G. Eliot, Forster and Lawrence (4)

The Sisters: A Study of *Middlemarch*, *Howards End* and *Women in Love* (II)

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要約

G.エリオット, フォースター, ロレンス(4)「姉妹」の小説
（Middlemarch, Howards End, Women in Love の比較）
II

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これらの小説に登場する「姉妹」の性格や生き方を比較する時、必ず、のぼってくるのは彼女達が、どんなタイプの男性を選ぶか、という問題である。タイプという言葉は、しばしば批判と軽蔑をこめて用いられるが、その一方では、ことに理想主義的傾向の強い女性の想像力をかきたて、憧憬、尊敬、献身の欲求をもたらす力や知性に満ちた「男性の神話」をも意味するのである。

しかも、この「男性の神話」としてのタイプは、その時代、社会の価値観と、これを受け容したり反発したりする女性の価値観との双方から構成されるもので、女性達は、あるいは被害者として、その薬になるなら、また、これを積極的に支持したり破壊する役割も担っている。ギリシャ神話のアンティゴネのように、社会的権力としての法、秩序を代表するクレオンを敵に回し、自らも死を選びつつクレオンの息子らをも同じ運命に巻きこんでいく女性——いわば、その男性神話に生きる男性にとってのファム・ファタールも存在する。

また、彼女らによる男性像の類型化は、それが肯定的なものであれ否定的なものであれ、作品の中の男達のキャラクタライゼーションに様々な問題をもたらす。リアルでないと批判される由縁だ。しかし、それ自体が小説の流れ問題意識に関わ、女性自身が、自らの恋、理想への情熱と幻滅のディレンマに立たされるとしたら、そのような状況からの脱皮を求める一つの重要な問題提起、そのためのエネルギーも、姉妹の中に見出されるかも知れないのだ。

現代社会の男性社会の二つの柱——金と知性——を取り巻く男達自身の葛藤と、彼らの虚像を作り上げ、また破壊する女達の葛藤を絡ませながら、三つの小説中の男性像を分析する。
II. The Worship of the Male Ideal

In the last chapter, I discussed the first sketch of the sisters in the three novels. There my major concern was, besides comparing and interpreting the images and styles of those novels, to find out what common problems the sisters share and how they differ in their reactions. These are related to the question: Why do they choose their particular type of lover?

I intentionally use the word "type", which, in fact, appears several times in Howards End, not always with a good connotation:

She [Margaret] knew this type very well—the vague aspirations, the mental dishonesty, the familiarity with the outsides of books. *(HE, p. 113)*

"I [Mr. Wilcox] know the world and that type of man [Leonard Bast], and as soon as I entered the room I saw you had not been treating him properly.... They aren't our sort...." *(HE, p. 141)*

"I [Margaret] said before—he isn't a type. He cares about adventures rightly. He's certain that our smug existence isn't all. He's vulgar and hysterical and bookish, but don't think that sums him up." *(HE, p. 144)*

"He [Mr. Wilcox] has all those public qualities which you [Helen] so despise and enable all this... If Wilcoxes hadn't worked and died in England for thousands of years, you and I [Margaret] couldn't sit here without having our throats cut." *(HE, p. 171)*

Not only on these occasions but more frequently Margaret and Helen describe the men by summing them up. Merely by comparing the first quotation (where Margaret sums up Leonard Bast) with the third quotation (where she objects to Mr. Wilcox's total disregard of Leonard's individual personality), we can see that her attitude, which seems to be heading for truth and reality of individual human beings, is not as consistent as she thinks. Her retort that "he isn't a type" does not prevent the sisters from putting Leonard into another, if more imaginative, category, which Helen comes to worship in her reaction to the Wilcox type of man. Margaret remains sensitive to Mr. Wilcox's glamour, but that too is classified, for instance, as "the Olympian laugh" of a successful "man of business". Also it has been a frequent criticism of the novel that the men are only types, not human beings.

But the word can also indicate more generally the idealization of a certain quality in man which the sisters pursue out of their reaction against their father's image. This applies more or less to the sisters' choice of men in all three novels. In this chapter, I shall discuss the idealization of men, particularly intellectuals and businessmen, and the problems which seem to be involved.

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25
Both the Brooke sisters (in *Middlemarch*) and the Schlegel sisters (in *Howards End*) are orphans, as Oedipus's daughters are in *Antigone*. In *Women in Love* the father remains but is so insignificant a figure as to be almost ignored. The figure who is supposed to take place of the father is the uncle in *Middlemarch*, as in *Antigone*, but Mr. Brooke has too "indefinite" a mind to offer any sort of leadership, or any really deep attatchmant. That is one reason why Dorothea seeks a more intellectual figure and eventually marries Casaubon. There is a gap as well as an ironic link between Casaubon's intellectual superiority and Creon's invincibility as statesman. Both see only what they choose to see and have the power to impress or constrain people. The major difference is that Dorothea sees Casaubon through the veil of idealization, while Antigone regards Creon as a sheer enemy or obstacle to her faith. In other words, Creon symbolizes the hostile reality of the society against Antigone's passionate allegiance to her dead kin. Although he claims to be her 'father', he is, to her, the anti–ideal, or what ought not to be. Casaubon, on the other hand, symbolizes the ideal or what ought to be:

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*, p. 4)

However, as soon as Dorothea marries him, Casaubon turns out to be a jealous and self-centred tyrant who does not deserve her devotion and respect. Casaubon, and probably other intellectuals like him, have the grotesque appearance of double masks: the fair appearance and the cold reality behind it.

Consider the case of Casaubon and the irony of what is generally called Casaubonism. Its signs appear at a very early stage, though Dorothea refuses to see the irony in her eagerness to grasp an ideal vision. They appear mainly through Celia's eyes:

How very ugly Mr Casaubon is! . . . Had Locke those two white moles with hairs on them? . . . Mr Casaubon is so sallow. . . . He talks very little. (*M*, p. 11)

Really, Dodo, can't you hear how he scrapes his spoon? And he always blinks before he speaks. I don't know whether Locke blinked, but I'm sure I am sorry for those who sat opposite to him if he did. (*M*, p. 31)

If, as Dorothea points out, Celia sees what "only the commonest minds observe", we feel there is a delightfully revealing truth in it, too. The point is that if there is no real significance in Mr Casaubon to match his 'important' gestures and what Dorothea calls Locke–like deep eye–sockets, then his whole figure is indeed as ludicrous as Celia makes out. That "he talks very little" is a telling point; because what impresses Dorothea is mainly not what he says but what she infers from his appearance, from what he meaningfully does not say. One occasion which particularly impresses Dorothea is when Casaubon steps in as Sir James Chettam insists on hearing the reason for her giving up horse–riding:

"We must not inquire too curiously into motives," he interposed, in his measured way. "Miss Brooke knows that they are apt to
become feeble in the utterance: the aroma is mixed with the grosser air. We must keep the germinating grain away from the light."

