have, and that will always be denied me. My life will have nothing great or beautiful in it—I would rather not have lived" (MF

314). His tribute to her and his pain affect Maggie and she begins to think that "perhaps she might really help him to find contentment as she had found it" (MF 315). Maggie begins to let herself be objectified as the thing of beauty in his life.

They talk of books but it is largely as they relate to images. He shows her the book he has in his pocket explaining to her that he is "studying a scene for a picture" (MF 317). "'Take that volume home with you, Maggie,' said Philip, watching her with delight. 'I don't want it now. I shall make a picture of you instead'" (MF 318). Philip moves from using the book as inspiration to having Maggie as a live muse and model. Maggie tells Philip she had once begun the book, The Pirate, but could never finish it: "I read to where Minna is walking with Cleveland—and I could never get to read the rest. I went on with it in my own head, and I made several endings; but they were all unhappy. I could never make a happy ending out of that beginning. Poor Minna" (MF 317-18). Thus Maggie becomes the inspiration and model for his painting of a story that dissatisfies her. Like Minna, Maggie can have no happy ending.

Though Philip has Maggie's best interests at heart, he also desires her for himself and through his painting develops a proprietary manner with her. When Maggie tells him that they cannot meet again, he reminds her of the picture he painted of her as a girl and responds: "If I kept that little girl in my mind for five years, didn't I earn some part in her? She ought not to take herself quite away from me" (MF 319). He doesn't believe that love and romance are for him, but thinks "If any woman could love him—surely Maggie was that woman" (MF 320). He sees Maggie as a love interest where Maggie sees him only as a kindred soul. She does, however, enjoy his attention and affection, part of which requires that she allow herself to be objectified. She acquiesces and becomes

interested in his painting her saying, “I shall be sitting for my second portrait then” (MF 339).

A year passes and they continue their meetings and conversations in the Red Deeps. Philip gives Maggie another book, which she returns to him, saying, “Take back your Corinne … you were wrong in thinking I should wish to be like her” (MF 345). Philip asks her, “Wouldn’t you really like to be a tenth Muse, then, Maggie?” to which she answers, “Not at all … The Muses were uncomfortable goddesses, I think” (MF 345). Again Philip places Maggie in the role of muse. Later we see that Philip has surrounded himself with his drawings of Maggie. Wanting his father’s approval to marry Maggie, Philip invites his father up to his attic studio where Maggie’s image is on view for his father to behold. Mr. Wakem views the portraits and comments on her beauty. As female, she is literally on view, as an art object.

After she meets Stephen Guest, she sits at a stall at the church bazaar where she is observed by both Stephen and Philip. When Stephen follows Philip’s gaze of Maggie, he perceives that there may be something between them. He uses the language of painting to ask, “Are you studying for a portrait, Phil? … something of the fallen princess serving behind a counter?” (MF 451-52). Both men think of Maggie as a desirable object to possess, as one would admire and possess a painting. She is princess, goddess, and muse to both men, inspiring them to love and desire. This gratifies her sense of self but does not fulfill her sense of purpose or her ambition to be something more, which is why she ultimately rejects both men. At the end of the novel when Philip sends a letter to Maggie after her fall, he uses the proprietary allusion of painting to express how he felt when he realized Stephen was also interested in her: “perhaps I feel about you as the artist does

about the scene over which his soul has brooded with love: he would tremble to see it confided to other hands …" (MF 522).

To some extent this painterly view of Maggie accords with the way she sees herself. She has always viewed herself as part of the illusory world of books, but with the difference that in her imagined world she plays an active role, not the passive one of muse or model. Rather than being objectified, Maggie wants to be a part of the world of beauty she so craves. When she visits Lucy she was "introduced for the first time to the young lady's life….amidst the new abundance of music, and lingering strolls in the sunshine….it was becoming very pleasant to dress in the evening, and to feel that she was one of the beautiful things of this spring time" (MF 417). From childhood to young adulthood Maggie's aesthetic nature identifies with the beauty she finds in books and paintings and in the natural world around her. However, it is music that most speaks to and reflects her aesthetic longing. Maggie's passion, yearning, and sense of beauty become almost a tangible manifestation as she listens to or plays music.

Maggie is one of Eliot's most musical characters. However, rather than associating Maggie with voice as she does with Caterina Sarti and Dinah Morris, Eliot renders Maggie as an instrument on which music is played. All of the key phases of Maggie's development are measured through musical analogy. The highs and lows of her life are described through musical metaphor. We are first introduced to Maggie as she is enveloped by the "dreamy deafness … [and] great curtain of sound" of the mill (MF 10). As a child we see her transfixed by the simple music of her uncle's musical snuff box and enchanted by the caroling outside her window. When her family becomes bankrupt, her sense of loss is described as both a literal and figurative loss of music and voice: "Every

affection, every delight the poor child had had, was like an aching nerve to her. There was no music for her any more—no piano, no harmonised voices, no delicious stringed instruments, with their passionate cries of imprisoned spirits sending a strange vibration through her frame" (MF 297-98). Similarly, when she finds something to fill this void, her discovery of Thomas á Kempis, it too is described in terms of music: "A strange thrill of awe passed through Maggie while she read, as if she had been wakened in the night by a strain of solemn music" (MF 302). Later, when she visits Lucy after she has been working in a girls' school, Lucy assures her that she knows of one interest that can disperse the bleakness of Maggie's difficulties: "There is one pleasure, I know, Maggie, that your deepest dismalness will never resist.…That is music….And I mean you to get up your playing again, which used to be so much better than mine when we were at Laceham" (MF 389). Maggie acknowledges the importance music has for her and says music helped her get through the dreariness of her teaching position. She tells Lucy, "You would have laughed to see me playing the little girls' tunes over and over to them, when I took them to practice … just for the sake of fingering the dear keys again" (MF 390). Recalling their days as girls, Lucy says, "I know what a wild state of joy you used to be in when the glee-men came round….St. Ogg's is so miserably provided with musical gentlemen. There are really only Stephen and Philip Wakem who have any knowledge of music…." (MF 390). The reference to Philip and Stephen in terms of music presages Maggie's future relationship with both of them. It is the musical evenings in Lucy's parlor that brings Philip back into Maggie's life and introduces her to Stephen Guest.

Maggie and Philip are often portrayed as two musical instruments that resonate with each other. In one of their early conversations in the Red Deeps, Philip tells Maggie of his dissatisfaction with life and encourages their friendship, which Maggie fears is duplicitous of her. She hears his complaints and pleas as a familiar strain of music from within: "The voice that said this made sweet music to Maggie; but athwart it there came an urgent, monotonous warning from another voice….Yet the music would swell out again, like chimes borne onward by a recurrent breeze" (MF 315). Later, they talk specifically of music. Philip tells Maggie, "Certain strains of music affect me so strangely—I can never hear them without their changing my whole attitude of mind for a time, and if the effect would last, I might be capable of heroisms" (MF 317), to which Maggie responds, "Ah! I know what you mean about music; I feel so….At least …I used to feel so when I had any music; I never have any now except the organ at church" (MF 317). For both Maggie and Philip, music plays a vital role in their search for beauty and meaning, and to live without it is counted as a diminishment of life. When Maggie explains to Philip why restraint is better for her that giving in to her passions, it is in musical terms that she expresses herself: "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 felt that I had enough music—I wanted more instruments playing together—I wanted voices to be fuller and deeper" (MF 341). After their relationship in the Red Deeps phase is discovered, Maggie and Philip know there is no chance of their coming together again. When they meet later, after Maggie has been away teaching, it is in Lucy's parlor. Again, Maggie is conveyed through musical metaphor: "When Philip entered the room, he was going merely to bow to Maggie….But Maggie, who had little more power of concealing

the impressions made upon her than if she had been constructed of musical strings, felt her eyes getting larger with tears as they took each other's hands in silence" (MF 427).

Whereas Philip is strongly associated with painting and with music to a lesser degree, Stephen Guest is associated only with music and much of his allure is represented by his powerful singing voice. It is this quality that is Maggie's undoing. Everything about Stephen's singing is sensuous. It stirs Maggie to life and unites her aesthetic longing with her sensual nature. Singing characterizes the difference Maggie feels for Philip and Stephen, which is reflected in their musical ability. When Philip sings we are told: "That pleading tenor had no very fine qualities as a voice….She was touched, not thrilled by the song: it suggested distinct memories and thoughts, and brought quiet regret in the place of excitement" (MF 435). When Stephen sings even Philip recognizes the effect on Maggie and thinks that "he had never before seen her under so strong an influence" (MF 434). Phyllis Weliver writes that particularly for women "Music was seen as a potentially dangerous force because its influence on the body, mind and emotions, was so very strong" (5), as we see in Maggie's response to Stephen's singing. Maggie is aware of the effect his voice has on her; however, she is unable to resist it:

> it was of no use … all her intentions were lost in the vague state of emotion produced by the inspiring duet….When the strain passed into the minor, she half started from her seat with the sudden thrill of that change. Poor Maggie! She looked very beautiful when her soul was being played on in this way by the inexorable power of sound. You might have seen the slightest perceptible quivering through her whole frame as she leaned a little forward, clasping her hands as if to steady herself; while her eyes

> dilated and brightened into that wide-open, childish expression of wondering delight which always came back in her happiest moments. (MF 434)

Maggie's response to Stephen's voice is presented as a physical intoxication over which she has very little control: "Maggie, in spite of her resistance to the spirit of the song and to the singer, was taken hold of and shaken by the invisible influence—was borne along by a wave too strong for her" (MF 435). This line foreshadows Maggie's lack of will power as she later dreamily floats down the river with Stephen. Delia da Sousa Correa explains that Maggie "is acutely susceptible to the influence of music and [Eliot] uses musical allusion to provide metaphors for both spiritual and sexual passion" (101). Eliot introduces one of her gender inversions here by casting the male as the musical seducer, a role typically reserved for women, as we later see in Middlemarch's Rosamond.

Stephen's voice is described in terms of masculine sensuality. His voice is a "full-toned bass" (MF 382) which he "delivered with admirable ease" (MF 383). When he sings, Maggie feels his "glance that seemed somehow to have caught the vibratory influence of the voice" (MF 400). When Stephen suddenly speaks to her at the bazaar, we are told that "The unexpected tones shook her like a sudden accidental vibration of a harp close by her" (MF 451). The effect Stephen has on her is measured as both musical and physical. Stephen possesses a physical quality that Maggie's sensuous nature responds to. The music and singing represent the whole aesthetic world that she has hungered after for years. The sexual dynamics between Maggie and Stephen is expressed in musical metaphor. He becomes the personification of all the passion and longing she has always sought:

> In poor Maggie's highly-strung, hungry nature … these apparently trivial causes had the effect of rousing and exalting her imagination in a way that was mysterious to herself. It was not that she thought distinctly of Mr. Stephen Guest, or dwelt on the indications that he looked at her with admiration; it was rather that she felt the half-remote presence of a world of love and beauty and delight, made up of vague, mingled images from all the poetry and romance she had ever read, or had ever woven in her dreamy reveries. The music was vibrating in her still—Purcell's music, with its wild passion and fancy….She was in her brighter aerial world again. (MF 400-01)

Music combines Maggie's ideal world with her adult sexuality. When Lucy asks Maggie if she enjoyed the music, she responds, "I think I should have no other mortal wants, if I could always have plenty of music. It seems to infuse strength into my limbs, and ideas into my brain" (MF 401). Although Lucy is also musical and sings, her performance is more like that of Philip's—enjoyable but not stirring, either in her singing or in her response to music. Beryl Gray points out that "Lucy's musicality is not of the kind associated with disturbing emotions: she is not susceptible to unfathomable influences in the way Maggie is" (27).

Music brings Maggie enrichment when she both listens to it and when she plays the piano. It is something that resonates with her internal wealth. This depth of feeling with music is evinced in Maggie but not in Stephen, which marks a character difference in them and is an indication that at bottom he is not suitable for Maggie. For Stephen,

singing is largely a display of his ego, rather than a reflection of his inner self. Maggie, conversely, enjoys music as much when she is alone. Maggie thinks:

> It was pleasant, too, when Stephen and Lucy were gone out riding, to sit down at the piano alone, and find that the old fitness between her fingers and the keys remained, and revived, like a sympathetic kinship.…her sensibility to the supreme excitement of music was only one form of that passionate sensibility which belonged to her whole nature, and made her faults and virtues all merge in each other; made her affections sometimes an impatient demand, but also prevented her vanity from taking the form of mere feminine coquetry and device, and gave it the poetry of ambition. (MF 417-18)

Eliot portrays Maggie's powerful connection to music as part of her ambition in her quest for meaning and her yearning for beauty. Uglow points out that beyond the physical aversion or attraction Maggie feels for Philip and Stephen, she is "seduced by culture. Philip describes his love for Maggie in terms of a painter's inspiration, while her own gradual drift into Stephen's arms is a cultural as well as sexual passage which takes place to the music of Purcell, Bellini's 'Sonnambula' and Arne's songs for 'The Tempest'" (139). With both men she has compromised her reputation by being secretly alone with them. It is the lure of the beauty and passion that both men possess, albeit in different forms, that draws Maggie into the compromising relationships. Philip gives voice to Maggie's intellectual and aesthetic yearnings; Stephen gives voice to Maggie's passion and sexuality.

Maggie's ambition is associated with the masculine sphere of action, self-education, and independence. As with Caterina Sarti and Dinah Morris, Eliot gives Maggie traits that are associated with the masculine sphere. Exercising such traits results in greater agency and wider experience for the females. Conversely, Eliot gives Philip qualities associated with the feminine sphere. By having traits associated with the other sphere, Maggie and Philip embody more of the gender spectrum and thus more of what it means to be human. As with Dinah and Caterina, Eliot first solidly establishes Maggie's femininity and gives her many feminine sphere qualities so as to align her with the ideal of the heroine. A large part of her femininity lies in the beauty she develops as a young woman. Part of the way Eliot conveys Maggie's physical beauty is to describe her in mythological terms. This grants her more status than a simple physical description confers and links her with the greater tradition of female beauty and power. When Philip first meets her in the Red Deeps, he corroborates this linking by saying he will paint her, "a Hamadryad, dark and strong and noble, just issued from one of the fir-trees" (MF 339). When Stephen first meets Maggie he "could not conceal his astonishment at the sight of this tall, dark-eyed nymph with her jet-black coronet of hair" (MF 391).

In addition to being beautiful, Eliot associates Maggie with other key features of the feminine sphere: Maggie is sympathetic, self-sacrificing, and above all, needs to love and be loved. After childhood, Maggie learns feminine submission and sacrifice in the name of family duty. She also exhibits conventional feminine responses to the masculine. She is delighted that Philip thinks her beautiful, which answers "her innate delight in admiration and love" (MF 312). Part of her attraction to Stephen is that it gratifies her to have the kind of masculine protection he offers. When she attempts to row the boat with

Stephen and Lucy, her foot slips and Stephen rushes to her aid: “It was very charming to be taken care of in that kind, graceful manner by some one taller and stronger than one’s self. Maggie had never felt just in the same way before” (MF 398). Maggie, unused to such attentions, “found her keen appetite for homage” (MF 436) responding to Stephen’s solicitations. In her relations with Philip and Stephen, Maggie responds in a way that is conventionally feminine.

Maggie is described as feminine in possessing a loving nature, in her desire for male attention and protection, in her beauty and sensuality, and in her submission and self-sacrifice. Yet Maggie’s traits are tinged with power—power usually associated with the masculine sphere. For example, when Maggie embraces female self-renunciation she does so in the masculine scholarly tradition of Thomas á Kempis, rather than a feminine one, as in a female saint, for example. Even the quintessential feminine trait, the maternal, takes the form of protectress in Maggie, rather than that of gentle mother love: as a child she defends Tom against her father, as a young adult she fiercely defends her father against her aunts and uncles, and as a young woman it is in angry, furious tones that she defends Philip against Tom.

Many of the images Eliot invokes to describe Maggie are those associated with female power: the witch, the Medusa, goddesses, divinity, and royalty. These images of female power suggest potential agency for Maggie, but the confines of the feminine sphere restrict her from carrying out her ambitions. Maggie represents a conflict of the spheres, a conflict that manifests itself in her anger, despair, and rebellion. Her physical appearance also mirrors the characteristics she possesses from both spheres. Her feminine

beauty is coupled with strength and stature. Her physical strength and the references of female power reflect the ambition and potential she longs to develop.

It is the pursuit of her ambitions that most identifies her with the masculine realm—her desire to be something greater than her society allows her, her desire for knowledge, and her desire for independence. Since her childhood Maggie has known that she has an aptitude for learning. As a young woman she pursues Tom's masculine studies and exhibits fierce independence. Education is associated with the masculine sphere. Maggie and Lucy go to a girls' school but true learning is reserved for men. Any reference to education is woven in thickly gendered masculine/feminine expectations. Mr. Tulliver tells Riley that Maggie is "Too 'cute for a woman, …—she'll fetch none the bigger price for that" (MF 15). Women are seen as commodities to be purchased at a price; men are the doers and achievers in the world. Mr. Tulliver wants Tom to be educated, but it is Maggie, and not Tom, who can "read almost as well as the parson" (MF 15) and is better suited to study. For the most part, Maggie meets with disapproval from everyone concerning her desire for learning. Yet Maggie continues to pursue her ambition for learning. She believes that education can bring her happiness and fulfill her sense of purpose. When her life becomes more difficult as a youth she thinks, "Latin, Euclid, and Logic would surely be a considerable step in masculine wisdom—in that knowledge which made men contented, and even glad to live" (MF 299). Later she faults her problems with her lack of knowledge and thinks, "If she had been taught 'real learning and wisdom, such as great men knew,' she thought she should have held the secrets of life; if she had only books, that she might learn for herself what wise men

knew!" (MF 298). Maggie believes her exclusion from the masculine sphere of knowledge has made her vulnerable and less capable of coping with the world.

Along with education, Eliot establishes finances and the ability to earn as part of the masculine realm. Maggie learns early on that money is related to agency and that earning money can bring a sense of accomplishment and worth. When Tom brings home his first earned money it is with "a delicious sense of achievement" (MF 290). When Maggie's world begins to fall apart after her father's financial ruin, she sees that the men are better off because they have something to focus on and engage their minds with. She sees that her father "was able to attend to business again….[and] Tom went to and from every morning and evening …" (MF 287) with his work. They have something outside on which to fix their minds and occupy their time, but she and her mother have no corresponding way of coping. Her mother "remained bewildered in this empty life" (MF 288) and wanders aimlessly through the barren house. Maggie later tells Philip, "I wish I could make myself a world outside it, as men do" (MF 430).

Maggie goes against convention and against her family in her determination to earn her own keep, first by sewing and later by teaching. Her earning power is part of her larger desire for independence. Even after her fall, when she is at her lowest, she clings to her independence. Though shunned by nearly everyone, she determines to push on: "she was not without practical intentions: the love of independence was too strong an inheritance and a habit for her not to remember that she must get her bread" (MF 512). Maggie tells Dr. Kenn, who tries to help her, "The only thing I want is some occupation that will enable me to get my bread and be independent" (MF 516). Her mother tells her that her Aunt Glegg will take her in, if "you'll go to her dutiful" (MF 520) but this is

unacceptable to Maggie. She tells her mother that she will “get some occupation. I can’t live with any one, or be dependent on them ... I must get my own bread” (MF 521). Maggie must be independent and earn her own keep in order to be true to herself. She rejects the other solutions that would place her in the feminine sphere, dependent and submitting to those she doesn’t respect and who don’t understand her. By acting in the public masculine sphere she is able to earn her own money, retain her independence, and answer to herself. It is the combination of characteristics from the feminine and masculine spheres that make Maggie such a compelling and complex character. Eliot delivers a subversive message that the appropriation of masculine qualities in women results in a fuller humanity, but cautions that in a society repressive to women, it comes at a price.

The only person who understands Maggie is Philip. Part of the reason for this is that he has many feminine qualities that allow him to identify with Maggie’s plight. Carlisle points out “Eliot’s repeated identifications of Philip as a woman….He is marginalized by his deformity as women are marginalized by their gender” (185). Throughout the novel, Eliot associates Philip with the feminine: in his appearance, in the way he relates to the world, and in how people relate to him. We are told that his hair “waved and curled at the ends like a girl’s” (MF 170); of “his small, delicate hand” (MF 191); when Philip argues with his father over Maggie, “the scene … jarred upon his nerves, which were as sensitive as a woman’s” (MF 444); and “Kept aloof from all practical life as Philip had been, and by nature half feminine in sensitiveness, he had some of the woman’s intolerant repulsion toward worldliness and the deliberate pursuit of sensual enjoyment …” (MF 344). In addition, as Carlisle points out, the dilettante nature

of his artistic pursuits puts him in the realm of the feminine sphere of the non-professional: "only through one's professional status does one earn a livelihood and establish one's place in society….Philip is the amateur artist and, therefore, the womanish artist" (185-186). Philip is painfully aware that his deformity excludes him from the masculine realm. Carlisle observes that Philip "uses a conventionally feminine language to convey his status as a dabbler, his lack of professional commitment to any particular art" (186): Philip says, "I delight in fine pictures—I long to be able to paint such" (MF 314); "I care for painting and music … I flutter all ways, and fly in none" (MF 339).

In Philip's letter to Maggie, after her fall, he writes, "my love for you sufficed to withhold me from suicide, without the aid of any other motive" (MF 523). For the most part, the men in Eliot's work don't experience the degree of despair that could lead to suicide. Philip's despair, resulting from the limitations placed on him physically and by society, enables him to identify with the feminine and to speak for Maggie.

Maggie and Philip encompass more of the gender spectrum, which grants them greater identity with the human condition and makes them more conflicted and complex than characters more conventionally feminine and masculine. Maggie and Philip are contrasted with Lucy and Stephen who are stamps of their prescribed masculine and feminine spheres. We have already seen that Philip's tenor voice is contrasted with Stephen's strong bass voice; that Philip is small with feminine traits and Stephen is tall and masculine; that Stephen is handed his job, while Philip is excluded from masculine industry—all these resulting in Stephen's confidence and Philip's timidity. The contrast between the two men is obvious. Though they are friends, Philip sometime feels "rather

oppressed … by Stephen's bright strong presence and strong voice" (MF 432). Maggie's response to Philip is one that elicits her pity and protection, and she very much identifies with him; her response to Stephen is passionate and sensual. It is Philip's feminine side that resonates with Maggie. Beer writes that Philip's "exclusion from active life sets him alongside of Maggie in a way which confuses likeness and difference. He tempts Maggie with his offer to be 'brother and teacher,' but he can never satisfy her sexually" (92).

Maggie is positioned next to the perfectly prescribed feminine sphere ideal of Lucy. Lucy is small and blonde, docile, and is unshakably sweet-natured. Maggie is tall and dark, passionate, and willful. Her ambitions touch on the intellectual, the artistic, and the spiritual. She is driven by a sense of purpose and a search for meaning that is not located in the feminine sphere.

In many ways Eliot uses these characters to both reflect and reconstruct the Corinne story. Lewis points out that both Maggie and Corinne are "self-assured and intellectual, willful and proud; both have a passion for the intellectual and the aesthetic….Both are perceived by the men in their lives as remarkable, regal, beautiful" (Lewis 152). Philip sees Maggie as a Corinne-like artist figure but Maggie rejects the comparison: "I'm determined to read no more books where the blond-haired women carry away all the happiness….If you could give me some story, now, where the dark woman triumphs, it would restore the balance—I want to avenge … the dark unhappy ones" (MF 345). Philip responds, "Well, perhaps you will avenge the dark women in your own person: — carry away all the love from your cousin Lucy …" (MF 345). Though Maggie is hurt by this comment she is unaware that Philip has unwittingly predicted exactly what will happen. Conflicted as usual, and writing her own story as

usual, Maggie becomes both the "[triumphant] dark woman" and the "dark unhappy" character in her own story. She is capable of triumph and of Corinne-like glory but feels guilty about the selfishness of such a role.

Some critics, such as Moers, see The Mill on the Floss as a sort of revenge fantasy on the part of Eliot. It is rather a reworking and development of the Corinne myth. The obvious similarities are there, even down to the docile cousin/half-sister in Corinne both being named Lucy, or Lucile in Corinne. Both Lucy/Lucile are sweet and innocent and admire their darker, artistic female counterparts. In both works, Lucy is the proper choice from society's point of view, but, against their wills, Stephen/Nelvil fall in love with the inappropriate Maggie/Corinne figure. Corinne is half British, half-Italian; Maggie is the same sort of hybrid, her foreignness manifesting itself in her coloring and artistic "southern" nature. Maggie gives up Stephen so he can return to Lucy, just as Corinne gives up Nelvil to her half-sister. In "the dark woman and the fair lady—the antithetical implications are obvious: on the one hand, creativity, danger, suffering, the powers of darkness; on the other, safety, goodness, tranquility, all the powers of beneficent light" (Goldberger xl).

However, there are also strong differences between the two novels. In The Mill on the Floss Maggie is the one who rejects Stephen, whereas in Corinne it is Nelvil who rejects Corinne. Also, Maggie knows she is taking her cousin's betrothed, whereas Corinne falls in love with Nelvil before she realizes his connection with her half-sister. Corrine is largely shaped by her love for Nelvil, whereas Maggie is largely shaped by her quest for meaning and purpose; Stephen makes up only a small part of Maggie's story. Maggie is a Corinne-like figure placed in a realistic novel where such pinnacles for

women are not attainable. The longing, ambition, and potential are there, but not the resultant success. The fall is there for her, but not the heights. Maggie and Corinne both die at novel's end, but Maggie does not pine away from love. She dies a "hero's" death, exerting her strength of purpose and confidence in herself to the very end. Early in the story Tom tells Bob Jakin, "in the tone of a benevolent patron" (MF 54), that if a flood should come he will rescue Bob in his ark. It is Maggie, however, who rescues Bob and his family and attempts to rescue Tom. Far from being a damsel in distress, Maggie usurps the masculine position of rescuer and hero. Eliot builds on the Corinne myth and develops it in a direction that reflects her idea of a heroine. By making Maggie a character largely driven by self-determination, Eliot creates, as Beer writes, "the paradoxical sense of Maggie's triumph and vengeance with which, despite her death, the book concludes" (90). In a seemingly passive-aggressive manner, Maggie, as the "dark woman" does "carry away all the love," as Philip predicts, but then she renounces it. Whether it is due to her loyalty to Lucy and Philip, as she declares, or to the fact that Stephen could not make her any happier than Philip, as is suggested, we do not really know. The answer to her actions probably lies in some combination of the two, and in the fact that Maggie never finds what it is she is looking for. Stephen and Philip only embody parts of what she searches for.

In The Mill on the Floss Eliot conveys a stronger condemnation of separate spheres ideology than in her earlier works. Eliot criticizes the limitations society imposes on women and through Maggie shows us the frustration and pain that results from a nature that craves what it is denied. Women's lesser roles are limiting and stifle their growth, and by extension the growth and development of society.

Mr. Tulliver's choice in his wife and Stephen Guest's choice of Lucy reflect society's valuing appearance and docility in women rather than more substantial qualities. Mr. Tulliver explains to Riley that "I picked the mother because she wasn't o'er 'cute…. 'cause she was a bit weak like; for I wasn't agoin' to be told the rights o' things by my own fireside" (MF 22). When his wife unwittingly demonstrates her slowness, Mr. Tulliver winks at Mr. Riley "with the natural pride of a man who has a buxom wife conspicuously his inferior in intellect" (MF 27). Lucy recognizes this quality in Stephen and tells him, "I know you like women to be rather insipid" (MF 379), and that her "silliness is part of [her] charm" (MF 378). The hierarchy of power is what is valued—a structure that keeps men in control and makes women subservient.

Maggie is proud of her inner qualities and resents the external valuing of women. She "had once said impatiently to Philip that she didn't see why women were to be told with a simper that they were beautiful, any more than old men were to be told that they were venerable …" (MF 393). The superficial valuing of women, which Maggie sees as demeaning, is something she comes up against throughout her life. Hers is a world where women are there for the service and pleasure of men. They are viewed as belonging to their fathers, brothers, or husbands. Mr. Waken puts it most succinctly. When Philip says he wants to marry Maggie and that she has never been a part of her father's quarrel, Mr. Waken replies, "What does that signify? We don't ask what a woman does—we ask whom she belongs to" (MF 443-44).

The world Maggie is raised in is largely shaped by separate spheres ideology. According to Ermarth, "They are norms according to which she is an inferior, dependent creature who will never go far in anything, and which consequently are a denial of her

full humanity" (587). The women operate largely within the domestic sphere, the men in the outer world. Eliot points out the result of this imbalance throughout the novel. Maggie's ambitious nature and her need for purpose are not satisfied in the feminine domestic. When problems arise, it is clear that the women turn inward and are restricted to the confines of their homes, whereas the men can alleviate their frustrations by action in the world of commerce and in their ability to travel freely. Maggie rebels against this restrictive order and tries to maintain her independence. Tom, always critical of her choices, tells her she in unfit to decide things for herself. He tells her, "you might have sense enough to see that a brother, who goes out into the world and mixes with men, necessarily knows better …" (MF 408). Maggie lacks the practical knowledge that men gain from being out in the world. Her limited education and limited opportunity prepare her for nothing more than marriage. Maggie represents what women could be—fuller human beings with the potential to act in a much larger sphere. In going against such a world, Maggie is a culprit—she has attempted to act according to her own wishes, breaking free of her confines. Maggie tries to explain their difference in behavior to Tom, saying "'you are a man, Tom, and have power, and can do something in the world" (MF 361). However, instead of sympathizing with her point of view, Tom responds, "Then, if you can do nothing, submit to those that can" (MF 361). Maggie is rendered powerless. Women can only watch and wait and turn inside themselves. The oppressive sameness of her days depresses Maggie. For her "day follows day in dull unexpectant sameness and trial is a dreary routine—it is then that despair threatens: it is then that the peremptory hunger of the soul is felt" (MF 287).

Maggie longs to exercise her faculties and make something of herself, but her every attempt is thwarted, as we see in her early search for education. It's not just that education isn't available to her as a female, but that the reasoning behind it is demeaning to women. Tom's classical education and endeavors in commerce are compared to the "smattering, extraneous information, such as is given to girls" (MF 148). Maggie blossoms in the environment of books and learning when she visits Tom at school. However, she soon learns that the education system excludes women. As she peruses Tom's books, "The astronomer who hated women generally caused her so much puzzling speculation that she one day asked Mr. Stelling if all astronomers hated women" (MF 158). Maggie perceives that the demeaning attitude towards women pervades even the world of knowledge. When she attempts to learn math, Tom ridicules her, going to his instructor for support. "Girls can't do Euclid: can they, sir?" (MF 158) to which Stelling replies: "They can pick up a little of everything, I dare say….They've a great deal of superficial cleverness: but they couldn't go far into anything. They're quick and shallow" (MF 158). We are told that Maggie "had hardly ever been so mortified: she had been so proud to be called 'quick' all her little life, and now it appeared that this quickness was the brand of inferiority" (MF 159).

Underlying the unfair treatment of Maggie in education and elsewhere is the pervasive devaluing of women. When Tom insults Philip at school he says, "you're no better than a girl" (MF 182). Maggie is accustomed to this attitude, which is evinced by her mother's preference for her brother Tom. Her mother and brother exclude her from discussion of the family misfortune. Maggie feels "Tom's silent concurrence with her

mother in shutting her out from the common calamity. She had become almost indifferent to her mother's habitual depreciation of her …" (MF 215).

Eliot places details throughout concerning the perceived superfluity of women. Women are seen as a drain on men's finances, burdens to be married off as soon as possible. Maggie's Aunt Gritty, Mr. Tulliver's sister, "had not only come into the world in that superfluous way characteristic of sisters, creating a necessity for mortgages, but … had crowned her mistakes by having an eighth baby" (MF 83). Women are expected to fulfill their role as mothers but are blamed for having too many children, or too many girls. When Mrs. Moss talks to her brother about her children, he replies, "'You've got enough o' gells, Gritty,' he added in a tone half compassionate, half reproachful" (MF 87). Women are reduced to a biological role that they have little control over. Yet paradoxically, the status of motherhood is among the most highly prized and expected conditions of the feminine sphere. Its concomitant quality of maternal nurturing is one of the characteristics that Eliot most values. Mrs. Tulliver is largely portrayed as dull-witted and critical of Maggie's unusual nature. However, Eliot redeems her somewhat at the end by foregrounding her maternal qualities. When Tom denounces and disowns Maggie, her mother breaks from her own practice and sides with Maggie. After Tom refuses her entrance to the house, Maggie turns to leave in despair. "But the poor frightened mother's love leaped out now, stronger than all dread. 'My child! I'll go with you. You've got a mother'….She had only clear to her the mother's instinct, that she would go with her unhappy child" (MF 505). For all Mrs. Tulliver's shortcomings, the maternal in her asserts itself to defend and protect Maggie when Tom's masculine self-righteousness and judgment condemn her.

In a similar manner, Maggie's Aunt Glegg, previously one of her harshest critics, comes to Maggie's defense. She "burst forth in severe reproof of Tom for admitting the worst of his sister until he was compelled. If you were not to stand by your 'kin' as long as there was a shred of honor attributable to them, pray what were you to stand by?" (MF 518). This is contrasted to the her Uncle Glegg who had seemed the more amenable to Maggie, reminiscent of the attitudes Mr. and Mrs. Poyser take toward Hetty after her fall. Mrs. Glegg is critical and sometimes harsh, but in the end more loyal and forgiving to Maggie than the men in the family. Lucy, who has been devastated by Maggie's actions, "[steals] away" (MF 530) to visit and give comfort to Maggie.

Though this maternal gentleness is valued, for the most part, women are placed in "habitual depreciation" where their role is a superfluous one that puts women in competition with each other and makes them vindictively protective of their tenuous position. When a woman goes against the norm, as Maggie does, she is ostracized and shunned. Initially Maggie excites some envy and admiration from the women of St. Ogg's because of her appearance, but after her fall the women are harsh in their condemnation of her. Maggie becomes a pariah to be avoided by the women, lest they taint their own reputation by association with her. Eliot refers to this attitude as that of "the world's wife" and points out the inherent hypocrisy of this position. "Public opinion, in these cases, is always of the feminine gender—not the world, but the world's wife" (MF 509). When it is learned that Maggie has been with Stephen overnight, we are told that had Maggie come back married all would have eventually been forgiven and she might be seen in a positive, romantic light—but that she comes back unmarried places her in the status of a fallen woman to be shunned. The same women now think: "there

had always been something in Miss Tulliver's very physique that a refined instinct felt to be prophetic of harm" (MF 511); "It was to be hoped that she would go out of the neighborhood … so as to purify the air of St. Ogg's from the stain of her presence—extremely dangerous to daughters there" (MF 511); there was "cast an odour around her which caused her to be shrunk from by every woman who had to take care of her own reputation—and of society" (MF 525).

This harsh condemnation is contrasted with the men's point of view, which sexualizes Maggie's predicament. The women are afraid that their parish priest, Dr. Kenn, might also fall under Maggie's spell. "The masculine mind of St. Ogg's smiled pleasantly, and did not wonder that Kenn liked to see a fine pair of eyes daily, or that he was inclined to take so lenient a view of the past; the feminine mind, regarded at that period as less powerful, took a more melancholy view of the case" (MF 527). For all Dr. Kenn's sterling reputation and history of doing good for his parishioners, he cannot persuade anyone to assist him in his attempt to help Maggie. Against his will, "He made up his mind that he must advise Maggie to go away from St. Ogg's for a time; … her stay was a source of discord between himself and his parishioners" (MF 533).

A great part of Maggie's allure is a sensual one. Maggie is comfortable about her sensuality and it is an integral part of her. She never laments over the brownness of her skin and never tries to conform to the ideal of feminine beauty. She has a sexuality about her that attracts the attention of men, which becomes viewed as a sort of threat. When Maggie is at the bazaar, she chooses an inconspicuous stall on the periphery but the men gravitate to her. It is this element that many people perceive and hold against her. When Philip's father looks at the portrait of Maggie, we are told: "Wakem was silent a little

while, pausing before Maggie's picture….'I saw her at church … deuced fine eyes and fine figure, I saw; but rather dangerous and unmanageable, eh?'" (MF 446). This is close to Stephen's first impression of her also: "An alarming amount of devil there, was Stephen's first thought" (MF 392). Maggie's rebellion is linked to her sensuality. Even her "rebellious" hair becomes part of her allure. Just as her hair was an arena for Maggie's early rebellion, it remains symbolic of sensuality and rebellion as she grows older. That she binds it represents her conflicted nature. Maggie, "in spite of her own ascetic wish to have no personal adornment was obliged to give way to her mother about her hair and submit to have the abundant black locks plaited into a coronet on the summit of her head … and showed a queenly head above her old frocks …" (MF 306). The symbol of her rebellion becomes her crown.

Maggie's sensual quality, coupled with her ambitions, desire for independence, and self-determination make Maggie a threat to the social order. Her rebellious nature, part of Eliot's depiction of the artist's nature, is located under her attempts at submission but is never quelled and resurfaces to the end. When Dr. Kenn advises Maggie that it would be best for her to leave town, she says, "with some of the old proud fire flashing out, 'I will not go away because people say false things of me. They shall learn to retract them'" (MF 516).

Unfortunately, Maggie's rebellions do not lead to positive outcomes. Her conflicted nature dooms her to repeat acts of anger, followed by rebellion, followed by despair. Maggie's actions result from her resentment at the limitations imposed on her by society, frustration at the crippling of her huge potential, and anger against her imposed diminishment. Unable to express her anger, prevented from achieving her ambitions, and

thwarted in finding a purpose, Maggie's life becomes a denial of her self. Ermarth writes that "For Maggie the price of 'feminine' affection and 'feminine' self-sacrifice is suicide … the deprivation of mental, imaginative, and emotional life. Maggie's literally drowning is merely physical corroboration of the more important disaster" (601).

Though never an artist, Maggie fills two of the key functions of the artist figure in Eliot's work—that of resistance and transformation. Maggie resists the expectations of her society and gives expression to the anger she feels at the unfairness with which women are treated, though her anger is usually of the self-destructive or passive-aggressive kind. As Hayles points out, "The violence associated with the expression of anger is one reason it must be repressed" (Hayles 30), as we have seen with the anger of Caterina Sarti. Thus it falls to the role of the male artist Philip to verbally give expression to the anger Maggie feels.

Through the character of Maggie, Eliot points out many of the faults that prevent society from evolving into something higher. Referred to throughout as a piece of art herself—a musical instrument and a painting—Maggie enacts Eliot's role of art to enlarge the sympathies and extend our experience. Maggie's desire to transform herself and her world accords with her sense of beauty and meaning. Though she has an artistic nature, she never finds a medium for her ambitions and purpose; thus the actual artist role largely gets displaced onto Philip.

It is Philip who from the beginning perceives the "large-souled" (MF 524) nature of Maggie, who appreciates her unusual nature, who mirrors her quest for agency. In the end, it is the artist figure Philip who achieves the widest vision. In his letter to Maggie he writes

> "The new life I have found in caring for your joy and sorrow more than for what is directly my own, has transformed the spirit of rebellious murmuring into that willing endurance which is the birth of strong sympathy. I think nothing but such complete and intense love could have initiated me into that enlarged life which grows and grows by appropriating the life of others…." (MF 523)

Maggie can never get beyond her conflicts, but in knowing her Philip grows beyond his earlier narrower self to one of fuller humanity. Together Maggie and Philip fulfill Eliot's role of the artist figure: to give voice to women's concerns, to express resistance to the limitations of society, and to strive towards an expansion of self. Their anger and rebellion, marginality and "otherness," and their expression of self through the arts combine to argue for a fuller humanity.

Chapter IV

Dorothea Brooke's Search for Purpose

In Middlemarch Eliot develops the association of female ambition and purpose with "voice" in the character of Dorothea Brook, and the role of the artist figure in the character of Will Ladislaw. As in The Mill on the Floss, Eliot pairs a heroine of exceptional nature with a male artist figure. Dorothea Brooke and Maggie Tulliver are capable, passionate, and ambitious but their potential remains locked inside them. The male artist types, Philip Wakem and Will Ladislaw, serve as stand-ins and spokesmen for the heroines. The heroine and artist recognize themselves in each other; they see someone who filters and perceives the world as they do, and who are judged harshly by others as they are.

Though Middlemarch with its multiple intertwining plots is a far more complex novel than The Mill on the Floss, its core structure is similar. The heroines' stories are about the search for purpose and the channeling of their ambition. The artist figure enters their life to amplify the issues surrounding their search. In both cases it takes the sensitive temperament and discerning eye of the male artist to appreciate the nature of the exceptional heroine. Because they mirror the heroines in their search, in their "otherness," and in their susceptibility to art, they are the only characters who fully understand the heroines and encourage their search for meaning, falling in love with them as they draw closer to them. Both Will and Philip are antagonistic to the families of Dorothea and Maggie and are considered by them to be unworthy. The heroines develop relationships with men who go against society's model and in doing so upset the status

quo. As artists Will and Philip are portrayed as emotionally accessible and adept at expression. As “others” in their societies they identify with the struggle of the heroines. Much of the female anger and rebellion at being marginalized is displaced onto these male artist figures. Their dilettantism and frustration with their paths in life mirror the heroines’ frustration at what to do with their lives. As males who are somewhat older, more experienced, and more educated than the heroines, their opinions carry authority. They persuasively counter the heroines’ attempts at self-denial and self-sacrifice. These artist types give voice to the females, vocalizing the injustice of the system that suppresses their best natures and expressing the anger that accompanies this.

In many ways Dorothea is a reworking and development of the key aspects of Maggie, suggesting that Eliot was still working out issues that were not resolved in Maggie. Both reveal a heightened sensitivity, a refinement of nature, and a susceptibility to beauty. Margaret Homans writes of Maggie and Dorothea that “both attempt to have their own desires and their own words, and in their early imaginativeness they appear to be artist figures …” (217). Dorothea, like Maggie, is ambitious, unconventional, intelligent, and independent minded. Her struggle for selfhood is also framed within a tightly bound patriarchal order. Dorothea, too, seeks out challenges that will lead to her growth. She searches for a way to live her life with meaning, wanting to connect to some larger ideal. Like Maggie, Dorothea is dutiful and wants to act in a way that will benefit others—for Maggie it is her family, for Dorothea it is her community.

Just as Maggie’s intellectual pursuits and desire for independence set her apart from other women, Dorothea’s sense of purpose distinguishes her. Her search takes expression in self-education and partaking in Casaubon’s scholarly endeavors, plans for

cottage and land improvement, and involvement in the new hospital. In all these undertakings Dorothea seeks out knowledge in order to accomplish her goals and bring about change. Lewis notes that much of Middlemarch is about the masculine pursuit of knowledge, as seen in Casaubon and Lydgate, and that of the women in the novel "only Dorothea quests for knowledge….[which] puts her outside typical womanhood and emphasizes her exceptionality" (165).