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; nay, who could illuminate principle with the widest knowledge: a man whose learning almost amounted to a proof of whatever he believed!

(M, p. 13)

Critics have pointed out that horse-riding, which Dorothea enjoys "in a pagan sensuous way" (M, p. 3), is a sexual symbol in a number of George Eliot's novels. Without the aid of Freud, we can see why Dorothea in her eagerness to reject commonness and to embrace spiritual truth, has "conscientious qualms" about it. But people like Sir James, Mr. Brooke or Celia would not understand; and if Dorothea tried to explain, her motives would be belittled and made to look ludicrous. And this fear is shared by Casaubon. Instead of leading her to confront "the grosser air" with her (or his) revealing light, he justifies her unwillingness to expose herself. That is typical of the kind of intellectualism which protects itself by excluding the outside world, and which is so much unlike what Lawrence's or Forster's main characters try to attain.

In Middlemarch, though the characters themselves are not aware, the style registers the subtle irony and contrast between leading "away from the light" and the longing for the man who "could illuminate" principle with the widest knowledge. Dorothea herself gradually discovers this irony after she marries Casaubon: "she was to live more and more in a virtual tomb, where there was the apparatus of a ghastly labour producing what would never see the light." (M, p. 329) Obviously, what Casaubon means by "the light" is the hostile belittling light of other eyes, but Dorothea before long realizes that one has to take it into account in order to "illuminate" the human mind. She learns that her husband's research, isolated from the world and from recent German scholarship, is entirely fruitless and yet that after his imminent death he wants her to take over and piece together the fragments of the work that he cannot bring himself to complete.

And now she pictured to herself the days, and months, and years which she must spend in sorting what might be called shattered mummies, and fragments of a tradition which was itself a mosaic wrought from crushed ruins—sorting them as food for a theory which was already withered in the birth like an elfin child. Doubtless a vigorous error vigorously pursued has kept the embryos of truth a-breathing: the quest of gold being at the same time a questioning of substances, the body of chemistry is prepared for its soul, and Lavoisier is born. But Mr Casaubon's theory of the elements which made the seed of all tradition was not likely to bruise itself unawares against discoveries:... it was a method of interpretation which was not tested by the necessity of forming anything which had sharper collisions than an elaborate notion of

27
Gog and Magog: it was as free from interruption as a plan for threading the stars together. (M, pp. 331–2—my italics)

"Nothing materializes! Everything withers in the bud," says Gudrun in *Women in Love*. The images are similar, but while Dorothea is just questioning a vain intellectual pursuit, Gudrun more radically is sceptical of all activity whatsoever. "The days, and months, and years" which she pictures, likewise, sound similar to "the repetition of repetitions" which Lawrence so detested, and yet Dorothea's idealism, unlike Gudrun's sweeping cynicism, can more easily pinpoint the reason for such futility. That German scholarship has already made useless what Casaubon is doing is not the essential problem.

Alchemy, though mistaken in the light of later science, did prepare the way for something greater and unknown to itself because at the same time it questioned "substances". The implication of the word "substance" is the solid material base which often collides with and looks as if it has nothing to do with its products. In order to keep a theory, a principle or method of interpretation alive, one has to let it be "tested by the necessity of forming" something through sharp "collisions". Casaubon has never let it happen; he cautiously guards his theory from any possibility "to bruise itself". He "talks very little" to people like Mr. Brooke, which Dorothea at first justifies by saying, "There is no one for him to talk to." (M, p. 11) But, as it turns out, he speaks very little to Dorothea, too.

The language which links alchemy, substance, chemistry, and the material base (which forms all human beings) sounds modern and even Lawrentian, and makes one look again at Lawrence's famous letter I referred to:

When Marinetti writes: 'it is the solidity of a blade of steel that is interesting by itself, that is, the incomprehending and inhuman alliance of its molecules in resistance to, let us say, a bullet. The heat of a piece of wood or iron is in fact more passionate, for us, than the laughter or tears of a woman'—then I know what he means. He is stupid, as an artist, for contrasting the heat of the iron and the laugh of the woman. Because what is interesting in the laugh of the woman is the same as the binding of the molecules of steel or their action in heat: it is the inhuman will, call it physiology, or like Marinetti—physiology of matter, that fascinates me. I don't care so much about what the woman *feels* in the ordinary usage of the word. That presumes an *ego* to feel with. I only care about what the woman *is*—what she *is*—inhumanly, physiologically, materially—according to the use of the word: but for me, what she *is* as a phenomenon (or as representing some greater, inhuman will), instead of what she feels according to the human conception. That is where the futurists are stupid. Instead of looking for the new human phenomenon, they will only look for the phenomena of the science or physics to be found in human being. . . . You mustn't look in my novel for the old stable ego of the character. There is another ego, according to whose action the individual is unrecognis-
able, and passes through, as it were, allotropic states which it needs a deeper sense than any we've been used to exercise, to discover are states of the same single radically-unchanged element. (Like as diamond and coal are the same pure single element of carbon. The ordinary novel would trace the history of the diamond—but I say 'diamond, what! This is carbon')

The letter was written in 1914 during the time Lawrence was still working on The Wedding Ring, which eventually became Women in Love (and The Rainbow). One of the things strongly in his mind is the inhumaneness and resistance of material (whether of the iron or of the woman) as against the 'stable' ego of the old moral scheme which the traditional author exemplifies in the novel, though he does not quite phrase it that way. He emphasizes the resistance of the material, calling it "a phenomenon", while pretending that in his novel "a certain moral scheme" does not exist. That is part of his emphatic oratorical style which is often misleading. But his own "certain moral scheme" does differ from ordinary moral schemes in that it allows or deliberately wills itself to be "bruised" (to use George Eliot's term) by what can neither be intended nor explained in the material. While "Mr Casaubon's theory of the elements which made the seed of all tradition was not likely to bruise itself unawares against discoveries", Lawrence's scheme deliberately attempts the opposite "to discover... states of the same single radically-unchanged element" below the surface of the individual. As Lawrence criticizes the futurists, he is attacking another sort of Casaubonism which brings the principle of the science of physics intact into the study of people. Any principle ought to collide with the mysterious unknown element of human being. That is what he intends here, mixing human terms with the terms of physical science: "allotropic states", "carbon", "diamond", "coal", "the laugh of the woman". . . .