Even in style and manner, Dorothea resembles Maggie. Eliot establishes the similarity between the two heroines in the opening sentence of Middlemarch: "Miss Brooke had that kind of beauty which seems to be thrown into relief by poor dress" (M 7), which echoes Maggie's "witchery … that makes [her] look best in shabby clothes…" (MF 387). Physically they are similar; they are both tall, dark haired, and unadorned, their simply styled hair and plain dress flying against the conventions of female ornamentation of the day. Both are beautiful but are unaware of this quality; rather, their beauty ranks far below on the scale of what is important to them. The description, "She was open, ardent, and not in the least self-admiring …" (M 10) is as true for Maggie as it is for Dorothea. Several additional passages distinctly recall images of Maggie, for example: Dorothea "seated herself on a dark ottoman … looking in her plain dress of some thin woollen-white material, without a single ornament on her besides her wedding-ring, as if she were under a vow to be different from all other women …" (M 362-63), recalls a description of Maggie: "clad in a white muslin of some soft-floating kind … [she] appeared with marked distinction among the more adorned and conventional women around her" (MF 447). Both women adhere to a self-effacing style that, in spite of their intention, attracts attention and admiration. As with Maggie, part of Dorothea's

allure is located in an unstated sensuality that finds expression in the abundance of "coiled" hair and in the glow and brightness of youth. Just as Maggie is contrasted to the blonde doll-like beauty of Lucy, Dorothea is contrasted to the blonde conventional prettiness of Rosamond Vincy.

Both Dorothea and Maggie are of a proud, independent nature. They know they are capable of much more than the feminine sphere prescribes for them and undertake self-education and other challenges. Maggie tries to earn her own money, and Dorothea tries to do something significant with her wealth. Like Maggie, Dorothea has a weakness for recognition of her abilities: "Miss Brooke presided in her uncle's household, and did not at all dislike her new authority, with the homage that belonged to it" (M 10). Proud of her cottage plans, she asks her sister to come and admire her work: "Here, Kitty, come and look at my plan; I shall think I am a great architect, if I have not got incompatible stairs and fireplaces" (M 14).

Maggie's need for praise makes her vulnerable to the opinion of others. Similarly, Dorothea's need for recognition contributes to her making a disastrous choice in marriage. She marries Casaubon because she is attracted to his intellectualism and because he recognizes and feeds her pride in her own intellect and higher motives. In this one characteristic, they see themselves in the other. Another suitor, Sir James Chettam, doesn't recognize this aspect in Dorothea, or rather, doesn't afford it the same value she does. This difference between the two suitors is represented in the gifts they bring Dorothea: Causabon sends Dorothea some pamphlets on the early church, which pleases her; Chettam brings Dorothea a lap dog, which she rejects. Where Chettam is cheerful and down-to-earth, Casaubon strikes Dorothea as learned and superior in his restrained

demeanor. Although neither man is a suitable choice for Dorothea, Chettam is later revealed to be more aligned with Dorotheas's larger goals. He enthusiastically embraces her plans for improvement of the cottages and later carries out his intentions, where Causabon shows no interest in this or anything other than his own endeavors. However, Casaubon flatters the qualities of Dorothea she most values in herself. She wants to be taken seriously in her high aspirations and intellectual ambitions, and Casaubon gives her the recognition she seeks. Chettam is perplexed at Dorothea's decision to give up riding and asks for the reason why; Causabon defends her personal motives, for which she is thankful: "Dorothea coloured with pleasure, and looked up gratefully to the speaker. Here was a man who could understand the higher inward life, and with whom there could be some spiritual communion …" (M 22).

Dorothea believes Casaubon is the road to the realization of her ambitions. In him she sees a way out of the narrow sphere of woman's lot. Casaubon appears to offer her wide learning and deep understanding; Dorothea can scarcely believe her good fortune in finding someone who so answers to her intellectual need and sense of purpose. Her ambition seems on the point of being realized on a large scale; she is to be part of the rarified masculine historical tradition. Casaubon explains his "key to all mythologies" project and she is "altogether captivated by the wide embrace of this conception. Here was something beyond the shallows of ladies'-school literature …" (M 25). To be a part of this great endeavor, if only as a "lamp-holder" (M 18), blinds Dorothea to all else. Casaubon is the means of filling in the gaps in her education, of bringing her closer to understanding truth, and to discovering her place in the world. Her desire to marry Casaubon has more to do with gratifying her own desires than in fulfilling his, though she

fully intends to assist him in his work. As a traditional and dutiful woman, Dorothea believes that her marriage will unite her ambition for learning with her sense of duty and submission.

> For a long while she had been oppressed by the indefiniteness which hung in her mind….What could she do, what ought she to do?….Into this soul-hunger as yet all her youthful passion was poured; the union which attracted her was one that would deliver her from her girlish subjection to her own ignorance, and give her the freedom of voluntary submission to a guide who would take her along the grandest path. (M 28-29)

Dorothea is able to pursue her ambitions under the cover of traditional female subservience. She tells herself, "It would be my duty to study that I might help him the better in his great works" (M 29).

However, Dorothea's confidence in herself is shaken as she steps into the masculine sphere of education. Just as Maggie is first assured of her acuteness, then is told that it is of an inferior, female kind, so Dorothea is first confident, then unsure about her abilities: "she constantly doubted her own conclusions, because she felt her own ignorance …" (M 64). The masculine world of knowledge is not a welcoming one to women. Just as Maggie receives a check on her high opinion of herself at Stelling's school and fears it has something to do with being a girl, Dorothea finds she must adjust her high opinion of herself once she enters into Casaubon's masculine studies: "Dorothea herself was a little shocked and discouraged at her own stupidity, and the answers she got to some timid questions about the value of the Greek accents gave her a painful suspicion

that here indeed there might be secrets not capable of explanation to a woman's reason" (M 64-65).

While Dorothea is capable of participating in the masculine endeavors of architecture, classical learning, and the improvement of land and cottages, she remains, like Maggie, an odd combination of intelligence and naiveté, due largely to her inexperience of the world. Dorothea was, "according so some judges, so stupid, with all her reputed cleverness" (M 51). Her ignorance manifests itself most in the area that she expects will liberate her—her choice in marriage. "Dorothea, with all her eagerness to know the truths of life, retained very childlike ideas about marriage….[believing] The really delightful marriage must be that where your husband was a sort of father, and could teach you even Hebrew, if you wished it" (M 10); and so she makes the dreadful mistake of marrying Casaubon, one that is abundantly clear to everyone else.

Dorothea's naiveté is expressed through the metaphor of near-sightedness, both literal and figural. When she declines the lapdog offered to her by Chettam, she says, "I was afraid of treading on it. I am rather short-sighted" (M 30). Her sister Celia repeatedly tells her, "you never see what is quite plain. That's your way, Dodo" (M 36). The narrator explains, "She was blind, you see, to many things obvious to others—likely to tread in the wrong places …" (M 372). Her myopia also serves as a metaphor for the smallness of her outer world, contrasted with the wealth of her unexpressed interiority.

Dorothea is most like Maggie in possessing the conflicting tendencies of the sensuous and the ascetic; she is passionate and restrained, sensuous and self-denying. She is frequently described as both "ardent" and "Puritanical." This conflict in the two heroines is what so captivates their male admirers, in particular the more perceptive artist

figures who have a greater appreciation of their complexity. It is this element that arrests the painter Naumann who perceives Dorothea as “a fine bit of antithesis” (M 189). He tells Will that he sees her “as antique form animated by Christian sentiment—a sort of Christian Antigone—sensuous force controlled by spiritual passion” (M 190).

Dorothea’s simple and restrained manner is contrasted with the sensuality that forces its way through her subdued garb and style. The narrator says that even her smooth hairstyle “was a trait of Miss Brooke’s asceticism. But there was nothing of an ascetic’s expression in her bright full eyes … absorbing into the intensity of her mood” the beauty of the afternoon (M 27). In spite of her serious nature, most people

> found that she had a charm unaccountably reconcilable with it. Most men thought her bewitching when she was on horseback. She loved the fresh air and the various aspects of the country, and when her eyes and cheeks glowed with mingled pleasure she looked very little like a devotee. Riding was an indulgence which she allowed herself in spite of conscientious qualms; she felt that she enjoyed it in a pagan sensuous way, and always looked forward to renouncing it. (M 9-10)

Eliot conveys this conflict in Dorothea through language that combines the two elements: “something she yearned for by which her life might be filled with action at once rational and ardent” (M 86). Her reaction to Casaubon’s letter of proposal is framed in language both religious and passionate, evoking the image of Saint Teresa whom she is compared to in the Prelude: “Dorothea trembled while she read this letter; then she fell on her knees, buried her face, and sobbed….Her whole soul was possessed by the fact that a fuller life was opening before her: she was a neophyte about to enter on a higher grade of

initiation.…All Dorothea's passion was transfused through a mind struggling towards an ideal life" (M 44-45).

Like Maggie, Dorothea's passionate nature makes her impulsive and sometimes extreme in her actions. The narrator remarks on her "love of extremes" (M 9), and notes how her "intervals of quietude made the energy of her speech and emotion the more remarked when some outward appeal had touched her" (M 88). Her sister Cecilia remarks, "how strangely Dodo goes from one extreme to the other" (M 47). Mrs. Cadwallader, the rector's wife, predicts a complete reversal in Dorothea's feelings for Casaubon: "Mark my words: in a year from this time that girl will hate him. She looks up to him as an oracle now, and by-and-by she will be at the other extreme. All flightiness!" (M 91). Even Dorothea realizes this aspect of her nature. She says of herself, "I am never unhappy long together.…I have a great outburst, and then all seems glorious again" (M 220). Like Maggie, and she quickly goes from one emotional extreme to another, which is perhaps one way of Eliot marking theirs natures as artistic.

Dorothea's sensuous nature, like Maggie's, is susceptible to the beautiful. However, whereas Maggie completely succumbs to the aesthetic, Dorothea attempts to discipline herself against it and is openly disdainful of the superficial arts. Eliot establishes this conflicted sensuality in the opening chapter as Dorothea and Celia look at their mother's jewels. Initially, Dorothea has no interest in what she sees as mere ornamentation. When Celia suggests that Dorothea take the jeweled cross, Dorothea shudders and responds, "not for the world. A cross is the last thing I would wear as a trinket" (M 12). However, when a set of emeralds is suddenly struck by a beam of sunlight, Dorothea's susceptibility to their beauty is ignited. Almost trancelike she holds

them, trying to reconcile the effect of their beauty on her with her Puritanical notions, saying:

> "How very beautiful these gems are….It is strange how deeply colors seem to penetrate one, like scent. I suppose that is the reason why gems are used as spiritual emblems in the Revelation of St. John. They look like fragments of heaven. I think that emerald is more beautiful than any of them"….slipping the ring and bracelet on….All the while her thought was trying to justify her delight in the colors by merging them in her mystic religious joy. (M 13)

While there are many similarities between Dorothea and Maggie, there are differences that mark a development in Eliot's strategy of pairing the heroine with the artist figure. One of the most obvious is that Dorothea has more advantages, more overall agency than Maggie. She has none of the financial and familial responsibilities that so hamper Maggie. Dorothea has status, freedom from family constraints, and independent wealth. Her increased agency allows her to pursue her ambitions to a greater degree and increases her range of action. This allows Eliot to develop the relationship with the artist figure to a great degree, giving greater expression to women's issues.

Another difference is in the nature of their ambition. Maggie's ambition is predominantly that of self-development, while Dorothea's is largely of a practical sort that will benefit a great number of people, which her financial status allows her to do. She wants to embrace "the fullest truth, the least partial good" (M 202). She wants her life to have meaning and she wants to effect social change. She tells her uncle who is running for local office, "I think we have no right to come forward and urge wider changes for

good, until we have tried to alter the evils which lie under our own hands" (M 389). She is referring to the Dagley's farm, tenants under her uncle. She is appalled by their living conditions and seeks practical solutions to such social ills. To Chettam and her uncle she says, "Surely … it is better to spend money in finding out how men can make the most of the land which supports them all, than in keeping dogs and horses only to gallop over it" (M 17).

Unfortunately, her marriage puts a damper on her zeal for change. As she soon discovers, social reform does not fall under the scope of Casaubon's interests. He takes no interest in her plans for cottages and once she is settled at Lowick she is disappointed that it is not a poorer parish. She realizes that there was "nothing for her to do in Lowick; … she would have preferred, of finding that her home would be in a parish which had a larger share of the world's misery, so that she might have had more active duties in it" (M 78). To make matters worse, she realizes that Casaubon does not want her assistance in his studies. The vision of a purpose-filled life with Casaubon that she had spun out of her own ambitions and dreams is not to materialize. This is a crushing realization for her. When she returns from her disastrous honeymoon in Rome, where their differences become obvious, she sits in her boudoir and reflects on the disparity of her dreams and the reality of her situation:

> The clear heights where she expected to walk in full communion had become difficult to see even in her imagination; the delicious repose of the soul on a complete superior had been shaken into uneasy effort and alarmed with dim presentiment. When would the days begin of that active wifely devotion which was to strengthen her husband's life and exalt her

> own? Never perhaps, as she had preconceived them; but somehow—still somehow….duty would present itself in some new form of inspiration and give a new meaning to wifely love. (M 274)

Not giving up is part of what makes Dorothea remarkable. She takes stock and moves forward in a new way that still supports her goals and ambitions, determined to be of help to her husband. She makes "it a matter of course that she should take her place at an early hour in the library and have work either of reading aloud or copying" (M 281). She waits on her husband, reads to him, nurses him, and helps him in any small way possible.

After Casaubon's illness and death, Dorothea continues to give help where she can. Her profound sense of purpose and idealism encompasses the community. After Casaubon's death she picks up where she left off, "motiveless, if her own energy could not seek out reasons for ardent action" (M 540). She tells her sister, "I should like to take a great deal of land, and drain it, and make a little colony, where everybody should work, and all the work should be done well" (M 550). She rides over the estates with Sir James and Caleb Garth, inspecting the land and laying plans for improvements.

She also helps the new doctor Tertius Lydgate when she sees that she can be of use to him. When he discusses his plans for the hospital she tells him, "I shall be quite grateful to you if you will tell me how I can help to make things a little better" (M 438), and offers to help financially. She explains, "I have some money, and don't know what to do with it—that is often an uncomfortable thought to me.…How happy you must be, to know things that you feel sure will do great good! I wish I could awake with that knowledge every morning" (M 440). Not only does she offer her wealth, but she enthusiastically enters into the spirit of Lydgate's plans. She embraces his vision and

actively engages in the building and administration of the hospital. She also tries to help him on a personal level. She loans him money so he can disentangle himself from the disgrace of the Bulstrode scandal and takes the lead in clearing his name. To others who don't want to get involved, she asks, "What do we live for, if it is not to make life less difficult to each other? I cannot be indifferent to the troubles of a man who advised me in *my* trouble, and attended me in my illness" (M 733-34). She then takes it upon herself to go see his wife Rosamond and convince her that Lydgate has been mistakenly maligned. "The idea of some active good within her reach, 'haunted her … like a passion,' and another's need having once come to her as a distinct image, preoccupied her desire with the yearning to give relief, and made her own ease tasteless" (M 760-61).

The good she ultimately achieves is widely "diffused" (M 838) and benefits many people. She knows the importance of the living at Lowick for Farebrother and his family of dependents and takes it upon herself to learn about him and promote him as the best person for the position. Initially, even her interest in Will Ladislaw lies in what she can actively do for him. When he first visits her in Rome she has recently been crying as a result of her disillusionment in her marriage. She quickly shifts from self-pity to how she can help him. "She was alive to anything that gave her an opportunity for active sympathy, and at this moment it seemed as if the visit had come to shake her out of her self-absorbed discontent" (M 204). Perhaps projecting her own thwarted ambitions onto him, she tells him, "I am quite interested to see what you will do….I believe devoutly in a natural difference of vocation" (M 223). Later, she tries to help Will financially, explaining to her husband that she has too much money and that by right Will should have part of his grandmother's legacy. Dorothea has the means, the ambition, and the

sense of purpose to do something meaningful with her life but she lacks a medium, which Will ultimately provides for her.

Part of the role of the artist for Will is that he acts as a sort of catalyst for Dorothea. Once she is married to Casaubon, her world narrows and she tries to suppress her nature in her duty to her husband. Will enters and is appalled at the waste of Dorothea's life. He fulfills her need for intellectual communion and personal growth. As in The Mill of the Floss, Eliot pairs her exceptional heroine with a male dilettante artist who mirrors her unusual nature and her search for a purpose.

Just as Dorothea is in many ways a reworking of Maggie, so Will is a development of Philip. Our first introduction of both characters establishes them as artistic figures. When we first meet Philip he is sketching and is on the defensive as Tom observes him. Will is similarly introduced as he sketches and he displays the same hypersensitivity and defensive attitude. Casaubon, Dorothea, Celia, and Mr. Brooke come across him sketching as they walk the grounds of Lowick. When they stop to examine his work he mistakes Dorothea's comment on his sketch as criticism. Exhibiting a similar defensive behavior that Philip first showed, Will "did not feel it necessary to smile … but wore rather a pouting air of discontent" (M 79). The physical description of him emphasizes his curls and his "transparent complexion" (M 204) that registers his fluctuating emotions. Like Philip, Will's petulance, his feminine curls, and his quickness to color are noted as key attributes of his character. Also, as with Philip, his dilettantism in art is established in the introductory scene. When Mr. Brooke remarks, "You are an artist, I see," Will quickly answers, "No, I only sketch a little" (M 79). He is later said to be "dilettantish and amateurish" (M 190), to which he agrees. Like Philip, Will has been

educated but now is left with the question of what to do with his life. Casaubon gives the group a brief description of the unsteady nature of his cousin. Though he paints an unflattering picture of Will, it resonates with Dorothea who is also seeking something to do with her life. She defends Will's search by saying, "After all, people may really have in them some vocation which is not quite plain to themselves, may they not? They may seem idle and weak because they are growing" (M 82).

However, there are key differences between the two dilettantes, the most salient being that Will has no physical handicap holding him back. In this and other ways, Eliot grants Will more agency, mirroring Dorothea who has more agency than Maggie. Like Philip, he both paints and sings, but Will has had professional training and moves in larger, international circles. In Rome he is under the tutelage of a painter, knows the best studios, frequents the museums and galleries, and engages in discussions about the nature of art with his peers.

Will's status as an artist is elevated in Eliot's language that identifies him as a sort of Apollo figure, associated with poetry, music, and light. There are several allusions to his singing, his remarks about poetry, and there are numerous references to Will and light. "The first impression on seeing Will was one of sunny brightness.…his hair seemed to shake out light" (M 209). His smile is "a gush of inward light" (M 205), his laughter is "sunshiny" (M 190). He is also identified with Pegasus, winged horse of the Muses. Throughout the novel Will is likened to a spirited horse—needing freedom, shaking his mane, stamping in impatience. When Causabon criticizes Will's "indisposition to thoroughness of all kinds" (M 81) Will "replies by calling himself Pegasus, and every form of prescribed work 'harness'" (M 82).

Another way Eliot develops the artist figure is by expanding his range of emotions. Both Philip and Will are quick to temper and are often irritable, but Will has a more aggressive nature. He is capable of holding his own ground and has nothing of the victim about him as Philip has. Where Philip inspires pity, Will inspires challenge. The narrator points out that Will has a "delicate but rather petulant profile, with its defiant curves of lip and chin" (M 363) and that his chin has a "threatening aspect" (M 79). He is portrayed as passionate and rebellious. He sometimes speaks with "gnashing impetuosity" (M 218) and is often in "a defiant mood" (M 604). Eliot uses animal imagery to underscore his fervent nature. In addition to being compared to a spirited horse, Will is compared to a wild feline. When the unsavory Raffles taunts Will with knowledge of his mother's history, we are told of "Ladislaw's threatening air. The slim young fellow with his girl's complexion looked like a tiger-cat ready to spring on him" (M 610). Another time, "He began to move about with the restlessness of a wild animal that sees prey but cannot reach it" (M 778).

Will's expanded range of emotions also includes more humor. He is capable of great amusement and self-contentment whereas Philip is almost always dissatisfied and perturbed. When the critical Casaubon and others leave Will to his sketching it is amusement rather than ill-temper that dominates: "Mr. Will Ladislaw's sense of the ludicrous lit up his features very agreeably: it was the pure enjoyment of comicality, and had no mixture of sneering and self-exaltation" (M 80).

Altogether, as with Dorothea, there is more possibility in Will, more ability to shape his life than we find in Philip. There is also more progress in the career of Will. Where Philip never moves beyond being an unfulfilled dilettante, Will learns to channel

the creative energy of his dilettantism to carve out a political career for himself, and develops his talents in writing and speaking. Will is a replay of Philip in that he is artistic, quick to temper, amateurish, and is connected to the questing heroine. However, Eliot develops this figure and in Will there is more confidence, more rebellion, and more agency than is found in Philip. In the progression of the male artist, there is a strong sense of vocation and a sense of purpose. Most importantly, unlike Philip, Will marries the heroine of exceptional nature. There is more overall development and a sense of closure with Will.

Another element that Eliot develops in her theme of the artist figure is that of "otherness." Dorothea and Will, as with Maggie and Philip, are both "others" in their community. Like Maggie and Dinah Morris, Dorothea is an integral part of her community, yet her differences make her stand out as unusual. It is not in a negative or threatening way, but in a way that disconcerts people and often disappoints them. Nearly everyone is of this opinion of her, at least initially. Her positive attributes are recognized but her differences are what people most react to. At the dinner party early in the novel, the masculine consensus of Dorothea is: "She is a good creature—that fine girl—but a little too earnest….It is troublesome to talk to such women….she was altogether a mistake" (M 93), the same word used to describe Philip Wakem, also an "other" in his society.

Her sister Celia, more conventional and so more acceptable to Middlemarch society, observes that "poor Dodo never did do what other people do, and I think she never will" (M 284). She realizes that Dorothea sees things differently from other people, and interacts with her accordingly. She "felt that she could act on her sister by a word

judiciously placed—by opening a little window for the daylight of her own understanding to enter among the strange coloured lamps by which Dodo habitually saw" (M 819-20).

Where Maggie is made uncomfortable by her differences, Dorothea, more like Dinah, is comfortable with being unlike others, and pursues the very things that make her different, in part because her class status allows her this freedom. Unlike Dinah, however, Dorothea takes some pride in her difference, in not conforming to Middlemarch's ideas of what a young lady should be. When Sir James tells her, "Every lady ought to be a perfect horsewoman, that she may accompany her husband," Dorothea haughtily responds, "You see how widely we differ, Sir James. I have made up my mind that I ought not to be a perfect horsewoman, and so I should never correspond to your pattern of a lady" (M 22).

After her husband's death, Dorothea goes against everyone's wishes when she decides to return to Lowick. Dorothea "was simply determined to go, not feeling bound to tell all her reasons. But every one around her disapproved" (M 536). For the most part, Dorothea does what she wants. She is not influenced by the advice or opinions of others and she is willing to accept the consequences of her actions. "'I never called everything by the same name that all the people about me did,' said Dorothea, stoutly" (M 537), in defense of her actions. She is not bothered that she disappoints people or that they think her odd. She is sure of her decisions and acts resolutely.

While her differences are met with mixed results, her choices in marriage condemn her in the eyes of many. Casaubon is recognized as being supremely unsuited to Dorothea. His being "a good seven-and-twenty years older" (M 40) than Dorothea, combined with his dry-as-dust demeanor cause people to view the match with distaste.

Mrs. Cadwallader says “I wish her joy of her hair shirt” (M 61). Her marriage to the young Will Ladislaw, however, is met with outrage. Sir James declares “It is perfectly scandalous” (M 816) and tells Celia, “I cannot bear to see her again; it is too painful. It hurts me too much that a woman like Dorothea should have done what is wrong” (M 816). Celia, voicing the general opinion of Middlemarch, tells Dorothea, “You have disappointed us all so….you always wanted things that wouldn’t do…. You know what mistakes you have always been making, Dodo, and this is another. Nobody thinks Mr. Ladislaw a proper husband for you” (M 820-21). Dorothea quietly ignores her reprimand, saying, “this is what I am going to do. I have promised to marry Mr. Ladislaw; and I am going to marry him” (M 821). She answers only to her own ideas, confident that only she knows what is best for her.

Dorothea’s extremism and difference is interpreted by some as mental unsoundness, just as it is with Philip and Maggie. Concerning Dorothea’s marriage to Casaubon we are told, “As to freaks like this of Miss Brooke’s, Mrs. Cadwallader had no patience with them” (M 61). She suspects that “those Methodistical whims … came from a deeper and more constitutional disease than she had been willing to believe….there was a chance, if she had married Sir James, of her becoming a sane, sensible woman” (M 61). In ironic tones the narrator voices the general Middlemarch opinion about Dorothea stating that “Sane people did what their neighbors did, so that if any lunatics were at large, one might know and avoid them” (M 9).

Dorothea’s differences make her stand out in a way that Dinah and Maggie also stand out. They frustrate and challenge the status quo but in a manner that produces unease, rather than alarm. Will Ladislaw, however, is another matter. He is an “other” in

the way that Caternina is—he is of foreign blood. Like Caterina, Will is hot blooded, quick to temper, and passionate. Just as Caterina has Englishness "grafted" on to her Italian nature, Will is a mixture of English and Polish descent. Where Dorothea discomfits, Will is seen as a threat. Nord points out that "although Will's Polish ancestry remains his only real claim to foreignness, numerous characters in the novel allude to him as an alien of various sorts. His peripatetic ways, uninhibited manner, and social promiscuity" (106) are viewed with suspicion. Although he is Polish, Will is associated with the South and lumped in with all that is foreign and the wariness that goes with it. Mrs. Cadwallader says Dorothea "might as well marry an Italian with white mice!" (M 490). Lydgate, one of the few who accepts Will, says, "Ladislaw is a sort of gypsy….he is a good fellow: rather miscellaneous and bric-a-brac, but likable" (M 436). When the antagonistic Raffles meets up with him, he tells Will that physically he resembles his Polish father: "a most uncommon likeness you are of him, … a little in the foreign style. John Bull doesn't do much of that" (M 610). Will's "irregular" habits, such as stretching out on the carpet of the houses he visited, "confirm[s] the notions of his dangerously mixed blood and general laxity" (M 463). It later comes out that not only is Will a foreigner, but he is doubly tainted as the "grandson of a thieving Jew pawnbroker….a worse kind of placard on poor Will's back than the 'Italian with white mice'" (M 772). Yet to all these opinions Will remains impervious, knowing he is superior in many ways to the narrowness of Middlemarch minds and general prejudice.

In a manner similar to Dorothea, Will does not feel the need to conform to those around him and is outspoken about his differences. He tells Dorothea, "I am a rebel: I don't feel bound, as you do, to submit to what I don't like" (M 392). When people frown

on Dorothea's friendship with him, he thinks "let them suspect what they pleased, they would find themselves in the wrong" (M 611). At the auction, Will is contrasted with the narrowness of some of the Middlemarchers by the narrator: "Hackbutt, and the rest, who looked down on him as an adventurer, and were in a state of brutal ignorance about Dante—who sneered at his Polish blood, and were themselves of a breed very much in need of crossing" (M 604). Also emphasizing Will's outsider status is the fact that he is somewhat of a loner with little family. He tells Dorothea that he would like to be around her and stay in Middlemarch: "I belong to nobody anywhere else" (M 367).

Many of the small-minded Middlemarchers are only too ready to attribute Will's differences to mental aberrance, as they do with Dorothea. The editor of the town newspaper, threatened by Will's superior journalistic skills, views Will as "not only a Polish emissary but crack-brained" (M 462). Sir James fears he might have "extreme opinions" (M 379) that could influence Mr. Brooke, and Mrs. Bulstrode feels that Will "illustrate[s] the usual tendency to unsoundness in intellectual men" (M 463).

For the most part, however, Will's "oddities" are viewed as "more or less poetical" (M 462). There is a distinct aesthetic cast to Will's differences, making him picturesque and charming. He most often associates with the other marginalized of Middlemarch, as with the village children and the timid Miss Noble. "He had a fondness, half artistic, half affectionate, for little children—the smaller they were on tolerably active legs, and the funnier their clothing, the better Will liked to surprise and please them" (M 463). He takes this "troop of droll children … on gypsy excursions" (M 463) to gather nuts and entertains them with puppets shows. With "little Miss Noble, whom it was one of his oddities to escort" (M 463), he gives little gifts and makes her feel

appreciated. This picturesque side of Will is part of his aesthetic of being an artist figure: "he was a sort of gypsy, rather enjoying the sense of belonging to no class; he had a feeling of romance in his position, and a pleasant consciousness of creating a little surprise wherever he went" (M 461-62). Nord writes that "The identity of Will … is never separable from the foreignness of his ancestry, his surname, and his appearance. Neither are his foreign ancestry and name separable from his bohemianism, his artistic interests, his reformist politics, and his heterodox masculinity" (105).

Where much of Will's difference is cast in a charming light, his "reformist politics" cause some people to view him as dangerous. Eliot emphasizes Will's difference by associating him with language and expression, particularly in relation to his politics. This both sets him apart from others and sets the stage for the connection between him and Dorothea and the issue of female "voice." Will's foreignness is viewed as suspect but the threat people feel from him has more to do with his prowess at language, an element of his artistic and rebellious nature. He is skilled with words and writing and with making speeches. It is a form of power that creates unease among Middlemarchers. As one of them remarks, "There are stories going about him as a quill-driving alien, a foreign emissary …" (M 379). His artistic and foreign ways are perceived as threatening in a vague way, something they can't quite put their finger on. Mrs. Cadwallader says, "he's a dangerous young sprig, that Mr. Ladislaw … with his opera songs and his ready tongue. A sort of Byronic hero—an amorous conspirator …" (M 380). She associates his artistic nature and his verbal skills with danger, conspiracy, and amour. Mr. Keck, editor of the town newspaper "Trumpet," says that Will's foreignness explains the

> preternatural quickness and glibness of his speech when he got on to a platform—as he did whenever he had an opportunity, speaking with a facility which cast reflections on solid Englishmen generally. It was disgusting to Keck to see a strip of a fellow, with light curls round his head, get up and speechify by the hour against institutions "which had existed when he was in his cradle." And in a leading article of the "Trumpet" Keck characterized Ladislaw's speech at a Reform meeting as "the violence of an energumem—a miserable effort to shroud in the brilliancy of fireworks the daring of irresponsible statements…." (M 462)

When one of the readers asks what "energumen" means Keck explains it is a "term that came up in the French Revolution" (M 462), which associates Will with revolution. Underneath the charm of Will is a threatening aspect associated with rebellion, upheaval, and change. Like Caterina Sarti, Will is associated with the threat of the French Revolution. Mr. Brooke, speaking in favor of Will but with his knack of saying the wrong thing, says, "He seems to me a kind of Shelley….I don't mean as to anything objectionable….But he has the same sort of enthusiasm for liberty, freedom, emancipation" (M 359). Byronic and Shelleyan, Will is associated with Romantic poetry, freedom, and youth-driven reform.

Ironically, the bumbling Mr. Brooke is the only person to foresee a bright future for Will. He tells the others, "He is just the sort of young fellow to rise. I should be glad to give him an opportunity. He would make a good secretary, now, like Hobbes, Milton, Swift" (M 330). When Chettam later urges Brooke to force Will to leave Middlemarch, Brooke defends Will saying, "Ladislaw has been invaluable, most satisfactory. I consider

that I have done this part of the country a service by bringing him …" (M 484). When Chettam presses him, Brooke responds, "It's my opinion that if he were to part from me to-morrow, you'd only hear the more of him in the country. With his talent for speaking and drawing up documents, there are few men who could come up to him as an agitator …" (M 485).

Will gets invited to the homes of the Bulstrodes, Farebrothers, and Lydgates. "Will's articles and speeches naturally recommended him in families which the new strictness of party division had marked off on the side of Reform" (M 463). Will's talents are recognized by many, including the other editors in Middlemarch. In speaking about Mr. Brooke's campaign and the "Pioneer" newspaper that he recently bought, one of them remarks, "I understand he has got a very brilliant young fellow to edit it, who can write the highest style of leading article, quite equal to anything in the London papers" (M 358). Will's time with Mr. Brooke lays the groundwork for his later political success. He has an aptitude for "seizing the points of the political situation, and dealing with them in that large spirit which, aided by adequate memory, lends itself to quotation and general effectiveness of treatment " (M 359). Will is a natural at canvassing political reform and public speaking. Dorothea encourages Will to pursue this path, saying, "I have heard from my uncle how well you speak in public, so that every one is sorry when you leave off, and how clearly you can explain things" (M 542).

It turns out to be a career for which Will is supremely suited and one that gives him a sense of pride and satisfaction. "His nature warmed easily in the presence of subjects which were visibly mixed with life and action, and the easily stirred rebellion in him helped the glow of public spirit" (M 461). When Mr. Brooke fails miserably at the

elections, Will decides to continue on his own political path. After all, he thinks, "He could speak and he could write; he could master any subject if he chose….Why should he not one day be lifted above the shoulders of the crowd, and feel that he had won that eminence well?" (M 507). He sees that the time is ripe for such a career, that "political writing, political speaking, would get a higher value now public life was going to be wider and more national, and they might give him such distinction that he would not seem to be asking Dorothea to step down to him" (M 507). He resolves upon this course of action. He intends to set forth to London and become a barrister, in preparation for a career as a politician.

Will is aware of his linguistic superiority. When Mr. Brooke tells him he reminds him of Burke, we are told that "Will was not displeased with that complimentary comparison, even from Mr. Brooke; for it is a little too trying to human flesh to be conscious of expressing one's self better than others and never to have it noticed….Will felt that his literary refinements were usually beyond the limits of Middlemarch perception" (M 460). Will's connection to "voice" and expression is underscored repeatedly. He is at one point or another compared to Byron, Shelley, Milton, Burke, and Hobbes. Mr. Brooke sees Will as "a sort of Burke with a leaven of Shelley" (M 499). These references specifically link Will with political writing and poetry—the practical and the aesthetic are interwoven in his character. It is this combination that so resonates with Dorothea, susceptible to the aesthetic, driven by effecting social good. Nord writes that Will "is an ideal husband for Dorothea … because of his foreignness, which is inseparable from his artistic spirit, political liberalism, and lack of social snobbery" (106). Throughout the novel Will is portrayed as an artist, though in the end we see him

move towards a vocation of public service. The introductory sketching scene is symbolic of the vague and sketchy aspirations he begins with. This shifts to secretarial work for Mr. Brooke, which he develops to writing and speaking on political issues. He doesn't give up his pursuit of the aesthetic rather he mergers it with his political aspirations.

As a stand in for women, Dorothea in particular, Will is connected with the power of articulation, with communication, the exchange of ideas, and discussion. He is a natural at expression and is persuasive, convincing, and entertaining. In an early scene with Casaubon and Dorothea in Rome, Will wants to make himself agreeable to both and does so over a dinner conversation with them. He reveals himself to be a brilliant conversationalist when he chooses to be. By turns he is deferential, inclusive, and expansive. He draws them both out on certain subjects and is an interested listener. Dorothea, sensitive to the art of conversation, recognizes and appreciates Will's subtleties: "it seemed to Dorothea that Will had a happier way of drawing her husband into conversation and of deferentially listening to him than she had ever observed in any one before" (M 212). Will consciously weaves his listeners into his conversation, knowing just when to include Dorothea and to what extent—what degree remains flattering to Casaubon and at what degree he would begin to feel threatened. Will has sensed the nature of their relationship and knows how to speak in a way that is beneficial and flattering to both. Dorothea's sensibility dovetails with Will's and his delicacy of feeling and genuine companionability bring her closer to him.

Will's voice is linked with the purpose Dorothea so desires. It is the combination of voice (writing, speaking) with purpose (public service) that ultimately serves to fulfill both Dorothea and Will. Disappointing as it may be, Dorothea's "voice"—her ambitious

sense of purpose—is ultimately filled vicariously through the work of Will. Will gives active expression and form to Dorothea's desires and ambitions. Conversely, Dorothea is the catalyst for Will's transformation from dilettante to Parliamentarian. In this sense they exhibit the partnership that Eliot advocates between men and women.

Dorothea is equally associated with voice and expression, though hers is performed in a more private arena. As in the earlier novels, Eliot associates female voice with agency and with depth of character. Gray writes that in Middlemarch "music and musical allusion … reveal the capacity for sympathy of each principal character. Dorothea['s] … ardour is measured by the quality and effectiveness of her own voice, and by her musicality—that is, by her responsiveness to certain kinds of sound" (79). In eloquence and quality of voice Dorothea is most like Dinah Morris. Dinah is presented as a compelling piece of drama, of which her voice is an integral part. Dorothea is compared to music and poetry, both as they relate to the beauty of her inner vision. The artistic Will is captivated by the beauty of Dorothea's voice. When he first hears her speak he thinks, "what a voice! It was like the voice of a soul that had once lived in an Aeolian harp" (M 80). Voice is the first and most profound connection that Will has to Dorothea. When he hears her speak, he immediately knows the nature of her character. Gray writes that "Although [Dorothea] is no executant, her own voice … matches her actual responsiveness to true resonance….[and] Ladislaw's identification of voice with soul and passion indicates George Eliot's essentially favourable disposition towards him" (81). Dorothea's voice is beautiful, rich, and nuanced in its tone. The narrator describes it as a "pure voice" (M 543) that speaks with "liquid flexibility" (M 543) with a "gentle tremor"

(M 543). Another time Dorothea is described as speaking "in a voice as clear and unhesitating as that of a young chorister chanting a credo …" (M 389).

In addition to the beautiful quality of her voice, Dorothea is an expressive and articulate speaker. Though it is Will who is especially struck by the beauty of her voice, many others are aware of her eloquence. "Mr. Casaubon too was not without his pride in his young wife, who spoke better than most women, as indeed he had perceived in choosing her" (M 213). Her eloquence reflects her high-mindedness and depth of thought. Both Will and Mr. Brooke are somewhat abashed by her superior verbal skills. In an ironic passage following one of her articulate outbursts, the narrator comments on nature's supposed bias for masculine superiority:

> But nature has sometimes made sad oversights in carrying out her intention; as in the case of good Mr. Brooke, whose masculine consciousness was at this moment in rather a stammering condition under the eloquence of his niece. He could not immediately find any other mode of expressing himself than that of rising, fixing his eye-glass, and fingering the papers before him. (M 389)

In the development of female "voice," Eliot grants both heroine and artist figure more verbal ability. Dorothea more readily speaks out on her own behalf than do the earlier heroines. She is as eloquent and passionate in her speaking as Will is. Casaubon finds this out after making a cutting, patronizing remark to Dorothea, to which she responds with a quickness and force of speaking that surprises him: "With her first words, uttered in a tone that shook him, she startled Mr. Casaubon into looking at her, and meeting the flash of her eyes. 'Why do you attribute to me a wish for anything that

would annoy you? You speak to me as if I were something you had to contend against'" (M 282).

Like Maggie, she is only too quick to defend another against injustice. She stands up for Lydgate when all others fail to do so and she defends Will against slanderous remarks. When Mrs. Cadwallader says something against Will's character, Dorothea fires back: "'You began by saying that one report was false, Mrs. Cadwallader, and I believe this is false too,' said Dorothea, with indignant energy….'I will not hear any evil spoken of Mr. Ladislaw; he has already suffered too much injustice'" (M 629).

Dorothea has a ready tongue, is capable of expressing her anger, and is confident in her speech. However, in a manner similar to Maggie who learns submission as she grows older, Dorothea learns to be silent after her marriage to Casaubon. Eliot presents submission and silence as intertwined responses to repression. Dorothea later refers to this difficult period in her married life in a conversation with Will in which she speaks of "the unexpected way in which trouble comes, and ties our hands, and makes us silent when we long to speak" (M 545). Eliot contrasts Dorothea's freedom of speaking before her marriage to her gradual silencing after marriage as she slowly gives in to Casaubon's expectations. As a group watches the funeral of Featherstone from the inside of a house, Dorothea remarks on the dismalness of the funeral. "She was going to say more, but she saw her husband enter and seat himself a little in the background. The difference his presence made to her was not always a happy one: she felt that he often inwardly objected to her speech" (M 328).

Another time she begins to find the voice of rebellion stirring within her but suppresses it. Outraged at Casaubon's unjust treatment of her, she inwardly rebels. "She

was in the reaction of a rebellious anger stronger than any she had felt since her marriage. Instead of tears there came words: 'What have I done—what am I—that he should treat me so?'….She began to hear herself, and was checked into stillness" (M 426). The same spirit of rebellion that Will feels free to express is located in Dorothea, but she has learned to suppress it in her marriage.

Like Maggie, Dorothea's passionate, ambitious nature learns resignation after a series of defeats and humiliations. With both heroines, it is at this stage of submission that the artist figure re-enters to actively engage with the heroine, in large part to counter the silencing of these women. For Dorothea this begins on her honeymoon in Rome after she realizes the disastrous mistake she has made in her marriage. She believes that submission and acquiescence to her husband's will is the means of coping. It is at this point that Will begins the conversations and discussions that figure largely in his relationship with Dorothea. These are private conversations in which they freely discuss art, purpose, and life. This phase corresponds to the Red Deeps phase of Maggie and Philip. It is the phase where the relationship takes root, in an environment infused with discussions about art. It is the point where female dissatisfaction merges with artistic appreciation, rebellion, and expression.

With Will Dorothea finds a way to express herself, an outlet for her mental and spiritual hunger, and a sympathetic listener: "it was a source of greater freedom to her that Will was there….She felt an immense need of some one to speak to, and she had never before seen any one who seemed so quick and pliable, so likely to understand everything" (M 210). After a period of resignation, the artist figure enters to give voice to the heroine's position and to encourage her own "voice."

Just as Philip angrily urges Maggie to give up her self-renunciation, Will expresses his anger at Dorothea's life and her submission to Casaubon's will. When Dorothea alludes to the dismalness of life, Will says, "You talk as if you had never known any youth. It is monstrous….You have been brought up in some of those horrible notions that choose the sweetest women to devour—like Minotaurs. And now you will go and be shut up in that stone prison at Lowick: you will be buried alive. It makes me savage to think of it!" (M 220). Anger at women's sacrificial role and of submitting to the needs of family and husband at the cost of youth and happiness is voiced not by the women, but by the male artists, another of Eliot's strategies of displacement.