Without going into Freud or Marinetti, however, we can see that the main purport of Lawrence's belief was already in George Eliot, especially in the quoted passage above. The implication is expanded through her ironic portrayal of Casaubon (both through Celia's sharp, almost caricaturing, tongue and through the coolly penetrating eyes of the narrative), the criticism of his scholarship (Ladislaw is the first to acquire knowledge enough to put his finger on its weakness), Dorothea's gradually growing awareness and intimacy (which hurts both Dorothea and Casaubon as his hidden reality is revealed), and Casaubon's own reaction: the change from shutting others out of his study to his growing dependence on and jealousy of Dorothea as he suddenly sees death approaching him. Death is the severest reality that Casaubon cannot shut out of his scholarship—the musty scholarship which has not yet seen the light outside and upon which, he believes, the value of his life depends. It is a belief, a myth, which binds him, and he seeks to bind others even though the myth remains unsubstantiated. Before his death, he almost succeeds in forcing a promise out of her, and on his death, he leaves a will which forbids her to marry Ladislaw (or else his legacy will not go to her). The will is particularly ironic because in the last resort he depends on the power of money rather than on the scholarship he has believed in.
As for Drothea, first she shares his myth, herself forming a vision of it when she marries him. But marriage with the actual man forces her to open her eyes to reality, with all the fears and ignoble sentiments arising out of the man struggling with death. There are further complications, such as her sympathy for the secret suffering of a man who has laboured for a fruitless project and will not admit his defeat even in death. But when later she learns the content of his will, she realizes the inhumanity of the dead hand which has never allowed itself to be touched by human emotions, either within himself or within others, degrading even her deep sympathy to the level of greed and calculation: Choose money rather than Ladislaw, a living, yet penniless, young man. That Ladislaw has been kept by Casaubon at a cold and calculating distance from him in spite of the blood-connection, that Ladislaw as a man has been ignored and victimized in order to preserve Casaubon's position in society, that Ladislaw has known enough to disbelieve in Casaubon's scholarship... These are the elements which make Ladislaw a victim of the social myth. As Gillian Beer has pointed out, Ladislaw stirs Dorothea's sympathy because they are both victims of man's values. But even without him Dorothea has to learn through her own experience the horrible doom of a man's "principle" (Casaubonism) which devours life in others as well as in himself.

Now, the problem of Casaubonism goes further than Casaubon himself. Dorothea herself, as I indicated by pointing out her own responsibility for imagining a mythical vision of his intellect, has an innate inclination to Casaubonism. Even her love for Ladislaw, after her disillusion with Casaubon, has a tendency to idolize the free young individual. If she escapes Casaubonism, it is only by learning to subject her adored vision and principle to harsh reality, in other words, by learning to die, from which some unknown possibility may open. If we follow this train of thought, we can see that Lawrence is not far from George Eliot. The difference between the two novelists is the shift of emphasis from the need to allow any deep understanding to be tested by the often-insensitive non-receptive world which has a life of its own (Eliot) to the need to explore the depth of this insensitive world (Lawrence).

'To explore' would be also a misleading word because it would not reflect his distinction from Freud, or more pertinently, from Joyce or Virginia Woolf. It looks as if Lawrence were trying to use the technique of 'stream of consciousness', slipping inside and observing from inside the workings of man's psyche. But the more adequate word for Lawrence would be to 'be bruised', 'be undermined', 'be surprised', 'be subjected'... further and further by the inexplicable and unmanageable nature of man. Hence the importance of stressing his link with George Eliot, though Lawrence is much more radical. To be sure, his intention is very deliberate, but that, too, is supposed to come under the subjection of the unknown and to go through "allotropic states" of transformation. Here is the difficulty of defining Lawrence's intention (or scheme) in a word.

A glance at Impressions of Theophrastus Such will illustrate further the link between George Eliot and Lawrence, especially in the representation of Casaubon. These sketches and essays were written in 1878 (Middlemarch was begun in 1869 and completed in 1872). One of them, "How We Encourage Research", is given by William Myers
an accurate summary and observation much to the point here:

... a piece about an amateur philologist and man of letters who has a strikingly original idea, the soundness of which is uncertain, but which is in any case very much at odds with the views of a prominent and influential professional scholar. In ensuing controversy, the philologist is very shabbily treated by the press and the intellectual community, and unfortunately this arouses his combative and egoistical instincts, so that the controversy itself comes to absorb all his attention, and so destroys his life. The philologist's situation is thus comparable with that of the artist or the teacher: his effectiveness as a scholar and as a man depends on his own capacity to withstand the humiliations of public exposure, and on society's willingness to react sensitively to his susceptibilities.¹

The difference between Casaubon and this philologist is that he does have an original idea, and he does publish. Significantly, he is an "amateur" philologist. He is guardlessly exposed and "shabbily treated" (belittling experience) both by the professional men themselves and the press. In the end his career and his whole life are ruined because he is not able to "withstand" the humiliations of public exposure. The controversy, which originated in the difference of ideas, has turned into the combat of 'egoistical' powers because neither side is willing to submit or to have his territory invaded, or to detach their own self-esteem from the intellectual issue. In pursuing the futile controversy to justify the truth of his idea exclusively, he moves away from the truth itself, losing the ability to place it in perspective. Thus, paradoxically, the public disputant falls into the same sort of failure as Casaubon.

Of course, there is Lydgate who tries to unite the ideal of purely scientific research with the ideal of medical practice. In a sense, he is closer to the philologist of "How We Encourage Research" than Casaubon is. Lydgate escapes or attempts to escape Casaubon's blindness to the tangible world by meeting the Middlemarchers with his humanistic ideal. The ideal is similar to Dorothea's in its spirit and, therefore, rouses her deep sympathy both when he first tries to practice his new ideas in the conservative and unenlightened Middlemarch society and after he is discredited by debts and what looks like his suspicious relationship with the entirely discredited Bulstrode. His failure results from his pride, which makes him blind to the minds of the Middlemarchers, and from the different pride, the experience of his graceful but uneconomical wife, Rosamond, who outwardly is everything a man could hope for. Rosamond weaves a social myth of her own around her husband, based on his 'reputation' for cleverness and good birth, which has little to do with his ideal, or even with the man himself.

The core of Lydgate's blindness is his idealism itself, which he places above everything else, whether social, domestic or emotional, reducing it to a subsidiary function. There is an account of his affair with an actress in his student days in Paris, which shows how headlong he could be in passion, but the disappointment of this romance makes him determined to take only "the scientific view" of women, which means nothing but
following the empty and superficial social view which places value on women's appearance and conformity. He gives up his responsibility for forming his own intrinsic view of a woman, for good or for bad, in the name of scientific truth and for the convenience of carrying out his ideal smoothly from a secure base. He does not worship Rosamond, but he trusts himself to society's 'myth' of a woman who is as graceful and gentle as her looks, and obeys and admires her husband's mind. When he fell in love with Rosamond, he fell in love with the graceful image of subservience to his own ideal, which is an illusion which betrays him the moment they are married.

Dorothea's marriage to Casaubon is an act of worship; she tries to embrace her ideal in Casaubon's person, though Casaubon himself worships and tries to justify only himself. Lydgate worships the ideal vision of himself (like Jenner): he would "resist the irrational severance between medical and surgical knowledge in the interest of his own scientific pursuits, as well as of the general advance: he would keep away from the range of London intrigues, jealousies, and social truckling, and win celebrity, however slowly, ... by the independent value of his work." (M, p. 99) The irony is that even if Lydgate avoids "London intrigues, jealousies, and social truckling" which, in fact, destroy such men as the philologist of "How We Encourage Research", there are in Middlemarch, too, intrigues, jealousies, and social truckling of an even meaner kind, which he fails to recognize. That is why he fails to fill the gap between his idea and its practice, even though he resists "the irrational severance between medical and surgical knowledge". His work cannot exist independently, though he believes in its "independent value"; this again reminds us of the philologist's mistake of forgetting the 'relative value' of his research in his eagerness to refute his opponents. Although Dorothea and Lydgate share an emotional and idealistic nature, Dorothea escapes the self-centredness of her vision by making it depend on another person, while Lydgate does not. In this sense, Lydgate is closer to Casaubon, because they both worship the idea of themselves and are betrayed, in different ways, by the social 'myth' of a woman's sweet obedience. Lydgate's story shows how the attempt to overcome the narrowness of an academic mind fails if it does not take account of its relationship to another person's mind. It is merely a substitution of one self-centred idea for another.

This being the major difference between Lydgate's myth and Dorothea's myth, we should remember that many contemporary readers wished Dorothea had chosen Lydgate for her lover, and that Middlemarch is composed of what were originally two stories: Dorothea's story ("Miss Brooke") and Lydgate's story. Whether the two stories are successfully joined depends upon the parallelism between them and upon the sympathy and fellowship between the two central characters. While the parallelism shows the similarities between the two stories, it also highlights the gap between Dorothea's mind and Lydgate's mind, a breach which is not mended until the very end when Lydgate's practice in Middlemarch is ruined. His ideal could not incorporate its own relationship to another mind, whether Rosamond's or other Middlemarchers', so that it escapes its narrowness only when it collapses. His life and research after he leaves Middlemarch, a study of 'gout' among wealthy patients in a resort, is only a parody of his glorious
humanistic ideal, though he has learned to consider the limited range of his wife's thoughts and ambitions. It seems to me that the emphasis on the self-enclosedness (call it 'independence') of Lydgate's mind makes it impossible for him to fall in love with Dorothea. Their relationship does not depend on love but on fellowship, based on common experience, understanding, and imagination. It has its plus and minus elements. Unlike love, it is free from the dazzling effect of romantic worship, but whether the fellowship could be developed at a convincingly deep level is another matter. What is to be regretted is not exactly that they do not become lovers but that someone like Dorothea does not criticize him or open his mind to a critical view of his own ideal. Then, their relationship might have been more fruitful. Of course, to do that, she would have at once to see that she was criticizing her own ideal in doing so. And this requires a change of character both in Dorothea and in Lydgate. Enveloped in the web of social and cultural tradition, they are too respectful and diffident, as a man and a woman, to have such an aggressive exchange of critical voices. And they do not come close enough to know each other that well.

That is what Lawrence attempted to have his characters do in Women in Love. If we follow the line of Casaubon, the philologist of "How We Encourage Research", and Lydgate—the researcher and teacher caught in the dilemma of willing and being unwilling to expose his knowledge to other people's minds—we come to Rupert Birkin. Birkin often philosophizes and tries to teach others, sometimes disguising his difference from others in amiability and "affected social grace, that somehow was never quite right" (WL, p. 177). He sometimes writes serious philosophical letters indiscriminately to those artist-friends in London, who at Cafe Pompadour would read out one of them "in the sing-song, slow, distinct voice of a clergyman reading the Scriptures" to ridicule his sense of mission. On the last occasion, Gudrun takes the letter and coolly walks away with it, later crying out:

I could have killed them! ... Dogs!—they are dogs!—Whys is Rupert such a fool as to write such letters to them? Why does he give himself away to such canaille? It's a thing that cannot be borne—

(WL, p. 385)

Gudrun, so to speak, declares there is a limit to one's "capacity to withstand the humiliation of public exposure" and that Birkin should not "give himself away". In a way, Birkin seems almost incurably naive and guileless in such instances, but we know from other instances that he is a highly sophisticated man and should be aware of what he is doing.

For instance, there is the strangely self-conscious conversation between Birkin and Gerald Crich's half-mad mother:

"I myself can never see why one should take account of people, just because they happen to be in the room with one: why should I know they are there?"

"Why indeed, why indeed!" said Mrs. Crich, in her low, tense voice. "Except that they are there,—I don't know people whom I find in the
house. The children introduce them to me—'Mother, this is Mr So-
and-so.' I am no further. What has Mr So-and-so to do with his
own name?—and what have I to do with either him or his name?"

She looked up at Birkin. She startled him. He was flattered too
that she came to talk to him, for she took hardly any notice of
anybody. He looked down at her tense clear face, with its heavy
features, but he was afraid to look into her heavy—seeing blue eyes.
He noticed instead how her hair looped in slack, slovenly strands
over her rather beautiful ears, which were not quite clean. Neither
was her neck perfectly clean. Even in that he seemed to belong to
her, rather than to the rest of the company; though, he thought to
himself, he was always well washed, at any rate at the neck and
ears.

He smiled faintly, thinking these things. Yet he was tense, feeling
that he and the elderly, estranged woman were conferring together
like traitors, like enemies within the camp of the other people. He
resembled a deer, that throws one ear back upon the trail behind,
and one ear forward, to know what is ahead. (WL, pp. 24)

Despite his apparent sociability, Birkin agrees with Mrs. Crich that they and other people
differ almost in quality and that there is no need to accept any relationship with (one
might paraphrase it as 'responsibility' for) other people who "happen to be in the room
with" them. Common sense and the social conventions tell us that people do not just
"happen" to be there: they are there because they have connections with somebody and
because in this case they are invited as wedding-guests. Mrs. Crich does not care for
any of this. Even the consensus that a person is connected with his name has lost its
meaning for her. Still she does not deny the fact that other people are there, but she has
no more to do with them than with a fly or with dirt at her neck and ears. Although
Birkin half flatteringly and half reluctantly concurs with her in admitting the unreality
of those people and feel himself, like her "like traitors, like enemies within the camp of the
other people", he still sees the dirt at her neck and ears and "slack, slovenly strands over
her rather beatiful ears". Those details are clearly seen—the vision of half-neglected
realities which are other, and real. While he feels himself belonging more to her with her
dirt at her neck and ears than to the rest of the company, he reflects at the same time that
he is different, distinct: "he was always well washed, at any rate at the neck and ears."