Dorothea's relationship with Will introduces her to a new of way of being in a relationship that is equitable and mutually stimulating, which largely takes place through conversation. Though Maggie and Philip grow in their love for each other through their conversations, Maggie's love for Philip is not of a romantic kind, a fact that pains Philip. A mark of development in the theme of the artist figure and female "voice" is that with Dorothea and Will the relationship becomes more balanced in every sense. This is reflected in the fact that Dorothea is not the passive listener that Maggie is with Philip, but an active participant in their conversations. Dorothea and Will establish an open communication that both find increasingly necessary for their happiness. Only with Will is Dorothea able to express her deepest feelings which she has learned to suppress since being married: "Dorothea had gathered emotion as she went on, and had forgotten everything except the relief of pouring forth her feelings, unchecked: an experience once habitual with her, but hardly ever present since her marriage, which had been a perpetual struggle of energy with fear" (M 389). As Will begins to understand the negative effect of

marriage on Dorothea, he blames Casaubon for putting Dorothea in such a position. He thinks "Casaubon had done a wrong to Dorothea in marrying her. A man was bound to know himself better than that, and if he chose to grow gray crunching bones in a cavern, he had no business to be luring a girl into his companionship" (M 360). The relationship between Casaubon and Will disintegrates into strong mutual antipathy. As Casaubon becomes increasingly hostile to both Will and Dorothea, she finds the company of Will ever more important. At one point Will contrives to see Dorothea at Lowick, for which she is grateful: "Dorothea for the moment forgot her husband's mysterious irritation against Will: it seemed fresh water at her thirsty lips to speak without fear to the one person whom she had found receptive …" (M 363). Stifled and depressed at Lowick, and needing someone to mentally and emotionally engage with, Dorothea welcomes her discussions with Will: "Poor Dorothea before her marriage had never found much room in other minds for what she cared most to say; and she had not, as we know, enjoyed her husband's superior instruction so much as she had expected….But Will Ladislaw always seemed to see more in what she said than she herself saw" (M 361).

With Will Dorothea is able to voice what is most important to her. Only to Will does she speak of her lifelong need for an active purpose: "even when I was a little girl … it always seemed to me that the use I should like to make of my life would be to help some one who did great works, so that his burthen might be lighter" (M 363). Will begins to understand why Dorothea married Casaubon. She later further explains, "That by desiring what is perfectly good, even when we don't quite know what it is and cannot do what we would, we are part of the divine power against evil—widening the skirts of light

and making the struggle with darkness narrower … I have found it out, and cannot part with it" (M 392).

Dorothea and Will are well matched in conversation with each other and catch each other's slightest modulations and nuances. Will, "with irrepressible quickness" (M 363) at one point catches something Dorothea says that could be construed to refer to Casaubon's scholarly ineptness. We are told that "through certain sensibilities Dorothea was as quick as he, and seeing her face change" (M 363) he adjusts his words. Their styles in speaking and communicating are similar; they are open and frank, sensitive and perceptive. Dorothea tells Will, "We used to agree that we were alike in speaking too strongly" (M 633). When Dorothea believes they must part, she grieves for the loss of their conversation, for having a listener who understands her, for being able to speak her mind freely. "Their young delight in speaking to each other, and saying what no one else would care to hear, was forever ended, and become a treasure of the past" (M 547), and when he leaves she sees him as "receding into the distant world of warm activity and fellowship….There was no refuge now from spiritual emptiness and discontent …" (M 475).

In their conversations, the transmission of one's inner self is exchanged. Eliot uses the quality of voice and the perception of voice as an indication of her characters' inner wealth. Dorothea's inner wealth is matched by the beauty of her voice and this is perceived by Will. This strategy is used to indicate the personalities of another couple in the story, Rosamond Vincy and Tertius Lydgate. Dorothea's richness of mind and voice is contrasted with the inner shallows of Rosamond Vincy and the "bland neutrality" (M 270) of her voice. Though Lydgate has a sonorous speaking voice, a "fine baritone" (M

150), he lacks the depth of perception that Will has and for this reason he misses the fact that Rosamond is superficial and vain.

In Middlemarch the quality of voice and music is closely related. True appreciation of these is equated with inner vision and wealth of character. Gray notes that "The self-revealing power of Dorothea's voice is felt by another important associate in her schemes for good: Caleb Garth, … the novel's chief arbiter of religious feeling" (94). Garth recognizes the richness of Dorothea's voice and the accompanying inner quality that voice indicates. He tells his wife, "You would like to hear her speak, Susan. She speaks in such plain words, and a voice like music. Bless me! it reminds me of bits in the 'Messiah'…it has a tone with it that satisfies your ear" (M 552). Like Will, Garth compares Dorothea to a musical work of art. He is associated with music and the truth of feeling that great music can produce. "Caleb was very fond of music, and when he could afford it went to hear an oratorio that came within his reach, returning from it with a profound reverence for this mighty structure of tones, which made him sit meditatively, looking on the floor and throwing much unutterable language into his outstretched hands" (M 552-53). Though words don't come easily for him, and "he had the fear of having to speechify" (M 559), he feels deeply and recognizes strength and nobility of character when he encounters it. It affects him in the same way beautiful music affects him. Caleb's desire to do good through his work with the land is expressed in terms of music and poetry in a way that recalls Adam Bede: "The echoes of the great hammer where roof or keel were a-making, the signal-shouts of the workmen, the roar of the furnace, the thunder and plash of the engine, were a sublime music to him … all these sights of his youth had acted on him as poetry without the aid of the poets" (M 250).

Like voice, a profound receptivity to music is associated with purpose and with the desire to do good for others. Caleb's motivation closely mirrors Dorothea's and he is one of the few who understands her drive and ambitions. After he and Dorothea have inspected the lands with Chettam and made plans for its improvement, he tells his wife, "Mrs. Casaubon had a head for business most uncommon in a woman" (M 552) and repeats her words to his wife:

> She said a thing I often used to think myself when I was a lad: - "Mr. Garth, I should like to feel, if I lived to be old, that I had improved a great piece of land and built a great many good cottages, because the work is of a healthy kind while it is being done, and after it is done, men are the better for it." Those were the very words: she sees into things in that way. (M 552)

Strength of feeling, inner vision, and beneficent ambition are located in voice and music receptivity. They form a kind of language that like-minded people perceive in each other.

Articulation and verbal ability are largely located in the females, with the exception of Will who serves as stand-in for women. This is part of Eliot's strategy of connecting female voice with agency and the artist figure. Eliot uses voice as a measure of personal power and active agency—of intelligence, capability, and influence. Dorothea is articulate and expressive and Will is an accomplished writer and speaker. Eliot buttresses the connection between female voice and agency with minor female characters, as she does in her earlier works with Mrs. Poyser and Aunt Glegg. In Middlemarch, this buttressing of voice with female agency can be found most notably in Mrs. Cadwallader, the rector's spirited wife, who has "a mind, active as phosphorus, biting everything that

came near" (M 60). When we are introduced to this character she symbolically has the reigns of her phaeton and is driving herself—her servant sits behind her. She has an animated conversation with one of the tenants who is greatly entertained by her. The tenant

> would have found the country-side somewhat duller if the Rector's lady had been less free-spoken … Indeed, both the farmers and laborers in the parishes of Freshitt and Tipton would have felt a sad lack of conversation but for the stories about what Mrs. Cadwallader said and did … [she] cut jokes in the most companionable manner, though with a turn of tongue that let you know who she was. (M 53)

Mrs. Cadwallader's "clever tongue" (M 549) spares no slings at masculine inferiority with language. She tells Mr. Brooke, who contemplates running for public office, "my dear Mr. Brooke. A man always makes a fool of himself, speechifying" (M 54), and of Casaubon's dry, scholarly endeavors she quips, "Somebody put a drop [of his blood] under a magnifying-glass and it was all semicolons and parentheses" (M 71).

Throughout the novel, the art of speaking is largely located in the females. In addition to Mrs. Cadwallader, Mary Garth and her mother also embody the connection between female voice and female agency. Mrs. Garth speaks in a "fervid agreeable contralto" (M 243) and is careful with her words; she "never committed herself by over-hasty speech" (M 242). She was a governess before her marriage and still takes on an occasional student, combining her household duties with tutoring: "with her sleeves turned above her elbows, deftly handling her pastry … she expounded with grammatical fervor what were the right views about the concord of verbs and pronouns" (M 244).

When one of her children asks her why they must learn this, she replies: "To teach you to speak and write correctly, so that you can be understood" (M 244). She is as meticulous with her own words and "the consciousness of having exceeded in words was peculiarly mortifying" (M 575) to her. Her daughter Mary is equally skilled with words, though she is more "inclined to sarcasm and to impulsive sallies" (M 242) than her mother. Mary's humorous and generous nature forms the dominant part of her character, but there is an edge to her that finds expression in her speech. We are told that "if you made her angry, she would not raise her voice, but would probably say one of the bitterest things you have ever tasted the flavor of" (M 408). Her father Caleb, less adept at language, is proud of this ability in his wife and daughter and defends Mary when his wife reprimands her for a humorous slur she makes regarding the clergy. The narrator presents us with a family conversation that demonstrates female voice. Mr. Garth tells his wife:

> "she gets her tongue from you, Susan."
>
> "Not its flippancy, father," said Mary, quickly, fearing that her mother would be displeased.
>
> "It was certainly a hasty speech, my dear," said Mrs. Garth, with whom speaking evil of dignities was a high misdemeanor.
>
> "There's something in what she says, though," said Caleb, not disposed to have Mary's sharpness undervalued. "A bad workman of any sort makes his fellows mistrusted. Things hang together," he added looking on the floor and moving his feet uneasily with a sense that words were scantier than thoughts. (M 405-06)

The intelligence, confidence, and influence of Dorothea, Mrs. Cadwallader, and Mary and Mrs. Garth are conveyed through their voices, their command of language, and their originality. They are all spirited women with strong opinions and quick tongues. Rosamond, by contrast, "was not a fiery young lady and had no sharp answers …" (M 297). She speaks in a "silvery neutral way….[and] never raised her voice" (M 593). Rosamond has a certain degree of agency but it is exercised through non-verbal communication. She exploits the role of pretty, man-pleasing female in order to manipulate and control. She possesses no language skills or the respect that the other articulate women possess.

Perhaps most demonstrating lack of female voice with lack of agency is the character of Miss Noble, Farebrother's impoverished, diminutive sister-in-law. She is championed by Will who values her company. Miss Noble wants to do good but has little means of doing so. She saves sugar and other treats to give to the village children but otherwise has no agency. She has almost no voice at all. When she speaks to Dorothea on Will's behalf the narrator says, "she made many of her beaver-like noises, as if she had something difficult to say" (M 806), and quickly "lapsed into her inarticulate sounds …" (M 806).

In Eliot's theme of female voice and the artist figure there is an increasing move towards the expression of female anger, a move towards vocation, and a weaving of both in the metaphor of the stage—female performance through voice. Caterina is a performer without a stage, or a very small one. Dinah has the sometime stage of the village green and the small audience of her preaching. In Middlemarch, Dorothea, like the adult Maggie, attracts attention wherever she goes. She attracts attention from Casaubon, Sir

James, Will, the painter Naumann, and the town at large who watch her and her moves as they would view a drama; she is interesting, unpredictable, beautiful, and dramatic in her choices. Auerbach writes about this quality of performance that Eliot previously located in Dinah:

> in Middlemarch, the performer's magic similarly upstages the artful private woman…. Rosamond hopes to entice Will Ladislaw into an affair, but the electric entrance of Dorothea captivates Rosamond's husband, her potential lover, and finally Rosamond herself, who is helpless under the magnetism of Dorothea's powerful presence….She is the novel's star, her entrances striking spectators with awe….As Dinah's effective simplicity overwhelmed Hetty's finery, so the Quaker-like Dorothea draws all attention from lovely vain Rosamond, who is at home with no audience but her mirror. (Romantic Imprisonment 263-264)

The metaphor of the stage gives all women more consequence, and at least metaphorically, moves them into the public sphere. Whether their roles take the form of melodrama, comedy, romance, or tragedy, Eliot focuses attention on women's issues and places them on this larger platform in the outer, public world. The stage becomes equated with the arena of life.

It is notable that in Middlemarch these allusions to the stage are exclusively used for the women, again with the exception of Will, which emphasizes his function as a stand-in for women. When Will tells Dorothea his family history, we are told "she was still looking with serious intentness before her, like a child seeing a drama for the first time" (M 366). When Will entertains the village children he "improvise[s] a Punch-and-

Judy drama with some private home-made puppets" (M 463). In describing Will's escorting Miss Noble, Lydgate tells Dorothea, "they looked like a couple dropped out of a romantic comedy" (M 496).

Mary Garth sees herself as part of the comedy of life; "she had already come to take life very much as a comedy in which she had a proud, nay, a generous resolution not to act the mean or treacherous part" (M 314). The metaphor of the stage is also extended to Rosamond and her issues, but she is cast as a bad actress in her own life drama: "If I loved, I should love at once and without change," said Rosamond, with a great sense of being a romantic heroine, and playing the part prettily" (M 297); "Poor Rosamond lost her appetite and felt as forlorn as Ariadne—as a charming stage Ariadne left behind with all her boxes full of costumes and no hope of a coach" (M 299); "Every nerve and muscle in Rosamond was adjusted to the consciousness that she was being looked at. She was by nature an actress of parts that entered into her *physique*: she even acted her own character, and so well, that she did not know it to be precisely her own" (M 117). Though Will enjoys her musical company and gets caught up in the romantic drama she tries to create for them, Will easily sees through this façade and in a moment of anger, strips her of this role. Dorothea walks in on Will and Rosamond as he tries to put an end to her hopes of a romance. He has her hands clasped in his and her tear stained face is turned to him as Dorothea walks in and witnesses this scene. Dorothea abruptly leaves, and while Will is mortified at what Dorothea must think, Rosamond experiences "gratification from what had just happened" (M 777). When she sees that Will is angry with her she is offended and suggests that he can go after Dorothea and explain. Will is furious with himself and with Rosamond for letting her spin her illusions and entangle him in them.

Will rather cruelly denounces Rosamond and tells her "No other woman exists by the side of [Dorothea]. I would rather touch her hand if it were dead, than I would touch any other woman's living" (M 778). Rosamond's stage world crumbles at his words: she "was almost losing the sense of her identity, and seemed to be waking into some new terrible existence" (M 779). Will feels no pity for Rosamond: "He had felt no bond beforehand to this woman who had spoiled the ideal treasure of his life" (M 779). She, however, experiences "the terrible collapse of the illusion towards which all her hope had been strained … her little world was in ruins" (M 780).

Although several women are put on stage, so to speak, it is Dorothea who most figures as the stage heroine. In the novel's introductory scene with the jewels, in which Dorothea's character is established, the narrator wraps her in language and a comparison to drama. Dorothea had not been interested in the jewels but suddenly realizes that Celia wishes to wear them: "'You would like to wear them?' exclaimed Dorothea, an air of astonished discovery animating her whole person with a dramatic action which she had caught from that very Madame Poinçon who wore the ornaments" (M 12). At a later date, the effect she has on Rosamond as she first visits her home is portrayed in the language of the stage. The narrator says her simple dress would have been appropriate "if she had entered before a still audience as Imogene or Cato's daughter …" (M 432), and says that "no dramatic heroine could have been expected with more interest than Mrs. Casaubon. To Rosamond she was one of those county divinities not mixing with Middlemarch mortality, whose slightest marks of manner or appearance were worthy of her study …" (M 432). Mrs. Cadwallader also uses the language of the stage when she warns Dorothea against returning to Lowick: "think what a bore you might become yourself to your

fellow-creatures if you were always playing tragedy queen and taking things sublimely" (M 537).

The metaphor of the stage grants all women more significance and addresses their issues in a large arena. In the progression of Eliot's works with female voice and the artist figure, the stage is increasingly used to connect female voice with female rebellion—in particular, female rebellion against the patriarchal order. Though degrees of female anger and rebellion against the patriarchal order are expressed in "Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story," Adam Bede, and The Mill on the Floss, beginning in Middlemarch female anger and rebellion move further from the heroine and get concentrated in the female artist subplot, connected with the stage.

This angry female rebellion against the patriarchal order shows up in two instances in Middlemarch. The first is directly related to Will and his heritage. As a stand-in for women Will is twice disinherited at the hands of the patriarchal order and its laws. The first is when his grandmother is disinherited because she marries a foreigner for love. The result is that her inheritance goes to her sister, Casaubon's mother. We later find that Will's mother has been similarly robbed of her inheritance, taken at the hands of Bulstrode who withholds information as to her whereabouts. Casaubon and Bulstrode represent the patriarchal domains of scholarship, church, business, and the law that defines and supports these masculine institutions. Will's mother, Sarah Dunkirk, rejects her inheritance when she learns that the money has been acquired through dishonorable means. She severs herself from her family and determines to make her own living by going on the stage. Both Will's mother and grandmother went against their families, against the patriarchal order that attempted to control them against their wishes. Will tells

Dorothea, "You see I come of rebellious blood on both sides …" (M 366). Here rebellion is presented as a necessary and honorable way for a woman to be true to herself and her beliefs.

However, a darker and more poignant use of the rebellious female artist subplot and the stage is found in the brief but powerful chapter on Lydgate and his first love, Madame Laure. As Eliot does with Caterina, she distances this plot of the female murderess by recounting it as melodrama, a foreign melodrama at that. When Lydgate thinks back on his love for the actress he thinks of it as a "madness which had once beset him" (M 163). During his student days in Paris, he becomes smitten with an actress in a melodrama. He sees the play over and over, enthralled with the actress. In the play, her role requires her to stab her lover, who is also her real life husband. One night her foot slips and she "accidentally" kills her husband. As she screams and faints, Lydgate becomes part of the drama: he "leaped and climbed, he hardly knew how, on to the stage, and was active in help, making the acquaintance of his heroine by finding a contusion on her head and lifting her gently in his arms" (M 151). She soon after leaves Paris and the smitten Lydgate seeks her out. He declares his love for her and his desire to marry her. She seems indifferent to his passion and explains that her husband's death wasn't an accident and that she actually intended to kill him:

> Lydgate, strong man as he was, turned pale and trembled: moments seemed to pass before he rose and stood at a distance from her. "There was a secret, then," he said at last, even vehemently. "He was brutal to you: you hated him."
>
> "No! he wearied me; he was too fond: he would live in Paris, and not

> in my country; that was not agreeable to me."
>
> "Great God!" said Lydgate, in a groan of horror. "And you planned to murder him?"
>
> "I did not plan: it came to me in the play—I meant to do it.…You are a good young man," she said. "But I do not like husbands. I will never have another." (M 153)

Almost phlegmatically, Laure recounts the deed and her reason for murdering her husband. Lydgate is stunned by her confession. Shaken and unnerved, he buries himself in his studies, determined to take a "scientific" view of life. It is ironic that he is taken in by the dramatics and staginess of Rosamond. To Lydgate's credit, it is actually at the moment when Rosamond is not acting that he commits himself to her. In a brief unguarded moment when Rosamond is hurt by Lydgate's rejection of her, she "was as natural as she had ever been when she was five years old.…That moment of naturalness … shook flirtation into love" (M 301). It is her sincere self, emerging only briefly, that secures his love. However, his inability to distinguish acting from sincerity is his undoing. It is society's false ideal of woman that he is conditioned to fall in love with and he repeats the mistake he made with the actress Laure.

Auerbach writes that "Laure's brief turn in the novel associates acting with marriage and marriage with murder" (Romantic Imprisonment 265). Dorothea also acts out this connection in her own lifeless marriage to Casaubon and his death that frees her. Her words of comfort to Rosamond reveal this connection. Believing Rosamond to be in love with Will, Dorothea says, "marriage drinks up all our power of giving or getting any blessedness [in love outside of marriage]. I know it may be very dear—but it murders our

marriage—and then the marriage stays with us like a murder—and everything else is gone" (M 797).

In Middlemarch, the institution of marriage and its concomitant required female submission is rebelled against. The chapter on Madame Laure addresses this issue sensationally but nevertheless it presents a puzzling interlude. The character of Laure is comprised of conflicting qualities. On the one hand, she has characteristics that are highly valued in Eliot, such as gentleness and "a sweet matronliness" (M 151) and she speaks with a "soft cooing voice" (M 151). After the murder when Lydgate finds her in Avignon she looks "more majestic than ever as a forsaken wife carrying her child in her arms" (M 152). Yet when she listens to Lydgate's profession of love she is described as "looking at him with eyes that seemed to wonder as an untamed ruminating animal wonders" (M 152). Eliot endows Laure with conflicting attributes: she is both tender mother and conniving murderess, a mediocre stage actor with unflinching off-stage honesty. She is a repository for the conflicting emotions found in the creations of her problematic female artists and her melodramatic story reads as an impulse that has worked its way up from Eliot's "subversive subconscious" (Barrett 46).

In addition to the stage, Eliot also uses the genres of painting and music as metaphors to highlight gender issues, as in her earlier works. Elements of the stage, music, and to a lesser degree poetry, pervade Middlemarch and serve as metaphors for the larger issue of female "voice." As in "Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story," Adam Bede, and The Mill on the Floss, painting is used predominantly to represent the masculine realm and music the feminine realm and female "voice." In Middlemarch Eliot complicates these metaphors by including superficial representations of both arts. For example, Rosamond

plays the piano with skill but without feeling; her playing fulfils society's ideal of woman but also reveals her lack of depth. Dorothea, on the other hand, does not play but is more deeply moved by serious music. Dorothea rejects the stereotype of decorative female while at the same time personifies the qualities of music as soul.

As part of highlighting gender issues, Eliot uses art to serve as a catalyst for bringing people together in the romance plots in Middlemarch. For Dorothea and Will in particular, the theme of art brings them together again and again. Most of their key scenes are connected to art. Dorothea is introduced to Will as he sketches at Lowick; the next time Will sees her is in Rome at the Belvedere Gallery; Will visits Dorothea in Rome and begins the discussions about art and life that they are to continue to have; he takes her and Casaubon to galleries which leads to Naumann's painting portraits of them; Will brings the portrait of Casaubon to Lowick which leads to his decision to stay near Dorothea as secretary to her uncle; Will sketches at Lowick as a means of seeing Dorothea; she encounters him at the Lydgates as Rosamond and Will amuse themselves singing; and when Will determines to leave Middlemarch, Dorothea runs into him as he retrieves his portfolio from her uncle's home—all key scenes that further the plot.

As in The Mill on the Floss, the drawing room, with its overtone of courtship and flirtation, is the locale for the superficial arts, both musical and pictorial. Rosamond uses the drawing room as a stage for self-display and to win admiration from the opposite sex. It is here that Ned Plymdale, a suitor of Rosamond's, offers her a picture book of fashionable ladies and gentlemen as way of furthering his suit. He uses it as an opportunity to flirt with and flatter Rosamond. Referring to one of the pictures he tells her, "'I did not say she was as beautiful as you are,' said Mr. Ned, venturing to look from

the portrait to its rival" (M 269). Seeing the book, the more intellectually discerning Lydgate shows his superior taste, but lack of tact. He takes the book and "opening it, gave a short scornful laugh and tossed up his chin, as if in wonderment at human folly. 'I wonder which would turn out to be the silliest—the engravings or the writing here'" (M 270). Unfortunately for him, his discernment of music, which proves a deeper measure of character, is not as sharp and he is as taken in by Rosamond's playing as Ned Plymdale is by the picture book.

The drawing room is also the arena for superficial music. Mr. Brooke voices the general opinion of women and their relation to art when he declares: "music, the fine arts, that kind of thing—they should study those up to a certain point, women should; but in a light way, you know. A woman should be able to sit down and play you or sing you a good old English tune" (M 65). This is exactly the role Rosamond has been trained for and excels in. Shallow and vain, Rosamond uses her musical abilities, combined with her ability to "act," to further her petty ambitions. It is through this "light way" of entertaining that she succeeds in ensnaring Lydgate. On hearing her perform, Lydgate echoes Mr. Brooke's opinion, thinking "she is perfectly lovely and accomplished. That is what a woman ought to be: she ought to produce the effect of exquisite music…. Rosamond Vincy seemed to have the true melodic charm" (M 94). He doesn't realize that Rosamond is merely mimicking her teacher's playing. Byerly writes that "Music is capable of communicating feeling, but it requires a sensitive listener to discriminate between genuine emotive content and the mere sensuous pleasure of sound. Lydgate is deaf to the truth" ("Language of the Soul" 7). Lydgate is conditioned to value women for their superficial decorativeness. He largely enjoys Rosamond's singing and playing

because it is done for his pleasure, which is part of the masculinist assertion that a woman most pleases when she "lays herself out a little more to please us" (M 89). In this lies Lydgate's "spots of commonness" (M 150).

It is this role of women as light amusement that makes Dorothea dislike domestic music, the "small kind of tinkling which symbolized the aesthetic part of the young ladies' education" (M 45). Dorothea finds this offensive and though she has been similarly instructed in music, she decides to put an end to "practising silly rhythms on the hated piano" (M 274). Da Sousa Correa writes that "Dorothea internalizes musical principles rather than practicing techniques of performance.…[She] is dissociated from the conventional female training and domestic ideology which the novel ridicules" (98). Dorothea's limited exposure to art has been of the superficial kind which has no meaning for her. Dorothea believes Casaubon is of the same opinion, but in fact, he is hopelessly unconnected to both music and painting and the deeper feelings that are so important Dorothea. He can't understand why anyone would want to have their "ears teased with measured noises" (M 65) of music. Symbolically, "there is only an old harpsichord at Lowick, and it is covered with books" (M 65).

Initially, Dorothea believes the absence of the arts at Lowick represents a state of higher mind, a myopic belief that is underscored by the narrator's irony: "'Mr. Casaubon is not fond of the piano, and I am very glad he is not,' said Dorothea, whose slight regard for domestic music and feminine fine art must be forgiven her, considering the small tinkling and smearing in which they chiefly consisted at that dark period" (M 65). The narrator matches Dorothea's condescending attitude with that of Casaubon's. He professes to appreciate the "grander forms of music worthy to accompany solemn

celebrations, and … serve as an educating influence according to the ancient conception," (M 66), but he phrases it as another part of the exclusive masculine realm of knowledge that he believes himself to be a part of. Dorothea mistakes his meaning, assuming they think alike and says, "music of that sort I should enjoy….When we were coming home from Lausanne my uncle took us to hear the great organ at Freiberg, and it made me sob" (M 66), revealing the emotional immediacy of music that she experiences.

The same manner of viewing art is revealed in a conversation Casaubon has with Dorothea on their honeymoon in Rome:

> "Should you like to go to the Farnesina, Dorothea? It contains celebrated frescos designed or painted by Raphael, which most persons think it worth while to visit."
>
> "But do you care about them?" was always Dorothea's question.
>
> "They are, I believe, highly esteemed.…Raphael … is the painter who has been held to combine the most complete grace of form with sublimity of expression. Such at least I have gathered to be the opinion of cognoscenti." (M 196-97)

Dorothea's question is whether the paintings are relevant to Casaubon—to his feeling. His answer is a detached, unemotional one. The narrator sets up an opposition between Dorothea and Casaubon in what they require of art. Casaubon's is whether it is "esteemed by the cognoscenti," Dorothea's is if the feeling of the work speaks to her directly.

This same impressionability that Dorothea has towards the organ music is also evident in Will. The narrator tells us that "Will, too, was made of very impressible stuff. The bow of a violin drawn near him cleverly, would at one stroke change the aspect of

the world for him" (M 388). Dorothea and Will are made up of the same substance that responds to the immediacy and truth of music. Byerly writes that "In Middlemarch, it seems, being 'musical' has nothing to do with training or ability in the art of music itself, but refers instead to a level of sensitivity for which music is a metaphor" ("Language of the Soul" 8). The inability of Casaubon to feel deeply, manifested in his detachment from art, is reflective of the disconnect in their marriage.

The lack of sensitivity and feeling in art mark character flaws in Lydgate, Rosamond, and Casaubon. While Will certainly has flaws, they are not of perception or inner vision. As "the most sensitive aesthetic intelligence in Middlemarch" (Wiesenfarth 363), Will is the novel's judge of inner truth and art. He sketches and paints but is quick to dismiss it as dabbling, preferring the "truth" of language, as he expounds in his argument with Naumann. When Dorothea asks him if he means to be a painter, he responds, "No … I have quite made up my mind against it. It is too one-sided a life… looking at the world entirely from the studio point of view" (M 207). Will sings but only as a source of amusement. His singing with Rosamond is a way to agreeably pass his time, in the same way he enjoys Lydgate's company, but he "prefers Dorothea's inner musicality" (Byerly, "Language of the Soul" 8). As Will draws closer to Dorothea, he thinks "It would be a unique delight to wait and watch for the melodious fragments in which her heart and soul came forth so directly and ingenuously. The Aeolian harp again came into his mind" (M 209).

Will realizes Dorothea's intrinsic value, which he first perceives through her voice. It is the recognition and responding to the truth in art that is a measure of character. In this way Eliot locates truth in art with inner vision and nobility of character. Except for a few

minor instances, as with Caleb Garth, this quality is located solely in Dorothea and Will, thus making them eminently suited for each other.

In Middlemarch music receptivity and voice are metaphors for deep feeling and inner vision and result in greater agency. They are associated with Dorothea and the feminine and are contrasted to painting, which represents patriarchy. Painting both objectifies and excludes women. The role of women in this art form is as model and muse. In the previously discussed novels there are examples of paintings that misrepresent the subject, either intentionally or through ignorance, which serve to highlight the fallibility of the male order. This strategy is even more incisive in Middlemarch with art objects that sexualize women, as well as misrepresent them. At the auction scene some paintings for bid are described as "large framefuls of expensive flesh-painting" (M 602). The narrator suggests that these paintings are examples of male voyeurism but are acceptable because they are Biblical in theme. We are told that the wife of the owner of these paintings "was nervous until reassured by finding the subjects to be Scriptural" (M 602). A veneer of religious respectability is layered over these flesh paintings. This mirrors the same veneer that covers the history of the unethical Bulstrode, who represents the masculine realm of business, church, and local politics.

The most significant misrepresentation of the "plastik" arts, as Will refers to them, is the statue of the reclining Ariadne in the Belvedere Gallery where Will and the painter Naumann observe Dorothea. The narrator tells us that at the time when Dorothea visits Rome (1830s) the statue was mistakenly identified as Cleopatra. The narrator puts this error in a larger frame of masculine fallibility by saying of another work that "even the most brilliant English critic of the day mistook the flower-flushed tomb of the

ascended Virgin for an ornamental vase" (M 188). The subtextual message regarding painting, and sculpture as well, is that they form a language that is developed by men and are open to misrepresentation, even in works of such iconic female figures as Cleopatra and the Virgin Mary. If the male authorities make these mistakes, a young girl unschooled in the language of art cannot be expected to make sense of it. In addition, the scene objectifies, even sexualizes Dorothea, who is unknowingly observed by the artists Naumann and Will. Abigail Rischin writes that the Ariadne-Cleopatra sculpture "not only helps to arouse Will's feelings for Dorothea but also prefigures the novel's larger romance plot and provides an acceptable vehicle for the representation of female eroticism within the mores of Victorian culture" (1125-26), and that "Cleopatra is both the quintessential object of male desire and the embodiment of the desiring female subject" (1128).

Eliot uses sculpture to represent the same values as that of painting. It is a predominantly masculine realm in which the male is creator, beholder, patron, and owner, and woman serves as model, muse, and possession. Naumann is captivated by Dorothea's beauty and as a painter, objectifies her. He is delighted that Will is acquainted with Dorothea and he suggests that they follow her home, a liberty Will is appalled by. Naumann gets his wish of studying Dorothea through his duplicitous act of asking Casaubon to sit for a portrait of Aquinas, and then sketching Dorothea as the painting dries. Naumann capitalizes on the notion of male as patron. Casaubon eagerly partakes in the tradition of self-aggrandizement that we see in the portraits of Cheverels and Donnithornes. As patron he is willing to pay for his portrait; as the portrait is of Aquinas, he places himself in the historical masculine scholarly tradition. Naumann is quick to

realize the selfishness behind Casaubon's act. Casaubon wishes to purchase his own portrait but takes little interest in Naumann's portrait of Dorothea. Naumann says, "Nothing like these starchy doctors for vanity! It was as I thought: he cared much less for her portrait than his own" (M 218).

Painting is portrayed as representative of the masculine world of learning, travel, conquest, intellectuality, and politics—all of which largely exclude women. The artwork Dorothea sees in Rome has been commissioned by the Church or by prominent patrons in masculine European history. The subject matter reflects the masculine realm and its values: the scholarly Aquinas, the conqueror Tamerlain, and Biblical scenes, which are often violent or salacious. When women are depicted it is either as Madonnas or saints (Naumann paints Dorothea as Santa Clara) or erotic portrayals, as in the Cleopatra/Ariadne statue.

One reason Dorothea initially prefers Casaubon's Lowick to the Grange of her uncle is due to Casaubon's lack of art. Her first impression of her new home is that its décor

> seemed more cheerful than the casts and pictures at the Grange, which her uncle had long ago brought home from his travels….To poor Dorothea these severe classical nudities and smirking Renaissance-Correggiosities were painfully inexplicable, staring into the midst of her Puritanic conceptions: she had never been taught how she could bring them into any sort of relevance with her life. (M 74)

Dorothea immediately understood the beauty of the organ music at Freiberg, but finds that painting has no connection to her. When Dorothea expresses the way she feels at

being unable to understand art, she places the blame on herself, thinking she must be "blind," "dull," and "stupid". Her experience in the world of art in Rome makes Dorothea feel inadequate and makes her doubt herself, just as she does when she enters Casaubon's masculine studies. She is surprised to find that Will attributes a greater understanding of art to her than she possesses. In a conversation between them, Dorothea candidly admits to her bewilderment at art. Will begins

> "I am thinking of the sort of figure I cut the first time I saw you, when you annihilated my poor sketch with your criticism."
>
> "My criticism?" said Dorothea, wondering still more. "Surely not. I always feel particularly ignorant about painting.
>
> "I suspected you of knowing so much, that you knew how to say just what was most cutting. You said…that the relation of my sketch to nature was quite hidden from you..."
>
> "That was really my ignorance….I must have said so only because I never could see any beauty in the pictures which my uncle told me all judges thought very fine. And I have gone about with just the same ignorance in Rome. There are comparatively few paintings that I can really enjoy. At first when I enter a room … I feel a kind of awe … But when I begin to examine the pictures one by one the life goes out of them, or else is something violent and strange to me. It must be my own dulness. I am seeing so much all at once, and not understanding half of it. That always makes one feel stupid. It is painful to be told that anything is very

> fine and not be able to feel that it is fine—something like being blind, while people talk of the sky." (M 206)

There is the sense that Dorothea wants to understand and appreciate what others value but has learned to blame herself for not comprehending. She tells her uncle: "I am no judge of these things….You know, uncle, I never see the beauty of those pictures which you say are so much praised. They are a language I do not understand. I suppose there is some relation between pictures and nature which I am too ignorant to feel—just as you see what a Greek sentence stands for which means nothing to me" (M 79). She places art in the same masculine world of learning, which also excludes her. Similarly, when Will describes the painting of Tamerlain and all its multiple meanings and symbols, Dorothea remarks to her husband, "What a difficult kind of shorthand!….It would require all your knowledge to be able to read it" (M 214). Dorothea understands that it takes masculine learning to understand the masculine language of painting.

Though she blames herself for her ignorance, Dorothea feels that much of art excludes and misrepresents people, especially those already marginalized by society, as with women and the poor. Will perceives Dorothea's sensitivity and associates her with beauty, so he is puzzled by her lack of connection to the beauty he so readily perceives in art. He says to her, "I fear you are a heretic about art generally….I should have expected you to be very sensitive to the beautiful everywhere" (M 219) to which she responds, "I suppose I am dull about many things…I should like to make life beautiful—I mean everybody's life….all this immense expense of art, that seems somehow to lie outside life and make it no better for the world, pains one. It spoils my enjoyment of anything when I am made to think that most people are shut out from it" (M 219). Due to her passion for

improving society, she faults art with being an amusement for the wealthy. She says that "in Rome it seems as if there were so many things which are more wanted in the world than pictures" (M 207). Dorothea feels that painting does not represent the life she knows and she objects to the romanticizing of poverty and misery. She explains this feeling to her uncle, comparing the lives of her uncles' tenants with the paintings on his wall:

> "those poor Dagleys, in their tumble-down farmhouse, where they live in the back kitchen and leave the other rooms to the rats! That is one reason why I did not like the pictures here, dear uncle—which you think me stupid about. I used to come from the village with all that dirt and coarse ugliness like a pain within me, and the simpering pictures in the drawing-room seemed to me like a wicked attempt to find delight in what is false, while we don't mind how hard the truth is for the neighbors outside our walls." (M 389)

Her response to painting is contrasted to the immediacy of music which needs no prior instruction to understand, as when she responds to the organ music. Will understands that part of her inability to understand art is connected to her lack of education and exposure. He explains to her, "there is a great deal in the feeling for art which must be acquired….Art is an old language with a great many artificial affected styles, and sometimes the chief pleasure one gets out of knowing them is the mere sense of knowing" (M 206). Although he speaks of feeling, it is couched in words that make it sound like an intellectual pleasure as opposed to the deep feeling in art that Dorothea requires to make it relevant to her.

Dorothea tells Will, “I think I would rather feel that painting is beautiful than have to read it as an enigma …” (M 214). Her relationship to art is an emotional one, not an intellectual exercise. She tries to describe this to Will in their conversations in Rome, saying, “I should be quite willing to enjoy the art here, but there is so much that I don’t know the reason of—so much that seems to me a consecration of ugliness rather than beauty. The painting and sculpture may be wonderful, but the feeling is often low and brutal, and sometimes even ridiculous” (M 220). Her ideas of art, both her understanding and her antipathy towards it, converge in Rome. Though she gains some insight into the symbolism of the paintings, she is always to think of Rome as “an alien world…. spreading itself everywhere like a disease of the retina” (M 194).

As a stand-in for women, Will straddles the boundaries of gender as it is represented by painting. On the one hand, he is feminized within its context. From the beginning of the novel through the end he is strongly associated with the miniature of his disinherited grandmother. Celia remarks to Mrs. Cadwallader, “He is just like a miniature of Mr. Casaubon’s aunt that hangs in Dorothea’s boudoir—quite nice-looking” (M 329). Mrs. Cadwallader refers to him as “a very pretty sprig” (M 330), rather than as handsome, and later compares him to a painting, saying “he is like the fine old Crichley portraits …” (M 819). At the end of the novel the narrator reiterates this connection by identifying Will with a painting: “he stood with his hat and gloves in the other hand, and might have done for the portrait of a Royalist” (M 809). In addition, his dabbling in painting is seen as feminine, as Mr. Brooke makes clear when he says to Dorothea, “this is just the thing for girls—sketching, fine art and so on” (M 80).

On the other hand, Will views Dorothea from a very masculine point of view. As an artist he sees her through a painter's eye and to some degree objectifies her. Will participates in the masculine notion of proprietorship that accompanies the painting metaphor. He takes Dorothea and Casaubon to Naumann's studio in the pretense of playing tour guide but it is really to gratify Naumann's desire to study Dorothea's beauty and capture it in a portrait. Will "had been allured by the gratification of his pride in being the person who could grant Naumann such an opportunity of studying her loveliness …" (M 217). Will regrets his ploy when he sees Naumann's objectifying Dorothea. "No sooner did Naumann mention any detail of Dorothea's beauty, than Will got exasperated at his presumption: there was grossness in his choice of the most ordinary words, and what business had he to talk of her lips? She was not a woman to be spoken of as other women were" (M 217). He tells Naumann, "Mrs. Casaubon is not to be talked of as if she were a model …" (M 217).

Will puts Dorothea on a pedestal, an act that goes hand in hand with possession, ownership, objectification, and idealization. As Naumann paints Dorothea as Santa Clara, we are told that "Will was divided between the inclination to fall at the Saint's feet and kiss her robe, and the temptation to knock Naumann down while he was adjusting her arm" (M 216). He has a similar impulse in relation to Casaubon who also uses Dorothea for his own ends: "if Mr. Casaubon had been a dragon who had carried her off to his lair … it would have been an unavoidable feat of heroism to release her and fall at her feet" (M 209). The narrator derides the futile masculine notion of female worship: "The remote worship of a woman throned out of their reach plays a great part in men's lives, but in most cases the worshipper longs for some queenly recognition … without

descending from her high place" (M 218). Will elevates Dorothea to queen, yet establishes himself as her protector: "he would never lose sight of her … if he gave up everything else in life he would watch over her …" (M 300). Though Will objectifies Dorothea to some extent, the better part of him realizes that though he would willingly prostrate himself at her feet, Dorothea has no need of it. "Will did not know what to say, since it would not be useful for him to embrace her slippers, and tell her that he would die for her: it was clear that she required nothing of the sort" (M 221). The narrator contrasts masculine worship of the female with a woman's real needs.

It is Naumann's objectifying of Dorothea that elicits Will's argument on the superiority of language over painting. He asks Naumann, "what is a portrait of a woman? Your painting and Plastik are poor stuff after all. They perturb and dull conceptions instead of raising them" (M 191). Will says that language, on the other hand, "is a finer medium….especially about representations of women….You must wait for movement and tone … they change from moment to moment. This woman whom you have just seen, for example: how would you paint her voice, pray? But her voice is much diviner than anything you have seen of her" (M 191). Will links voice with language and its ability, like music, to express inner vision. Will perceives that Dorothea's speaking voice is at one with her "voice" and is an expression of her inner beauty.

Dorothea's inner vision is alluded to throughout the novel and is the obverse of her myopia. It is an integral part of the external world she moves in. When Will and Naumann see Dorothea in the Belvedere Gallery, "her large eyes were fixed dreamily on a streak of sunlight which fell across the floor….She did not really see the streak of sunlight on the floor more than she saw the statues: she was inwardly seeing the light of

years to come" (M 189). Her voice is the channel for the expression of her interiority, which Will recognizes and responds to so immediately. Inner vision and deep feeling are associated with voice and music, and also with the language of poetry. Will is associated with language and poetry throughout. At one point Dorothea suggests that perhaps he will be a poet. He expounds on the idea, linking it with music and feeling: "To be a poet is to have a soul so quick to discern that no shade of quality escapes it, and so quick to feel, that discernment is but a hand playing with finely ordered variety on the chords of emotion—a soul in which knowledge passes instantaneously into feeling, and feeling flashes back as a new organ of knowledge" (M 223). On hearing this Dorothea tells him that she could never write a poem, to which Will responds, "You are a poem—and that is to be the best part of a poet …" (M 223).