This is what is meant by throwing "one ear back upon the trail behind, and one ear
forward", and Birkin is clearly conscious of it, even though a deer in so doing is conscious
(if the word can be used) of it. The affinity with the deer also emphasizes his apprehen-
sion that other people can become a hostile pack. Mrs. Crich, with her aristocratic
disdain, ignores them: they do not really exist. But Birkin knows they can be danger-
ous.

What does this attitude of Birkin's mean to his relationship with Mrs. Crich at this
moment; the other people in the room; with women, with society, with his mind and
body, with his past, and with what he has not yet come across? The repetitive and continuous use of the "ear"-image points to at least three dimensions: the female and sexual image ("how her hair looped in slack, slovenly strands over her rather beautiful ears"), the reflection on his traditional puritan upbringing ("always well washed. . . at the neck and ears"), and the animal-like sensitivity which is physical as well as intellectual and the consequent quick adjustment and balance between action and reflection, individual purpose and surroundings, past and future, and, if we develop this, two modes of being. It seems that we should take into account the female and animal aspects as well as the traditional male aspect (to form and act according to values and principles) when we consider Birkin’s position towards ideas entertained by society, by women, and also by himself.

Birkin’s doublessness, changeability, and inconsistency is emphasized by the image of “chameleon” and “changer”, and by other characters’ reactions to it: “There is no getting hold of him” (Hermione), “We cannot trust him” (Gudrun), Gerald “did not take him seriously”, and, most pertinently, Ursula’s bitter complaint:

I’m [Ursula] too big a fool to swallow your [Birkin’s] clevernesses, God be praised. You go to your women—go to them—they are your sort. You’ve always had a string of them trailing after you—and you always will. Go to your spiritual brides—but don’t come to me as well, because I’m not having any, thank you. —You’re not satisfied, aren’t you? Your spiritual brides can’t give you what you want, they aren’t common and fleshly enough for you, aren’t they? So you come to me, and keep them in the background!” (WL, p. 306)

The passage itself will be examined closely in a later chapter, so here let us consider Birkin’s “spiritual brides”, the women who respect, feed, and depend on his ideas, and his ceaseless hunger for, and yet his dissatisfaction with them. That dissatisfaction does not derive from the women’s inconsistency but from his hunger for what those spiritually-oriented women cannot offer him: the woman, the flesh, that is not bound by principles and values. At the same time, what is striking in this passage is Ursula’s almost vulgarly intentional devaluation not only of his “spiritual brides” but also of herself as “common and fleshly”. Paradoxically, it seems to bring into the foreground his tendency and hers to glorify the physical image of the female and the related physical image of what is “common” people (ordinary people in the universal human aspect: flesh and blood), as well as their tendency to glorify superior social and intellectual values. Ursula herself has struggled intellectually to procure her independence and social position as a grammar school teacher. Also she seems to want Birkin to succumb wholly to his love of her body. Both Birkin and Ursula have the double tendency to entertain the myth of the male (intellectual or social superiority) and the female (life-giver giving the male a renewal of his power). And they become growingly aware of this through their past unsatisfactory experience (Birkin’s with Hermione shares aspects of Ursula’s with Anton Skrebensky in The Rainbow) and through their relationship with each
other.

If we are to speak of Birkin alone, we can say it is such doubleness and self-awareness that distinguishes him both from Casaubon and from the philologist in *Impressions of Theophrastus Such*. He is almost fully aware of himself as half-isolated and half-related to his surroundings and his past. He is aware of his conflicting desires: to glorify and destroy the mental and physical values. The awareness of isolation and the awareness of relatedness are brought together in one character who himself tries to work them out, both consciously and following the instinct of balancing them on the spot. This is true not only with Birkin but more or less with all the major characters in *Women in Love*, which causes the difference of style between Lawrence and George Eliot. Only Birkin is the most typical or polemical example in which conflicting myths and the sense of common reality appear in sharpest contrast. In one sense, we can picturize him as having a woman on either flank: Hermione on the right (the spiritual bride) and Ursula on the left (the image of the life-giving female, the mother-bee, who gives the male the renewal of his power). In another sense, we can see him fighting these women off, one after another, and seeking support from a less reflecting but physically and socially more confident man (Gerald). Also we can see Ursula, a much more sophisticated figure than her own image of a 'common and fleshly' woman, being subtly and precariously balanced against her artist sister who is more outspokenly aristocratic in temperament and behaviour. Both sisters, but particularly Gudrun, resist the thought of their father, who is far more common than they, barely distinguished from the mining community, and unable to behave in any aristocratic or intellectual manner—in a word, not the sort of man they can look up to. Both sisters, but particularly Gudrun, are repelled by Birkin for treating them like any other woman. By following the line from Ursula to Gudrun and from Gudrun to Loerke, we can trace the admiration for and development of the female myth and then the myth of art (the absolute value of art), which we will study later.

As I have already indicated through the example of Dorothea and implied through the case of Urula, it is not only men but women, especially spiritual women, who construct the myth of intellectual men. We cannot avoid discussing Hermione, when we consider this problem. She is a much more sophisticated version of Dorothea because, unlike Dorothea, she is forced to recognize and fight the resistance of the man she is determined to keep for her ideal. What does this mean? Why does she persist?

At Breadalby, her own estate and domain, Birkin refuses to go on the walk which Hermione has suggested. She says, "Then we'll leave a little boy behind, if he's sulky," pretending not to care, and led the rest of the company, "This way, this way," to look at daffodils and the shy deer in her garden. However, almost involuntarily—

... Hermione talked to the stag, as if he too were a boy she wanted to wheedle and fondle. He was male, so she must exert some kind of power over him.

When they trail home by the fish-ponds, half deliberately, half instinctively,

... Hermione told them about the quarrel of two male swans, who
had striven for the love of the one lady. She chuckled and laughed as she told how the ousted lover had sat with his head buried under his wing, on the gravel. (WL, p. 88)

This is almost a banal dream—compensation for her thwarted will. Birkin, who was likened to "a deer that throws one ear back... and one ear forward", is here fondled and charmed because he has resisted her power. In fact, here in the group are Hermione and Ursula, whom Hermione is conscious of as her latent rival over Birkin and who "was stiff all over with resentment by this time, resentment of the whole atmosphere." (WL, p. 87)

In the story of the swans, there are two males fighting over "one lady", whereas in reality one might say two women are fighting over one man. All the same, Birkin is exerting the strongest influence upon Hermione because he can lead her and liberate her (make her feel "unbounded") out of her intellectual boundaries and also because he has the potential power to catch her "as it were, beneath all her defences" and destroy her "with some insidious occult potency" (WL, p. 89). The terms are awkward especially out of their context; nevertheless, these are the only words she can find (or the author can find) to describe the threat to her self—possession.