The metaphor of poetry is again used for Dorothea and Will later in their relationship when Will desires to speak with Dorothea alone: "However slight the terrestrial intercourse between Dante and Beatrice or Petrarch and Laura, time changes the proportion of things, and in later days it is preferable to have fewer sonnets and more conversation" (M 361). In all the metaphors Will is the poet, Dorothea the muse or poem. He is the creator, she the inspiration. In the end, it is the combination of Dorothea's inner vision with Will's outer action that enables Dorothea and Will to fulfill each other's needs.

However, a key difference between Dorothea and Will is that Dorothea is completely self-motivated. Her ambition and sense of purpose are independent of Will, whereas Will's ambition is inspired by Dorothea. He wants to be worthy in her eyes. When Will began his political life as secretary to Mr. Brooke,

> he studied the political situation with as ardent an interest as he had ever given to poetic metres or mediaevalism. It is undeniable that but for the desire to be where Dorothea was, and perhaps the want of knowing what else to do, Will would not at this time have been meditating on the needs of the English people or criticising English statesmanship…. (M 461)

It is Dorothea's "voice" that galvanizes Will's talent into meaning. She lets him know how much it means to her that he cares about justice. She tells him, "When we were in Rome, I thought you only cared for poetry and art, and the things that adorn life for us who are well off. But now I know you think about the rest of the world" (M 542). As a woman Dorothea cannot put her desire to make a difference into action. As muse to Will, Dorothea's vision finds expression. Though mutually supportive, they are able to fulfill their visions only within the gender boundaries of the day: Dorothea as muse, Will as creator; Dorothea as idea, Will as action. Within the boundaries of Middlemarch, she is able to help with cottages, the hospital, and the improvement of land. However, in the larger urban political world that Will moves into, Dorothea's role becomes that of partner and helpmate. Nevertheless, it is Dorothea's ambition and sense of purpose that lies at the root of and drives their joint effort.

Although Dorothea and Will are limited by their gender roles, they possess traits of each other's sphere. Like the previous pairs of artist and beloved, they embody more of the gender spectrum. Will's anomalous position is used to both compare and contrast him to women's position in society. He is feminized to some extent, but more importantly he is identified with women. Beer writes of this quality:

> Will Ladislaw, son of two generations of rebellious women, is shown as lucid about his own feelings and responsive to women. He is not shut up in his own masculinity….His failure for a long time to find a role in the world sets him alongside women's experience. He is outside the educational hegemony….He is kin to women, not polarised against them. Ladislaw's position, outside money inheritance, sharing the awkward financial dependency more often associated with women, does have the effect of reinforcing his feminization. It also shows that not only women suffer from dependency and powerlessness. At the same time, Will is much freer than a woman in an equivalent position would be—and that is a pointer to another of his uses. He exactly focuses what is peculiar to women's predicament by sharing many of their conditions, and yet living a liberated life. This liberation depends upon his being a man, with freedom to travel, to live where he will, and to make his own friends. (171-72)

Emphasizing his connection with women is the fact that Will is most associated with his female lineage. From the beginning he is linked with the miniature of his grandmother. In a scene where a distraught Dorothea finds comfort in the miniature of Will's grandmother that reminds her of Will, the face changes from female to male. The blurring of the sexes in the miniature mirrors the blurring of masculine and feminine qualities in Will.

Will is feminized, but not effeminate. He embodies many masculine attributes as well: as an artist he is portrayed as the masculine creator; he is intellectually discerning enough and has had enough education to see the faults in Casaubon's studies; and he is

interested in reform and becomes a politician, a role reserved for men. Dorothea and Rosamond, the two females in the novel noted for their beauty, are both attracted to him. The combination of Will's feminine and masculine attributes enables him to identify with women, particularly with Dorothea. The same applies to Dorothea. Her desire to act in the masculine sphere of land reform and masculine education do not undermine her femininity, but rather make her a fuller character. She is able to relate to and partake in the interests and endeavors of Will, Lydgate, Casaubon, and Garth. Indeed, Dorothea most interacts with the male characters in the novel. She consciously rejects the limitations and superficiality of the feminine sphere.

Although Dorothea stands out from all the other women in the novel, she is most contrasted to Rosamond Vincy. Surprisingly, in many ways they are similar. They appreciate each other's beauty and do a good turn for the other, in both cases as it concerns their love lives. They are both ambitious and determined to improve their lives. Both marry an "outsider" and by novel's end have moved to London, which provides a larger sphere for their actions. Though they experience setbacks, they never give up on their ambitions. Rosamond's ambitions play out in the small world available to her, for the most part that of the drawing room, whereas Dorothea aspires to a larger stage. They see marriage as a way of realizing their ambitions but have naïve notions about marriage that correspond with the idealized world they have constructed. We are told that as she contemplates her life with Lydgate, "Rosamond could not doubt that this was the great epoch of her life" (M 118), almost identical to Dorothea's belief that marriage to Casaubon represented "a fuller life opening before her …" (M 44). Though it is not their intention, they both undermine their husband's goals—Rosamond through her selfishness

and narrow vision, Dorothea unwittingly, in her attempt to assist Casaubon with his studies. "Mr. Casaubon was nervously conscious that he was expected to manifest a powerful mind" (M 279), and he becomes fearful that Dorothea can see through his ineptness. She becomes an obstacle to his "key to all mythologies" (M 85) endeavor, much as Rosamond is to Lydgate's "origin of all the tissues" (M 455) project.

While they have many similarities, at the same time, Dorothea and Rosamond are as different as night and day. They both determine to make something of their lives but go about it in completely different ways. In spite of Rosamond's accomplishments, it is Dorothea who wins the admiration of the discerning men in the novel. Rosamond wins approval from the men of more limited vision. She corresponds to the feminine ideal defined at the dinner party where the men of Middlemarch discuss what they like in a woman. As a representative masculine voice, Mr. Chichely, "a middle-aged bachelor and coursing celebrity …" (M 89), says he likes women who dress and act with the goal of pleasing men. "There should be a little filigree about a woman—something of the coquette. A man likes a sort of challenge" (M 89).

Rosamond's "infantine blondness and wondrous crown of hair-plaits" (M 432) is contrasted to Dorothea's dark, simply coiled hair. Rosamond's style calls attention to her external self—her rings and ribbons and dressmaker; Dorothea's style calls attention to her inner self—her intellect and passion and purpose. Rosamond asks both her husband and Will about Dorothea's style and looks, perceiving their admiration of her. Will responds, "When one sees a perfect woman, one never thinks of her attributes—one is conscious of her presence….Mrs. Casaubon is too unlike other women for them to be compared with her" (M 435). The conventionality of Rosamond highlights the

uniqueness of Dorothea. Rosamond acts entirely in the feminine sphere, while Dorothea steps into the masculine sphere of action, consequence, and purpose.

The character of Rosamond is used to highlight many issues regarding the limitations imposed on women and how they affect society at large. Her faults correspond to weaknesses in men and what they desire. She represents the female ideal of many men, including Lydgate, who view the role of women as one that serves them. Women are there to amuse, gratify, and admire the superior male. Lydgate at first believes that Rosamond "appeared to be that perfect piece of womanhood who would reverence her husband's mind after the fashion of an accomplished mermaid, using her comb and looking-glass and singing her song for the relaxation of his adored wisdom alone" (M 583). He is later shocked to find that she does not reverence his mind. "His superior knowledge and mental force, instead of being, as he had imagined, a shrine to consult on all occasions, was simply set aside on every practical question" (M 586).

Casaubon's choosing Dorothea as his wife is also built on the assumption of male superiority: "Providence, in its kindness, had supplied him with the wife he needed. A wife, a modest young lady, with the purely appreciative, unambitious abilities of her sex, is sure to think her husband's mind powerful" (M 279). Chettam assumes the same attitude in his pursuit of Dorothea. In one of the most satiric of passages the narrator tells us that Chettam "had no idea that he should ever like to put down the predominance of this handsome girl, in whose cleverness he delighted. Why not? A man's mind—what there is of it—has always the advantage of being masculine,—as the smallest birch-tree is of a higher kind than the most soaring palm,—and even his ignorance is of a sounder quality" (M 21).

Even Will is not spared the narrator's gibe at masculine assumed superiority: "For the moment, Will's admiration was accompanied with a chilling sense of remoteness. A man is seldom ashamed of feeling that he cannot love a woman so well when he sees a certain greatness in her: nature having intended greatness for men" (M 389). Will, however is neither threatened nor derailed by Dorothea's ways. Will and Dorothea are familiar with and value attributes of both spheres. By contrast, most of the other characters, with Rosamond and Lydgate serving as typical examples, rigidly embody their own narrow sphere and so cannot understand each other. Kate Flint writes that "The catastrophe of Lydgate and Rosamond's marriage lies in the propensity of each to adhere to the developing doctrine of separate spheres" (164).

Rosamond is used to both personify the limitations and detriments of separate spheres ideology and to underscore the difference in Dorothea, a woman who attempts to act outside her sphere. Though shallow and selfish, Rosamond never intends harm. Rather she is incapable of seeing things from any viewpoint save her own. Perhaps her redeeming value is that she admires and appreciates Dorothea and never forgets her kindness: "she never uttered a word in depreciation of Dorothea, keeping in religious remembrance the generosity which had come to her aid in the sharpest crisis of her life" (M 835).

As in <u>The Mill on the Floss</u>, one area of separate spheres that Eliot most heavily criticizes is the educational model deemed appropriate for women. It excludes women from serious learning and keeps them ignorant and unable to navigate in the external world. It further diminishes a woman by defining her identity as merely decorative. Beer writes that "The first reviewers of <u>Middlemarch</u> were in little doubt about the book's

intended topic: it was the nature and the education of women, and the question of society's responsibility for women's difficulties" (147).

Again Rosamond is used to exemplify this narrow type of education: "She was admitted to be the flower of Mrs. Lemon's school, the chief school in the county, where the teaching included all that was demanded in the accomplished female—even to extras, such as the getting in and out of a carriage" (M 96). The result is that "Rosamond never showed any unbecoming knowledge, and was always that combination of correct sentiments, music, dancing, drawing, elegant note-writing …" (M 268). The narrator makes it clear that the purpose of this type of education is to attract a spouse. The narrator voices this in Mrs. Plymdale who "thought that Rosamond had been educated to a ridiculous pitch, for what was the use of accomplishments which would be all laid aside as soon as she was married?" (M 167).

Dorothea's education at a Swiss school is described as a "toy-box history of the world adapted to young ladies" (M 86). Part of Dorothea's alienation from Rome results from her lack of education. Rome has meaning and relevance for Will and Casaubon but it is indecipherable to Dorothea. Beer writes that Dorothea "has no alternative discourse with which to make sense of her experience" (164). The limitations of her education and the narrow boundaries of her sphere thwart Dorothea's potential for greatness. She has "an active conscience and a great mental need, not to be satisfied by a girlish instruction….[and] a nature, struggling in the bands of a narrow teaching, hemmed in by a social life which seemed nothing but a labyrinth of petty courses, a walled-in maze" (M 28-29). Though she tries to broaden her scope and field of activity, she is constantly reminded that women are not allowed to participate in the world at large.

Dorothea has ideas, ambition, and independent wealth, but lacks the knowledge and opportunity for these assets to make much difference in her life. Dorothea says repeatedly that her money is a burden to her because she doesn't know what to do with it. She says, "I am very uncomfortable with my money, because they tell me I have too little for any great scheme of the sort I like best, and yet I have too much. I don't know what to do….I should like it to make other peoples lives better to them" (M 765).

Minimal education and a limited sphere of action are combined with a disparaging view of women. Dorothea is belittled by her status as a woman, which her uncle repeatedly makes clear. On different occasions he tells her: "Young ladies don't understand political economy" (M 17); "I cannot let young ladies meddle with my documents. Young ladies are too flighty" (M 20); "deep studies, classics, mathematics, that kind of thing, are too taxing for a woman….there is a lightness about the feminine mind—a touch and go …" (M 65). The narrator renders Mr. Brooke's scattered intellectuality in a comedic manner, yet makes it clear that his view is the prevailing one of society.

The unfairness of this ideology is engrained in the fabric of society, from the education system to the legal system. Dorothea is shown as being sensitive to the injustices of this system. When she was young Dorothea had questioned the "reasons why eldest sons had superior rights, and why land should be entailed …" (M 371). She comes up against the unfairness of the system in relation to Will and the account of his mother. After his mother ran away from her family, she wasn't sought out until her brother died, leaving no heir but her. "The son was alive then, and the daughter was at a discount" (M 611). When Dorothea hears the story of Will's grandmother being disinherited she thinks,

"What a wrong, to cut off the girl from the family protection and inheritance only because she had chosen a man who was poor!….Was inheritance a question of liking or of responsibility?" (M 371). When Dorothea brings up this subject to Casaubon, he condescendingly dismisses her saying, "Dorothea, my love, this is not the first occasion, but it were well that it should be the last, on which you have assumed a judgment on subjects beyond your scope.…Suffice it, that you are not here qualified to discriminate" (M 374).

While this masculine disparagement of women is presented as unjust and degrading, even more disturbing is the demonstration that the women absorb this low estimation of their sex. As Flint points out, "far more insidious…are those assumptions about gender roles which are so ingrained as to form part of individuals' automatic mental reflexes" (164). Beer writes that "Rosamond Vincy is a woman entrapped so completely that she is hardly aware of it, so smoothly does her compliance fit" (169). Mrs. Garth is also an example of how engrained this ideology is even in women. She is less entrenched in the feminine sphere than most women. She takes pride in both her household duties and the fact that she possesses "'education' and other good things ending in 'tion,' … without being a useless doll" (M 243). She has had more education that most women and yet she too embraces many of the limiting beliefs of separate spheres ideology. When her husband praises Dorothea's character Mrs. Garth responds, "'But womanly, I hope,' … half suspecting that Mrs. Casaubon might not hold the true principle of subordination" (M 552). Strong, assertive, and confident, Mrs. Garth adheres to separate spheres ideology. The narrator tells us that Mrs. Garth was "apt to be a little severe towards her own sex, which in her opinion was framed to be entirely subordinate.

On the other hand, she was disproportionately indulgent towards the failings of men, and was often heard to say that these were natural" (M 243). Most of the characters in the novel don't question the state of their society. Lydgate is an exception in that he desires to bring about medical reform but he remains locked in rigid gendered stereotypes. That Dorothea and Will desire to bring about reform and can operate in both spheres is what make them different from the rest and suitable for each other. The difference between their individual visions is that Will can act on his desire for reform, whereas for Dorothea it remains largely theoretical.

Hand in hand with the disparagement of women is the overvaluing of the masculine sphere. Dorothea so highly values the masculine that she believes in marrying Casaubon she will have entrance to the realm of knowledge and purpose that has been closed off to her as a woman. She tells herself that as his wife, "I should learn to see the truth by the same light as great men have seen it by. And then I should know what to do, when I got older: I should see how it was possible to lead a grand life here—now—in England" (M 29). Dorothea believes men hold the key to living a life with purpose. She thinks, "what lamp was there but knowledge? Surely learned men kept the only oil; and who more learned than Mr. Casaubon?" (M 86-87).

Beer writes that "Middlemarch … is about work and the right to work, about the need to discover a vocation which will satisfy the whole self and to be educated to undertake it … [It] is most particularly concerned with the problems of women excluded from work and from fulfilling activity, sequestered by their education" (161-62). Within the strictures of such a society, the only opportunity for women is through marriage. Both Dorothea and Rosamond demonstrate that for women marriage is equated with

opportunity. As with Maggie Tulliver, there seems no place for the exceptional woman, except in the shadow of a man. Dorothea believes that the only way she can live a grand life is by attaching herself to the coattails of a great man. Eliot uses a quote that expresses this sentiment to preface the opening of her novel: “Since I can do no good because a woman, Reach constantly at something that is near it” from “The Maid’s Tragedy” by Beaumont and Fletcher (M 7). Though Dorothea makes attempts at social improvement with the school, the cottages, land reform, and the hospital, they are never quite under her control, never things she can act on independently and so her goals are never realized. She has had no preparation that would enable her to carry out her large ideas. She tells Celia at the end of the novel, “I never could do anything that I liked. I have never carried out any plan yet” (M 820). All she is allowed to do is something through a husband. She marries Casaubon in order to assist him with his grand project, the “key to all mythologies.” She pours all her hopes and ambitions into this project. By marrying Casaubon Dorothea believes, “I should learn everything then” (M 29). Her marriage turns out to be nothing as she had imagined it. However, even after all her experience and disappointment in her first marriage, when she determines to marry for the second time, her approach is remarkably similar. She tells Will, “I don’t mind about poverty … and I will learn what everything costs” (M 811-812). Just as she eagerly volunteers to help Casaubon in his work, so she does with Will. Dorothea can only find meaning and the fulfillment of her ambitions through a husband, through his masculine endeavors of which she can be a part:

> she never repented that she had given up position and fortune to marry Will Ladislaw….No life would have been possible to Dorothea which was

> not filled with emotion, and she had now a life filled also with a beneficent activity....Dorothea could have liked nothing better, since wrongs existed, than that her husband should be in the thick of a struggle against them, and that she should give him wifely help. (M 835-36)

The “maid’s tragedy” is that with all her talents, ambitions, and passion to do good for others, there is very little she can do. There is a sense of diminishment at the end of the novel but no suggestion of what the solution might have been, other than a complete reworking of society—a reworking of the system that shapes education, law, politics, finances, and ideology. However, this vision is not part of Dorothea’s world view. She can only act on what is available to her, and the system she has absorbed also teaches her to blame herself for any shortcomings or disappointments she might have. Dorothea felt

> that there was always something better which she might have done, if she had only been better and known better….Many who knew her, thought it a pity that so substantive and rare a creature should have been absorbed into the life of another, and be only known in a certain circle as a wife and mother. But no one stated exactly what else that was in her power she ought rather to have done. (M 835-36)

And so like Caterina, Dinah, and Maggie, Dorothea is diminished at the end.

If there is a glimmer of hope in the life of Dorothea, it is what is brought through her relationship with Will. Most of the novel deals with the futility and despair in her marriage to Casaubon. Before she marries him, Dorothea is full of belief in herself. She believes it is possible to improve the lives of others and live a grand life of meaning; but

everything changes after her marriage. She becomes part of the established order she had earlier criticized. She tells Will, “I used to despise women a little for not shaping their lives more, and doing better things. I was very fond of doing as I liked, but I have almost given it up” (M 545).

Marriage is portrayed as the arena where women are supposed to find fulfillment but the narrator makes it clear that it is largely a negative aspect of separate spheres ideology. When Dorothea first sees Lowick the narrator says “The betrothed bride must see her future home, and dictate any changes that she would like to have made there. A woman dictates before marriage in order that she may have an appetite for submission afterwards” (M 73). Even for the trivial minded Rosamond, marriage in itself does not bring fulfillment. She becomes “oppressed by ennui, and by that dissatisfaction which in women’s minds is continually turning into a trivial jealousy” (M 601). A similar sentiment is expressed by Dorothea: “Marriage, which was to bring guidance into worthy and imperative occupation, had not yet freed her from the gentlewoman’s oppressive liberty … the stifling oppression … where everything was done for her and none asked for her aid” (M 274). For a woman like Dorothea, the narrowness of her sphere is further diminished by marriage. She tells Will that she is expected to “be a great deal on horseback, and have the garden altered and new conservatories, to fill up my days. I thought you could understand that one’s mind has other wants” (M 274). Dorothea had thought that marriage would provide an outlet and stimulation for her intellect, that she would be a part of Casaubon’s world of learning. She discovers that marriage confines, defeats, discourages her growth and ambitions, and ultimately leads to despair.

In several passages the narrator expresses the despondency Dorothea feels in her marriage. She first tries to subdue her frustration and disappointment through duty. It is the same strategy that Maggie tries to embrace at the low point of her family troubles. Dorothea's "strength was scattered in fits of agitation, of struggle, of despondency, and then again in visions of more complete renunciation, transforming all hard conditions into duty" (M 198). However, resignation and duty do not satisfy her soul's hunger and need for meaning. It festers and finds other channels to flow into, either anger and rebellion or despair. "In the weeks since her marriage, Dorothea had not distinctly observed but felt with a stifling depression … with a certain terror, that her mind was continually sliding into inward fits of anger and repulsion, or else into forlorn weariness" (M 195). She feels but cannot express her anger. Her depression deepens as her marriage becomes more and more repressive to her. She experiences it as a "dreary oppression….All existence seemed to beat with a lower pulse than her own, and her religious faith was a solitary cry, the struggle out of a nightmare in which every object was withering and shrinking away from her" (M 275). After Casaubon degrades her for speaking out on Will's behalf she is fully silenced, defeated, and entrapped. She sits in the darkness, "listening, frightened, wretched—with a dumb inward cry for help to bear this nightmare of a life in which every energy was arrested by dread" (M 375).

Dorothea is wrapped in language that associates her with imprisonment, death, and darkness. Though the narrator is sympathetic to Casaubon and gives us his point of view, from Dorothea's point of view Lowick and Casaubon become her jail and keeper. Casaubon is associated with underground chambers and labyrinths. The narrator says, "Poor Mr. Casaubon…had become indifferent to the sunlight" (M 197) and even he

admits, “I live too much with the dead” (M 18). Dorothea’s life becomes a sort of living death, “her best soul [shut] in prison …” (M 426).

Enter Will, Apollonian artist figure of sunshine, life, laughter, and youth. He represents freedom, expression, rebellion, and action—everything Dorothea longs for but is denied. “She longed for work which would be directly beneficent like the sunshine and the rain, and now it appeared that she was to live more and more in a virtual tomb” (M 475). Will is appalled by Casaubon’s treatment of Dorothea, and sees him as a “dried-up pedant …groping after his mouldy futilities” (M 205) and his union with Dorothea brings to mind “beautiful lips kissing holy skulls and other emptinesses ecclesiastically enshrined” (M 364). He tells Dorothea that her life at Lowick is “dreadful imprisonment …” (M 391). Will comes to her as a source of light and life: “the mere chance of seeing Will occasionally was like a lunette opened in the wall of her prison, giving her a glimpse of the sunny air …” (M 361). After Casaubon’s death and her recovery from the fear that Will was forever gone from her life, she is reawakened to life through Will: “here within the vibrating bond of mutual speech, was the bright creature whom she had trusted—who had come to her like the spirit of morning visiting the dim vault where she sat as the bride of a worn-out life …” (M 786).

As artist figure and stand-in for women, Will understands and gives expression to Dorothea’s anger, frustration, and despair. He reconnects her to the sense of purpose and a life of action that she needs for fulfillment; he recognizes, honors, and gives form to her “voice.” For Dorothea, Will is the only one who can “reconcile self-despair with the rapturous consciousness of life beyond self” (M 3). Will enables Dorothea to continue her search for self-fulfillment and the pursuit of her ambitions.

Eliot frames the story of Dorothea and Will within the larger context of an "imperfect social state" (M 838) that affects both men and women. In the Prelude and Finale Eliot draws attention to the fact that Dorothea is not unique, that there are many women like her who we will never know about because they are reduced to small acts. "Many Theresas have been born … the offspring of a certain spiritual grandeur ill-matched with the meanness of opportunity …" (M 3). At the end the narrator says that there are "many Dorotheas, some of which may present a far sadder sacrifice than that of the Dorothea whose story we know" (M 838). Through the characters of Dorothea and Will, Eliot portrays despair at the current state of affairs and hope for what is possible. Will, as a different type of man, represents part of a new possible order. Dorothea and Will, by embracing a wide array of human characteristics are more balanced and fully developed than the other characters in the novel. They represent a possible new model for relationships between men and women which is inclusive, balanced, and beneficent. They do this in part by embracing gender attributes from the other's sphere.

Dorothea refuses to be reduced to a decorative doll there for the pleasure of men. She thinks more highly of herself—and of men—to accept such a role. She relates to men in a fuller human way, one of equality and mutual respect. Chettam at first is disappointed that Dorothea has rejected him as a suitor. However as he ceases to see Dorothea as possible wife and relates to her a fellow human being, "he found himself talking with more and more pleasure to Dorothea.…he was gradually discovering the delight there is in frank kindness and companionship between a man and a woman who have no passion to hide or confess" (M 72). Lydgate undergoes a similar transformation as he interacts with Dorothea: "He could say no more: it was something very new and

strange in his life that these few words of trust from a woman should be so much to him" (M 762). He thinks, "She seems to have what I never saw in any woman before—a fountain of friendship towards men—a man can make a friend of her.…her love might help a man more than her money" (M 768-69). Dorothea's nature suggests the same transformative effect on others as is found in Eliot's artistic characters.

Though Dorothea is "foundress of nothing" (M 4), the combination of her feminine traits with those of the masculine sphere unites to bring about good. Her feminine traits are allowed greater influence and have more impact because they are combined with masculine ambition and interest in the social order. She is largely driven by "the ardent woman's need to rule beneficently by making the joy of another soul" (M 361). Eliot's argument seems to be for more agency and influence in women, which in itself is in keeping with the ideology of feminine influence. Dorothea could have accomplished so much more. Her large vision could have effected improvement for many. Rosamond, under a different social structure, might have been a better wife, which would have helped Lydgate to better help society in his fight against illness and disease. Eliot's argument is that the thwarting of women stunts the growth and development of society. Dorothea desires great action, and possesses the ambition and sense of purpose to achieve great things, but as a woman she is cut off from opportunity. The ideology of the day limited women and produced shallow women like Rosamond, "adorned with accomplishments for the refined amusement of man" (M 269). In the character of Dorothea, Eliot presents a glimpse of what a woman could be and suggests the good she could achieve if she had the means and freedom to act. Instead, she is diminished,

imprisoned, and silenced. The role of the artist figure is to free her, to give voice to her predicament, to offer a way out of submission, and to expand the notion of woman.

In Middlemarch Eliot pairs the heroine with the artist and their stories merge into one that ends in a sort of resolution. Both heroine and artist figure are taken much further in the exploration of art and in finding a purpose and fulfillment of ambition than in the earlier pairing in The Mill on the Floss. The more hopeful ending gestures towards the fulfillment of both Will and Dorothea, as well as the possible transformation of society.

Angry Voices:

"Armgart" and Daniel Deronda

Chapter V

The Diva's Loss of Voice in "Armgart"

In the short dramatic poem "Armgart" Eliot directly addresses the subject of female "voice" and foregrounds the issues that she associates with it: ambition, purpose, rebellion, and transformation. She presents an argument on the right of the female artist to express herself and to find a channel for her creativity and power. "Armgart" marks a pivotal point in the development of Eliot's female artists. Armgart is the first, and only, professional female artist that Eliot creates as a protagonist, and the first to fully articulate her feelings as an artist and as a woman of ambition.

For Eliot, the successful opera singer became the perfect metaphor for expressing the web of issues surrounding female "voice"—of being heard and expressing one's beliefs. Leonardi writes that "Armgart's story, short and sad, lays bare the central problem of the nineteenth-century woman—she has no voice.…women writers such as George Eliot and George Sand … choose an opera singer as heroine [because] she is … a female success in a male world" (65). Renata Miller similarly states that the character of Armgart is part of the "tradition of operatic diva heroines created by women writers [that] focuses on how voice provides self-expression, agency, and spiritual meaning" (38). For the expression of female "voice," the figure of the prima donna is an obvious choice. Her voice is her life. Her singing provides her with status, independence, and agency. When she speaks her words carry weight and significance. Not only is she the cynosure of attention and a self-determined professional, but as a diva she has power over her art, as well as her life. While women were often defined and limited by their domestic roles, the

diva had a role beyond this in the public sphere. The diva character is the perfect receptacle for a female figure of artistic ambition who seeks agency, acclaim, and creative power in a male dominated world.

"Armgart" tells the story of a successful prima donna who loses her voice due to an illness. The poem opens at the pinnacle of Armgart's career after her brilliant opening night in the star role of Gluck's Orfeo. One year later she loses her voice as a result of an illness and the treatment prescribed for it. Angry and bitter, Armgart must come to terms with living the life of the ordinary woman. There are five brief scenes, all of which take place in Armgart's drawing room. In addition to Armgart, there are three characters, each one offering a specific point of view that Armgart must contend with. The Graf is her suitor who argues for traditional marriage. He advises her to give up her career to become a wife and mother. Her lame cousin Walpurga embodies the selfless role of the domestic woman, but with the twist that her service has been to Armgart. She gives voice to the ordinary woman and argues against Armgart's egotistical point of view that excludes the majority of women. Armgart's teacher Leo provides the point of view of the veteran artist, who, though talented and ambitious, did not meet with success as an artist and gave up his career as composer to become a teacher. Within these varying points of view emerge arguments on the rights of the artist, separate spheres roles, love versus art, ego versus community, rebellion against the common lot of women, and finally, an uneasy coming to terms with these issues.

Throughout "Armgart" are echoes of Eliot's earlier works. Elements of her earlier heroines associated with art are evident—their struggle for agency, their striving for a larger life, their ambition, their dissatisfaction with woman's lot, and their attempt to find

"voice"—whether through words, singing, preaching, or music. Indeed, the seeds of "Armgart" must have been germinating in Eliot for a long time. Though composed during the writing of Middlemarch in 1871, the idea may have come as early as 1855, a year marked by two important events. This was the year Eliot first read "Aurora Leigh," Barrett Browning's narrative poem of a female artist. Eliot greatly admired Barrett Browning's poem and later reviewed it in the Westminster Review. Also in 1855, for the first time together as "husband and wife," Eliot and George Lewes traveled to the continent and among the performances they saw while in Berlin was a performance by Johanna Wagner, niece of the composer. The pieces they heard her sing were from the two operas that Eliot references in "Armgart:" Gluck's Orfeo and Beethoven's Fidelio. A significant biographical note of Johanna Wagner that Eliot borrows for Armgart is the fact that she lost her singing voice during the course of her career. However, unlike Armgart, Johanna Wagner went on to become a successful stage actress. Eliot was clearly inspired by her performance. In a letter she wrote to John Chapman shortly after hearing Joanna Wagner, Eliot wrote of an idea she had to write articles on the "Ideals of Womankind" and on "Women in Germany" (Haight, GE's Letters 145). Eliot never wrote the article on German women but the impact of the operas found expression in her works involving female singers. She used one of the pieces from Gluck's opera two years later in her first fictional account, "Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story," written in 1857. Caterina Sarti also sings the aria from Gluck's Orfeo as an expression of her passion and anguish, and "Armgart" opens with reference to this opera.

Perhaps a more influential example of a successful opera singer was Pauline Garcia Viardot, the model for George Sand's novel Consuelo. Pauline Viardot became

one of the most celebrated divas of her day and enjoyed a long international career. Her greatest success was her performance of Gluck's Orfeo, the same success Eliot mirrors for "Armgart."[2] Though Viardot was a wife and mother, she saw herself first and foremost as an artist. In 1870, Viardot fled to England to escape the Franco-Prussian War and performed in the salons of London. Paula Gillett writes that "During the course of Viardot's London sojourn, the two women [Eliot and Viardot] visited each other's home and Eliot's letters contain several references to the beauty and emotional power of her singing" (154). Viardot was born to Spanish parents in Paris. She lived most of her life in France, performing on the stages of Italy, Russia, France, and even the United States. Viardot, like Armgart, was not considered beautiful, was even considered by many to be ugly. However, the force of Viardot's artistry and her personal charm made her one of the most famous women of her day, courted by many. In Viardot, Eliot had a real life example of the successful, cosmopolitan female artist on which to model her opera singer.

Eliot's admiration for the achievements of continental women, a sentiment expressed in "Women of France" and in her intention to write "Women in Germany," is likely the reason Eliot makes her female artists foreign. Eliot was clearly influenced by women like Germaine de Stael and George Sand who created prototypical female artists

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[2] "Berlioz entered into reworking…Orfeo to adapt the opera for the female, dramatic mezzo-soprano. Specifically, he designed it for Pauline Viardot-Garcia—the singer alluded to at the conclusion of "Armgart"—perhaps the most famous Orpheus as well as a superior Fidelio of the century. The collaboration of Berlioz and Viardot-Garcia overwrites, literally and figuratively, the castrato history and informs the relationship of Armgart and Leo, for the nineteenth-century Orfeo continues the previous century's debate about authority and artistry. In both the historical and fictional representations, a male musical colleague of the cantatrice opposes her for daring to revive, to insert into the opera, ornaments belonging to the (baroque) bel canto tradition" (Kehler 71).

in Corinne and Consuelo. As she does with her earlier performing females, Eliot draws on these prototypes for her characterization of Armgart. As in de Stael's Corinne, "Armgart" opens at the pinnacle of the performer's career. Like Corinne, Armgart is adored by her audience and revels in her fame. Fame and audience admiration stimulate the artistic drive in these performers. Similarly, both artists have a rebellious nature. Some of Corinne's words could as easily be spoken by Armgart. For example, Armgart's anger at her suitor's appeal for female submission is reminiscent of Corinne's scorn the lesson she was taught that

> women were made to watch over their husbands' households and their children's health, that all other ambition was harmful, and that….[the] best advice for me was to hide any ambition I might have….Duty is the noblest of human purposes, but like any other idea it can be distorted into a weapon of attack in the hands of narrow-minded people pleased with their own mediocrity. They will use it to silence talent…. (de Stael 255)

When Armgart loses her voice, she sees it as a type of death and is overcome by despairing, suicidal thoughts. She echoes Corinne's sentiment, "What else is happiness but the development of our abilities….Is not killing yourself morally the same as killing yourself physically? And if mind and soul must be smothered, what is the point of going on with a wretched life that stirs me to no purpose?" (de Stael 254). Unlike Corinne, however, Armgart never compromises her art with a love interest. She remains true to her artistic vision, even when she must change the form of its expression to teaching.

As referenced earlier, the other work that clearly informs "Armgart" is Barrett Browning's "Aurora Leigh." Eliot chose the poem form for her most sustained argument

on the female artist and female "voice."[3] As Bodenheimer points out, "the poem allows [Eliot] to dramatize strong versions of single emotions as her prose narratives never do" ("Ambition" 24). The verse drama which Eliot uses for "Armgart" in particular lends itself to the exploration of conflicting points of view. Grace Kehler writes that the verse drama is "a form attentive to both internal and external conflict, [which] explores contemporary anxieties and debates about agency" (66). The form allowed Eliot to express multiple points of view that vie with each other.

Eliot uses both the form and many of the themes that Barrett Browning uses in "Aurora Leigh," such as voice, ambition, and purpose. Like Aurora, Armgart is driven by her ideals of what it means to be an artist. Although the similarities between the two poems are obvious, there are also significant differences. One difference is that Aurora's love interest, both her resistance to Romney and her final acceptance of him, shapes much of the poem. Armgart's love interest, by contrast, disappears after the second scene. The Graf provides the point of view of the traditional male, which Armgart easily counters. His presence is necessary for Eliot to dramatize and polarize the conflict of love versus art. He voices the conventional point of view that valorizes the domestic woman and her role of subservience and self-sacrifice. However, Eliot puts a spin on the role of the conventional woman by giving a strong voice to this position as well, in the character of Walpurga.

Through the character of Walpurga, Eliot sympathetically articulates the common lot of woman, which is an element that is not found in the works of de Stael, Sand, and

[3] The collection of poems in which "Armgart" appears contains other poems that explore the nature of art: "The Legend of Jubal," about the mythical creator of music, and "Stradivarius," the legendary violin maker.

Barrett Browning. Filling the role of subservient helpmate, Walpurga provides support, love, and caretaking for Armgart. Eliot highlights Walpurga's diminished position by giving her a visible handicap—she walks with a limp—a symbol of the ordinary woman's handicapped position. Hudd writes that in providing this point of view, Eliot "restores subjectivity and importance to the ordinary woman, and so broadens the base of Barrett Browning's feminist aims" (79). Walpurga expresses the thankless role of the domestic woman, giving voice to the majority of women.

Another key difference between Aurora Leigh and Armgart is their attitude towards the importance of audience adulation and fame. In Scene I Armgart delights in the applause and flowers and jewels that are bestowed on her, using language that links herself to Dante and the heavens.

> Think you I felt myself a *prima donna*?
> No, but a happy spiritual star
> Such as old Dante saw, wrought in a rose
> Of light in Paradise, whose only self
> Was consciousness of glory wide-diffused,
> Music, life, power – I move in the midst
> With a sublime necessity of good. (A 194)

Leo chides her with her love of fame and ambition: "Come, my lady, own / Ambition has five senses, and a self / That gives it good warm lodging when it sinks / Plump down from ecstasy" (A 194). Armgart acknowledges the role of ambition in her art and explains it as part of the exchange between her and her audience: "Own it? Why not? / ... I sing to living men and my effect / Is like the summer's sun … / If the world brings me

gifts … / twill be the needful sign / That I have stirred it as the high year stirs / Before I sink to winter" (A 194). Armgart is comfortable with her ambition and the praise it brings her. As an artist she needs to feel that she has an effect on her audience. It is part of her role as a diva and she derives artistic sustenance from it. Armgart says: "I sing for love of song and that renown / Which is the spreading act, the world-wide share, / Of good that I was born with" (A 197). She asks the Graf, "Shall I turn aside / From splendors which flash out the glow I make, / And live to make, in all the chosen breasts / Of half a Continent?" (A 195). In "Armgart" the audience and its adulation is essential to the making of a diva. Like Corinne, Armgart responds to and draws motivation from this aspect of her career. It stimulates her as an artist and satisfies the part of her ego that demands public approval. Kathleen Blake writes that Eliot, in her creation of Armgart, is "recognizing the intensity and ambition that the world so little credits in a woman….Her ambition is treated seriously as a source of artistic identity and energy" (79).

Eliot draws from "Aurora Leigh," Corinne, and Consuelo, but she reworks their attributes and creates a new type of female performer; one that is unapologetic, egotistical, and single-minded in her dedication to her art. In the character of Armgart Eliot claims the right of the female artist to pursue art in the same manner that men have been able to pursue it. In addition to building on works that came before her, "Armgart" builds on Eliot's previous creations of the performing female. Armgart follows the pattern of Eliot's ambitious females' search for purpose and the expression of this through voice. Armgart displays the passion and rebellion of Caterina Sarti and Maggie Tulliver; like Dina Morris she is one with her performance and comfortable in her public

role; and she has the drive and sense of purpose of both Dinah Morris and Dorothea Brooke. Like all of them she is ambitious and wants to claim a larger life.

Perhaps the most obvious connection to a previous heroine is with Caterina Sarti in “Mr. Gilfil’s Love-Story.” Both women are professionally trained singers and voice is the medium through which they most interact with their world. It provides them with status, purpose, and expression. As with Caterina, there is the suggestion that woven in with her ambition, rebellion, and power of performance is a vague threat related to political revolution.

The other obvious link with “Armgart” to a previous work is Middlemarch. Margaret Reynolds points out that Eliot’s “poetry functions as a parallel text to the novels….This is nowhere more obvious than in the case of the verse drama ‘Armgart’ which was written while George Eliot was working on Middlemarch” (Oxford 317). “Armgart” continues and develops many of the themes that Dorothea grapples with: the role of the exceptional woman, female ambition, the artist, “voice”, and the patriarchal institutions, namely marriage, that suppress women.

In addition to the issues associated with Dorothea, elements found in the character of Madame Laure re-emerge more fully developed in the character of Armgart. Laure can be seen as a sketchy precursor of Armgart. Though of mediocre talent, Laure is Eliot’s first female professional, a successful performer of the stage. She is the first character to express the conflict of love versus art. Laure’s story is not the poignant story of loss that Armgart’s is and yet it holds the kernel of Eliot’s argument on the issues of the female artist. Armgart is not categorically averse to marriage as Laure is; rather she is averse to a husband who wants her to give up her art. Armgart envisions a partnership in love and art

in place of the traditional hierarchy of marriage, and she will not settle for anything less. In Laure, the strength of emotion or mental turmoil that would seem precursors to murder is never expressed. She never conveys anger or outrage at her lot as a woman. Armgart, on the other hand, though tending towards self-destruction rather than murderous feelings, aggressively voices her grievances against the institution of marriage, the medical profession, and society in general that keeps women down.

The critique of married life by Madame Laure and Armgart's more vehement denunciations of marriage and other male dominated institutions demonstrate a larger theme uniting "Armgart" with Middlemarch—that of reform. In Middlemarch the themes of religious, social, medical, and political reform are woven throughout and figure in many of the plots. In addition to the implied need for feminist reforms in "Armgart," the theme of reform is underscored in the two operas Eliot works into Armgart's career—Gluck's Orfeo and Beethoven's Fidelio, both considered reform operas.[4] In shaping the poem, Eliot partakes of this tradition of reform and revision. Hudd points out that "Eliot's chief objection to Gluck's version of the Orpheus myth was its happy ending.…Eliot thus restored the tragic dimension to the myth" (79) by having Armgart lose her voice.

Scene I introduces the four key characters and presents their positions. It opens with Walpurga and the Graf awaiting the return of Armgart from her opening night. The Graf professes to love both Armgart and her music. However, he is a product of separate spheres ideology and cannot step outside his mindset of patronizing authority. His

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[4] "The importance of Gluck for 'Armgart' lies in his legendary … stature as a reformer.…Both his music and his theories of reform impressed Hector Berlioz, who revived select operas of Gluck during the 1850s and 1860s, and these original notions of reform as well as Berlioz's valorization of them underwrite the text of 'Armgart'" (Kehler 68-70).

language, when he speaks of Armgart, is one of diminishment: "Poor human-hearted singing-bird! She bears / Caesar's ambition in her delicate breast" (A 188), and "Too much ambition has unwomaned her" (A 189). Wanting her as wife, and not as diva, he asks, "Is it no offense to wish the eagle's wing may find repose, as feebler wings do in a quiet nest?" (A 195).

Walpurga is positioned as the self-effacing caretaker who lives in Armgart's shadow. She explains to the Graf, "She fills my life that would be empty else, / And lifts my nought to value by her side" (A 188). She embodies the feminine sphere attributes of nurture and self-sacrifice, though later in the poem she voices the pain and demeaning existence of such a position.

Armgart and her mentor Leo enter from the triumph of her performance. Eliot establishes Armgart's position as an artist. Her core artistic belief is that her art elevates her and connects her with something larger than herself. She sees her singing as an exchange, even something spiritual, between her, the audience, and the composer. The language that surrounds her is one of royalty, eminence, praise, and glory. Speaking of her success, Armgart says she

> has found
>
> This night the region where her rapture breathes—
>
> Pouring her passion on the air made live
>
> With human heart-throbs. Tell them, Leo, tell them
>
> How I outsang your hope and made you cry
>
> Because Gluck could not hear me. That was folly!
>
> He sang, not listened; every linked note

Was his immortal pulse that stirred in mine,

And all my gladness is but part of him. (A 190)

She claims that she is “Glad of the proof that I myself have part / In what I worship!” (A 194).

However, her valorization of art is complicated by her huge ego and sense of entitlement she has as an artist. Her mentor Leo tries to temper this attitude in her with his sense of artistic integrity. Their different approaches to art are expressed in an argument over an impromptu trill that Armgart added to Gluck’s score, which Leo sees as pandering to the crowd. He refers to it as “melodic impudence; / …burlesque bravuras” (A 190) and lightly rebukes Armgart, saying, “I thought you meant / To be an artist—lift your audience / To see your vision, not trick forth a show / to please the grossest taste of grossest numbers” (A 190). Armgart defends her right to revise by saying that she sang “At Nature’s prompting” (A 191), as the nightingales sing. Her ego is at odds with her belief that singing connects her to the beauty of music that she “worships.” As we see later, her ego is a weakness that separates her from others. She believes of herself, “I triumph or I fail. I never strove for any second prize” (A 188). This brittle attitude towards her career nearly brings about her demise.

In addition to introducing the transcendent power of art and the issue of ego in the artist, Scene I introduces a more troubling attribute that often accompanies Eliot’s female artists—that of violence against men, such as we see in Caterina and Madame Laure. Walpurga tells the Graf that Armgart

often wonders what her life had been

Without that voice for channel to her soul.

> She says, it must have leaped through all her limbs—
>
> Made her a Maenad[5]—made her snatch a brand
>
> And fire some forest, that her rage might mount
>
> In crashing roaring flames through half a land,
>
> Leaving her still and patient for a while.
>
> "Poor wretch!" she says, of any murderess—
>
> "The world was cruel, and she could not sing:
>
> I carry my revenges in my throat." (A 189)

Hudd writes that Armgart's singing can be viewed as "[helping] to regulate the female excess associated with the maenad, … who was associated with exclusively female rites, sexual expression, and violence, especially directed against men" (A 76). Armgart's anger and violent words result from the narrowness that her society tries to impose on her talent and ambition. Her success as an artist is one of constant contention. For example, she disdains society's objectification of women, an affront she is subjected to as she first walks on the stage that night. She recounts, "The women whispered 'Not a pretty face!' / The men, 'Well, well, a goodly length of limb'… Gossips would peep, jog elbows, rate the price / of such a woman in the social mart" (A 191). Only her singing lifts her above this lowly estimation of her as merely a body. Without her voice she is sized up as chattel. Once the audience hears her voice, they, and their perception of Armgart, are transformed and elevated. As is the case with Dinah Morris' public performance, "Armgart's vocal talent allows her to transcend the audience's sexualization of her as a physical spectacle …" (Miller 40).

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[5] The image of the maenads appears in another of Eliot's poems about an artist. In "The Legend of Jubal," the maenads unleash their female fury against Jubal.

Scene II, in which the Graf presses his suit to Armgart, addresses the issue of love versus art. It is a showdown of separate spheres ideologies. Bodenheimer writes of this scene that "Armgart's dissection of his promises is the most compact and efficient attack on patriarchal arguments to be found in George Eliot's work—and it is fully supported by the plot of the poem" ("Ambition" 23). The Graf says he glories in Armgart's victory, yet wishes her to relinquish her career. He tells her the path of "high success has terrors when achieved" (A 198). Armgart, confident of her abilities says, "I accept the peril. / I choose to walk high with sublimer dread / rather than crawl in safety. And, besides, / I am an artist as you are a noble: / I ought to bear the burden of my rank" (A 198). She speaks with authority and with a sense of equality with the Graf.

As she had earlier expressed to Walpurga, Armgart again articulates her dread of life without voice, foreshadowing the tragedy that is to befall her. She explains to the Graf,

> Had I failed—
> Well, that had been a truth most pitiable.
> I cannot bear to think what life would be
> With high hope shrunk to endurance, stunted aims
> Like broken lances ground to eating-knives,
> A self sunk down to look with level eyes
> At low achievement, doomed from day to day
> To distaste of its consciousness. (A 197)

Her words echo those of previous artist figures who speak out on behalf of the heroine against accepting a life of diminishment—Philip Wakem to Maggie Tulliver in the Red

Deeps as he encourages her to be true to her passionate and artistic nature, and Will Ladislaw to Dorothea Brooke as he pleads with her not to shut herself up in the prison of Lowick. One of the marks of progression in Eliot's theme of the artist figure is rather than have a male artist speak for the heroine, the artist is now a female who speaks for herself—articulately, unapologetically, and often angrily. Unlike Maggie and Dorothea, Armgart speaks from experience. Philip and Will speak with authority to Maggie and Dorothea because as men they have lived in the wider world and have spread their wings more. Armgart speaks from the same authority. She lives the life that Maggie and Dorothea can only blindly struggle towards. She has gone further than the male artist characters in Eliot and speaks from the position of being at the height of her career. Her position allows her to freely speak her mind, not needing to submit to the will of family, husband, or the conventions of society. Part of her "voice" is that of rebellion, for even though she experiences success and freedom, she constantly lives in the shadow life of what life might have been without her career. Not only does she sing the praises of her life as it is, she speaks of the dread and inconsequence of the lives of most women—the life that would have been hers without her voice.

The Graf attempts to use separate spheres ideology to bolster his argument against Armgart pursuing her career, stating "Men rise the higher as their task is high / … A woman's rank / Lies in the fullness of her womanhood: / Therein alone she is royal" (A 198). Armgart despises such rhetoric and derisively refutes it, referring to it as:

> The oft taught Gospel: "Woman, thy desire
>
> Shall be that all superlatives on earth
>
> Belong to men, save the one highest kind—

> To be a mother. Thou shalt not desire
>
> To do aught best save pure subservience:
>
> Nature has willed it so!" O blessed Nature!
>
> Let her be arbitress; she gave me voice
>
> Such as she only gives a woman child,
>
> Best of its kind, gave me ambition too,
>
> That sense transcendent which can taste the joy
>
> Of swaying multitudes, of being adored
>
> For such achievement, needed excellence,
>
> As man's best art must wait for, or be dumb. (A 199)

Armgart must defend her position as a successful singer against the dominant ideology of the day that values domesticity in a woman. She sees voice and ambition as gifts that have been bestowed on her by Nature, gifts that should be honored and used in gratitude.

Though dogmatic and of narrow vision, the Graf is portrayed with some nuance. He appreciates Armgart's artistry and tells her, "I … own / The magic of your nature-given art / As sweetest effluence of your womanhood" (A 199), yet he undermines his position by being incapable of understanding Armgart's strength of purpose and the profound connection she has to her art. He cannot conceive that Armgart's identity is bound up with her voice and ambition as a singer. He continues in a patronizing manner:

> Ambition exquisite as yours which soars
>
> Toward something quintessential you call fame,
>
> Is not robust enough for this gross world
>
> Whose fame is dense with false and foolish breath.

Ardor, a-twin with nice refining thought,

Prepares a double pain. Pain had been saved,

Nay, purer glory reached, had you been throned

As woman only, holding all your art

As attribute to that dear sovereignty—

Concentering your power in home delights

Which penetrate and purify the world. (A 199)

The Graf believes in the ideology that women need protecting and are best suited to the private sphere of the home—a position that "purifies the world," while conveniently deferring to his needs and will. Armgart is outraged at what he asks of her and responds:

What! leave the opera with my part ill-sung

While I was warbling in a drawing-room?

Sing in the chimney-corner to inspire

My husband reading news?

……………………………

I am an artist by my birth—

By the same warrant that I am a woman:

Nay, in the added rarer gift I see

Supreme vocation: if a conflict comes,

Perish—no, not the woman, but the joys,

Which men make narrow by their narrowness.

Oh, I am happy! The great masters write

For women's voices, and great Music wants me!

> I need not crush myself within a mold
>
> Of theory called Nature: I have room
>
> To breathe and grow unstunted. (A 200)

Again Armgart echoes the words of Philip and Will about stunting and repressing one's nature. While denouncing the Graf's paternalistic ideology, Armgart invokes another type of relationship between man and woman—that of collaborative artists, where woman's role is both needed and valued, where they work together as equals. True of Eliot's works in general, the poem argues for a revisioning and expansion of social codes, particularly where it involves the woman of ambition. Armgart can be self-sufficient and fulfilled in a role that does not require a husband. In this aspect she is similar to the previous stage performer, the melodramatic character of Madame Laure, who is fulfilled by her role as an actress but finds a husband a hindrance to her career. Armgart breaks off her engagement. She tells the Graf:

> I will live alone and pour my pain
>
> With passion into music, where it turns
>
> To what is best within my better self.
>
> I will not take as husband one who deems
>
> The thing my soul acknowledges as good—
>
> The thing I hold worth striving, suffering for,
>
> To be a thing dispensed with easily,
>
> Or else the idol of a mind infirm. (A 202)

She explains to him that "The man who marries me must wed my Art—honor and cherish it, not tolerate" (A 203). She can live without a husband but cannot live without her

singing. The Graf's position forces her to choose between the two. She tells him, "I can live unmated, but not live / Without the bliss of singing to the world, / And feeling all my world respond to me" (A 204). Marriage is seen as part of a larger force that keeps women down and subject to man's will. Armgart knows that if she marries, she will be the one who has to change, who has to give up her essential self, which would be a sort of death to her. Midler writes that "In refusing marriage, Armgart underlines its lack of mutuality, indicting the unwillingness of men to make sacrifices they expect routinely of their wives" (99). The Graf and Armgart part, not in anger, but with a defeated sense of the disparity of their ideals—a position that cannot be reconciled while remaining true to themselves.

Scene III is comprised of only a few lines. One year has passed, presumably with Armgart reveling in her glory as a diva. However, she has contracted an illness and is now recuperating at home. Armgart's doctor has come to check on his patient and discovers that she is not there. Walpurga explains that on seeing an opera bill for Fidelio Armgart "turned pale, / Snatched up her hat … [saying] / 'I go to Leo—to rehearsal—none / Shall sing Fidelio tonight but me!'" (A 205).

In Scene IV Armgart returns from rehearsal with the realization that her voice has been destroyed and that her life as a diva is over. She is faced with living the life of an ordinary woman and the thought of it is unbearable to her. The scene is an outpouring of Armgart's anguish and anger at the loss of her voice. Contrasted to the first scene with its images of paradise and eminence, Scene IV is dominated with images of hell, torture, cruelty, and death. Armgart accuses the doctor saying:

you have murdered it!

> Murdered my voice – poisoned the soul in me,
>
> And kept me living.
>
> You never told me that your cruel cures
>
> Were clogging films—a mouldy, dead'ning blight—
>
> A lava-mud to crust and bury me,
>
> Yet hold me living in a deep, deep tomb,
>
> Crying unheard forever! Oh, your cures
>
> Are devil's triumphs: you can rob, maim, slay,
>
> And keep a hell on the other side your cure
>
> Where you can see your victim quivering
>
> Between the teeth of torture—see a soul
>
> Made keen by loss—all anguish with a good
>
> Once known and gone! (A 206-07)

In despair she laments that she is now part of the common lot of women: "I had meaning once, / Like day and sweetest air. What am I now? / The millionth woman in superfluous herds" (A 207).

Armgart's fury falls on the doctor, an incidental figure who, for her, represents the all-encompassing force of masculine oppression. She views his medical treatment of her as intentionally maiming her. As the doctor appears to be well-meaning and there is no supporting evidence made by Walpurga or Leo, we can assume that the doctor treated Armgart to the best of his ability within the conventions of the day. It is Armgart's anger that causes her to see him as a part of patriarchal oppression.

Armgart hints at suicide, suggesting that is the only way she will regain the control of her life that the doctor has taken away from her: “there is one physician, only one, / Who cures and never spoils. Him I shall send for; / he comes readily” (A 208). Singing has been everything to Armgart and without it she sees ahead of her the dreaded life of mediocrity she has always feared. She will be part of the throng of superfluous women she has always disdained.

Scene V brings Armgart to terms with her new existence. It defines the role of the artist in terms of self versus community. Once more, separate spheres ideology is invoked. However, this time it is first upheld and then criticized by Walpurga, the domestic woman. At first Walpurga attempts to use the separate spheres argument on Armgart, much as the Graf did. She thinks now Armgart can become the Graf’s wife and chides her with, “Did you not reject a woman’s lot more brilliant … than any singer’s? It may still be yours. Graf Dornberg loved you well” (A 209). However, Armgart believes that he will view her now as “an ordinary girl—a plain brown girl” (A 210) and says “my charm / Was half that I could win fame yet renounce! / A wife with glory possible absorbed / Into her husband’s actual” (A 210). A farewell letter from him seems to confirm this and pushes Armgart to deeper anger and misery. Seeing only a bleak vision for her future she asks, “What is my soul to me without the voice / That gave it freedom?….I can do nought / Better than what a million women do— / Must drudge among the crowd and feel my life / Beating upon the world without response” (A 214). As she prepares to leave, Walpurga, fearing suicide, prevents her from going out. Armgart is indignant that Walpurga tries to keep her “a prisoner,” to which Walpurga responds, “have I not been yours? / Your wish has been a bolt to keep me in” (A 214).

For the first time Walpurga expresses her resentment of Armgart's dismissive attitude towards her, and the ordinary woman in general.

Armgart defends her position as an artist saying she has a right to a higher life that is denied to the ordinary woman. She claims "An inborn passion gives a rebel's right: / I would rebel and die in twenty worlds sooner than bear the yoke of thwarted life, / ….All the world now is by a rack of threads / To twist and dwarf me into pettiness" (A 214). At these words Walpurga releases her pent up pain and anger at being the type of woman Armgart so despises. It is an argument against separate spheres ideology, the domestic woman crying out against the unfairness of an order that keeps most women subservient:

> As the few born like you to easy joy,
> Cradled in privilege, take for natural
> On all the lowly faces that must look
> Upward to you! What revelation now
> Shows you the mask or gives presentiment
> Of sadness hidden? You who every day
> These five years saw me limp to wait on you
> And thought the order perfect which gave *me*,
> The girl without pretension to be aught,
> A splendid cousin for my happiness. (A 215)

Her role is "to listen, always listen" (A 215) to Armgart, "who having power had right / To feel exorbitantly, and submerge / the souls around her …" (A 215). Walpurga contrasts Armgart's "voice" to her own position as a listener, and having no voice of her own.

For the first time, Armgart is shaken out of her egotism and given a glimpse of the common lot of women that surrounds her and the unfairness of their situation. She attempts to justify her actions by falling back on the transcendence of art argument:

> Nay, Walpurga,
>
> I did not make a palace of my joy
>
> To shut the world's truth from me. All my good
>
> Was that I touched the world and made a part
>
> In the world's dower of beauty, strength and bliss;
>
> It was the glimpse of consciousness divine
>
> Which pours out day, and sees the day is good.
>
> Now I am fallen dark; I sit in gloom,
>
> Remembering bitterly. Yet you speak truth…. (A 215)

Eliot's argument seems to be that art has the power to transform both artist and audience, but that it cannot be at the expense of others. It is not Armgart's ambition that is criticized, but her blindness to the pain of others that results from her egotism. Armgart's ego disconnects her from most women, and by extension all those who suffer at the hands of the privileged few. Walpurga rejects Armgart's argument and further castigates her:

> Noble rebellion lifts a common load;
>
> But what is he who flings his own load off
>
> And leaves his fellows toiling? Rebel's right?
>
> Say rather, the deserter's. Oh, you smiled
>
> From your clear height on all the million lots
>
> Which yet you brand as abject. (A 216)

Armgart begins to understand Walpurga's point of view but her self-pity prevents her from identifying with Walpurga's words. Walpurga, however, pushes on with her critique of Armgart's treatment of her, saying, "hear the truth— / A lame girl's truth, whom no one ever praised / For being cheerful" (A 217). She criticizes the order Armgart is so readily a part of, asking her,

> For what is it to you that women, men,
>
> Plod, faint, are weary, and espouse despair
>
> Of aught but fellowhip? Save that you spurn
>
> To be among them? Now, then, you are lame—
>
> Maimed, as you said, and leveled with the crowd:
>
> Call it new birth—birth from that monstrous Self
>
> Which, smiling down upon a race oppressed,
>
> Says, "All is good, for I am throned at ease." (A 217)

Walpurga's speech is a scathing rebuke against any system of oppression, but in particular, it is directed against the patriarchy that keeps women subservient to men, though the message is camouflaged by being spoken to a woman. Armgart practices the same hierarchy that so outrages her when it is used against her. Walpurga is the traditional domestic woman who stands in the background and administers to the wants of others, and who has been silenced by the domineering successful "male"—in this case Armgart. Fearing she has said too much, Walpurga apologizes for her anger and leaves the room as Leo enters. There follows a shift from the predicament of the common woman back to the life and role of the artist. Walpurga's words have acted as a catalyst to Armgart and have shown her the egotistical arrogance with which she has surrounded

herself. For the first time she sees Leo as a fellow artist, rather than as her mentor whose purpose was to help her reach the heights of her career. She asks about his age and his past, and discovers that as a young man Leo had a potentially brilliant career as a composer but that it never took hold. However, he kept true to his artistic vision by teaching others. He tells Armgart, "It was my chief delight to perfect you" (A 219). Though this sounds Pygmalion, Leo has devoted his life to his students. Part of his teaching has been to reign in her ego and to teach her to distinguish her artistry from her ego. He suggests that Armgart become an actress but she knows that it would be a pale second to what she was as a singer: "Song was my speech /….I will not feed on doing great tasks ill, / Dull the world's sense with mediocrity, /….One gift I had that ranked me with the best— / The secret of my fame—and that is gone" (A 219). Inspired by Leo's dedication to art, of which she has been a recipient, she says that she too will teach music and singing and pass on his legacy of instruction. In honor of her cousin, and perhaps to expiate her selfishness of the past five years, she decides she will relocate in Freiberg, Walpurga's beloved hometown. For the first time in the cousins' relationship there is some reciprocity.

As in her earlier works, Eliot challenges some of the gendered stereotypes of her day. One way she does this in "Armgart" is in her use of the operas in the poem. Though peripheral to the plot of the poem, Eliot's choice of operas underscore the gender and voice issues that are central to the poem. It opens with Armgart's triumph in singing the lead in Orfeo and ends with the bitterness of disappointment that the lead part of Fidelio, the character of Leonore, goes to someone else. Both operas portray marriages of partnership where one will sacrifice for the other. More important is the fact that both

require women to perform as men. As Hudd writes, "Fidelio is not just a paean to married love. Florestan is a political prisoner imprisoned for a love of liberty. The male disguise Leonore adopts is a strategy to release her husband, just as Orpheus seeks to release Eurydice from Hades. What matters in both operas is liberation" (77). Mirroring the opera story line is the fact that the career of diva provides Armgart with liberation, a symbolic gesture towards feminist reform, yet it is complicated with all the tangled issues such reform implies. Kehler writes that "opera references constitute an (intertextual) frame for the drama.…the operas' performance histories and plots resonate with the issues of gender and authority that visibly dominate Eliot's play" (67). The two operas form a theme and coda for the five act drama, opening and closing with reference to agency and liberation. However, just as Orpheus loses his hard won liberation of his wife, Armgart loses her hard won status of diva.

In addition to the aspects of reform and liberation, these operas also draw attention to gender issues. In Gluck's Orfeo the lead part of Orpheus is written for a woman and Fidelio requires the female lead, Leonore, to dress as a man. In both there is the feminine usurping of masculine power to bring about liberation. Eliot both underscores the devotion and sacrifice associated with the feminine and complicates it at the same time by having the women succeed in masculine roles. The female Orpheus and the cross-dressed wife Leonore capably perform the male role of hero and liberator—one pleases the gods with beautiful singing to release Euridice from Hades, the other risks her life to free her husband. Another effect of having Armgart succeed in Orfeo is that it demonstrates the transformative power of art. In "Armgart" voice and gender are inextricably intertwined—both in the operas referenced and in the arguments of Armgart.

Leonardi writes, "Not only does the diva equate voice and self, she also expands and changes her identity, even her sexual identity…. she has not merely incorporated but usurped both the male's text and the traditionally masculine-identified musical tradition" (68). Describing Armgart's performance, her voice teacher Leo recounts how Armgart became the character of Orpheus: "Armgart stood / As if she had been new-created there / ….Gluck had not written, nor I taught: / Orpheus was Armgart, Armgart Orpheus" (A 192). It is Armgart's voice that allows her to step into the male role.

Both on-stage and off-stage Armgart embodies more of the gender spectrum, a characteristic Eliot applies to all her performing figures. Armgart possesses the masculine sphere characteristics of ambition, independence, of having a career, of speaking with authority and consequence, all qualities which enable her to operate in the public masculine sphere. The diva figure contrasts the subservient role of the domestic woman with a real life example of a woman who has power—power which is expressed both literally and figuratively through her voice. Leonardi writes that Eliot uses "the diva's singing voice to explore the possibility of a woman's 'having a voice'—having power in the sense of both control and creation—outside the domestic sphere" (66). This public career aspect carries over into the private domestic sphere of Armgart's home. In her conversations with the Graf, Walpurga, and the doctor, Armgart is bold in expressing her ideas and opinions. The status afforded to her as a diva figure allows her to speak forcefully, sometimes vehemently, on her own behalf. The diva steps out of the private feminine sphere and succeeds in the public masculine sphere. All of Eliot's performing females step outside of the female sphere, to greater or lesser degrees; but only the diva

firmly stakes out a place for herself, a place that no man can fill, providing an example of a successful female role model.

However, Eliot makes clear that such freedom comes at a price. Some of the qualities necessary for Armgart to survive the public sphere are the very ones that weaken her. Though a strong sense of self is fundamental to her art, an excess of it separates her from the majority of women, as well as from the sublime function of art to connect and transform. Armgart sees herself as above other women and believes her status as an artist allows her to feel this way. In Scene V she tells Walpurga, "my song / Was consecration, lifted me apart / From the crowd chiseled like me, sister forms, / But empty of divineness" (A 210). When Walpurga asks what gives her such a right, Armgart arrogantly responds it is because, "heaven made me royal—wrought me out / With subtle finish toward pre-eminence, / Made every channel of my soul converge / To one high function…" (A 214). Eliot seems to support Armgart's decision to reject the Graf's proposal of marriage and to pursue her career, but not at the cost of setting herself above others. In the end, it is not Armgart's loss of voice but her loss of connection that nearly ruins her.

However, the transformative power of art, also essential to Armgart's artistic vision, is in the end strong enough to override her ego. As her singing allowed her to become one with Gluck, she now learns to identify with both her cousin Walpurga and her fellow artist Leo. Armgart's voice, both in singing and in loss, is the catalyst for transformation. Leonardi writes that "The diva's singing voice serves as a metonym for the woman herself; it becomes for these diva characters inseparable from their identities and becomes, further, the instrument by which these identities can expand and change"

(68). The same quality of voice that in the beginning allows her to identify with her music and her audience allows Armgart to "expand and change" at the end of the poem. It is truth to art, a life dedicated to art, as demonstrated by Leo, which ultimately saves Armgart from despair and leads her to a life of purpose, a life beyond self. Leonardi writes that Armgart represents the transformative power of art, especially as it relates to women: "Her voice and … life empower other women, free them from the necessity of marriage, and give them voice, in Armgart's words, for channel to their souls" (71).

The ending of the poem appears to offer some resolution and yet is problematic. Kehler writes that "The text is reticent, ruling out several possibilities for conventional happy endings" (85), and that "the drama may be read as a series of negotiations about social and power positions … that have provisional rather than absolute resolutions" (75). Some critics point out that the ending is still based on a masculine model, since it is Leo's path that Armgart follows. Kehler writes that "the silenced singer … has a history of domination and privilege and a desire to pass on Leo's gift, perhaps borrowing too his notions of authority" (85). Bodenheimer also points out that Armgart's "identification [is] not with other women but with her fellow-artist. Thus the poem makes a significant turn at its end—a turn to the special fellowship of art" ("Ambition" 24). However, this in itself marks another development in Eliot's performing figures or those associated with the artist figure. Caterina, Dinah, Maggie, and Dorothea all make sacrifices out of filial or wifely duty. Bodenheimer points out that with Armgart "the sacrifice of ambition is finally made in the name of art, and in honor of two personal affections….this poem embraces the life of the uprooted, the marginal, the displaced, and celebrates the non-genealogical continuity of musical tradition" ("Ambition" 25). While Armgart may still

harbor some of the attitudes of ego that the poem argues against, at the end, the theme of transformation overrides this other underlying tone. Armgart combines her artist's life with a life of service, merging the public and private spheres; she has grown, changed, and learned through her suffering. She channels her sense of self-determination and ambition into a path that helps other women, a choice of "power over impotence, of voice over silence" (Leonardi 71).

Although the poem ends with the artist's vision, it also ends with a sense of loss, with the same sense of disappointment that we feel with the previous heroines—of their unrealized potential and the diminishment of their exceptionalness. On the one hand, Armgart is still connected to her original purpose and still leads the life of the artist. In this sense, she is a development of the other figures. On the other hand, she has achieved much more and so her loss is more keenly felt. This sense of loss is part of the strategy Eliot uses to highlight the loss of potential lives that women could be living if they were allowed more vocational, educational, and financial opportunity. The problematic ending represents women's general exclusion from the public realm of success, power, and action. Armgart tells Leo that she will teach, will move to Walpurga's hometown, will help other women in their artistic dreams, and will learn to bury her life as a diva. Resolution seems at hand but then her last words to Leo are: "She sings— / I mean Paulina sings Fidelio, / And they will welcome her tonight" (A 221). In this way Eliot decries the loss of the woman of talent and of women in general. Miller writes that Armgart's failure to sing Fidelio "underscores her lost ability to enter the masculine public world" (40).

Loss of “voice” represents loss of agency and the essential loss of self. Like the previous heroines, Armgart suppresses her anger, and moves through her despair to a place of resignation. However, just under the surface of resignation is the anger, the outrage at the lot of the common woman, and the certainty of living a diminished life. Through the arguments of Armgart and Walpurga, Eliot criticizes the limitations society imposes on both the exceptional woman and the ordinary woman and shows that all women are handicapped. She cautions against attitudes that might develop as a result of the anger and frustration women feel, such as Armgart’s self-importance. Eliot makes clear that Armgart’s egotism is part of her protection against a system that would shut her out from the world’s larger stage and that unfairly holds her to a harsher standard as a female artist. Behind the ego is pain and anger; however, Eliot shows that it is a response that impedes rather than promotes personal development and societal progress. For any meaningful change in society to take place, Eliot suggests it must be done through a broader encompassing of lives—through both female community and through male-female partnership, as the poem demonstrates. Though the ending disturbs rather than resolves, it ultimately offers a vision of a woman of ambition who devotes herself to a high purpose outside the domestic sphere, while embracing the best of feminine sphere characteristics.

Chapter VI

Polyphonic Voices in Daniel Deronda

Eliot's last novel, Daniel Deronda, is her culminating work on the figure of the artist. As with the poem "Armgart," the artist theme and female "voice" are central to this work. Although the two main characters, Gwendolen Harleth and Daniel Deronda, are not artists, the artist motif runs through their lives. Intertwined with their stories are numerous subplots and secondary artist characters. The stories of the artists Mirah Lapidoth, the Alcharisi, Julius Klesmer, Catherine Arrowpoint, and the Meyrick family all contribute to the two plots. Eliot wrote of Daniel Deronda, "I meant everything in the book to be related to everything else" (Haight, GE's Letters 475). Because the plots are interrelated and the characters' fates are so interconnected, it is difficult to discuss the characters independently of each other.

In Daniel Deronda Eliot once again uses female voice as a metaphor for the larger issues surrounding women: vocation, agency, and ambition. Many of the women's issues center on Gwendolen Harleth but it is the diva figure of the Alcharisi who most strongly demonstrates female "voice"—both literally, in her career as a singer, and figuratively, in her expression and desire for self-determination. In her problematic character Eliot once again uses the operatic stage performer to give the most strident denunciation of patriarchal oppression and separate spheres limitations and the most impassioned cry for the freedom to be oneself.

Eliot presents the figure of the artist and issues regarding female voice from multiple character view points. The novel is full of varying degrees and types of artists:

there are those engaged with music, singing, acting, and painting; there are dilettantes and professionals; there are teachers and patrons. The most articulate voices on the position of the artist are Klesmer, the successful musician-composer, and the embittered diva Alcharisi who still regrets relinquishing her brilliant stage career. Mirah Lapidoth is also a professional performer who gives up her career, though for quite different reasons. At one point Gwendolen decides to become a stage performer only to realize that she lacks the talent and discipline for being a true artist. Deronda, conversely, has a beautiful singing voice and could have made a career as a singer but refused it, believing it would demean him as a gentleman. He also suspects his talent comes from his unknown mother and feels a sense of shame associated with his origins. We are presented with the musical partnership of Klesmer and Catherine Arrowpoint and the artistic women of the Meyrick family, who support Hans Meyrick as he attempts to establish himself as a painter.

In the multiple characters and intertwined plots Eliot addresses the issues of the artist figure and female "voice." Voice, as always, is a measure of character, as well as a metaphor for female agency. Musical sensitivity and receptivity indicate the potential for personal growth. Byerly writes that "Music becomes in Daniel Deronda a touchstone by which all of the novel's characters can be evaluated….Herr Klesmer's judgments on different characters' musical taste function as an index to their spiritual or emotional worth …" ("Language of the Soul" 9). As in her earlier works concerning female voice, Eliot delivers two intertwined messages: one is played out within the arena of separate spheres, the other is manifested in the artist figures. Within the separate spheres framework, Eliot argues for a revisioning and revaluing of what is considered masculine and feminine and a balance between the two sexes, if not actual partnership. She once

again investigates the repressive lot of woman. She argues for more opportunity for women, vocational in particular, though educational and financial issues always enter into her argument. Woven into these issues is her second argument, which concerns the role of art and the artist. Eliot uses the artist figure to give voice to women's issues, to express the pain and anger they feel at their subjection, and to serve as a catalyst for transformation.

In Daniel Deronda Eliot continues the argument of "Armgart" and once again uses female voice to unite her arguments on separate spheres and the role of the artist figure. In the characters of Gwendolen, Mirah, and the Alcharisi, Eliot examines female voice, the lack of female voice, and the silencing of female voice. As with her previous performing women, female voice is associated with female ambition and purpose, as well as with female anger, rebellion, and violence. The repression and commodification of women are examined, both in the role of female artist and in the traditional roles these women have as wife, mother, and daughter.

Other women's issues are dealt with primarily in the character of Gwendolen. As the female protagonist, Gwendolen represents the struggle for a woman of ambition within a restrictive sphere to find expression, to find a purpose in her life, to discover a way to make the most of her life. Eliot uses Gwendolen to criticize superficial values, the marriage market, women's lack of vocation and education, and their financial dependence on men. A product of separate spheres, Gwendolen demonstrates how such a mold constrains a woman of ambition and perverts qualities that, perhaps under a different value system, could have been shaped to a different result. Gwendolen both adheres to and challenges her society's separate spheres values. She is beautiful,

charming, articulate, and confident. She excels at being the center of attention wherever she goes and is most gratified when she is making a spectacle of herself. Whether at archery matches where women display their grace and form, or in the drawing room where they exhibit their musical talents, Gwendolen always captures the limelight. She has been conditioned to believe that her beauty and charm endow her with special status. She has been raised on false values and has received only minimal education, “two years at a showy school” (DD 23). The narrator makes clear that Gwendolen has been largely shaped by marriage market demands. In spite of her assets, she suffers the fate of women who are victimized by the result of separate spheres dictates. She makes an apparently splendid match and becomes engaged to Grandcourt but then discovers his past when his mistress, Lydia Glasher, makes herself and her children known to her. Horrified at such perfidy, Gwendolen gives her word to Lydia not to marry Grandcourt. In disgust with the ways of men Gwendolen flees to the Continent. Soon after she learns of her family’s loss of money and her world begins to unravel further. When she returns home she is outraged and humiliated to hear that her family has secured her a position as a governess. Rather than submit to such a dismal fate, her ego and ambition rally and she determines instead to become an actress. When Herr Klesmer, as artistic authority, disabuses her of her vanity driven plan, she despairs, and when Grandcourt presses suit, she gives in and marries him. She submits to the only fate she has been prepared for. Her marriage reveals the darker side of both Grandcourt’s nature and her own. Living under Grandcourt’s repressive control and her own self-suppression at the guilt of her actions towards Lydia Glasher, Gwendolen slowly breaks down, loses her sense of self, and becomes silenced. Throughout Gwendolen’s travails, Daniel Deronda acts as a counterpoint to her, urging

her to voice, to self-knowledge and betterment of self, much of which is done through the metaphor of music.

The oppression and anger Gwendolen feels at her demeaning position in marriage culminate in the death of her husband in a scenario that strongly resembles Caterina Sarti's story, in which her murderous intention is played out in actuality before her eyes. As with Caterina, the guilt of this imagined act nearly unhinges Gwendolen, though she effects a type of recovery that Caterina is not able to achieve. Though Gwendolen has little else in common with Caterina, this act and the confession of her murderous thoughts to a sympathetic male character powerfully link Gwendolen with Eliot's earliest female artist figure and demonstrate the connection that runs between all of Eliot's performing women. Female confession of dark intent resulting from subjection is a pattern that is established with Caterina and Gilfil, re-emerges in Adam Bede in the characters of Dinah Morris and Hetty Sorrel, surfaces again in Middlemarch in Madame Laure and Lydgate, and culminates in Gwendolen and Deronda. It is one of the many patterns evident in Eliot's reworking of the artist figure and female voice. In fact, elements of Gwendolen can be located in all of the previous female characters related to female voice and the artist figure. Broadly speaking, as Eliot develops her own heroines, she patterns them less after the Corrine, Consuelo, and Aurora Leigh models and instead builds and develops on what she has herself created. Gwendolen is both a development of earlier heroines and an introduction of something new, demonstrating that Eliot continued to work on the issues that she used her heroines to give voice to.

Like Maggie Tulliver, Gwendolen's fate is largely determined by her family's financial ruin, with the suggestion that the responsible male is inadequate in his

custodianship of the females who are dependent on him. This highlights the pitfalls of women's dependence on men and their inability to fend for themselves when financial need arises. Also like Maggie, Gwendolen is associated with an innate personal power and beauty that attracts men, though unlike Maggie, Gwendolen is very much aware of her charms. They both have a sylph-like beauty which is seen as primal and mythological and which the narrator associates with the power of the witch and temptress. Where the earthy Maggie is associated with the woods and seen as a hymadryad, the more capricious Gwendolen is associated with water and seen as a lamia and a "Nereid" (DD 12). Her allure is referred to as serpentine—sinuous and fascinating on the one hand, potentially dangerous and cold-blooded on the other. Various characters remark on this aspect saying, "she has got herself up as a sort of serpent, all green and silver, and winds her neck about a little more than usual" (DD 12), and her "long narrow eyes" suit "the ensemble du serpent" (DD 12). From the beginning description of her gambling and throughout the novel, Gwendolen is cast in terms of the demonic, much as Maggie is. We are told about Gwendolen, "that it was no wonder a boy should be fascinated by this young witch" (DD 77); she has "a trace of demon ancestry" (DD 68); and Deronda thinks "Roulette was not a good setting for her; it brought out something of the demon" (DD 360).

Like Dorothea Brooke, Gwendolen is determined to make something of her life and sees marriage as the means of expanding her horizons. Echoing Dorothea almost verbatim, she naively believes "that marriage would be the gate into a larger freedom" (DD 146) and enters into a disastrous marriage with Grandcourt. Like Dorothea, she is crushed by the reality of her married life and is portrayed by the narrator and sees herself

in the imagery of imprisonment and labyrinths: she "saw the life before her as an entrance into a penitentiary" (DD 271); "a young creature is pitiable who has the labyrinth of life before her and no clue" (DD 273). Also like Dorothea, the death of her husband releases her from a life of subjection and misery.

Gwendolen most strongly resembles the vain and shallow Rosamond Vincy, also a product of a showy school. Her type of beauty resembles that of Rosamond's, who also moves in a twisting, serpentine manner, always aware of the pose she is striking and the effect she has on her audience. Both are attractive in a way that merits the approval of their society, particularly the men in it. Aware of their beauty, even dependent on it, they are very much products of separate spheres ideology which emphasizes looks and the superficial drawing room accomplishments of music and light conversation. Also like Rosamond, Gwendolen is stunned when she learns that this feminine bag of tricks is at its core worthless outside of the arena of the marriage market.

In her ego and strength of ambition Gwendolen is most like Armgart. She is defiant and refuses to settle for second best. After Gwendolen's luck turns at the gaming table under Deronda's scrutiny, she determines to lose as absolutely as she had previously been winning. She thinks, "Since she was not winning strikingly, the next best thing was to lose strikingly" (DD 11), which recalls Armgart's all or nothing attitude, who says "I triumph or I fail. / I never strove for any second prize" (A 188). Also like Armgart, Gwendolen loves the limelight and her adoring audiences and would prefer to live "unmated" (A 204), rather than under the yoke of a husband: "The inmost fold of her questioning now, was whether she need take a husband at all—whether she could not

achieve substantiality for herself and know gratified ambition without bondage" (DD 252).

Gwendolen is a new development in that her future is left open. Unlike her predecessors, we don't know what happens to her. Da Sousa Correa points out that "Like Armgart at the end of the poem, she is a woman who, having nurtured high aspirations, neither realizes them, subsumes them in marriage, nor is destroyed by them" (167). All we are assured of is that she "means to live … [and] shall be better," (DD 807) and will try to make something of the urgings that Deronda has encouraged her to.

In relation to her ambition and voice, both her singing voice and her self-expression, Gwendolen has three key relationships: with Deronda, who acts as confidante and mentor; with Klesmer, whose advice to Gwendolen on pursuing a stage career serves as a catalyst for her development; and with Grandcourt, the husband who slowly silences her. The male artist figure of Eliot's earlier works is split into the characters of Klesmer and Deronda (to be discussed more fully later). Deronda takes on the role that Philip Wakem and Will Ladislaw perform. While Deronda possesses many characteristics of Eliot's artist figures, it is Julius Klesmer who is the true artist. He and Deronda share many of the same qualities. Klesmer is a German Jew, and so a foreigner and "other" within his society; we later find out that Deronda is a Jew. Like Deronda, he is connected to several female artists and their issues, and as an "other" he mirrors the marginal status of women. He is not quite accepted by English society. He is also something new in George Eliot, representing the culmination of the development of her male artist figure. Though in many ways his career is similar to that of Leo's in "Armgart," Klesmer is the only successful male artist figure she ever creates; he is a consummate musician, famed

composer, and dedicated teacher. His experience and success enable him to speak with great authority on the value of the artist to society.

As in the earlier works, Eliot contextualizes her argument by using the arts, particularly painting and music. Musical receptivity is a measure of moral character and is predominantly associated with the female characters and traditional feminine qualities. Painting represents patriarchal proprietorship in which women are commodified and valued for the degree of pleasure they bring. This is the predominant mind set in the world Gwendolen moves in, where women are viewed as objects and other women are seen as threats. Gwendolen is repeatedly positioned as something to be viewed and judged. She is often portrayed as a painting or as viewed through a painter's eye. The narrator says "Sir Joshua would have been glad to take her portrait …" (DD 117). When she is most entrenched in the patriarchal order, she is depicted through the metaphor of painting. For example, after she submits to marriage with Grandcourt, she is set against the background of the portrait galleries at the Abbey, Hugo Mallinger's manor. On Gwendolen's first arrival there as Mrs. Grandcourt we are told the backdrop is one of "full-length portraits" (DD 405), "rows of quaint portraits in the gallery above the cloisters" (DD 423), and "old portraits stretching back through generations" (DD 440). On the admiration for Gwendolen's beauty that Deronda and Mr. Vandernoodt feel the narrator says that "Some faces which are peculiar in their beauty are like original works of art …" (DD 406). Gwendolen is further objectified by the painter Hans Meyrick who repeatedly refers to her as "that Vandyke duchess of a beauty" (DD 558). Gwendolen is objectified by nearly everyone, including herself. It is a social skill she has developed as

a means to get more out of life, to gratify her ego, and to increase her chances of success in the marriage market, a woman's only means of social advancement.

Contrasted with the objectification of Gwendolen through paintings is the lack of depth of her musical skills, which reveals her deeper lack of awareness and connection to others. She enjoys singing but largely because it is a means of basking in the admiration of her audience. Her musical performance is similar to that of Rosamond Vincy's. Its purpose is meant to delight without challenging and is a means to allure and ensnare a mate. Gwendolen is in her element as she performs an aria of Bellini at the Arrowpoint's musical evening. Not only does her singing reveal the shallowness of Gwendolen, but of the society that enjoys it. She performs with confidence and ease, sure of the result. While everyone admires her singing, the narrator problematizes her performance by comparing her singing to Jenny Lind's[6], a mixed compliment. "Gwendolen was not nervous: what she undertook to do she did without trembling, and singing was an enjoyment to her … her singing gave pleasure to ordinary hearers, and she had been used to unmingled applause" (DD 48). While Gwendolen meets with her usual success, she receives her first ever criticism from Herr Klesmer. It is the artist Klesmer who first begins to chisel away at Gwendolen's false sense of self, believing there is something more substantial underneath her facade. Unable to equivocate where art is concerned, he responds to Gwendolen's singing first by silence, then when pressed, by saying "It is

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[6] Da Sousa Correa writes that "the Leweses were known not to admire" (141) the singing of Jenny Lind, which was considered showy and superficial. However, Weliver points to another aspect of Jenny Lind that resonates with Gwendolen's later career ambitions. She says that "While myths were maintained, singers simultaneously broke down negative stereotypes. The respectability of oratorio as an art form and the unsullied character of stars like Jenny Lind (1820-1887) helped to make public performance respectable" (Weliver 55).

always acceptable to see you sing" (DD 48), not hear her sing. The narrator comments, "Was there ever so unexpected an assertion of superiority?....Gwendolen colored deeply …" (DD 48). Catherine Arrowpoint, a musician herself and future wife of Klesmer, is perceptive enough to see that while Klesmer clearly admires the spectacle of Gwendolen, he is offended by her musicality. She immediately sympathizes with Gwendolen and goes to her saying "with the utmost tact and kindness" (DD 49) that her teacher Klesmer "can hardly tolerate anything we English do in music" (DD 49). Corroborating Catherine's understanding of him, the narrator states: "Woman was dear to him, but music was dearer" (DD 49) and, believing her capable of something more, he elaborates on her singing:

> that music which you sing is beneath you. It is a form of melody which expresses a puerile state of culture….There is a sort of self-satisfied folly about every phrase of such melody; no cries of deep, mysterious passion—no conflict—no sense of the universal. It makes men small as they listen to it. (DD 49)

Klesmer is the ultimate artist, the personification of music. His fame growing, his musical superiority established, Eliot positions him as the voice of artistic truth, a cultural critic whose progressive tastes are at odds with the insular British. Gwendolen's singing is overvalued by a society that knows no better. Conversely, when Klesmer plays his piece it is not truly appreciated.