Probably Hermione is the closest character to Casaubon in the novel because of her half—deliberate rejection of reality—reality in the sense of whatever does not come into his or her power. But Hermione is different from Casaubon in two respects: she builds up and guards with her unrelaxing will a sort of fictional world in which everybody has to come into her power, and she does this out of the precarious instinct of balancing the ever—receding, ever—dissolving realities. We must remember that there is no indication that Hermione's intellect itself is superior to others. On the contrary, she is fully aware of her parasitic dependence on Birkin's mind and is never satisfied until she is convinced that she has possessed his mind. But as Birkin ironically says, knowledge is liberty "in compressed tabloids" (WL, p. 95), so we know that the idea of possessing his mind by extracting more and more tabloids is itself a fiction.

When we come to think of the superiority of Birkin's mind and wonder why it attracts Hermione with her need to "feel unbounded", suddenly we come face to face with his treachery to intellectual values and devotion to barely conscious, primarily physical and instinctive activities, which again can be turned into a philosophy, a principle, another sort of intellectualism. His abusive words to her reveal the danger latent in Birkin as well as in Hermione:

Even your animalism, you want it in your head... It is all purely secondary—and more decadent than the most hide—bound intellectualism. What is it but the worst and last form of intellectualism, this love of yours for passion and the animal instincts? (WL, p. 41)

The only difference between them seems to be that he can be absorbed, forget himself, in pure mental or physical activity, whereas she must get it always second—hand, through her deliberate consciousness. But Birkin also seems struggling to make it clear by abusing her, which may be a sign of his resemblance, his hunger and dependence on her.
He needs the intellectual support of the woman, but his satisfaction is gained only through assaulting her will, her persistence in philosophizing his experience and containing his knowledge in her mind. Perhaps Hermione's helplessness before Birkin, too, may hide a corresponding dilemma in spite of herself.

The dilemma could be best explained by examining the following scene, especially paying attention to the verb "to know". First Hermione calls to Birkin, who has shut himself in his room, copying a Chinese drawing "with much skill and vividness". He does not answer. She makes enquiries, comes to his door, still calling, and taps. In the end, he opens his door, but he either refuses to answer or answers her questions reluctantly, while she, "almost unconsciously", moves into his room, presuming her right to move in without invitation. Her first question is: "What are you doing?" She repeats the question twice, before she gets an answer. Still, the simple answer does not satisfy her.

"But why do you copy it?" she asked, casual and sing-song.
"Why not do something original?"
"I want to know it," he replied. "One gets more of China, copying this picture, than reading all the books."
"And what do you get?"
She was at once roused, she laid as it were violent hands on him, to extract his secrets from him. She must know. It was a dreadful tyranny, an obsession in her, to know all he knew. For some time he was silent, hating to answer her. Then, compelled, he began:
"I know what centres they live from—what they perceive and feel—the hot, stinging centrality of a goose in the flux of cold water entering their own blood like an inoculation of corruptive fire—fire of the cold—burning mud—the lotus mystery."

Hermione looked at him along her narrow, pallid cheeks. Her eyes were strange and drugged, heavy under their heavy, drooping lips. Her thin bosom shrugged convulsively. He stared back at her, devilish and unchanging. With another strange, sick conviction, she turned away, as if she were sick, could feel dissolution setting in her body. For with her mind she was unable to attend to his word, he caught her, as it were, beneath all her defences, and destroyed her with some insidious occult potency. (WL, p. 89)

What we notice is that, though Birkin uses the same term "to know" as Hermione does, his meaning is quite different and that she is "caught", in spite of herself, on his level of knowing "beneath all her defences". Birkin is able to know in both ways, and he knows it. Hermione wants to think that her world of knowledge is everything. "With her mind she was unable to attend to his words", and so she ignores or belittles the realities which do not come into it. All the same, beneath her fiction there is a hidden instinct which turns away from harsh realities in bitterness that "stings" and corrodes herself.

In other words, she does unconsciously "know" this picture of "the hot, stinging centrality
of a goose in the flux of cold water and mud" and is, therefore, surprised out of her normal sphere of knowledge and "words". In this instinct, she has never trusted her knowledge.

This is what I mean when I say Hermione goes one step further than Casaubon. Casaubon still seems able to believe in his knowledge, though there is a strong hint of his suspicion and jealousy, which almost turn into helplessness as he and the accumulation of his fragmentary research have to face an encroaching death. If we remember that one of the criticisms against Casaubon (given by Ladislaw) is that his research is not original and that Lydgate, on the other hand, strives to make an original medical study out of his common practice, Hermione's first question begins to have a very sophisticated irony: "Why not do something original?" "Originality" and "uniqueness" are the key words in purely intellectual pursuit, but George Eliot already realizes its difficulty in the human situation where each man struggles with the common reality of men.

In Hermione, we can see Casaubon wearing the mask of Dorothea, so skillfully and yet looking "old" and "wearied". If Dorothea's motives were right, her tools, her theories of social action, were both old and immature. She was young as long as she did not recognize that they were out of date and as long as her motives were genuine. Hermione, with her "social passions" (which she does have as plenty of ideas), instinctively knows that they are out of touch with reality, that the encroaching death of all her knowledge, forced upon herself especially by Birkin, is secretly eating away her seemingly solid ground. It is a fictional ground, the belief that knowledge is eternal and all-embracing, created (or piled up, rather) by herself, disbelieved by herself, and kept by herself, just as a capsized boat is clung to by a drowning man, a Casaubon. She knows all the while, though she never admits it, that there is a suppressed, counterattacking force of ignoble, unmanageable sentiments beneath her peaceful, confident manner. If Casaubon is a god to himself, though jealous and suspicious, Hermione is described as "a fallen angel", a priestess of knowledge without genuine belief, a priestess of "a dreadful tyranny" with the "obsession" to know and yet not to know.

If Hermione is the priestess presiding over the tyranny of knowledge, with Birkin as her idol and traitor, we have to remember that her problem is the problem of everybody around them, but pursued with a persistence stronger than others'.

Everything seemed to be thrown into the melting pot, and it seemed to Ursula they were all witches, helping the pot to bubble. There was an elation and a satisfaction in it all, but it was cruelly exhausting for the new-comers, this ruthless mental pressure, this powerful, consuming, destructive mentality that emanated from Joshua and Hermione and Birkin, and dominated the rest.