Although Gwendolen is stung by the low assessment of her performance, the effects of his words begin to open her to a wider existence. Some of this finds root in Gwendolen's consciousness. The effect of his words leaves her "with a sinking heart at

the sudden width of horizon opened round her small musical performance" (DD 49). He asks her to sing something different but she declines. Again Catherine acts as a sort of softening agent for the words of Klesmer, saying, "I always require half an hour to get up my courage after being criticized by Herr Klesmer" (DD 49). Throughout the novel Catherine and Klesmer act in partnership, even in criticism. As an artist herself with wider vision, Catherine (also to be discussed more fully later) is not part of separate sphere female rivalry and she is one of the few women not threatened by Gwendolen's superior beauty, no doubt in part due to the security she has in family and fortune. She is sympathetic and perceptive to the wounded feeling Gwendolen tries to hide, and desires to bring her comfort. Her generosity of spirit and largeness of soul evoke the woman-to-woman kindness in Dinah's comforting of Hetty and Dorothea's comforting of Rosamond.

We see another side of Gwendolen, perhaps the one that Klesmer intuits is buried in her, when she hears Klesmer's performance. As he plays one of his own compositions, Gwendolen responds to the "variety and depth of passion" (DD 49) of his music and "in spite of her wounded egoism, had fullness of nature enough to feel the power of his playing, and it gradually turned her inward sob of mortification into an excitement which lifted her for the moment into a desperate indifference about her own doings …" (DD 50). Klesmer fulfills Eliot's definition of the artist as one who transforms his audience and connects them to something greater outside themselves. Although Gwendolen has been taken down a peg after her performance and feels the blow, the narrator also reveals a potentially deeper side to Gwendolen, one that her receptivity to great music indicates. After she hears Klesmer's performance, she realizes the littleness of her own. Gray writes

that "although George Eliot's moral placing of Gwendolen is judgmental, it is also sympathetic, and she endows her with a degree of musicality which precisely corresponds to this placing" (100).

Art conspires to tell the truth, whether it is wanted or not. It is the truth and power of Klesmer's music, as well as his words, that are able to penetrate Gwendolen's egotistical shell and bring her outside herself, perhaps for the first time. It is on this experience that she slowly learns to build a better self. She later remarks that evening, "I have been taught how bad my taste is, and am feeling growing pains. They are never pleasant …" (DD 50). This is her first sign of personal growth. Though it is a short-lived moment, it nevertheless serves as the beginning of her development. Even after Klesmer's later devastating assessment of her potential career as a stage artist, Gwendolen is still able to say, "I think very highly of him….His genius is quite above my judgment, and I know him to be exceedingly generous" (DD 408). In Gwendolen, two sides of music are revealed—one that gratifies the ego and one that takes one outside of ego. The performance of and receptivity to music is used as a measure of character and serves as a metaphor for truth and for personal growth.

The most poignant example of Eliot using art as a metaphor for revealing truth combines painting with music in the hidden painted panel at Offendene, Gwendolen's home. The painted panel, which comes to represent Gwendolen's story and her deepest fears, is first discovered when her family moves to Offendene. Upon arrival Gwendolen sees an organ and, always quick to display herself, seats herself at it saying, "I will be St. Cecelia: someone shall paint me as St. Cecelia" (DD 26). The art metaphors combine here; seated at the musical instrument, under the image of the patron saint of music,

Gwendolen identifies with the objectification of herself in painting, not with music itself. Gwendolen is delighted that the new house "was so excellent a background" (DD 27) for her striking poses and offering her a stage on which to display herself. However, art conspires to strip away the false surface Gwendolen has learned to adopt and reveals her inner essence. In the same room as the organ, her sister discovers a hidden panel, the picture of which reflects a hidden dread and fear in Gwendolen: "The opened panel had disclosed the picture of an upturned dead face, from which an obscure figure seemed to be fleeing with outstretched arms" (DD 27). Gwendolen "shuddered silently" (DD 27) and angrily berates her sister with, "How dare you open things which were meant to be shut up" (DD 27). Upset and leaving the room, her remedy for this experience that so unsettles her is to immediately re-objectify herself. She and her mother go to their room where Gwendolen gazes in a mirror and says to her mother, "I should make a tolerable Saint Cecelia" (DD 28). She is safe in her imagined idealized role as object, which, like the mirror, reflects only her surface image. We do not understand the fear the panel strikes in Gwendolen until we get to the end of the novel and realize it tells her story. It both foreshadows Grandcourt's death and reflects Gwendolen's fear of the darker urges that lie within her. The panel encapsulates the story of Gwendolen and resonates with the opening quote to the novel:

> Let thy chief terror be of thine own soul:
>
> There, 'mid the throng of hurrying desires
>
> That trample on the dead to seize their spoil,
>
> Lurks vengeance, footless, irresistible
>
> As exhalations laden with slow death,

> And o'er the fairest troop of captured joys
>
> Breathes pallid pestilence. (DD 3)

The state of Gwendolen's inner character, her fears, and her veneer of confidence, are most revealed during the theatrical charades in which Gwendolen poses as Hermione. Painting, acting, and music conspire to expose Gwendolen's inner self for all to see. Her desire to lightly play act turns into a dark revelation of self. Once again, the artist Klesmer is the catalyst for this. Gwendolen is eager for the theatrical charades because it displays her to advantage. Desiring the good opinion of Klesmer, she invites him to the theatrical. His role is to strike a chord at the words, "Music, awake her, strike!" (DD 60). On cue, he unwittingly strikes a chord so deep and resonant that it causes the hidden panel to spring open, revealing "the picture of the dead face and fleeing figure, brought out in pale definiteness by the position of the wax-lights" (DD 60-61). Though it startles everyone, Gwendolen cries out and stands frozen "with a change of expression that was terrifying in its terror. She looked like a statue into which a soul of Fear had entered: her pallid lips were parted; her eyes … were dilated and fixed" (DD 61). The narrator's words, "terror," "soul," and "pallid," evoke the opening quote.

Though Klesmer is unflinchingly honest where art is concerned, it never overrides his human compassion. He sees that Gwendolen is truly terrified and that her vanity will suffer at being so publicly exposed. Operating from the same sympathy that Catherine earlier shows, he comes to her rescue exclaiming, "A magnificent bit of *plastik* that!" (DD 61). It is enough for her to maintain her high opinion of herself. "Gwendolen cherished the idea that now he was struck with her talent as well as her beauty, and her uneasiness about his opinion was half turned to complacency" (DD 62).

However, that belief, combined with her usual inflated sense of self, works against her when her fortunes change. After she breaks off her engagement to Grandcourt and her family becomes financially ruined, she determines to pursue a career on the stage, believing “that she could act well” (DD 54). She asks for an interview with Klesmer for his honest opinion as to her chances at success. This time Klesmer speaks the truth to her in order to save her from entering on a disastrous path for which she is completely unprepared. As Gwendolen awaits his arrival she reflects on the room full of paintings, the organ at which she had play acted St. Cecelia, her acting as Hermione. She remembers how Klesmer had admired her acting. At this moment “She really felt clever enough for anything” (DD 251). She is drawing strength and hope from her creative successes, but these moments have been based on her superficial self. The narrator underscores the self-objectifying of Gwendolen in the description of her which once more links her to painting: “She is dressed in black, without a single ornament … she might have tempted an artist …” (DD 251).

Confident, yet wary of the only person ever to have criticized her abilities, she tells Klesmer that she needs to earn money in order to support herself and her mother. She tells him the only thing she can think of is to be an actress and to pursue singing if he thinks she could make a career of it. The one thing Gwendolen always feels sure of is her beauty and charm but she places it at a higher value than it is worth. She is completely unprepared for Klesmer’s words. Not wanting to hurt her, he first tries to gently dissuade her from that path.

He first tells her “You are a beautiful young lady—you have been brought up in ease….whom it is an impoliteness to find fault with” (DD 254). He explains that her

upbringing does not prepare her for "the life of the artist … a life of arduous, unceasing work, and— uncertain praise" (DD 254). He says such a life "is out of the reach of any but choice organizations—natures framed to love perfection and to labor for it …" (DD 255). Through Klesmer Eliot defines the path of the true artist. It is one of hard work, discipline, and commitment to a noble but uncertain end. He explains that "Genius at first is little more than a great capacity for receiving discipline" (DD 257). When he senses her resistance to his words, he cuts more directly through Gwendolen's sense of self by saying, "you must unlearn your mistaken admirations…. you must subdue your mind and body to unbroken discipline" (DD 256). He tells her that she will need money for her training and that she should have started such a course of action years ago, and that even then her voice would not have been much valued. The narrator says that "Klesmer seemed cruel … but [he] was … directed by compassion for poor Gwendolen's ignorant eagerness to enter on a course of which he saw all the miserable details …" (DD 257).

Gwendolen hears these words but still cannot imagine that she, who has always been praised and admired, would not meet with success. She tells him, "I suppose I have no particular talent, but I must think it is an advantage, even on the stage to be a lady and not a perfect fright" (DD 259). Klesmer responds, "I was speaking of what you would have to go through if you aimed at becoming a real artist …" (DD 259). At this point he doesn't refrain from distinguishing Gwendolen's idea of easily won admiration based on self-display from the path of the true artist. He is offended that Gwendolen should put in the same category vain superficial pandering to the crowd with the arduous path of the artist, the path he has devoted his entire life to. He now tells her "You would find—after your education in doing things slackly for one-and-twenty years—a great difficulty in

study….you would have to bear a glaring insignificance….my judgment is—you will hardly achieve more than mediocrity" (DD 259). Then in specific response to what she alludes to he shifts his tone and pointedly says,

> But—there are certainly other ideas … with which a young lady may take up an art that will bring her before the public. She may rely on the unquestioned power of her beauty as passport….This goes a certain way on the stage: not in music: but on the stage, beauty is taken when there is nothing more commanding to be had….The woman who takes up this career is not an artist: she is usually one who thinks of entering on a luxurious life by a short and easy road—perhaps by marriage….Still.… the indignities she will be liable to are such as I will not speak of. (DD 259-260)

Klesmer makes the clear distinction between the stage for display and the stage for musical performance. He alludes to the exploitation that goes hand in hand with female public performance when only acting is involved. Gwendolen blushes at such a suggestion and defends herself; "deeply stung and confusedly apprehending some scorn for herself in Klesmer's words" (DD 260) she declares that it is independence she desires. Again, it is the artist Klesmer who reveals to Gwendolen the truth about herself and the larger world, of which she is so ignorant. Gwendolen soon realizes how truly impoverished she is; all she has is the thin veneer of feminine attributes that give her value in the marriage market. Outside her sphere she is powerless and valueless except as an object to be commodified.

After Klesmer departs, she reflects on his words, which recall those of Will to Rosamond. Like Rosamond, the words of the artist strip her of the false sense of self that she has believed was highly valued. Like Rosamond, the things she had learned to be proud of are nothing after all and have no intrinsic value outside of the marriage market. She has mastered her society's ideal of feminine excellence only to discover that it is not counted for much: "this first experience of being taken on some other ground than that of her social rank and her beauty was becoming bitter to her" (DD 256). She begins to regret that she has asked for Klesmer's advice. "Only a few hours before … it seemed but the affair of a year or so for her to become the most approved Juliet of the time …" (DD 262), or with a little more work, to become a success in the opera. Refusing to stoop to the position of a governess, and stripped of her allusions of a stage career, Gwendolen is left with nothing. There is no course of action, no vocation for her other than marriage. She does not have the voice that will afford her means of escape.

Eliot is critical of the commodification of women, both on the stage and in the marriage market. While female acting is closely linked to female prostitution, selling oneself in marriage is completely acceptable in Gwendolen's society. This is an example of Eliot's subtle subversion. While Eliot is reserved and somewhat critical in her opinion of public female performance, her real criticism is directed at a society that commodifies women wherever they are, whatever they do. Soon after Klesmer's assessment, Grandcourt reappears and continues his pursuit of Gwendolen. Seeing marriage to him as an honorable escape from poverty and degradation, either as an actress or a governess, she accepts him. She knows she is breaking her word to Lydia Glasher and thus compromising her "voice," but she sells herself rather than accept a life of poverty. Her

brief foray into the outside world has resulted in a bitter blow to her ego. At least in her small realm she is queen.

The society Gwendolen has been shaped by is shown as keeping women small. Women are commodified, objectified, and valued for superficial reasons. Their potential goes largely untapped. The epigraph to Chapter 10 states it bluntly: “Our daughters must be wives, / And to be wives must be what men will choose: / Men’s taste is woman’s test …” (DD 99). Throughout the novel Gwendolen is on display and subject to male judgment. The opening line of the novel squarely places Gwendolen as an object to be valued and judged by men. Deronda’s thoughts as he gazes on her at the gambling tables are: “Was she beautiful or not beautiful?....Was the good or the evil genius dominant in those beams? Probably the evil …” (DD 7). She is not given the benefit of the doubt, nor is she allowed any measure between the polarities of good and evil. Later that evening she is similarly objectified by the men and women at a gathering. Like the men of Middlemarch who disparage Dorothea’s type of beauty, preferring a woman who “lays herself out a little more to please us” (M 89), another such man declares of Gwendolen, “I cannot endure that sort of mouth.…I like a mouth that trembles more” (DD 12). A dowager at the party is even harsher in her judgment and declares: “I think her odious” (DD 12). Gwendolen is made the subject for gossip and cruel judgment. She is figuratively pieced apart as the group discusses her “nez retrousse … and long narrow eyes” (DD 12), the lack of color in her cheeks, her neck, her lips that “curl backwards so finely” (DD 12) and her general demeanor. The narrator underscores this judgmental attitude by simply describing Deronda, who is also striking, as “young, handsome, distinguished in appearance” (DD 11), without any judgment. In separate spheres

ideology men are never judged physically, though perhaps equally degrading, they are judged by their wealth; hence the supremacy of someone like Grandcourt, who is wealthy but morally and emotionally bankrupt.

The narrator, to some extent, shows Gwendolen and Grandcourt as made of the same stuff, products of the same societal values. They are linked by their arrogance, sense of entitlement, lack of connection to others, desire for power and control, and British insularity; they are different sides of the same coin. The narrator links them through imagery, casting them both in reptilian terms. Gwendolen's serpent-like beauty is mirrored in Grandcourt, suggesting a cold-blooded, calculating nature, and potential cruelty. He is referred to as being "neutral as an alligator" (DD 157) and "a dangerous serpent" (DD 672). It is a characteristic they are both familiar with in themselves and so, as egoists, are attracted to. Gwendolen tells her mother, "he is very proud. But so am I. We shall match each other" (DD 313). They initially value the haughty and cold nature in the other, recognizing their separate sphere counterpart—Grandcourt embodying masculine power and money, Gwendolen feminine youth and beauty.

A large part of their attraction to each other is that they believe they can exercise control and domination over the other. Gwendolen thinks he "was not likely to interfere with his wife's preferences" (DD 113) and Grandcourt looks forward to subduing the spirited Gwendolen: "his strongest wish was to be completely master of this creature …" (DD 301). They both think of the other in terms of imagery involving mastery of animals. Gwendolen thinks, "This splendid specimen was probably gentle, suitable as a boudoir pet …" (DD 137); Grandcourt later thinks Gwendolen had been "brought to kneel down like a horse under training for the arena….He meant to be master of a woman who would

have liked to master him …" (DD 320). They both have the instinct to be cruel and controlling. We see this in Gwendolen's wincing at the memory of strangling her sister's canary when she was younger because its singing interfered with her own. She is sometimes cruelly thoughtless even to those who love her, as with her mother and she is cruelly dismissive of her "superfluous" (DD 32) younger sisters. Their separate spheres values encourage this part of their nature by giving them license over others. There is the expectation that beauty and power are to be obeyed and deferred to by lesser others.

Though ostensibly each a model of separate spheres masculine and feminine ideals, Gwendolen openly challenges and attempts to expand the rigid gender definitions assigned to her. Eliot repeatedly places her in situations of gender inversions. For example, when we first see Gwendolen at the gaming tables, the narrator tells us "she had visions of being followed by a cortege who would worship her as a goddess of luck…. Such things had been known of male gamblers; why should not a woman have a like supremacy?" (DD 10). In the evening party that follows Gwendolen's gambling a similar question is raised. As a group comments on the lure of her beauty, one of them comments, "Woman was tempted by a serpent: why not man?" (DD 12). The question of equality is raised but the answer given is always one of deeply entrenched inequality. When Gwendolen imagines Grandcourt as a docile spouse, there is another gender inversion: "Gwendolen wished to mount the chariot and drive the plunging horses herself, with a spouse by her side who would fold his arms and give her his countenance without looking ridiculous" (DD 137). What comes to pass, however, reflects the status quo with Grandcourt controlling Gwendolen tightly by the bit. Even the sympathetic Deronda is shown as participating in the double standard imposed on women. Gwendolen

asks him if he thought it was wrong for her to gamble because she was a woman. When he replies that it is "base" (DD 337) she pushes the question, "But why should you regret it more because I am a woman?" (DD 337). Deronda responds with one of the hallmarks of separate spheres ideology saying, "we need that you should be better than we are" (DD 337). Gwendolen usurps the same masculine logic and responds, "But suppose *we* need that men should be better than we are" (DD 337).

Through the character of Gwendolen, Eliot shakes up the status quo of gender ideology and points to the underlying hypocrisy and unfairness of the system. One of the ways this is portrayed as by having Gwendolen possess attributes associated with the masculine sphere. For example, Gwendolen finds more stimulation and challenge in the world of action usually reserved for men. She delights in the hunt, riding, and archery. The narrator portrays the thrill Gwendolen experiences as she rides after the hounds, enjoying "the animal stimulus that came from the stir and tongue of the hounds, the pawing of the horses, the varying voices of men, the movement hither and thither…: that utmost excitement of the coming chase …" (DD 71) and tells us that Gwendolen was "never fearful in action and companionship" (DD 71). She is very much like the chaste goddess Diana. Sir Hugo refers to her as "an uncommonly fine girl, a perfect Diana" (DD 161) and "the fair gambler, the Lebronn Diana" (DD 322). She is fiercely independent and disdainful of romance. "She objected, with a sort of physical repulsion, to being directly made love to. With all her imaginative delight in being adored, there was a certain fierceness of maidenhood in her" (DD 70). Lovemaking places her in an acquiescent position and she violently rebels against it, as we see with her cousin Rex who falls hopelessly in love with her. Gwendolen, "who had always disliked needlework"

(DD 326) and other indoor feminine occupations, would rather be outdoors actively pursuing some end. She thrives in the freedom of the outdoors and enjoys competition. She has a strong desire for stimuli and a sense of adventure, stating that she wants to go to the Matterhorn or the North Pole. She is resentful that her sphere denies her the freedom that men take for granted. When Grandcourt speaks to her of marriage she complains about the lot of woman, alluding to the fact that there is no other fate for a woman than marriage. In a harsh condemnation of separate spheres restrictions she says

> We women can't go in search of adventures—to find out the North-West Passage or the source of the Nile, or to hunt tigers in the East. We must stay where we grow, or where the gardeners like to transplant us. We are brought up like the flowers, to look as pretty as we can, and be dull without complaining. That is my notion about the plants: they are often bored, and that is the reason why some of them have got poisonous. (DD 135)

Gwendolen's most salient masculine sphere trait is her uninhibited ambition, which is presented as powerful and strong as a man's. The narrator tells us, for example, that "this delicate-limbed sylph of twenty meant to lead. For such passions dwell in feminine breasts also" (DD 39). The narrator repeatedly points to the fact that the definitions of masculine and feminine need to be expanded in order to more accurately reflect the fullness of human nature.

Initially Gwendolen believes that the only means for her to exercise her ambition is through the unpleasant state of marriage. The narrator says, "let no one suppose that she also contemplated a brilliant marriage as the direct end of her witching the world with

her grace….her thoughts never dwelt on marriage as the fulfillment of her ambition….to become a wife and wear all the domestic fetters of that condition, was … a vexatious necessity" (DD 38-39). Matrimony to Gwendolen was "rather a dreary state, in which a woman could not do what she liked, had more children than were desirable, was consequently dull, and … immersed in humdrum. Of course marriage was social promotion; she could not look forward to a singe life …" (DD 39). However, while Gwendolen is imaging a state of freedom in marriage, the narrator has been at pains to reveal its more negative side, setting up a collision course between Gwendolen's vain ambitions and the reality of her society. Marriage is portrayed as the commodification of women, a ritual that all of Gwendolen's society seems to partake in. The narrator casts a heavy indictment against marriage as the only "career" opportunity for a woman. A woman is seen as a possession that goes from one household to another in a perpetual state of subjection to the will of the patriarch. Gwendolen's uncle thinks it is not right for her to participate in the hunt. He tells her, "When you are married … you may do whatever your husband sanctions" (DD 77).

Eliot portrays Gwendolen as distinctly different before and after her marriage. Before she enters into marriage, her freedom and ambition is expressed in her being "voiced." She sings and is adept at conversation. Part of Gwendolen's charm is the quickness she has with words and expression. She is articulate and outspoken and skilled at playful, though superficial, banter: her "lively venturesomeness of talk has the effect of wit …" (DD 271). Part of "her ideal was to be daring in speech …" (DD 63). Her voice is part of her allure: her singing controls her audience, her conversation conquers her partners. When she is not trying to be charming, she is caustic and satiric. Much of her

outspokenness is directed against woman's lot, especially as it relates to marriage and men. She tasks her mother with, "Why did you marry again, mamma? It would have been nicer if you had not" (DD 24). Likewise, she complains to her cousin Rex, "Girls' lives are so stupid: they never do what they like….I never saw a married woman who had her own way" (DD 69). Gwendolen rebels against her lack of choices in her life, but there is nothing she can do but submit to marriage. Concerning a possible proposal from Grandcourt, her uncle tells her: "You have a duty both to yourself and to your family" (DD 141). He states the separate spheres maxim of self-sacrifice for women: "Marriage is the only true and satisfactory sphere of a woman….you will have … power, both of rank and wealth, which may be used for the benefit of others" (DD 143). She declares "I cannot be dictated to by my uncle or anyone else. My life is my own affair" (DD 235). Her words are strong, resolute, and she is still full of fight. Concerning their financial loss, her mother says, "we must resign ourselves to the will of Providence …" (DD 232). Gwendolen retorts, "But I don't resign myself. I shall do what I can against it….I shall do what is more befitting our rank and education" (DD 233).

Gwendolen's confidence in herself and ignorance of the world lead her to think she can succeed outside of her sphere. A large part of Eliot's critique against separate spheres ideology is how poorly it prepares women for life outside the domestic sphere. It leaves women in a state of ignorance and keeps them at a disadvantage. Gwendolen's mother has kept information away from her that might have benefited her. When the subject comes up about Sir Hugo's relationship to Deronda, we are told that Mrs. Davilow thought it "unsuited to the ear of her daughter, for whom [she] disliked what is called knowledge of the world …" (DD 333). Gwendolen's ignorance and her lack of any

real education have led to an inflated sense of self and an ignorance that becomes her handicap. Her miscalculation of Grandcourt is due to do her general ignorance of the world. She slowly gains a greater understanding of the world but it comes too late. The narrator says of Gwendolen that "With all her perspicacity, and all the reading … her judgment was … at fault …" (DD 137). As she gains in experience she realizes the effect of living within a narrow sense of life. She later realizes, "Her mother's dulness, which used to irritate her, she was at present inclined to explain as the ordinary result of women's experience" (DD 429).

Gwendolen receives a series of blows that one by one rob her of self-eminence: the discovery of Grandcourt's past with Lydia Glasher, her family's loss of fortune, and Klesmer's withering critique. However, it is her relationship with Grandcourt that completely destroys her sense of self and brings out her dark side. The nature of their relationship and the fate that awaits them is foreshadowed in the hidden painted panel that so frightens Gwendolen. The image can be seen as representing the patriarchal world that Gwendolen tries to flee but which she instead becomes entrenched in. The narrator slowly builds the significance between Grandcourt and the image in the panel. When Gwendolen first meets him we are told "it was not possible for a breathing man wide awake to look less animated….Grandcourt's bearing had no rigidity, it inclined to the flaccid" (DD 111), and "he was so little suggestive of drama …" (DD 137). Her attempts at resisting his control and her participation in his death are reflected in the fleeing figure in the painted panel. As Gwendolen becomes beaten down and silenced by Grandcourt she becomes haunted by dark thoughts that reflect the action in the painting: "Side by side with the dread of her husband had grown the self-dread which urged her to flee from

the pursuing images wrought by her pent-up impulse" (DD 673); and more specifically, "her vision of what she had to dread took more decidedly than ever the form of some fiercely impulsive deed, committed as in a dream …: to find death under her hands … the palsy of a new terror—a white dead face from which she was for ever trying to flee and for ever held back" (DD 674). It is as if she is frozen in an ongoing, eternal horror of the moment of his death and the dread and fear that lead up to it.

Lydia Glasher, the other woman in the novel who has entangled herself with Grandcourt, feels the same fear and dread of him and lives in a similar state of subjection. She too perceives him in a manner that evokes the painted panel. In her relations with him, Lydia "knew her helplessness and shrank from testing it by any appeal—shrank from crying in a dead ear and clinging to dead knees, only to see the immovable face and feel the rigid limbs" (DD 346). Both women's dread of him is linked to death and his forcing a sort of non-living existence on them. There is a quality about him that suggests a lifeless stupor, a "sort of lotus-eater's stupor" (DD 135) that is connected with the women's sense of imprisonment at his hands. Like Gwendolen, Lydia fears him and has been silenced by him over time: "reticence had necessarily cost something to this impassioned woman, and she was the bitterer for it" (DD 341). She has a quality about her that suggests a slow eating away at her from anger and resentment: "Her head, which, in spite of emaciation, had an ineffaceable beauty" (DD 344) bears traces of "sunken pallor….[and] pale cheeks" (DD 344). She is an aged version of what Gwendolen will become living under Grandcourt's despotic will.

Lydia Glasher functions as a dark double of Gwendolen, both women having sold themselves to Grandcourt. Like the Alcharisi, whom she also resembles, Lydia makes

only a few brief appearances but they are dramatic, haunting, and disturbing. She is an older and literally darker version of Gwendolen with "crisp hair perfectly black, and her large anxious eyes also what we call black" (DD 144). Mr. Vandernoodt describes the situation to Deronda saying, "It's a rather piquant picture … Grandcourt between two fiery women. For depend upon it this light-haired one has plenty of devil in her" (DD 432). After Gwendolen receives a letter from Lydia, they agree to meet at an archery match, in an area called "The Whispering Stones." Lydia tells Gwendolen her history and says Grandcourt should marry her and make her son his heir. Gwendolen gives Lydia her word, saying "proudly, 'I will not interfere with your wishes'" (DD 152). While Lydia speaks, Gwendolen "felt a sort of terror: it was as if some ghastly vision had come to her in a dream and said, 'I am woman's life'" (DD 152). In spite of Lydia's beauty and status as a mother, two of the most highly valued separate spheres feminine attributes, she suffers the same fate of subjection as the countless other women referred to throughout the novel. Like Gwendolen and later the Alcharisi, Lydia Glasher is linked to the power of the witch, her power located in her physical attractiveness and fierce spirit. We are told she has "the poisoning skill of a sorceress" (DD 555).

The young Lydia was very much like Gwendolen: "an impassioned, vivacious woman, fond of adoration …" (DD 341). Like Gwendolen, Lydia turned to Grandcourt as a means of escape, in her case from a "disagreeable husband….[and] five years of marital rudeness" (DD 340-341). However, the death of her husband three years ago and the existence of her four children with Grandcourt make her determined that he should marry her. Knowing full well what Grandcourt is, "she expected no other happiness in marriage than the satisfaction of her maternal love and pride….[and] she was prepared even with a

tragic firmness to endure anything quietly in marriage …" (DD 341). The fate of such a woman is described by the narrator in terms of violence and loss: "No one talked of Mrs. Glasher now, any more than they talked of the victim in a trial for manslaughter ten years before: she was a lost vessel after whom nobody would send out an expedition …" (DD 340). She lives in "complete seclusion" (DD 339) with her children and is "absolutely dependent on Grandcourt" (DD 342).

Linking Gwendolen with Lydia Glasher is raw female anger that results from their fear and subjection to Grandcourt. Lydia also fears and dreads Grandcourt. However, as we see with Gwendolen, there are repercussions to such prolonged fear and enforced silence. The narrator says, "There is no quailing … which has not an ugly obverse: the withheld sting was gathering venom" (DD 341-42). In both women this "venom" takes shape as a histrionic loss of control that is the only thing Grandcourt seems unable to control. It is related to madness that is a product of female subjection and silencing. When Grandcourt tells Lydia he is going to marry Gwendolen and that he wants her to return the diamonds he has given her, Lydia is frozen in angry "Silence. She dared not answer … But underneath the silence there was an outlash of hatred and vindictiveness" (DD 347). She makes the request that she be the one to send the jewels to Gwendolen and despite his refusal she doesn't back down. Grandcourt responds by saying "Such preposterous whims make a woman odious.…What is the use of talking to mad people?" (DD 351), to which she responds, "'loneliness has made me foolish….indulge me this one folly'….She burst into hysterical crying, and said again almost with a scream – 'I will be very meek after that'" (DD 351). Seeing no other choice, Grandcourt gives in. He

"had a baffling sense that he had to deal with something like madness; he could only govern by giving way" (DD 352).

With the jewels Lydia Glasher sends Gwendolen a letter stating: "You have broken your word….I am the grave in which your chance of happiness is buried as well as mine.…You will have your punishment….The willing wrong you have done me will be your curse" (DD 358-59). The effect of the letter on Gwendolen causes her guilt to rise to the surface and she suffers a "spasm of terror" as (DD 359) she burns the letter. The jewel box falls open and the diamonds spill out, as the mirror reflects her fragmented self, "like so many women petrified white …" (DD 359). When Grandcourt knocks at her room and enters, the sight of him "brought a new nervous shock, and Gwendolen screamed again and again with hysterical violence….He saw her pallid, shrieking as it seemed with terror," (DD 359) leaving him to wonder if it was "a fit of madness" (DD 359). The narrator writes, "In some form or other the Furies had crossed his threshold" (DD 359).

The repressed silence and terror these women feel is eventually directed at Grandcourt in theatrical fury. Silence and theatricality are shown as opposite responses to subjection. The anger Gwendolen and Lydia experience is the type of maenad fury that Armgart refers to in not having "voice": "Without that voice for channel to her soul. / She says, it must have leaped through all her limbs— / made her a Maenad" (Armgart 189). This type of vengeful anger surfaces when the women approach the point of having nothing left to lose and are willing to go down destroying the man who so outrages them. For Lydia, "had she not been a mother she would willingly have sacrificed herself to her revenge" (DD 351). The only thing that keeps Gwendolen in check is Deronda's belief in

her better self. Grandcourt objects to Gwendolen's increasing conversations with Deronda, and berates her behavior saying, "Oblige me in future by not showing whims like a mad woman in a play" (DD 446) and tells her "not to make a spectacle of [her]self" (DD 447). The narrator again makes the connection between repression and silence, madness and theatrical rage.

Deronda picks up where Klesmer leaves off. Where Klesmer tears down the false image Gwendolen has of herself, Deronda helps her to rebuild something better in its place. Much of the encouragement and advice he gives her is done through conversations they have about the value of music. Their conversations resemble those of Dorothea and Will on the value of art. As Dorothea becomes increasingly dependent on her conversations with Will, so Gwendolen becomes with Deronda. These conversations are refreshing and restorative to the newly married wife who is experiencing the disillusionment and demeaning position in her marriage. Deronda in many ways recalls Will, who is also of Jewish heritage and is a combination of British and "other," and is disinherited. Weliver writes, "Musical and contemplative, Daniel Deronda becomes a fleshed-out Will Ladislaw" (226).

Grandcourt demonstrates the British arrogant and dismissive attitude towards such "others." Upon Deronda's first arrival at their home, Gwendolen asks who he is, to which Grandcourt responds, "A sort of ward of Sir Hugo Mallinger's. Nothing of any consequence" (DD 329). This attitude is shown as pervasive in the society Deronda moves in. Referring to his darker coloring, Gwendolen's mother remarks of Deronda, "there was foreign blood in his veins" (DD 333) and guesses that "his mother was some foreigner of high rank" (DD 333). This foreignness is counted against Deronda. At Sir

Hugo's Christmas party, the narrator remarks that Deronda is admired for his looks and is well liked, "but if he had been the heir, it would have been regretted that his face was not as unmistakably English as Sir Hugo's" (DD 442). Deronda, however, never attempts to model himself after the English gentleman and seeks out a large world view. On the completion of his studies at Eton and Cambridge, he decided to "pursue a more independent line of study abroad" (DD 180) in line with "his boyish love of universal history" (DD 180). Like Eliot's artist figures, Deronda seeks to occupy a wider world and a broader way of looking at things. When Deronda expresses his desire to Sir Hugo to travel after his studies, Sir Hugo asks him, "So you don't want to be an Englishman to the backbone after all?" (DD 183). Deronda responds, "I want to be an Englishman, but I want to understand other points of view. And I want to get rid of a merely English attitude in studies" (DD 183). Throughout there are references to him that link him with the Mediterranean and the East, even before his Jewish identity is known. He sings Italian arias and resembles "Italian paintings" (DD 333), and the Meyrick girls refer to him as Prince Camaralzaman (DD 184) from the "Arabian Nights." Though not an artist, his musicality, foreign aspect, wider vision, and "his fervour of sympathy [and] activity of imagination on behalf of others" (DD 178) cast him in the role of the artist, particularly as he relates to the females in the novel.

The role of Deronda is very much like that of Philip to Maggie as well as Will's to Dorothea. Deronda's ambiguous origins, suggestive of foreign blood, and his anomalous status align him with women who are also marginalized in their society and relegated to a narrow sphere, as we have seen with Gwendolen. As Philip and Will are stand-ins for Maggie and Dorothea, so Deronda is for Gwendolen. His status mirrors that

of women, which is part of the reason he understands and is sympathetic to women. He literally rescues Mirah, figuratively rescues Gwendolen, and serves as a buffer against patriarchal oppression for Mirah, Gwendolen, and his mother, the Alcharisi.

Especially like Will, he embodies the female search for purpose. His artistic, penetrating nature is channeled in the end to a larger social cause, as is the case with Will. Deronda seeks to establish a homeland for the Jews, to discover his roots, to reinstate something that was lost. Though he isn't actively searching for his mother, he finds her, which is the mirror image of Mirah's searching for her mother but not finding her. "Something in his own experience caused Mirah's search after her mother to lay hold with peculiar force on his imagination….The desire to know his own mother, or to know about her, was constantly haunted with dread …" (DD 205-06). Like Will, Deronda comes from "rebellious blood" (M 366). As we discover later, his mother, the Alcharisi, also took to the stage as a way to escape patriarchal coercion. Between his interactions with his mother, Mirah, and Gwendolen, Deronda's life is very much shaped by performing women and the issue of female voice.

Eliot emphasizes Deronda's marginalized status and his identification with women in the same way she does with Philip and Will—by feminizing him. He is more balanced than Philip or Will in his having many masculine qualities, but the feminine is pronounced in his nature. His ambiguous social status lends Deronda to objectification in ways that woman are. He suspects that Sir Hugo, known to him as his uncle, is in fact his father and that he is illegitimate. Deronda has a beautiful singing voice and as a boy Sir Hugo encouraged his musical ability by taking him to the opera. When Sir Hugo suggests the stage as a possible career, Deronda is stung and demeaned. It was "unmistakable

proof that there was something about his birth which threw him out from the class of gentlemen to which the baronet belonged" (DD 170). From that point, Deronda "set himself bitterly against the notion of being dressed up to sing before all those fine people who would not care about him except as a wonderful toy" (DD 170). Da Sousa Correa writes that "the context for his musical performance is identical to that in which most female musical performance takes place" (149). He later hears that Mirah has been similarly objectified: "My father began to believe that I might be a great singer….[He] set me to sing for show at a minute, as if I had been a musical box" (DD 213).

Related to Deronda's beautiful voice is his physical beauty. He is referred to as handsome and "a striking young man" (DD 333). When his mother sees him after twenty three years she says, "You are a beautiful creature….I knew you would be" (DD 625). He is even more feminized at this moment by realizing that as she gazes on him he "felt himself changing color like a girl …" (DD 624). All his life he has hated the attention he received from his looks and his voice because he believes they come from his unknown mother. Qualities such as beauty and voice that are valued attributes in women work to disadvantage in Deronda.

Though Deronda is feminized in many ways, his masculinity is also emphasized. Like the artists Philip, Will, and Klesmer, he is attracted to female beauty. Rather than wanting to possess a woman for it, as Grandcourt does, Eliot portrays the artistic male as susceptible to it. We are told that Klesmer is responsive to Gwendolen's charms and evinces "a certain softening air of silliness which will sometimes befall even Genius in the desire of being agreeable to Beauty" (DD 47). When Deronda first sees Gwendolen he very much assesses her as a woman, though it is explained as being almost against his

will: “Why was the wish to look again felt as coercion and not as a longing in which the whole being consents?” (DD 7). It is unmistakably his masculinity that initially responds to Gwendolen: “something due to the fascination of her womanhood. He was very open to that sort of charm …” (DD 324); “he liked being near her…She was something more than a problem: she was a lovely woman …” (DD 587). Deronda is a balance of feminine and masculine attributes, which always seems to be Eliot’s argument: that women and men need to develop the best of both spheres and not be restricted to narrow and restrictive definitions that hamper growth.

Gwendolen’s “masculine” attributes of ambition, self-determination, and sense of personal power are very likely what enable her to survive and possibly transcend her fate. As Eliot’s previous performing figures embody more of the gender spectrum, so Deronda seems a combination of the best of both spheres. His sensitivity to the pain of others and desire to help them is portrayed as both feminine, as in maternal, and masculine, as in rescuer. We are told there was “something of the knight-errant in his disposition” (DD 325). His growing interest in Gwendolen is determined by the same protective motive he has with Mirah and Hans Meyrick. “Deronda’s disposition… [is to] take care of the fellow least able to take care of himself” (DD 179). The narrator says of Deronda’s interest in Gwendolen, “The story of that girl’s marriage did interest him….Persons attracted him, as Hans Meyrick had done, in proportion to the possibility of his defending them, rescuing them, telling upon their lives with some sort of redeeming influence …” (DD 324). He is actively sympathetic to people and his desire to help them borders on the religious. He is often cast in religious terms as savior. On hearing how he had helped Hans during a sickness, we are told Mirah’s “original visionary impression that Deronda

was a divinely-sent messenger hung about his image still …" (DD 465). She tells him, "Hans said…that you thought so much of others you hardly wanted anything for yourself….he said you were like Bouddha" (DD 465).

The narrator repeatedly relates this combination of attributes by describing it in terms of gender: Deronda "was moved by an affectionateness such as we are apt to call feminine, … while he had a certain inflexibility of judgment, and independence of opinion, held to be rightfully masculine" (DD 322). In his interview with his mother, Deronda at one point speaks with anger and judgment in "a deep-voiced energy that made his mother shrink a little backwards …" (DD 627) and recalls her father. She accusingly tells him, "You are the grandson he wanted. You speak as men do—as if you felt yourself wise" (DD 662). Yet, at the conclusion of their second interview the narrator tells us Deronda "allowed himself in his solitude to sob, with perhaps more than a woman's acuteness of compassion …" (DD 683).

Deronda's relationship with Mordecai, Mirah's brother who wants to pass on his vision of a Jewish resurgence to Deronda, is expressed in terms that go beyond the traditional ideas of gender in being referred to as a marriage of souls. Deronda explains to Mordecai that he has "always longed for some ideal task, in which I might feel myself the heart and brain of a multitude….I mean to work in your spirit" (DD 750). The consumptive Mordecai, nearing death, replies that "It has begun already—the marriage of our souls—let the thought be born again from our fuller soul which shall be called yours" (DD 751).

The intertwining of both masculine and feminine attributes in Deronda is reflected in the metaphors of painting and music. Painting often feminizes him while at the same

time points to his artistic, idealized nature. For example, the narrator says that Mordecai wanted to find "a Jew, intellectually cultured, morally fervid; … but his face and frame must be beautiful and strong, … he must glorify the possibilities of the Jew …" (DD 472). In order to get an image of what such an idealized Jew would look like Mordecai goes to the "National Gallery in search of paintings" (DD 472) of this type. "Deronda had that sort of resemblance to the preconceived type which a finely individual bust or portrait has …" (DD 479). The narrator compares him to a Titian in a description which feminizes him by placing him on view, so to speak, yet emphasizes his masculinity: "look at his lithe powerful frame and firm gravity of his face….Look at his hands: they are not small and dimpled with tapering fingers … [but] are long, flexible firmly-grasping hands, such as Titian has painted in a picture where he wanted to show the combination of refinement with force" (DD 186). The narrator contrasts the youthful "traces of the seraphic boy" (DD 185) to his now "thoroughly terrestrial and manly" (DD 186) countenance.

There is the sense that Deronda suppresses his artistic nature, that his "aloofness of manner … implied some suppression" (DD 322). As a youth he demonstrated "a fine musical instinct, and had early made out accompaniments for himself on the piano, while he sang from memory" (DD 168) and musical instruction confirmed his talent. However, the discovery of his ambiguous origins puts an end to the further pursuit of his talent. He sings and plays at musical gatherings if it is requested of him but is shown most connected to music when he is alone, as when rowing on the Thames at sunset. There he may freely express his inner longings and allow music to connect him to something larger outside himself: "He was forgetting everything else in a half-speculative, half-involuntary

identification of himself with the object he was looking at, thinking how far it might be possible habitually to shift his centre till his own personality would be no less outside him than the landscape …" (DD 189). Also, the people he attracts into his life are artists, as with Hans Meyrick and Mirah. His outlook on life is that of the artist; he sees and is susceptible to beauty, both in people and in nature. The narrator emphasizes this by linking him with the Romantic poets: there are traces in his makeup of the angelic child "'trailing clouds of glory'" (DD 185), lines from Wordsworth's "Ode on the Intimation of Immortality," and "the silent consciousness of a grief within … [is] compared in some ways with Byron's susceptibility about his deformed foot" (DD 174). Yet the narrator qualifies this aspect of his nature: "To say that Deronda was romantic would be to misrepresent him; but under his calm and somewhat self-repressed exterior there was a fervour which made him easily find poetry and romance among the events of everyday life" (DD 205).

More than anything else, it is Deronda's musicality that most identifies him as artistic. Ruth Solie points out that Deronda "is not a professional musician like Klesmer, Mirah, or Alcharisi, but the author is at great pains to let us know that Daniel is indeed 'musical' in that wider, sympathetic sense that was to her so important a trait of human beings" (180). It is his voice in particular that resonates with women and the issue of female "voice." It is his penetrating singing voice as he rows on the Thames that enters into Mirah's "inner world without her having taken any note of whence it came …" (DD 187), so closely does it articulate her despair as she prepares to drown herself. When Deronda sees Mirah soaking her cloak in the river, it "might have been an impersonation of the misery he was unconsciously giving voice to …" (DD 187). Deronda's role is to

participate in the expression of suppressed female "voice." After he rescues Mirah he helps her to find her voice, both literally and figuratively. He arranges for Klesmer to hear her sing so that he can advise her on how best to use her voice as a means of financial independence; and she begins her recovery in part by voicing her story to both himself and Mrs. Meyrick, to whom Deronda brings her for safekeeping. He later performs a similar role to his mother who makes her past known to him in a sort of confession, and Gwendolen unburdens herself in a confession to him. To these three women he is both sympathetic listener and enabler of "voice." His receptivity to others in need is part of his sensitive, artistic nature that is portrayed through the metaphor of his musicality and voice. The narrator refers to it as the "exquisite quality of Deronda's nature—that keenly perceptive sympathetic emotiveness which ran along with his speculative tendency …" (DD 496), and says that he has a "profound sensibility to a cry from the depths of another soul …" (DD 496).

As we saw with Philip Wakem and Will Ladislaw in their relationships with Maggie and Dorothea, Deronda more fully enters into Gwendolen's life at the point in which her voice is beginning to be silenced. For Gwendolen, this begins in her marriage to Grandcourt. Gwendolen hears Deronda speak for the first time when he comes to Grandcourt's home soon after she is married. His voice causes her to unconsciously compare him to her husband: "His voice, heard now for the first time, was to Grandcourt's toneless drawl, which had been in her ears every day, deep notes of a violincello to the broken discourse of poultry and other lazy gentry …" (DD 331). Their early conversations are largely about music as it relates to self development. Gwendolen has decided to give up on music. She tells Deronda, "I am fond of music….But I have not

talent enough to make it worth while. I shall never sing again" (DD 411), to which he responds, "But if you are fond of music, it will always be worth while in private, for your own delight" (DD 411). He voices Eliot's ideas on one of the functions of music: "it enlarges the range of affection—and affection is the broadest basis of good in life" (DD 417).

It is Deronda who voices Gwendolen's larger potential, of which she has no conception. Deronda believes that music could be a way for Gwendolen to find meaning and develop her better self. In a later conversation in which Gwendolen persists in closing herself off from music, Deronda tells her "If you heard Miss Lapidoth … perhaps you would revoke your resolution to give up singing" (DD 436). When Gwendolen replies by saying "I don't feel able to follow your advice of enjoying my own middlingness" (4DD 36), Deronda perseveres in trying to present her with a wider view:

> For my part, … people who do anything finely always inspirit me to try.…I can bear to think my own music not good for much, but the world would be more dismal if I thought music itself not good for much. Excellence encourages one about life generally; it shows the spiritual wealth of the world.…We should have a poor life of it if we were reduced for all our pleasure to our own performances. A little private imitation of what is good is a sort of private devotion to it, and most of us ought to practice art only in the light of private study—preparation to understand and enjoy what the few can do for us. I think Miss Lapidoth is one of the few. (DD 436)

In his urging Gwendolen to pursue music, Deronda echoes Philip's urging Maggie to pursue her passions of music and reading, after she has decided to renounce them. The artist figure sees the role of art as essential to personal growth and the full expression of self.

It is significant that it is within the context of Deronda voicing the value of personal growth through music that the name of his mother is introduced, though at this point the reader does not know of her identity. In evoking the great singers of their youth, Lady Pentreath says to Sir Hugo, "I daresay you are one of the men who ran after Alcharisi. But she married off and left you all in the lurch" (DD 437), to which he responds, "Yes, yes; it's rather too bad when these great singers marry themselves into silence….And the husband is a public robber" (DD 437). He then furnishes the quote, "A man might as well take down a fine peal of church bells and carry them off to the steppes …" (DD 437). Alcharisi's name becomes associated with artistry and with the role of the artist as valued by society. Her name is associated with the loss that her audience felt at her marriage, though it is also tinged with the commodification of the female artist that runs throughout the novel.

The reference to Alcharisi also alludes to Gwendolen's allowing herself to be bought, and later silenced, in marriage. After Gwendolen's growing despair in her marriage, Deronda convinces her to take voice lessons from Mirah and to try to improve herself. When Gwendolen tells Grandcourt of her wish to study music with Mirah, he responds with "I don't see why a lady should sing. Amateurs make fools of themselves….And one doesn't want to hear squalling in private" (DD 588). Angry that Gwendolen has gone to check on his allegations that Deronda and Mirah's relationship is

improper, and knowing that Deronda frequents the house, he tells her "you are not to go near that house again….When you undertook to be Mrs. Grandcourt, you undertook not to make a fool of yourself" (DD 593). Da Sousa Correa writes that Grandcourt "silences the crucial power of utterance which music represents for women….Their snatched discussions of music symbolize her need to overcome the silence imposed upon her as well as to expand her sympathies" (145). The result of Gwendolen's marriage to Grandcourt is one of submission to his will. The repeated beating down of her will results in her loss of "voice." The hope Gwendolen has for herself, which involves self-improvement through music, is intimately tied to her conversations with Deronda and without it her despair and silencing increase.

Part of Gwendolen's silencing is the result of the fear she feels of Grandcourt. His words have the affect of reducing her to a possession that he has full control over. When she pleads not to wear the diamonds, Grandcourt tells her "What you think has nothing to do with it" (DD 427). She finds herself unable to speak up for herself. The more she tries the more she is demeaned and silenced: "Of what use was the rebellion within her? … How could she be defiant? She had nothing to say … but what would give him a more painful grasp on her consciousness" (DD 427).

Failing to make a career for herself and now miserable in marriage, Gwendolen becomes part of the system she despises. When Mirah performs at a party at the Mallingers, Gwendolen condescendingly remarks to Deronda that Mirah is "lovely—not in the least common; and she is such a complete little person" (DD 562). Underneath the arrogance is her bitter sense of failure. The narrator says, "Poor Gwendolen … had wanted to be a struggling artist herself …" (DD 561). Da Sousa Correa points out that

both women are commodified by the same system: “The grandeur of her appearance makes Gwendolen the representative of the society which exploits women like Mirah: the woman as spectator connives in the commodification of the female artist….Gwendolen has been, if anything, more irredeemably commodified … [for she] has been silenced” (149-50). Ironically, it is the performing woman who keeps her voice and integrity. Eliot demonstrates the commodification of both women, but it is the domestically enshrined woman who becomes silenced.

Part of Gwendolen’s silencing is self-inflicted. She suffers the “humiliation of being doomed to terrified silence lest her husband should discover with what sort of consciousness she had married him …” (DD 555). Gwendolen has betrayed both herself and another woman by marrying Grandcourt and the guilt and fear of discovery slowly eat away at her and suppress her voice. She is locked in her own deception: “After the intensest moments of secret hatred towards this husband who from the very first had cowed her, there always came back the spiritual pressure which made submission inevitable” (DD 555). When Gwendolen defends the relationship between Deronda and Mirah as being honorable, Grandcourt sneers at her gullibility. Gwendolen’s reaction to his insinuations and condescension is one of controlled angry silence: “Gwendolen was mute. The daring answer within her was turned into the rage of dumbness” (DD 593). Grandcourt belittles her by saying “What do *you* know about the world? You have married me, and must be guided by my opinion” (DD 593). Shortly after this scene he further humiliates her by having Lush read his will to her, which leaves much to Lydia Glasher and their children. He wants Gwendolen to “know that it was no secret to him that she was aware of his relations with Lydia …” (DD 595). What she has most dreaded

him finding out is now revealed as something he has known all along. Her bitter humiliation, resentment, and suppression churn into a seething anger that grows to vengeful maenad-like fury. Gwendolen's former voice, her outspokenness, and her assertion of self are now turned inward to a silent "suppressed struggle of desperate rebellion" (DD 555). She becomes tormented by dark thoughts of violence and revenge. The narrator says that "the intensest form of hatred is that rooted in fear, which compels to silence and drives vehemence into a constructive vindictiveness …" (DD 673). Grandcourt enjoys the affect he has on her. He later sees that "she is in a desperate rage.…But the rage was silent, and therefore not disagreeable to him" (DD 597). Da Sousa Correa writes that Gwendolen's "murderous emotion … takes shape in an inaudible internal music of thought and suppressed utterance.…[in] Eliot's opposition of silencing and giving voice" (147).

Gwendolen becomes tormented by her dark thoughts of revenge and is "governed by many shadowy powers" (DD 555). Only Deronda's guidance and belief in her keeps her fractured self together. Her desperation and the unbearableness of her marriage build to a crescendo during the yachting expedition in Italy. Gwendolen does not want to go but Grandcourt insists on it because he "wanted to feel more securely that she was his to do as he liked with, and to make her feel it so" (DD 668). The narrator says that Grandcourt had no "conception of what was going on in the breast of his wife….but was that necessary? She was under his power …" (DD 671), and that "Grandcourt had an intense satisfaction in leading his wife captive after this fashion...—the protest (kept strictly private) adding to the piquancy of despotism" (DD 672). Gwendolen's feelings are of absolute helplessness and hopelessness. She is completely in the control and

"domain of the husband to whom she felt that she had sold herself….sold her truthfulness and sense of justice, so that he held them throttled into silence, collared and dragged behind him to witness what he would …" (DD 669). The culmination of her desperate humiliation and outrage plays out in Grandcourt's drowning in Genoa as they are out sailing alone. Gwendolen sees her vengeful intentions before her eyes as Grandcourt falls overboard and drowns. Although the narrated scene is equivocal as to the degree of Gwendolen's culpability in his death, in Gwendolen's mind she is guilty because it was her hidden wish. In a confused chaotic scene, Gwendolen is first frozen at what she is witnessing, and then jumps in after Grandcourt, though it appears it is less to save him than to end the horror of it.

It is by coincidence that Deronda is also in Genoa, having been requested to go there in an unexpected letter from his mother. Once again, it is to Deronda that Gwendolen turns, unloading her guilt and anguish. "She was bent on confession, and he dreaded hearing [it]….He was not a priest. He dreaded the weight of this woman's soul flung upon his own with imploring dependence" (DD 689). As Gwendolen disjointedly relates the incidents leading up to Grandcourt's death, she connects her anger and pent up feelings with being silenced and prevented from speaking to Deronda. She tells him:

> "For after all my struggles and my crying, the hatred and rage, the temptation that frightened me, the longing, the thirst for what I dreaded, always came back. And that disappointment—when I was quite shut out from speaking to you, and I was driven to go in the boat—brought all the evil back, as if I had been locked in a prison and no escape." (DD 693)

In part, the narrator attributes Gwendolen's state to her suppressed voice, which is supported by an earlier passage. On the day of Gwendolen's marriage, the narrator relates a passing conversation between a tailor and a village woman regarding abuse in marriage. The tailor puts the blame of marital discord on women, saying "A quarrel may end wi' the whip, but it begins wi' the tongue, and it's the women have got most of that" (DD 354), to which the woman replies, "The Lord gave it to 'em to use, I suppose….*He* never meant you to have it all your own way" (DD 354). Voice is represented as one of the few means of defense for a woman against patriarchal oppression. When voice is denied and suppressed, the narrator suggests that it turns inward to disastrous ends.

The patriarchal order to which women are subject is revealed as often mistaken and inadequate. We see this in the attitude of Gwendolen's uncle on hearing the contents of Grandcourt's will. Mr. Gascoigne tells Sir Hugo, "It has certainly taken me by surprise … all the more because … [I] stood in the place of father to [Gwendolen]" (DD 758). In a tone full of irony the narrator says, "the good Rector had an innocent conviction that his niece was unaware of Mrs. Glasher's existence, arguing with masculine soundness from what maidens and wives were likely to know, do, and suffer, and having had a most imperfect observation of the particular maiden and wife in question" (DD 758).

Throughout Eliot's works on female voice and the figure of the artist, there are characters who embody more of the gender spectrum, which often results in fuller humanity. This leads to more types of relationships between men and women than the narrowly defined ones of traditional separate spheres ideology. We see the beginning of this in Adam Bede in Dinah Morris's role as preacher, and it is suggested in the relationship between Maggie and Dr. Ken in The Mill on the Floss. It is more developed

in Middlemarch in Dorothea's relationships with Lydgate and Caleb Garth, and in "Armgart" in the mentoring relationship between Armgart and Leo. It is explored at length in Daniel Deronda in the relationship between Gwendolen and Deronda. Their relationship hovers on the romantic but its deepest motivation stems from Deronda's drive to help others and Gwendolen's need for sympathetic guidance. Other characters in the novel assume their relationship is romantic and will end in marriage, though Deronda insists to Sir Hugo and Hans that it is not of that nature. The narrator refers to it as something potentially stronger than romantic. Critics have pointed out that in this pre-Freudian period, there is no language to describe the relationship between Deronda and Gwendolen, which is more of therapist and patient. Hence, we see the references to Deronda as Christ-like, priest-like, and resembling the Buddha. When Gwendolen fears that Deronda will not be there for her, she asks him, "Will you forsake me?" (690). Deronda responds in a way that is new to Gwendolen: "He took one of her hands, and clasped it …: it was the only way in which he could answer, 'I will not forsake you.'….That grasp was an entirely new experience to Gwendolen: she had never before had from any man a sign of tenderness which her own being had needed …" (DD 690-91).

Deronda's relationship to Gwendolen is complex. Although the physical attraction is there, it is Mirah who attracts him as a husband. Mirah "had taken [Gwendolen's] place in his soul as a beloved type.…Gwendolen's … dependence on Deronda tended to rouse in him the enthusiasm of self-martyring pity rather than of personal love …" (DD 744-45). After Grandcourt's death, when Hans again alludes to a relationship now being possible between Deronda and Gwendolen, Deronda tells him, "let me say once and for

all, that in relation to Mrs. Grandcourt, I never have had, and never shall have the position of a lover" (DD 784). His role has been something else, though it borders on romantic. Gwendolen needs him more as a mentor and "therapist." Deronda is repeatedly linked to Gwendolen's psychological state. The narrator uses language that evokes the symbolic painted panel and opening quote that express the internal fears of Gwendolen and foreshadow her role in Grandcourt's death. The dread that the panel reveals in Gwendolen is perceived by Deronda before the drowning. "It was as if he saw her drowning while his limbs were bound" (DD 453). The feeling grows as his relationship with her intensifies. He has a sense of "foreboding of a growing incompatible claim on him in her mind. There was a foreshadowing of some painful collision….He had a vision of himself besought with outstretched arms and cries, while he was caught by the waves and compelled to mount the vessel bound for a far-off coast" (DD 564). He has been the figure to which the fleeing figure in the panel has been running, but his fate lies in another direction, to the "far-off coast" of the Levant. Just as the image in the panel surfaces and resurfaces in the novel, so do the words of the opening quote, "Let thy chief terror be of thine own soul" (DD 3). When Gwendolen expresses her growing fear of herself to Deronda she says, "I am frightened at myself. When my blood is fired I can do daring things—take any leap; but that makes me frightened at myself" (DD 452). The advice Deronda gives to Gwendolen is: "Turn your fear into a safegaurd" (DD 452). Later, during the yachting trip with her husband, Gwendolen is haunted by a vision of the thing she dreads: "to find under her hands … a white dead face from which she was for ever trying to flee and forever held back. She remembered Deronda's words: they were continually recurring in her thought—'Turn your fear into a safeguard. Keep your dread

fixed on the idea of increasing your remorse….Take your fear as a safeguard'" (DD 674). Gwendolen and Deronda are psychically linked in the struggle Gwendolen has with the fate that awaits her. The relationship between Deronda and Gwendolen is more psychological than it is romantic. Though Deronda leaves her physically in the end, he tells her, "I shall be more with you than I used to be….we can perhaps never see each other again. But our minds may get nearer" (DD 806). It is Deronda's tenderness and his unbending belief in Gwendolen that she can be better that leads to her survival and development.

Gwendolen's survival and her move from the patriarchal order to one more of her own determining is brought about by the figures of Klesmer and Deronda, who fill the role that Eliot assigns to her artists. They give voice to the experience of women and envision an alternative way of shaping society. As men, they are able to express themselves in a political way that could have an effect on revising society. Eliot's artists are always "others" with a wider understanding of the world than those of the society they live in. Just as Deronda is an amalgam of both British and "other," so Klesmer is a mixture of "the German and the Sclave and the Semite" (DD 47) and is now a part of British society. Both by blood and by temperament, the artist figure is identified with a wider world. The narrator writes of Klesmer: "His personality, especially his way of glancing round him, immediately suggested vast areas and a multitudinous audience …" (DD 482). Their "otherness" and their political vision are expressed in their differing approaches to their roles as Jews. For Deronda, as we see with Will Ladislaw, the novel ends in his embarking on a social-political mission. Where Will moves to London to participate in national politics, Deronda leaves for the East to participate in the nascent

Zionist movement. Klesmer, on the other hand, demonstrates the other Jewish position voiced in the novel, that of assimilation. At a musical soiree at the Arrowpoint's in which Klesmer is under scrutiny, Catherine explains to one of the guests that "Herr Klesmer has cosmopolitan ideas….He looks forward to a fusion of races" (242). Deronda's revisionist role takes place on a very personal and private level with Gwendolen, Mirah, and his mother, the Alcharisi; we never see the larger political role he embarks on at the end of the novel. Klesmer's revisionist role takes place on a larger, public stage and is also tied to a political outlook. Klesmer is desired for the prestige he brings to the Arrowpoints: "To have a first-rate musician in your house is a privilege of wealth" (DD 238), but he is clearly an outsider at the gathering. At a musical evening at the Arrowpoint's, Klesmer's artistic genius and wider views are contrasted to those of man of politics, Mr. Bult. Bult is "amazed at an after-dinner outburst of Klesmer's on the lack of idealism in English politics …" (DD 241). Intending no offense, but demonstrating his ignorance, Bult declares, "I was sure he had too much talent to be a mere musician" (DD 242) to which Klesmer haughtily replies,

> No man has too much talent to be a musician. Most men have too little. A creative artist is no more a mere musician than a great statesman is a mere politician. We are not ingenious puppets, sir, who live in a box and look out on the world only when it is gaping for amusement. We help to rule the nations and make the age as much as any other public men. We count ourselves on level benches with legislators. And a man who speaks effectively through music is compelled to something more difficult than parliamentary eloquence. (DD 242)

Through Klesmer, Eliot expounds on the idea of the artist as one who pushes society further towards positive development.

Though an outsider, Klesmer is a valued member of society, but as with many of Eliot's artist figures, Klesmer is not without his share of ego. The narrator says, "those who take in a larger sweep than their neighbors are apt to seem mightily vain and affected. Klesmer was vain …" (DD 482). Solie writes that "Klesmer already glimpses a cosmopolitan future in the universal aristocracy of art.…He has a noticeable, if loveable, trace of that 'arrogance' – the arrogance of the Messiah-artist …" (168). For the most part, Klesmer's arrogance surfaces only when he is criticized or misunderstood, as at the Arrowpoint's musical gatherings. His character is otherwise shown to be gracious and generous. The narrator excuses Klesmer by saying that in him "nature seemed to have first made generously and then … added music as a dominant power.…His foibles of arrogance and vanity did not exceed those found in the best English families …" (DD 240). Unfortunately, it is on the "best English families" that he is dependent as an artist, and for the most part, they do not understand his artistry. Klesmer's cosmopolitanism is contrasted to British insularity. Both in his music and in his opinions Klesmer is shown as passionate and progressive, which is contrasted to the typical British gentleman who the narrator says "objects to looking inspired" (DD 102) and has a narrow way of looking at things. Da Sousa Correa writes that Klesmer "establishes himself as the representative of cultural standards in the broadest sense whilst also endorsing the aesthetic hierarchy central to German Romanticism, in which music occupies the highest pinnacle" (131-32). His role as artist is to reveal a progressive vision, which he does through his music, through his words, and through the integrity of his actions.

Paired with the musical genius Klesmer is his pupil and later wife, Catherine Arrowpoint. She is the only child of the wealthy Arrowpoints and heiress to their estate. However, she is first and foremost a musician. She "plays three instruments, but she does not sing" (DD 45), an indication that she does not partake in superficial parlor room displays but is a serious musician. Intelligent, generous, and sympathetic, Catherine Arrowpoint is Eliot's first and only English female musician. Against the displeasure and threat of disinheritance by her family, she marries Klesmer. She recognizes his genius and places it and her love for him above all else. Together they form one of the rare successful partnerships in Eliot, united by their music, their independent thinking, and their love for each other. A musician in her own right, she also demonstrates the larger vision of the artist and the requisite independence of mind that accompanies the true artist. She is described as having "native kindliness [though] she was perhaps too coolly firm and self-sustained" (DD 240), something akin to Klesmer's arrogance but with a softer edge to it. She has already demonstrated her perceptive and generous nature in her relations to Gwendolen. Catherine is shown as both understanding the role of the artist and participating in it. At their musical gathering Mrs. Arrowpoint tells Gwendolen that Catherine is "magnanimous" (DD 104) and that it was she who requested that Klesmer be there: "I told her it was not quite *en regle* to bring one so far out of our own set; but she said, 'Genius itself is not *en regle*; it comes into the world to make new rules'" (DD 104). Catherine follows her own conviction by refusing to be a part of her society's marriage market. "She already refused Lord Slogan" (DD 91) and she is the most obvious match for Grandcourt but she is not in the least interested. Surprising everyone and outraging her parents, she announces that she is going to marry Klesmer. The narrator says that

Catherine Arrowpoint has “a clear head and a strong will. The Arrowpoints had already felt some anxiety owing to these endowments of their Catherine. She would not accept the view of her social duty which required her to marry a needy nobleman …” (DD 237); however, her parents never dream of her being in love with Klesmer.

Acting outside of separate sphere expectations, Catherine marries the man of her choice. She values Klesmer’s genius, his integrity, and his independence of mind. In his relationship to Catherine, Klesmer exhibits the same set of values. He sees and desires the beauty and intelligence of her nature, which her musicality reveals.

> Klesmer was eminently a man of honor….Miss Arrowpoint [was not] an acknowledged beauty … [but] the most powerful of all beauty is that which reveals itself after sympathy and not before it. There is a charm of eye and lips which comes with every little phrase that certifies delicate perception or fine judgment … that shows a heart awake to others; and no sweep of garment or turn of figure is more satisfying than that which enters as a restoration of confidence that one person is present on whom no intention will be lost….where the mind that can flash out comprehension and hand that can execute finely! (DD 238-39)

Her position as heiress is an obstacle to Klesmer and has prevented him from acting on his feelings. He expresses his sentiment to her when he determines that he must leave. She freely voices her feelings by saying, “I am afraid of nothing but that we should miss the passing of our lives together” (DD 245). When they go to her parents declaring their intentions, Catherine is confident and articulate. Speaking like a true heroine she declares, “I will not give up the happiness of my life to ideas that I don’t believe in and

customs I have no respect for" (DD 246). Her parents assume Klesmer is interested in her money and tell him they will disinherit her. To this he replies, "her fortune has been the only thing I have had to regret about her" (DD 248-49), and declares, "My rank as an artist is of my own winning, and I would not exchange it for any other. I am able to maintain your daughter, and I ask for no change in my life but her companionship" (DD 249). Throughout they exhibit true partnership, both in music where they play duets, and in support of each other's vision.

In Eliot, a mark of the artist figure is that of "voice," of speaking out, which Catherine clearly demonstrates. We see this in her outspokenness to her parents and even in her speaking her mind to Klesmer. Klesmer, who backs down for no one, accepts Catherine's reprimand on his behavior to Mr. Bult. When Klesmer asks her, "You mean I acted without dignity and you are offended with me," she replies, "Now you are slightly nearer the truth" (DD 243). There is the sense that Catherine will keep his ego in check.

Critics point out that Catherine becomes subsumed in Klesmer's career and that she largely disappears after her marriage. However, they fail to point out that Klesmer, too, recedes into the background after their marriage. Other than the scene in which he judges Mirah's singing, he largely disappears from the narrative. He and Catherine have performed their roles as artist: speaking the truth, revealing the shallowness of their society, and acting on their wider vision in their marriage to each other and faithfulness to their art. Though we don't hear much of Catherine after their marriage, she has had her say. She is shown as continuing and extending her role as artist and patron and of living a fulfilled life with the man of her choice.

Although Eliot doesn't make much of Catherine Arrowpoint, she is one of Eliot's most successful female characters. She is understated and quietly self-confident. In her success she is almost subversive in that she is not beautiful or coquettish, like many separate spheres models of femininity; rather, she is mature, intelligent, and self-assured. Though much of her freedom to act comes from her privileged background, she is shown as not believing in its values and is willing to give it up. She asks her father, "Why is it to be expected of an heiress that she should carry the property gained in trade into the hands of a certain class? That seems to me a ridiculous mish-mash of superannuated customs and false ambition" (DD 247). When her parents threaten to disinherit her she says, "It is no sacrifice to me….I have always felt my fortune to be a wretched fatality of my life" (DD 249). She exemplifies a fulfilled life of purpose and at the end she is not diminished, though she is subsumed into her husband's life. Klesmer, however, venerates and loves her and there is the sense that they will be equal partners. When he later tells Mirah that his wife will call on her to hear her singing, he says of Catherine, "She is a thorough musician, and has a soul with more ears to it than you will often get in a musician" (DD 485). Catherine holds a position of power and privilege, both through her inheritance, but more so in her connection to Klesmer and in her own substantial talent. Catherine is both vocationally and romantically fulfilled. Eliot perhaps allows more in Catherine Arrowpoint as an artist because she does not earn money from her art. As an heiress this issue does not come up. In this respect Catherine is like Eliot's other heroines who fulfill a personal purpose by providing a social benefit but do not earn money from it, like Dinah Morris' preaching and Dorothea Brooke's support of the cottagers and hospital.

In Eliot's two other female musicians in Daniel Deronda, Mirah and the Alcharisi, the idea of performing in public for money is fundamental to the characters and problematizes their relationship to art. Both Mirah and the Alcharisi have been professionally trained and have made careers on the stages of Europe. Their careers however, are fraught with tensions and unresolved issues. In Mirah Lapidoth Cohen, Eliot ostensibly creates an exemplary separate spheres feminine ideal and an ideal musical performer. Mirah physically resembles Caterina Sarti, both in her dark coloring and in her diminutive appearance. She is delicate, vulnerable, has a wistful, doll-like beauty, and possesses a beautiful singing voice. She has been commodified her whole life by her pandering father who has made money off of her singing talents, separated her from her mother and brother by telling her they had died, and tried to sell her to a lecherous count. From this fate Mirah flees and returns to England where she thinks she may find her mother and brother. In her despair at not finding them she decides to drown herself, the point at which Deronda finds and rescues her.

Deronda and Mirah, like Klesmer and Catherine, are linked musically. Their musicality reveals their sensitivity, high morality, and their compatibility with each other. When Deronda first encounters Mirah he is rowing on the Thames in a scene that effects him "like an unfinished strain of music" (DD 189). Of their encounter, in which the song Deronda sings reflects Mirah's state of mind as she soaks her clothing, da Sousa Correa writes that "Music signals internal divisions and also the erasure of boundaries between individuals….Deronda's refrain represents her remembered past and present sorrow" (182-83). After recognizing Deronda as the person who was singing she says "in a low sweet voice, with an accent so distinct that it suggested foreignness and yet was not

foreign, 'I saw you before;' … and then added dreamily, after a like pause, 'nella miseria'" (DD 190) from the song he was singing. In Mirah more than any of the other characters is "Eliot's representation of the voice as a confluence of music and language" (Byerly, "Language of the Soul" 13). The words and tone of her voice deeply affect Deronda: "The mere words themselves uttered in her sweet undertones seemed to give the melody to Deronda's ear" (DD 190). Everything about Mirah resonates profoundly in Deronda: "Her person, her voice, her exquisite utterance, were one strong appeal to belief and tenderness" (DD 194-95). Her despair brings to his mind the mystery of his mother: "The agitating impression this forsaken girl was making on him stirred a fibre that lay close to his deepest interest in the fates of women– 'perhaps my mother was like this one'" (DD 190-91). Their first words to each other establish them both as musical but averse to public performance. In a moment of hesitation as Deronda puts out his hand to her, Mirah cautiously asks him, "Do you belong to the theatre?" (DD 191). Deronda answers in a firm tone, "No; I have nothing to do with the theatre" (DD 191), which assures her of his trustworthiness.

After Deronda settles Mirah with the Meyrick family and learns of her musical training, he arranges for Klesmer to hear her and advise her on whether she can earn her keep by her musical talents, as she desires. Klesmer recognizes her as a fellow artist and confirms her ability. He tells her "I would not further your singing in any larger space than a private drawing-room….And in London that is one of the best careers open" (DD 485). This supports what her singing teacher in Vienna had told her, that her voice "will never do for the public: —it is gold, but a thread of gold dust" (DD 216). Mirah's temperament, along with her voice, is made for small, private spaces. She responds to

Klesmer's assessment by saying "I would rather get my bread in that way than by anything more public" (DD 485). In addition to the softness of her voice and the modesty of her demeanor, Mirah's choice in the music she sings underscores her domestic affinity, as well as her musical sophistication. In general she sings music from German composers and Jewish devotional music that her mother taught her. Compared to Gwendolen's shallow performance, Mirah's singing is depicted as being deeply rooted in her values. At Lady Mallinger's musical party Mirah sings to the delight of the audience and to Klesmer's satisfaction. However, unlike Gwendolen's desire for admiration, we are told that Mirah's only desire "was to know that she had satisfied Mr. Deronda" (DD 559).

However, even in private performances it is evident that Mirah is still being objectified by her paying public, even when they are wealthy patrons like the Mallingers and their society. Lady Pentreath says to Deronda, "Well, your Jewess is pretty—there's no denying that. But where is her Jewish impudence? She looks as demure as a nun. I suppose she learned that on the stage" (DD 558). Deronda has "an indignant dislike to her being remarked on in a free and easy way, as if she were an imported commodity disdainfully paid for by the fashionable public …" (DD 558). In the character of Mirah, performance is frequently associated with the exploitation of women. When she relates her past to Mrs. Meyrick she describes how her father, an actor, writer, and manager for the theater, put her on stage when she was nine. She remembers overhearing a comment when she was thirteen of a gentleman saying, "I wonder what market he means that daughter for" (DD 215). As she grows older she realizes that his marketing her as a performer was determined by "what would fetch the greatest price" (DD 217). Da Sousa Correa points out that "The novel makes a clear link between exploitation in the theatrical

market-place and prostitution" (148). We saw this earlier in Klesmer's allusion to Gwendolen of the stage as a place for women to display themselves. However, as Gwendolen's fate bears out, she is as commodified in the marriage market as she would be on the stage.

On the surface Eliot seems to be arguing against public performance for women, yet throughout the novel she has pointed to the more pervasive problem—that society objectifies women wherever they are. Mirah defies the argument that a public career will corrupt and sully a woman, the argument the Graf tries to use to dissuade Armgart from her stage career. The result in Mirah is quite the contrary. Deronda feels "that he was making acquaintance with something quite new to him in the form of womanhood. For Mirah was not childlike from ignorance: her experience of evil and trouble was deeper and stranger than his own" (DD 225). She has been around the stage and has been performing in public since she was a young girl and yet she remains the quintessential separate spheres woman. Mirah is proof that contact with the external world need not corrupt women. On the contrary, it can give them a better vantage point from which to judge, something Gwendolen sadly lacks. Mirah is quick and accurate in her perceptions of both Deronda and Klesmer. "Her peculiar life and education had produced in her an extraordinary mixture of unworldliness, with knowledge of the world's evil, and even this knowledge was a strange blending of direct observation with the effects of reading and theoretical study" (DD 652-53). Mirah has educated herself in the way that Deronda advises for Gwendolen: "some real knowledge would give you an interest in the world beyond the small drama of personal desires" (DD 451). Mirah's studies have taken her beyond herself. She has studied "plays and poetry, Shakespeare and Schiller and learned

evil and good" (DD 213) from her reading. Mirah's stage career has not hampered her desire for self-education and self-betterment. Strengthening Mirah's character is the fact that she is deeply rooted in her Jewish faith and in the memory of her mother and brother. At heart she is the ideal domestic woman, motivated by the affections. In spite of her public career she remains docile, demure, and modest.

Mirah does, however, exhibit several attributes associated with the masculine sphere. In spite of her docility, she is of independent mind. Though of a traditional submissive mold, she breaks with her father when her virtue is at stake. In addition, she determines to be financially independent, in part so that she can take care of her mother should she find her. She does not want to be dependent on anyone. Mirah tells Deronda, "I want to do something to get money….I cannot always live on charity …" (DD 373). In this she is very much like the Meyrick family of women with whom Deronda places her. Mrs. Meyrick tells Deronda, "My daughters are learning from her, and they hope to get her other pupils; for she is anxious not to eat the bread of idleness, but to work, like my girls" (DD 361). The Meyrick women exude an air of romance and excitement that the unexpected presence of Mirah feeds. Delighted with their new guest, Mab says their "life has become like a fairy tale" (DD 361). All the Meyrick daughters show an enthusiasm and pride in the artistic work they do. Kate is an illustrator and Amy and Mab work at embroidery. "Mother and daughters were all united by a triple bond—family love; admiration for the finest work, the best action; and habitual industry" (DD 197). The Meyrick girls and their mother live a cultured, artistic life and earn money so that their brother Hans can pursue a career as a painter. They also are associated with "voice." Mrs. Meyrick has "a pretty articulateness of speech that seemed to make daylight in her

hearer's understanding" (DD 197) and the faces of mother and daughters "seemed full of speech, as if their minds had been shelled, after the manner of horse chestnuts, and become brightly visible" (DD 198).

Their brother Hans is studying art in Italy. Hans is associated with painting and in Eliot's metaphorical use of painting it signals the patriarchal order in which women are objectified and treated as possessions. When Hans meets Mirah he predictably falls in love with her and tries to possess her by painting her in a series of pictures of Berenice. The subject matter of the series confirms his objectification of her on two counts. Berenice's history is that of a Jewish heroine, though she came to be associated with her dramatic love life. Hans, however, has left this part of out of Berenice's history when he asks Mirah to model for him. When Deronda sees the painting of Mirah he is surprised and asks Hans, "I should think no woman would be more abhorrent to her. Does she quite know what you are doing?...I dare say she knows nothing about Berenice's history …" (DD 458), to which Hans admits, "Oh, yes, she does—ladies' edition....I couldn't find it in my heart to tell her I invented … part of the story" (DD 458-59). Hans sees women as possible subjects he can paint. He repeatedly refers to Gwendolen as the Van Dyke Duchess. He sees both Gwendolen and Mirah only in terms of the beauty they would lend to his canvasses. He tells Deronda he "admires" Gwendolen's Van Dyke type of beauty but that he "worships" the Berenice style. He says, "Other styles of woman I might make myself wicked for, but for Berenice I could make myself … good" (DD 558), suggesting the different types of allure of the two women. In addition to being indignant at Hans' subterfuge, Deronda worries that Mirah, who is trying to establish herself as a singer, might be tainted by the association in the subject matter of the paintings. Hans, however,

brushes aside Deronda's concern. Hans is depicted as "a lovable creature" (DD 181) but reckless and immature.

The Meyrick women exhibit a balance in traits associated with both the feminine and the masculine spheres. They are highly domestic in their nurturing and affectionate natures and in their feminine activities of sewing and piano playing, and yet they are independent, seek out knowledge, and interact with the outside world, traits associated with the masculine sphere. As Catherine Arrowpoint shows with Gwendolen, they demonstrate female community and support in their interest in Mirah. The image of the maenad crops up again but this time it lends a positive cast to the story, one involving artistic female community rather than female anger towards men. When Deronda takes Mirah to Mrs. Meyrick, "Hans is safely in Italy" (DD 195) and it is to a household of women that he takes her for safe keeping. Deronda thinks of

> the beautiful story Plutarch somewhere tells of the Delphic women: how when the Maenads, outworn with their torch-lit wanderings, lay down to sleep in the market-place, the matrons came and stood silently round them to keep guard over their slumbers; then, when they waked, ministered to them tenderly and saw them safely to their own borders. He could trust the women he was going to for having hearts as good. (DD 195)

There are similarities between Mirah's combination of domesticity and professionalism and the Meyrick women. The creative Meyrick women are protective and nurturing, intellectual and industrious. As with Mirah, they display the same combination of the best attributes of both private and public spheres. Da Sousa Correa writes that "The assertion that women's wish to be independent, albeit within narrow

limits, demands respect, goes some way towards questioning domestic ideals of womanhood.…Eliot appropriates feminine ideals to proclaim the propriety of potentially radical ideals" (151).

In many ways the Meyrick family collectively fulfils the role that Eliot establishes for her artist figures. Although they are British, there is a foreign element about them. Hans, who pursues a career as a painter, has been "daringly christened after Holbein" (DD 180-81) by his father, who was an engraver. The narrator says Hans "reminded one of pale quaint heads by early German painters" (DD 180). A Continental influence remains in the house in their father's prints on the wall: depictions of the Virgin, "Prophets and Sibyls; … grave Holbein and Rembrandt heads; … [and] Italian poets" (DD 210). We are told Mrs. Meyrick is "half French, half Scotch" (DD 197). Their modest home reflects the arts and learning: "there was space and apparatus for a wide-glancing, nicely-selected life, open to the highest things in music, painting, and poetry….[their] treat [is] of opera-going (to the gallery) when Hans came home on a visit" (DD 197). Though of limited income, there is the sense that they occupy the wider world of the artist. Mrs. Meyrick is "a great reader of news, from the widest-reaching politics to the list of marriages …" (DD 726). When we first see her she is reading aloud to her daughters from a French historical novel on the Napoleonic wars. In addition to having a romantic outlook, they exhibit independence, ambition, and purpose. When Mirah tells her history to Mrs. Meyrick we are told that Mab was out teaching, "Kate was already gone to make sketches along the river, and Amy was away on business errands" (DD 210).

One way to read the Meyrick family is from a revisionist kunstlerroman point of view. For her female artist figures Eliot both borrows traditional masculine kunstlerroman characteristics and breaks away from the tradition. Leslie Hankins writes that "If we de-center or de-throne the solitary artist we may learn to hear more than a monologue in the kunstlerroman. In a revisionist kunstlerroman, the voice of one self-obsessed artist figure may be replaced by a polyphony of voices" (394), as a sort of collective function. This describes the strategy Eliot uses in her portrayal of the Meyrick family. Hankins suggests that "perhaps the point is to re-define the artist, to re-negotiate the role of art in the context of a whole life, placing the artist within culture, rather than limiting the artist to solitude" (394-95). Although many of Eliot's artist figures reflect the Romantic artist-hero tradition, as with Armgart, Alcharisi, and Klesmer, this collective revisionist strategy is found in the Meyrick family. It also furthers Eliot's injunction for female community and support, which is underscored in Eliot's allusion to the maenads.

The Meyrick family serves as an important backdrop for presenting the character of Mirah. Weaving in the artistic family's dynamics with the traditional characteristics of Mirah is one of the subtle ways in which Eliot complicates the character of Mirah. She is representative of the feminine separate spheres ideal, yet she is a professional public artist. Weliver writes that "Being a professional female musician is not criticized in this novel. Rather, the motivations behind having a career are explored" (230). Mirah's motivation for pursuing a career at this point in her life is to be able to be independent and, importantly, to be able to support her mother if she finds her. When she discovers that her mother has died, and once she marries Deronda, she willingly gives up her career. When Mirah joins Deronda in his mission of establishing a Jewish homeland, the

relinquishing of her career is not portrayed as silencing her, since her singing has always been a means of commodifying her. Rather, she is shown as following a course of action that connects her with her mother and brother and her earliest domestic memories. There is also the sense that music will always be an important part of her life because it also provides the same connections. In spite of Mirah's career as a professional singer, most of her attributes place her firmly in the feminine domestic sphere.

One troubling fact related to this, and perhaps a subversive move on Eliot's part, is that Mirah is the only character in all of Eliot to actually attempt suicide, though other characters have despaired and had suicidal thoughts, as with Caterina, Hetty, and Armgart. There is no doubt about Mirah's intentions. Soon after her rescue she tells Deronda, "If you had not come, I should have been dead now" (DD 192). Eliot has established Mirah as the embodiment of conventional separate sphere feminine traits, and yet her fate as the model female seems to be one of continual commodification. It appears that Eliot argues for more of the masculine sphere attributes in women, more of a balance of traits. Mirah is both the embodiment of and a victim of separate spheres ideology. Cultivation of feminine docility and submission does not lead to self-preservation. Survival for women seems more a result of adopting certain traits associated with the masculine sphere, as we see in Gwendolen and Alcharisi and even in the Meyrick women. When Deronda asks Mrs. Meyrick if she thinks Mirah will "be content to wait" for them to search out her family, she replies, "No trouble there. It is not her nature to run into planning and devising: only to submit. See how she submitted to that father!" (DD 224). If Mirah had more "masculine" drive and determination perhaps she would have

come up with another solution to her problems other than suicide, the ultimate act of self-silencing. She needed Deronda to literally save her because she could not save herself.