But a sickness, a fearful nausea gathered possession of Hermione. There was a lull in the talk, as it was arrested by her unconscious but all-powerful will. (WL, pp. 90–1)

And then she realized that his [Birkin's] presence was the wall, his presence was destroying her. Unless she could break out, she must die most fearfully, walled up in horror. And he was the wall. She
must break down the wall. She must break him down before her, the awful obstruction of him who obstructed her life to the last. (WL, p. 104-5)

The first passage tells us that "they were all witches", each giving a contribution to help "the melting pot" of knowledge to bubble, which gave them "an elation and satisfaction" in exchange for their energy. The balance between the physical need and the mental activity is destroyed under the tyranny of witchcraft, the creed, the glory. There is no feed-back. They would either be exhausted, like new-comers, and lose significance, or persist and feel "a fearful nausea" which gathers possession of Hermione. The sickness strikes back. It corrodes not only the body but also the spirit. It threatens to arrest the talk itself, turning it into something unreal, a mesmerizing incantation, a weird repetition of repetitions. This "nausea", which she cannot manage, begins to exert such a power that it is described as a "will" of a sort—a will which is different from her 'intention' (the usual sense of the term) but is "her unconscious but all-powerful will" which involuntarily comes up at the back of her mind. This is, in the second passage, identified with Birkin's presence, particularly with "the back of his head" which she wants to crush because he is the reminder of this powerful unconscious will. Hermione's eyes "strange and drugged, heavy under their, drooping lids" and Birkin's "silent, stooping back, the back of his head" are among the most powerfully disturbing images. And it is emphasized by the image of her dying "most fearfully, walled up horror", which is the possible allusion to Antigone's death within the walls of the graves, a living death among the dead.

* * *

Gods, heroes, tyrants, idols... none of them escapes the tides of time. What the three novelists acknowledge in their works as the fate of modern heroes (and heroines) is the fate of intellectuals and businessmen, gods of knowledge and gods of money.

In Middlemarch, Mr. Featherstone plays the symbolic role of a believer to the death in the power of money: he is an utter disbeliever in all other values and human virtues. He believes that everything in human nature can be manipulated with money, and his sole pleasure, as in his old age he approaches death, is to play on his relatives' expectations and disappointments about his money, to have them at his beck and call to show the power of his wealth. His last intention is to change his will for a new one which will leave a large sum to his favourite nephew and disappoint others. However, his intention is thwarted by Mary, the humble but wise and honest girl who works for this invalid. She will not obey his last order to change his will behind others' back even tough (or especially because) his favourite nephew, Fred, is her beloved and troubled from debt. Raging against her disobedience, Mr. Featherstone draws his last breath. Fred Vincy, on the other hand, is at first an easy-going fellow who counts on his expectations as a well-to-do manufacturer's son and also as a rich and dying man's (Mr. Featherstone's) second wife's nephew. Gambling plunges him into debt. Mr. Vincy's business, though solid for three generations, is not big enough to be divided between his two sons, and he has given an expensive education to the elder son, Fred, expecting him to be a clergyman and bring
honor to the family. Disappointed in his wish, the father is not going to pay for his son's indulgence. Mr. Featherstone dies, without leaving a fortune to Fred after all. Moreover, Mr. Vincy himself is obliged to cut down his business, due to the economic changes which hit such provincial towns in a rapidly changing society. Thoroughly disappointed in his expectations, and yet loving Mary with all his soul, Fred makes up his mind to undertake any humble work which he might manage, to learn it from scratch and earn his living. Supported by Mary's unchanging love and her father's devoted assistance, Fred succeeds in overcoming his weaknesses and building a sweet home with her, neither prosperous nor honourable but with affection, trust, and peace.

We might call this a fairy-tale story. The plot is simple, with a believer in human virtues (love, trust, honesty, and hard work) defeating a believer in money, with a happy ending. The good and the bad are clear from start to finish. So far as the idealization of money is concerned, both Mary and Dorothea escape from it with a Puritan passion. The women have no inner conflict in the choice between money and their own creed. Whatever they believe in, it does not include money.

However, we cannot ignore the reality behind Mary's story: that Fred does need money to marry her, that he has to work for money, and that, even so, it would have been difficult for them to get married if Mr. Featherstone's illegitimate son, who turned up from nowhere and inherited all his fortune, had not immediately sold Stone Court and its land to Mr. Bulstrode, the banker; if Mr. Bulstrode's old secret about money had not been suddenly revealed and forced him to leave Middlemarch in disgrace; if Mrs. Bulstrode, Fred's aunt, had not offered the young nephew the management of Stone Court and its farm, and if Mary's father, Mr. Garth, had not taken all the responsibility and assisted Fred gradually to buy the stock. Mary trusts and is grateful to her beloved father, and she is a wholehearted supporter of his working ethic, which, though it places a higher value on honesty and diligence, is not separable from money it gains or uses (though as it happens, Mr. Garth is rather too high-minded about money, and has his troubles in the past for that reason). Mary's simple virtue does not lie in any lack of realism about money, but in refusing to idealize or idolize any value in a man into which young women are liable to fall. She tells her father:

I don't love him because he is a fine match. . . . I don't think either of us could spare the other, or like any one else better, however much we might admire them. It would make too great a difference to us—like seeing all the old places altered, and changing the name for everything. (M, p. 570)

She does not love Fred for his wealth. Neither does she seek an ideal in her husband. She just cares for Fred as something known and valued; they have always known each other with affection as one knows and cares for old places. Her chance of finding a more idealized husband is clearly rejected when she declines Mr. Farebrother's proposal, though she deeply respects the parson for his kindness and wide knowledge.

Mary's preference for familiarity above ideals stands out if we compare it with Rosamond's indulgence in her romantic ideas:
Mr. Lydgate is a gentleman. I could never love anyone but a perfect gentleman. (M, p. 243)
In Rosamond's romance it was not necessary to imagine much about the inward life of the hero, or of his serious business in the world: of course, he had a profession and was clever, as well as sufficiently handsome; but the piquant fact about Lydgate was his good birth, which distinguished him from all Middlemarch admirers, and presented marriage as a prospect of rising in rank and getting a little nearer to that celestial condition on earth in which she would have nothing to do with vulgar people, and perhaps at last associated with relatives quite equal to the county people who looked down on the Middlemarchers. It was part of Rosamond's cleverness to discern very subtly the faintest aroma of rank. . . . (M, p. 114)

The terms used emphasize her romanticization of Lydgate's social rank, not the man himself, and her wish to be identified with it. However, if we remember that Lydgate's "cleverness", as if thrown into the bargain here, corresponds to Casaubon's intelligence, which Dorothea idealizes, we should think twice about the easy distinction between Dorothea's romance and Rosamond's. As if to emphasize the correspondence, here, too, appears the word "aroma" to describe Rosamond's romantic vision. Aafter all, is there an essential difference between two forms of idealization? To be sure, Dorothea's motive is altruistic, dedicated to the advance of scholarship and social betterment, while Rosamond's is merely self-gratifying. Though theoretical, Dorothea's motive comes out of her warm sympathetic nature, which may make mistakes but is always willing to learn the other person's suffering and desire in his heart. Rosamond, on the other hand, has an angel's face and an icy heart which means no evil but is simply closed to another person's heart: her interest is limited to raising her own social rank. The difference seems great, but George Eliot has realized the common fault which all sorts of romanticization share: that idealization blinds the eye towards reality and lets it ignore the living man as he is. Mary Garth's constancy to Fred shows her choice of reality and a familiar life rather than the kind of ideal which allures with a distant and blinding light.