This complicated attitude towards performing women is placed center stage in the character of Deronda's mother, the one-time renowned Alcharisi, now the Princess Halm-Eberstein. Although there are strong similarities between Mirah and the Alcharisi, they are polar opposites in many ways. Like Klesmer, they are highly trained professional musicians who have performed on the stages of Europe and have experienced success in their musical careers. Also like Klesmer, they are Jewish. The multiple names of Mirah Lapidoth/Cohen and the Alcharisi/Leonora[7] Charisi/Princess Halm-Eberstein reflect both the complexity that these performing women represent and their problematic Jewishness. As Alcharisi tells Deronda, "The Jews have always been changing their names" (DD 637). In the Alcharisi her Jewishness is problematic for herself; for Mirah it is problematic for her society. Their Jewishness is central to their identity and the paths they choose in life. In this respect the three Jewish artists in the novel represent three differing positions: Klesmer advocates assimilation; Mirah is fiercely devoted to her faith; the Alcharisi angrily denounces her Jewishness. In part, their being Jewish is in keeping with Eliot's pattern of making her artists foreign. They embody the cosmopolitanism that Klesmer has and demonstrate the pattern of the artist as one who occupies a larger world. These three artists, however, have all been shaped by British culture and so represent a combination of foreign and British, much as Deronda does. Klesmer is a German Jew who has made his home in England; Mirah is "English born" (DD 193) but has lived an

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[7] Her name recalls Armgart's mentor Leo and evokes pride, royalty, and eminence. Solie writes, "Her given name, inevitably, is Leonora. (Both Beethoven's and Tasso's Leonoras are invoked within the course of the novel.)….She is a dramatic, even histrionic character, as befits a diva, and her story is operatic and vivid" (172).

itinerant life on the stages of Europe and America; the Alcharisi, now married to a Russian prince, comes from a combination of cultures. Her mother was "English—a Jewess of Portuguese descent" (DD 633), her father "had been in various countries" (DD 633) but settled in Genoa where his family had roots. They represent the displacement and uprootedness of the Jewish people who are a marginalized people wherever they go. As Klesmer tells Mr. Bult, "I am the Wandering Jew" (DD 242). As with Eliot's earlier artist figures, they mirror the status of women in general in that they are marginalized by the society they live in. In the characters of Mirah and the Alcharisi there may be an additional metaphoric connection to being Jewish—that of a matrilineal bloodline which determines one's Jewishness. We never hear of Klesmer's parentage, but Mirah and the Alcharisi are very connected to the women in their lineage and oppose the patriarchal figures. Furthermore, there is a strong relation in the maternal link to "voice." Mirah strongly connects with and has been influenced by her mother, whom she remembers in terms of her singing. Mirah tells Mrs. Meyrick that her earliest memory is of her mother's face and that she sang Jewish hymns to her and taught her songs. The Alcharisi has been shaped by her mother's sister, who was also a singer. When the young Alcharisi/Leonora is left motherless at eight years old, she goes to live with her aunt Leonora, her namesake and role model, who taught her to sing, thus planting the seeds of her future career.

Although Eliot seems equivocal regarding female public performance, it is never explicitly denounced. Rather her criticism is directed at the larger societal attitudes that devalue women. This is strongly demonstrated in the careers of both Mirah and the Alcharisi. Eliot makes clear that they have not been exploited by their careers; rather, they have been objectified and commodified through their domestic ties. It is their fathers

who wanted to force them into actions against their wills. Mirah's father profited from her talents and nearly prostituted her. The Alcharisi's father saw her merely as a means to a grandson, an attitude that reduced her to chattel. She tells Deronda that her "father tyrannized over me—he cared more about a grandson to come than he did about me: I counted as nothing" (DD 634); "He wished I had been a son; he cared for me as a makeshift link" (DD 631). The effect of their fathers' actions determines their differing attitudes towards a stage career. For Mirah the stage represents the exploitation by her manipulative father. For the Alcharisi the stage represents freedom from such exploitation and manipulation. The stage for her was a means to live out her own life, rather than that of her father's. Eliot carries out the issue of exploitation more fully in the docile Mirah. The Alcharisi's traits of self-determination, ambition, and rebellion allowed her to escape being victimized. Mirah, as a traditional, submissive separate spheres woman, is more easily exploitable. She has none of the masculine sphere attributes that might have better protected her. However, both women make choices they did not want in order to escape a worse fate. Mirah chooses flight and suicide as solutions to her problems; the Alcharisi marries her cousin in order to get away from her father.

In temperament and fate, the Alcharisi strongly resembles Armgart who also loses her voice and career. Da Sousa Correa states that "the Princess follows her poetic model Armgart, a disturbing portrait of the consequences of a less amenable kind of female genius. The Princess and Armgart both berate the fallacy of not according women's artistic genius the same right of fulfillment as that of men" (153). Auerbach argues that Eliot's heroines demonstrate a capacity to perform that enables them to escape the confines of the domestic sphere. The fates of Mirah and the Alcharisi bear this out. Mirah

lacks the ability to perform. She sings beautifully but dislikes acting. She tells Mrs. Meyrick, "the plays I acted in were detestable to me….my acting was not good except when it was not really acting, but the part was one that I could be myself in" (DD 217). Da Sousa Correa suggests that this is Eliot's strategy for making Mirah both an ideal woman and an ideal singer: "It was no mean feat after all to portray a trained singer, who had acted on the public stage, as the epitome of feminine respectability, and it is hard to imagine how else Eliot could have done this than to make Mirah hate acting" (151). The Alcharisi, on the other hand, excels at both singing and acting. She drew on all her talents, including the art of "concealment" (DD 632), in order to achieve selfhood. Public performance is a problematic issue in Eliot but one that also signals self-determination, inner strength, and a force against repression. Eliot is known to have admired the work of the actress Helen Faucet, who, like Mirah, was noted for her dignity and womanliness. Da Sousa Correa notes that "Lewes records Eliot as having Helen Faucet specifically in mind when composing Klesmer's comments on the lofty status of art and the artist" (157).

The Alcharisi, like Armgart, heavily denounces the masculinist restrictions that attempt to reduce her to a prescriptive role. Both women had to fight an uphill battle in their careers as the preeminent opera singer of her day. Both divas risk the dangers that can accompany public performance rather than be reduced to silence and live the prescribed life of the common women. Lewis writes that in these two characters, "Eliot depicts a varied look at women and artistry in two extremes—the terror of being on display contrasted with the greater terror of being silenced" (176-77). Like Armgart, in the Alcharisi the idea of being a spectacle is raised. The Graf tries to warn Armgart

against the threat of corruption that comes with a stage a career; the Alcharisi says her father "hated that Jewish women should be thought of by the Christian world as a sort of ware to make public singers and actresses of" (DD 631). Her response to this kind of thinking is, "As if we were not the more enviable for that! That is a chance of escaping from bondage" (DD 631). Again, Eliot juxtaposes the commodification of women within both domestic and public roles.

Also like Armgart, Alcharisi is dismissive of suitors and the idea of marriage. In their first interview Alcharisi explains to Deronda that her first marriage to her cousin was a means of escape: "I did not want to marry. I was forced into marrying your father … by my father's wishes and commands; and besides, it was my best way of getting some freedom. I could rule my husband, but not my father" (DD 626-27). Echoing Madame Laure's words, Alcharisi claims she had no room or desire for so-called romantic love: "I did not want affection. I had been stifled with it" (DD 626). When she relates part of her history since her days as a diva we are told she has five other children. When Deronda asks if there is not love between her and her other children, she says, "Oh yes … but … I am not a loving woman. That is the truth. It is a talent to love—I lacked it. Others have loved me—and I have acted their love" (DD 666). Then in words that reiterate Gwendolen's disdain for romantic love and the desire to control rather than be controlled, she says, "I know very well what love makes of men and women—it is subjection. It takes another for a larger self, enclosing this one. I was never willingly subject to any man. Men have been subject to me" (DD 666). Even now she refuses any kind of dependence on men. When Deronda seeks to give her comfort she tells him, "I

am suffering. But with a suffering that you can't comfort" (DD 625), and "I need nothing that the skill of man can give me" (DD 640).

Alcharisi's diminishment, anger, and fear take the form of loss of voice, as with Armgart. At the height of her career she experiences a loss of voice, which she portrays in vague language, as something she did not understand. She explains to Deronda:

> "Something befell me. It was like a fit of forgetfulness. I began to sing out of tune. They told me of it. Another woman was thrusting herself in my place. I could not endure the prospect of failure and decline. It was horrible to me….I felt my greatness sinking away from me….I would not wait till men said, 'She had better go.'" (DD 639)

Rather than let men determine her fate, she gives up her career and marries in a "resolve taken in desperation" (DD 639). She tells Deronda, "I meant not to marry again—no more than I meant to be the shattered woman that I am now" (DD 637). Marriage, however, was her only way to escape ignominy. Her action echoes the all-or-nothing attitudes of Armgart and Gwendolen. She tells Deronda, "I made believe that I preferred being the wife of a Russian noble to being the greatest lyric actress of Europe….I acted the part" (DD 639). The cruel irony is that her voice came back, but it was too late to reverse her decision. Alcharisi's anger, regret, and resentment pervade her character. Everything conspires against her will: family, tradition, religion, motherhood. She has tried to live a life of freedom, expression, and self-determination but in the end she has been forced back into the patriarchal order. The bitterness she feels is expressed is the heading to the first chapter in which the Alcharisi appears. It is taken from a poem Eliot

worked on about the Erinna[8] of classical legend. Her story is representative of the Alcharisi's life:

> She held the spindle as she sat,
> Erinna with the thick-coiled mat
> Of raven hair and deepest agate eyes,
> Gazing with a sad surprise
> At surging visions of her destiny—
> To spin the byssus drearily
> In insect-labor, while the throng
> Of gods and men wrought deeds that poets wrought in song. (DD 624)

Terence Cave explains that Erinna is "a symbol of the repression of women's talents and their exclusion from participation in world events" (DD 840). For the Alcharisi this began from the moment of her birth. She explains, "I was to be what [my father] called 'the Jewish woman' under pain of his curse. I was to feel everything I did not feel, and believe everything I did not believe" (DD 630). When Deronda asks what his grandfather was like her feelings are a mixture of admiration and rebellion. She tells Deronda that he was learned

> and a clever physician—and good: I don't deny that was he was good. A man to be admired in a play—grand, with an iron will….But such men turn their wives and daughters into slaves. They would rule the world if

[8] Terence Cave explains the reference in a footnote to the 1995 Penguin edition. He writes that the lines are from "a fragment from the first stanza of GE's poem 'Erinna', in *Collected Poems*, pp.186-8. A brief preliminary note by GE herself explains that the Greek poetess Erinna 'died in early youth when chained by her mother to the spinning-wheel. She had as yet known the charm of existence in imagination alone'" (840).

> they could; but not ruling the world, they throw all the weight of their will on the necks and souls of women. (DD 631)

Deronda tries to mitigate his grandfather's actions by saying he must have acted out of good intentions, but his mother's anger is as fresh as it was over twenty years ago. She angrily expresses her feelings using images of torture and restraint: "he never thought of his daughter except as an instrument. Because I had wants outside his purpose, I was to be put in a frame and tortured" (DD 662); "He never comprehended me, … he only thought of fettering me into obedience" (DD 630); "I hated living under the shadow of my father's strictness….[his] teaching … pressed on me like a frame that got tighter and tighter as I grew" (DD 630).

Her pain and anger is fueled on finding that Deronda is glad he is a Jew. Deronda accuses her of taking away what was rightly his by birth. She asks him, "How could I know that you would have the spirit of my father in you? How could I know that you would love what I hated?" (DD 628). She defends her actions of leaving her faith and of giving Deronda to Sir Hugo Mallinger to be raised as English by equating her faith with bondage. She says, "I had a right to be free. I had a right to seek my freedom from a bondage that I hated….And the bondage I hated for myself I wanted to keep you from. What better could the most loving mother have done? I relieved you from the bondage of having been born a Jew" (DD 627). That she deserted her child is what she is most heavily criticized for. In part it is because she hates her faith. She believes it tried to keep her small and she did not want the same fate for her child. However, what makes the Alcharisi unique is her unapologetic denouncement of motherhood. She saw it as interfering with her plans and just another way of keeping her subjected. She explains her

actions by saying, "'I thought I chose something better for you than being with me. I did not think that I deprived you of anything worth having.…I don't mean to speak ill of myself', said the Princess with proud impetuosity, 'but I had not much affection to give you'" (DD 626). In even stronger language she tells him

> "Every woman is supposed to have the same set of motives, or else to be a monster. I am not a monster, but I have not felt exactly what other women feel—or say they feel, for fear of being thought unlike others. When you reproach me in your heart for sending you away from me, you mean that I ought to say I felt about you as other women say they feel about their children. I did *not* feel that. I was glad to be freed from you." (DD 628)

Much of the Alcharisi's argument is directed against the narrow definition of womanhood. She is not portrayed as monstrous but she is depicted as being different from other women. The narrator describes the Alcharisi in images that emphasize her otherworldliness. As with Eliot's other powerful female characters, they are images of mythological women of power and beauty. Deronda's first impression of her was that "She was a remarkable-looking being….Her worn beauty had a strangeness in it as if she were not quite a human mother, but a Melusina, who had ties with some world which is independent of ours" (DD 624). In their second interview he is again struck by the combination of her ethereal beauty and sense of power: "dressed in a loose wrap of some soft silk, in colour a dusky orange, her head again with the black lace.… You might have imagined her a sorceress" (DD 659). His final image of her is "in her dusky flame-coloured garment, she looked like a dreamed visitant from some region of departed mortals" (DD 666). Her disclosure of the fact that she doesn't have long to live accounts

for some of the detached distance she keeps. Yet, Eliot is also clearly linking her with the Romantic figure of the artist, as she does with Klesmer. In these terms the artist is set apart from others, connected to a larger world, is flamboyant and striking, with a degree of permissible arrogance. Her commitment to her art also echoes that of Klesmer's. He declares "she—Art, my mistress—is worthy, and I will live to merit her" (DD 255); Alcharisi's words, with the element of freedom added are: "I meant to be free, and to live for my art" (DD 639). Both artists place their art above all else.

Though she has relinquished her career, the Alcharisi is still first and foremost an artist. It is engrained in her identity. It is as if she were born for the drama of the stage. She has a face "so mobile that the next moment she might look like a different person. For even while she was examining him there was a play of the brow and nostril which made a tacit language" (DD 624). The narrator says that her

> speech was in fact a piece of what may be called sincere acting: this woman's nature was one in which all feeling … immediately became matter of conscious representation: experience immediately passed into drama, and she acted her own emotions. In a minor degree this is nothing uncommon, but in the Princess the acting had a rare perfection of physiognomy, voice, and gesture. (DD 629)

The narrator again alludes to the power that attends performance. Alcharisi herself says she was born to be an artist. The outrage Deronda feels at being denied his birthright is mirrored in her not being allowed to be an artist. She still speaks with pride at what she once was, though there is also "a passionate self-defense in her tone" (DD 626) as she tells her son: "I was a great singer, and I acted as well as I sang. All the rest were poor

beside me. Men followed me from one country to another" (DD 626). As with Armgart, much of her joy at being an artist comes from her competitiveness, which exults at being the best, and from the love of fame that accompanies such success. She says of her past glory, "I was the Alcharisi you have heard of: the name had magic wherever it was carried. Men courted me" (DD 634). Her art gave her an equal, sometimes superior, status with men. Her pride at what she once was is evidenced in a miniature she gives to Deronda. In her strongest assertion of her right to be an artist she asks him: "Had I not a rightful claim to be something more than a mere daughter and mother? The voice and the genius matched the face. Whatever else was wrong, acknowledge that I had a right to be an artist….My nature gave me a charter" (DD 664).

Though she was devoted to her art, her main motivation clearly derived from the freedom it granted her—freedom to be herself, to express herself, to determine the course of her life. The diminished and circumscribed life of the Jewish woman her father wanted for her is juxtaposed against her life as an artist. Deronda attempts to sympathize with her about his grandfather opposing her desire to be an artist, saying he can "imagine the hardship of an enforced renunciation" (DD 631), to which she replies,

> "No….You are not a woman. You may try—but you can never imagine what it is to have a man's force of genius in you, and yet to suffer the slavery of being a girl. To have a pattern cut out—'This is the Jewish woman; this is what you must be; this is what you are wanted for; a woman's heart must be of such a size and no larger, else it must be pressed small, like Chinese feet.…'" (DD 631)

She is most eloquent when she expresses the drive in her to be an artist, which allows her to live life to the fullest: "I cared for the wide world, and all that I could represent in it.…I wanted to live a large life, with freedom to do what everyone else did, and be carried along in a great current …" (DD 630). She achieved her dreams and was living the life of her choosing. Not even Klesmer has reached the heights she had. She was single-minded in her determination to hold on to her artist's path: "I wanted to live out the life that was in me, and not to be hampered with other lives….No princess in this tame life that I live now….I was living a myriad lives in one" (DD 626); "I had no bonds. For nine years I was a queen. I enjoyed the life I had longed for" (DD 639).

However, as a woman, her eminence was limited to the stage. She tells Deronda, "A great singer and actress is a queen, but she gives no royalty to her son" (DD 634). This has been part of her reason for giving him to Sir Hugo. She had fame and success for herself but nothing that would be passed on to her son. Sir Hugo, by contrast, could give him the life of an English gentleman. She tells Deronda, "I chose for you what I would have chosen for myself" (DD 628). In addition, the life of the artist left no room for her as mother: "You see I had no life left to love you with….But there is more fortune for you. Sir Hugo was to keep it in reserve. I gave you all your father's fortune. They can never accuse me of robbery there" (DD 640).

Alcharisi draws from a broad section of the gender spectrum. She is very much what Gwendolen would have liked to be—a powerful woman, dependent on no one, adored by many. Her beauty and charisma made her popular to men, her talent and artistry secured her admiration from her audience. The masculine sphere traits of ambition and independence and the feminine sphere traits of her charm and beauty

combined with her huge talent to create her success. She realizes that most of these traits come from her father and credits Nature. She tells Deronda that “nature sometimes thwarts” (DD 631) such men as her father. “My father had no other child than his daughter, and she was like himself” (DD 631-32) —proud, determined, and willful. She exhibits some of the imperious masculine characteristics that she has so rebelled against. She is both silenced and silences. When reference is made to her earlier in the novel as a renowned diva, Sir Hugo says she has been silenced by marriage. She has earlier been thwarted, diminished, and silenced by her father. However, she displays the same attitude towards her son. Deronda tells her, “You renounced me—you still banish me—as a son” (DD 663), and when he asks if they cannot now be together she denies him this with a firm, “‘No, not possible….I have a husband and five children. None of them know of your existence.’ Deronda felt painfully silenced” (DD 638-639).

Her hardness of will is that of her father’s. The cousin she married, Deronda’s father, was her opposite. She tells Deronda she married him and used traditional feminine artifice to gain her ends:

> Your father was different….I knew I could rule him; and I made him secretly promise me, before I married him, that he would put no hindrance in the way of my being an artist. My father was on his deathbed when we married: From the first he had fixed his mind on my marrying my cousin Ephraim. And when a woman’s will is as strong as the man’s who wants to govern her, half her strength must be concealment. I meant to have my will in the end, but I could only have it by seeming to obey. (DD 632)

Deronda resembles his grandfather in the face but is more like his gentle father, another link with his feminine nature. Mother and son demonstrate the impossibility of assigning specific traits to one gender. Deronda's father is like a traditional separate spheres woman, "all lovingness and affection" (DD 632), single-minded in his devotion to his wife. Alcharisi tells Deronda that his father "made it the labor of his life to devote himself to me … and lived to wait on me—he went against his conscience for me. As I loved the life of my art, so he loved me" (DD 633). The narrator compares Deronda's warmth and affection with his mother's distant personality in terms of gender: "It seemed that all the woman lacking in her was present in him …" (DD 660).

In spite of the Alcharisi's careful planning and the years of triumph as a diva, her father and the patriarchal order still dominate her and determine her actions. The bitter irony she feels at Deronda proudly claiming his birthright as a Jew is intensified as she divines that he is love with a Jewish woman. Worst of all for Alcharisi is her realization that she is still subject to the will of her father. This demonstrates the pervasiveness of patriarchal power, a force that has made itself a part of who she is and is something she cannot escape. When Deronda asks her why she is revealing the truth to him now, she says it is the combination of her fatal illness and the specter of her father: "I obey something tyrannic….I have been forced to obey my dead father. I have been forced to tell you that you are a Jew, and deliver to you what he commanded me to deliver" (DD 631). The pain this causes her is visible in her face; Deronda perceives "the heart-rending piteousness of this mingled suffering and defiance" (DD 631). What she has been fighting against her whole life she now bends to. The image of the spirited Gwendolen kneeling to the will of Grandcourt is evoked. Even the most determined and ambitious of

women must submit to the all-pervasive power of the patriarchal order, whether it is in a husband, a father, or the system itself. Alcharisi explains:

> "I wanted not to marry….My father died three weeks after we were married, and then I had my way!" She uttered these words almost exultantly; but after a little pause her face changed, and she said in a biting tone, "It has not lasted, though. My father is getting his way now." (DD 633)

She blames her change of mind on the illness that is now upon her, and links the pain, suffering, and death sentence of her illness with her father's will: "It is illness … my mind has gone back…. My pain seems to keep me there" (DD 635). She further explains that her father's "'right' … is laying hold of me….Well, I will satisfy him. I cannot go into the darkness without satisfying him" (DD 636). After a life of battling, she finally admits defeat as she sees her son joining forces with her father: "And *your* soul consents….I have after all been the instrument my father wanted" (DD 662).

Though Alcharisi sees her son as perpetuating the will of her father, she ends by feeling that he might also liberate her from her father's grip, which is part of Deronda's role. The power and subjection that Alcharisi, Gwendolen, and Mirah feel from patriarchal forces is to some extent reversed for all of them by Deronda, who represents a different kind of man. He rescues Mirah and determines to protect her against her conniving father. In the case of Gwendolen and the Alcharisi, Deronda acts as a buffer against the haunting grip of the men who exercise their power on them from beyond the grave. It is a psychological pull from the grave that destroys their peace of mind. When Gwendolen makes her confession about the death of Grandcourt to Deronda she tells him,

"He is dead….His face will not be seen above the water again….Not by any one else—only by me—a dead face—I shall never get away from it" (DD 689). Deronda assuages her guilt and comes between her and the dead face by telling her, "This death was an accident that you could not have hindered" (DD 690). He reasserts his faith in her by saying, "I believe that you may become worthier than you have ever been—worthy to lead a life that may be a blessing" (DD 700). Confession and absolution are also played out in Deronda's interviews with his mother. The Alcharisi similarly says she is haunted by the face of her father and describes the unease that presses on her. However, now that she has restored Deronda to his birthright and experienced his gentle, loving nature, she says it is his face that she will now see, not that of her father's: "perhaps now I have satisfied my father's will, your face will come instead of his—your young, loving face" (DD 640); "I shall see you instead of always seeing your grandfather….You will come between me and the dead" (DD 664). Deronda takes on the weight of these women's confessions and enables them to live more at peace, freed from the controlling grip of the men in their lives who represent domination and repressive patriarchy.

The Alcharisi is Eliot's most voiced female artist but she is framed in a way that emphasizes the silence and diminishment she now endures. Especially when compared to Klesmer, the fate of the female artist is shown as being markedly different from that of the male. In many ways Alcharisi is a female Klesmer; like him she was successful and was sought after for her musical genius. Like him she is egotistical, cosmopolitan, and bold. The narrator, however, brings attention to her different status as a female artist. Unlike Klesmer, we experience her only in the private sphere in two brief scenes. The only person she interacts with is Deronda. Klesmer interacts with Gwendolen, Mirah,

Catherine, her parents, the Meyricks, and various people at the musical gatherings. He speaks with great authority in public about the role of the artist. By contrast, the Alcharisi is still defending her actions of twenty years ago and she does this in private to an audience of one. Klesmer's genius is frequently referred to by other characters and the narrator; the Alcharisi must claim that status for herself. We only know her as she recounts her early life to her son; we never hear about her life as wife and mother. This part of her life is left out, perhaps symbolic of her silencing.

Alcharisi has learned to be defiant and defensive in order to survive and cannot let go of that behavior now. Deronda asks, "then are we to part, and I never be anything to you?" and she responds, "It is better so….you will always have a condemnation of me in your heart" (DD 660). In spite of her anger and coldness, Eliot manages to show the tenderness she feels for her son—though it is a tenderness she tightly controls. Alcharisi implies that because she gave him away, she has no claim to any of his affection now. Deronda pleadingly says, "'Take my affection'. She looked at him admiringly rather than lovingly, then kissed him on the brow, saying sadly, 'I reject nothing, but I have nothing to give'," then seeing the look of pain in his face says, "It is better so. We must part again soon, and you owe me no duties. I did not wish you to be born. I parted with you willingly" (DD 634). Deronda never stops trying to offer his love and affection, but she closes herself off to it, relentlessly keeping the pact with herself she had made years ago. There is no room for any of her former life in the role of princess, wife, and mother she has traded for. In spite of her words, she is not shown as completely hard-hearted. She feels his pain when he voices his doubts as to whether Mirah will accept him, which elicits her sympathy. She says, "Poor boy! ... I wonder how it would have been if I had

kept you with me" (DD 665). The memory she wants him to keep of her, are those of a mother: "You shall let me think of you as happy. I shall have done you no harm….When I am in your mind, you will look as you do now—always is if you were a tender son,—always—as if I had been a tender mother" (DD 664). The sense of loss and pain is palpable in the final scene between them. After a life of wondering about his parentage and finally finding his mother, Deronda must now accept the fact that this is the last time they will meet. He gives "an audible sob" and his mother says, "Good-bye, my son, good-bye. We shall hear no more of each other" (DD 666).

No matter how compelling the reasons for her former actions, the Alcharisi is antipathetic to Eliot's injunction for the role of art and the artist, which is to expand the sympathies and to connect with others. Alcharisi never experiences the transcendence and transformation from the effect of her art. Rather, we are not told about this part of her. In her brief scenes we are shown that she has never gotten beyond her anger towards her father. Midler writes, that "Eliot's recognition of anger, hostility, even violent rage as important wellsprings of female art is obvious. So, too, is her conviction of the ultimate need to transcend those feelings" (105). This is the Alcharisi's failing. However, viewed from a subversively written point of view, it can also be seen as her triumph. The Alcharisi is the most voiced of all Eliot's female artists. She is the most articulate about her anger and outrage at being demeaned as a woman. She is not humbled, as Armgart is at the end. She does not connect with the common lot of women, though she does enter the private domestic sphere. Alcharisi goes down fighting in a triumph of sorts. She finally obeys her father's wish but in a spirit of resistance and defiance, which we hear through her bitter words. Midler writes that the Alcharisi "embodies Eliot's resistance to

rigid preconceptions of female nature, and her sense of the individual differences which make sexual stereotypes invalid.…Still, personal fulfillment eludes her; the implications of her emancipation are disturbing" (104-05).

It is difficult not to draw parallels of the female artist with Eliot and her life as an artist. Midler writes that, "The Princess' self-justification for shunning the conventional female lifestyle … conveys both the defiance of the girl who became George Eliot, and the unresolved conflicts of the successful author" (104). Midler further suggests that the Alcharisi's anger at the system that would keep her small "surely borrows some of its intensity from Marian Lewes' youthful resentment. Even in his reverential 'Life of George Eliot,' second husband John Walter Cross conceded that the Princess' famous complaint in Daniel Deronda could best be interpreted as Eliot's own *cri de coeur*" (104). On the one hand, the narrator criticizes Alcharisi's lack of maternal instincts, which are always highly valued in Eliot, in both male and female characters. On the other hand, Alcharisi demonstrates that not all women feel the same thing and she suggests other possibilities for women.

Miller writes that "The bleakness with which Eliot characterizes the diminished lives of Armgart and the Alcharisi….conveys a sense of regret for their loss of public influence" (42). For the Alcharisi, as for Armgart, this brings up a troubling point related to their singing. While most critics acknowledge the complexity of the Alcharisi's character, they seem to lean towards the sentiment that Eliot is denouncing her successful diva and criticizing her for lack of feminine attributes. Other signs, however, point to another reading of the Alcharisi, one that is subversive and largely inferred. That she was such a huge success points to the level of artistry and the quality of voice she must have

had. Without exception in Eliot, a beautiful voice indicates depth of soul, the ability to connect to something larger than oneself, and the ability to transform others. Eliot never directly alludes to her voice, but to have reached such heights, Alcharisi must have had a beautiful, moving voice, which indicates the ability to positively influence others and nobility of character.

There are other factors that further complicate the easy condemnation of the Alcharisi. Noteworthy is the fact that although she is present in only two scenes, they are all hers. Eliot allows her center stage in the two chapters on her and Deronda. She is presented as still being dramatic, beautiful, and powerful. She controls the scenes. In addition, she has also kept her high status by becoming a princess. Eliot doesn't relegate her to an obscure fate or a life in service of others, as she does with Dinah, Dorothea, and Armgart. Perhaps most indicative that Eliot does not punish her is the fact that she becomes a mother. The Alcharisi, though we never hear of her life after her career, went on to have five children, whom she admits to loving and being loved by them. She is fecund, dynamic, talented, and strong. As Eliot believed in progressive evolution, these are favorable traits for a woman to have. Perhaps as proof of this is that fact that Eliot makes the Alcharisi mother to her most sympathetic male character. Deronda personifies the type of character necessary to bring about social evolution. He is a combination of British and "other," Christian and Jew; he has a balance of positive masculine and feminine attributes; he aids women in voicing their inner selves, and brings about healing and transformation in all the lives he touches. Weliver writes that "More than simply a goal for individual growth, the novel represents a woman's ability to evolve as also linked to positive social evolution" (236). The Alcharisi fulfills this role both as artist and

as mother. Not only does she transform her own life from traditional house-bound Jewish woman to famed diva of her day, and when that fails, once again escapes obscurity by becoming a princess, she also bears a son who actively engages in the social evolution of his people. However, like all of Eliot's performing women she is diminished at the end. The suffering from her fatal illness seems an expression of the anger and bitterness she has held on to. Some critics see the Alcharisi's illness and suffering as a punishment from Eliot. However, another way to read Eliot's giving her character illness and pain is as a way of tempering and "feminizing" her ambitious ego. Of all Eliot's female performers, the Alcharisi is the most voiced, the most intransigent, the most ambitious; perhaps for these reasons she is shown to suffer the most. Bodenheimer suggests that in Eliot's own life, she "punished" herself for her ambition and artistic success with frequent illness and physical suffering that she made public: "By separating her ambition from her achievement and transforming it into suffering, George Eliot could feminize and conceal it, both to her own satisfaction and for the benefit of her audience and admirers" ("Ambition" 8).

Given Alcharisi's brief appearance in the novel it is impossible to come to a conclusive reading of her. She is enigmatic, fascinating, and ultimately elusive. Her absence haunts Deronda's whole life and runs throughout the novel. Both her presence and her absence disrupt and disturb the novel. Her life has been made up of resistance to her father, to religion, to woman's lot, even to her child. Her nature is to rebel, to push away, not to reconcile. She is also the embodiment of the theme of loss that pervades Daniel Deronda: her loss of voice and loss of identity as an artist; the theme of the lost mother in both Deronda and Mirah; the loss of a homeland for the Jews and the

rootlessness of Gwendolen; and the loss of inheritance in Deronda, Gwendolen, Lydia Glasher's children, and the females in the novel. The Alcharisi taps into something essential to the entire novel and gives voice to the sense of loss, to women's fate, to female anger. She is a touchstone for many of the novel's themes.

A final argument that Alcharisi represents something more is her claim to happiness, something almost non-existent in Eliot's works. At the end of their interview when Deronda refers to the "privation" she must have suffered, she responds, "Perhaps—but I *was* happy—for a few years I was happy" (DD 666). No other character in Eliot makes this claim and it demands a closer look into what Eliot is saying. It is evidence that there could exist for women the chance for happiness, fulfillment, and a life of purpose and meaning. The Alcharisi's career gave her the life that so eludes Gwendolen; the life that eludes most of Eliot characters. Da Sousa Correa writes that "Eliot's contrasting portrayals of female musicianship thwart attempts to categorise her attitudes towards female achievement….when voicing claims for the rights of female genius, or when intimating the rage produced by constraints on female ambition, Eliot can seem breathtakingly subversive" (157).

The character of the Alcharisi represents a condensation of women's anger, despair, and sense of unfairness that is found throughout Daniel Deronda. Woven throughout the novel are repeated references to women being undervalued and superfluous. There are several families made up of predominantly daughters, which is shown to be a detriment to the family and a failing in the mother. On their move to Offendene, Gwendolen is pleased that her uncle will play an active role in her life and that the family "would cease to be entirely, insipidly feminine" (DD 31) and she

considers her four half-sisters to be “superfluous” (DD 32). The narrator comments on “the sad faces of the four superfluous girls, each, poor thing—like those other many thousand sisters of us all …” (DD 229). When Sir Hugo’s wife dances with Deronda it is to her shame because it is “a blazonment of herself as the infelicitous wife who had produced nothing but daughters, little better than no children …” (DD 442). If there are sons they are shown as getting preferential treatment to their sisters. We are told that Lush “has stinted his wife and daughters of calico in order to send his male offspring to Oxford …” (DD 129); Gwendolen’s cousin Anna “knew what it was like to have a brother and to be generally regarded as of minor importance in the world …” (DD 654); and when Mrs. Meyrick asks Hans’ opinion of Mirah’s dress, her daughter Kate “playfully” remarks, “You don’t consult me, ma,….I notice mothers are like the people I deal with—the girls’ doings are always priced low” (DD 488). When Deronda sees the look of despair in Mirah’s face as she soaks her cloak in the river, “His mind glanced over the girl-tragedies that are going on in the world, hidden, unheeded, as if they were but tragedies of the copse or hedgerow, where the helpless drag wounded wings forsakenly, and streak the shadowed moss with the red moment-hand of their own death” (DD 188). The general state of women is shown as a forlorn one of suffering and of waiting for something better, but with little chance of improvement in their lives other than through marriage. Marriage itself is portrayed in disturbing terms, with the hint of violence being done to women. On the day of Gwendolen’s wedding the narrator weaves in a passing comment made by a young girl regarding the ill treatment of the gentry to their wives. Her mother responds, “Oh, child, men’s men: gentle or simple, they’re much of a muchness. I’ve heard my mother say Squire Pelton used to flog his dogs in his wife’s

room to frighten her …" (DD 353). The link between cruelty to animals and to wives is experienced by Gwendolen soon after her marriage. She observes of her husband: "He delights in making the dogs and horses quail….It will come to be so with me; and I shall quail" (DD 427). Disturbing images of torture are used to describe the effect of men's words and actions on women: when Klesmer shatters Gwendolen's dream of being an actress "her pride had felt a terrible knife-edge" (DD 256); "his words had really bitten into her self-confidence and turned it into the pain of a bleeding wound" (DD 261); "the truth she had asked for … had come like a lacerating thong" (DD 263). When her uncle tries to make the position of governess sound like a good thing for her, his words are compared to snakes with "poison bags … biting and stinging" (DD 269). When Grandcourt goes to see Lydia, Gwendolen experiences it as "red heat near a burn" (DD 555), and when Grandcourt forces her to hear what Lush has to say regarding his will, she experiences "the humiliation of standing an obvious prisoner" (DD 597) followed by Lush's words that were "like a sharp knife-edge drawn across her skin" (DD 600). Gwendolen attempts but cannot refuse to go sailing with him because "His words had the power of thumb-screws and the cold tough of the rack" (DD 680). Lydia's response to Grandcourt is shown in the same images of torture. When he tells her of his plans to marry Gwendolen, she feels "as if the thumb-screw and the iron boot were being placed by creeping hands within sight of the expectant victim" (DD 346). In addition, there are wider political issues that link the subjection of women with British imperialism, making "the domestic sphere … inseparable from the theater of history" (Cave xxiv). The references to slavery in the West Indies are evoked in Grandcourt's treatment of Gwendolen and there are several references linking women to bondage and slavery.

Against this framework of women's subjection the role of the female artist offers an antidote and suggests other possible roles for women. For the lucky few it affords an alternative lifestyle of independence and action in the public realm; for the anonymous multitude it offers proof that greater possibilities exist; for all, they give voice to the common lot of women. They demonstrate the female support and community that is necessary for women to progress beyond separate spheres identities. Unlike Gwendolen, the female artists are connected to something besides their separate spheres function as women. Mirah, the Alcharisi, Catherine Arrowpoint, and the Meyrick women are connected to something other than their roles as daughters, mother, or wives. Miller writes, "Eliot's exceptionally talented professional performers achieve power and self-determination that elude women whose talents are limited to drawing room entertainment, who are able to exercise little control over their social audiences and only fulfill their audience's demands" (41). The male and female artist figures actively engage in the larger workings of the world and give voice to possible revisionings.

The polyphonic voices of Daniel Deronda explore the many sides of female "voice." The issue isn't whether a woman voices herself on a stage or in the drawing room, but whether she expresses her "voice" and is true to her authentic self. Mirah Lapidoth and Catherine Arrowpoint are unbending in their integrity to what they most value. They find successful partnerships in both love and vocation. This is contrasted to the angry voices of Gwendolen, her dark double Lydia Glasher, and the Alcharisi, where "the other side of silence" (M 194) is the maenad's vengeful cry. The Alcharisi, though bitter and angry to the end, voices a strong denunciation of the limitations imposed on women, and provides an example of an ambitious woman who attains a great height. To

give expression to the multiple themes and issues in Daniel Deronda, Eliot uses a polyphonic interplay of voices made up of both male and female artist figures, those who are silenced and those who retain their voices, those who speak for women in particular and those who speak for society at large.

Conclusion

The Figure of the Artist: Resistance and Transformation

While much has been made of George Eliot's silencing of her female figures, this move can be seen as part of her larger strategy of voicing women's concerns. Although all the female characters discussed in the six works of this study are either pulled into the domestic sphere or somehow diminished at the end, their silencing makes up only a small part of their story and can be seen as a subversive, though safe, strategy of their creator. Eliot delivers her messages, and then camouflages them by not having the women succeed to the end. This fate is especially true of Eliot's female artists; they are silenced only after having spoken their minds—after having expressed their anger, their ambition, and their determination to live lives of purpose. Their silencing contrasts with their earlier voicing and puts into sharp relief the despair and sense of loss at their diminished lives. It also represents the *actual* condition of women who were circumscribed by a society that didn't allow for ambition and action outside the feminine sphere. The disappointing curtailment of freedom and the crushing of dreams in her female characters also reflect Eliot's disposition as a writer. In a letter from 1866 she writes: "It is my way (rather too much so perhaps) to urge the human sanctities through tragedy—through pity and terror as well as admiration and delights" (Haight, GE's Letters 319). That these spirited, talented women become diminished is disturbing; that characters such as Armgart and the Alcharisi experience such triumph and exaltation, followed by such despair and bitterness, is tragic.

It is difficult to separate the author from her works. Eliot's letters and journals reveal many of the same struggles she gives to her female characters—her search for purpose, her pursuit of masculine knowledge, her deep connection to the arts, her struggle against ambition and ego, and her despair. In a letter of 1848, before she began her career as a novelist, she wrote: "the only ardent hope I have for my future life is to have given to me some woman's duty, some possibility of devoting myself where I may see a daily result of pure calm blessedness in the life of another" (Haight, GE's Letters 68). This displaced ambition was later channeled into her writing, yet it is a sentiment that Eliot gives many of her female characters, which represents their limited vocational choices. Her "ardent hope" to devote herself to a worthy cause found expression throughout her career as a writer. In a letter written towards the end of her life in 1876 she explained, "It is my function as an artist to act (if possible) for good on the emotions and conceptions of my fellow-men" (Haight, GE's Letters 475). Driven largely by a sense of moral duty to her audience, Eliot focuses on conservative elements and largely keeps her heroines aligned with the feminine sphere attributes of self-sacrifice, duty, and service to others.

However, her writing also served as a medium for resistance. Through the creation of the artist figure Eliot was able to voice sentiments that she did not express in her articles, letters, or journals: ambition, ego, anger, rebellion, and vengeance. For the most part, these darker urges surface in subplots, in dark doubles, and through melodrama, perhaps percolating up from the "subversive subconscious." The creation of the artist figure is Eliot's way of voicing and working out the tension found in women and her society. Eliot displaces the "voice" of resistance and dissent onto artist figures, foreign "others" who, like women, are also marginalized by society. The artist

figure voices the resentment, dissatisfaction, and anger that women felt at being excluded from the larger stage of life. Beginning with her first work of fiction and ending with her final novel, the artist figure develops over the course of her works. The early figures are largely youthful dilettantes who are characterized by their search for a purpose and their inability to control their destiny; the later figures are mature professionals who have followed a determined path of action and vehemently express their rights as artist, their ambition, and their anger.

Particularly in the creation of the female artist Eliot was able to express the anger and bitterness bred of a system that tried to keep women small. The female performer experiences a greater degree of agency and participates in both public and private spheres. In these female characters Eliot creates new models of womanhood and expands the boundaries of women's realm. All her female performing figures are problematic to some extent, yet they can also be viewed in a positive light. They are the ones who fight back, who articulate the unfairness of the system, who demonstrate strength of will and determination. They struggle and they suffer, but first they sing, they perform, they step outside of the narrow domestic sphere and "voice" their humanity. Often angry and egotistical, they articulate their right to live a life of freedom and consequence; they voice their creative selves, their passions, and ambitions. Female "voice" becomes concentrated in these artist figures. Their voice becomes their lifeline, their vocation, their identity.

In the theme of the artist figure Eliot expands the definition of "feminine" and "masculine," broadening societal notions of gender. Both male and female artist figures possess traits of the opposite sphere, enabling them to identify more fully with humankind. As with her silencing technique, many of Eliot's strategies are ambiguous

and camouflaged. Eliot combines traditional feminine sphere attributes with ambition and self-determination so that sometimes her most idealized female characters are the most transgressive or disruptive, as in Dinah Morris and Mirah Lapidoth. They are so completely aligned with the feminine ideal that they don't appear subversive. In a similar manner, the handicapped, self-sacrificing Walpurga delivers one of the strongest denunciations against the masculine order, but it is camouflaged by being addressed to a woman. Dutiful daughters and wives demonstrate their competence in masculine endeavors, as in Maggie Tulliver's educational pursuits and Dorothea Brooke's plans for land reform. Eliot creates the successful divas Armgart and the Alcharisi, yet we don't see them performing. What we are really presented with is their anger at the restrictions society places on them. What is most notable and memorable, ironically, is their speaking voices—they have been famed divas but it their words that have such impact, their words that live on.

Eliot's later letters reveal her hope that women were acquiring more agency and that society was slowly changing for the better. In a letter of 1873 she writes, "The influence of one woman's life on the lot of other women is getting greater and greater with the quickening spread of all influences" (Haight, GE's Letters 412), and in 1876, "Women can do much for the other women (and men) to come. My impression of the good there is in all unselfish efforts is continually strengthened" (Haight, GE's Letters 475). Though ambivalent in her feelings about the "Woman Question," Eliot contributed to the cause in a way that embraced her larger vision of contributing to the general good. In a letter of 1868 she wrote, "My books are a form of utterance …" (Haight, GE's Letters 352). Her novels and poems became the vehicle for her utterance, for her "voice."

Especially through the figure of the artist, Eliot expresses a possible revisioning of society. Through their performances the artist figures transform themselves and their audience; through their words they argue for a more just society. In their resistance lies the hope for transformation.

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