If Mr. Garth is an honest and hard-working father whom Mary admires for the virtue springing from his warm nature, Mr. Vincy is a well-to-do businessman (though his business is threatened by the change of time) whom his daughter only expects to supply her with money or the high style of life it can procure. In the two daughters' different vision, the former is a warm-hearted man with the working ethic, and the latter is an agent with money. As long as Mr. Vincy has money and a respectable social status, whatever constitutes his person does not count. It seems that Rosamond, still dissatisfied with his social rank and her familiar surroundings, seeks for an ideal in an utter stranger. Good birth, good connections, good reputation. . . these are just hints and sketches of a man whose reality she does not know, and she can supply the rest of the picture from her imagination all the more freely because she is not familiar with it.
With these two fathers in mind, we can say that Mr. Bulstrode presents an interesting mixture of the two. As an Evangelical and philanthropic banker he combines and extends Mr. Garth’s working ethic and Mr. Vincy’s money. However, that combination was made possible because he originally worked for a dishonest pawnbroker, and then married the broker’s widow, hiding his information about her child who had run away. Mr. Bulstrode started as a penniless orphan without connections, and there was no way for him to start a respectful life. This dark past emphasizes the sort of financial reality which the Garths do not ignore but just manage to keep in the background behind their higher virtues. Mr. Bulstrode, on the other hand, had to sink low in his moral action in order to overcome his circumstances, but the fortune, thus gained, gave him the opportunity not only to pursue his personal distinction but to influence society for its good. In Bulstrode’s case, his social actions and his social and moral identity, pursued according to his Calvinistic ideal vision, ironically depend on an immoral action in the past.

His righteousness and good deeds do not spring out of a genuine love or gratefulness to society but rather are forced by his self-discipline, his sense of duty, his need to appease his ever-gnawing conscience by compensating for his past actions. He almost but not quite succeeds in achieving a new image of himself, hiding his past and deceiving the Middlemarchers. There are several reasons for his ultimate failure. First, the general public of Middlemarch are narrow-minded and suspicious about anything with which they are unfamiliar: they never trust a new-comer, a man with an obscure origin. Secondly, the Middlemarchers think and act according to their own standard and common sense and distrust anything beyond the ordinary: anything extraordinary would be regarded as hypocrisy (Bulstrode’s case) or madness (Dorothea’s case). Thirdly, one’s secret will come out sooner or later by the chain of cause and effect: an assiduously-built new image stands on the hidden past, the precarious double-reality, which crumbles as soon as a hint of the hidden reality is out.

Paradoxically, Bulstrode’s salvation comes when this double reality is shattered and his new image goes with it. It is then that Mrs. Bulstrode, his second wife, looks at the man stripped of his image and discovers a loyal love, a genuine desire to be with him and to support him in his disgrace against the whole world. It is then that Bulstrode, who had wished to preserve his self-important image most of all for his wife’s sake, discovers a marital love deeper than any he has imagined.

The corrupting impact of hypocrisy, and the importance of destroying an image or myth before discovering a deeper reality—the message behind Bulstrode’s story is the problem that Gerald and Birkin struggle with in *Women in Love*. Or rather, it is the problem for the sons who cannot but recognize the hypocrisy of the father, its burden increased by the determination to see it through. In this context, Gerald is the more important or thorough-going of the two.

In Gerald’s case, his relationship with his parents, especially with his father, the moral and social image of his father and its deceptiveness, and the history working behind all these are the main causes which have brought about the image of himself as a powerful and conscientious mine-owner of the third generation. The original purpose
at the mine was simply digging more and more holes to get enough coal to support the
miners. The accumulation and centralization of financial power was inevitable; and
Gerald's father, the mine-owner of the second generation, profited from the wealth. But
he poured almost all his energy into following a Christian ideal of "charity", "benevo-
lence", and "universal brotherhood", as if to compensate for the economic disquality
between the miners and himself which inwardly troubled him. In that image of Mr.
Crich, as in the image of Mr. Bulstrode, the businessman's original purpose and the moral
purpose by which he justifies his social role form double visions whose conflict he could
choose to ignore by looking towards only one of them.

He had been so constant to his lights, so constant to charity, and to
his love for his neighbour. Perhaps he had loved his neighbour
even better than himself—which is going one further than the
commandment. Always, this flame had burned in his heart, sus-
taining him through everything, the welfare of the people. He was
a large employer of labour, he was a great mine-owner. And he
had never lost this from his heart, that in Christ he was one with his
workmen. Nay, he had felt inferior to them, as if they, through
poverty and labour, were nearer to God than he. He had always the
unacknowledged belief, that it was his workmen, the miners, who
held in their hands the means of salvation.... They were, uncon-
sciously, his idol, his God made manifest. In them he worshipped
the highest, the great, sympathetic, mindless Godhead of humanity.
(WL, p. 215)

The difference between Bulstrode and Mr. Crich is that the latter unconsciously makes the
miners his "idol" and "Godhead of humanity". With Bulstrode, it was the God of judge
and retribution that spurred him to self-discipline and the heavy sense of social respon-
sibility. With Mr. Crich, the human relationship or "sympathy" between the miners and
himself, rather than his relationship with any superhuman power, is his immediate
Christian purpose which should automatically bring him salvation, but at the back of his
mind he seems to know that genuine sympathy between a businessman and his workmen
is unrealistic. Supposing his unadmitted awareness and his inner need to hold on to an
illusion all the same, we can understand why he unconsciously depends on their
mindlessness (their lack of critical faculty) and covets their dependence on his benevo-
lence. His illusion held quite well as long as there was plenty of coal and the job was
easy, so that he could run the mine on a half profitable and half charitable basis, still
keeping on the old miners unable to carry out the whole task, offering coal to the
windows to makes up for the loss of their husbands, and giving money to those who hung
on for charity. Hypocrisy corrupts the men, and those who hang about Mr. Crich to
exchange respect for money are the most corrupted of all. Mrs. Chich hates them and
sets the dogs on them. As times change, it becomes impossible to run the mine on such
a human basis. As modern social and political ideas spread, the miners become aware of
the gap between the wealth of the owner and their poor living conditions: they begin to
seek material equality as their social right. Strikes and riots start, and Mr. Crich is forced to close the mines, depriving the miners of their work for bread, following the direction of the Federation of mine-owners. The war shatters his illusions, though the riots stop. He feels tired. Rather than giving up his illusion, he leaves the problem for the next generation to solve and chooses to carry his righteousness to the grave.

In this situation Gerald takes over the firm, and it is his job to rationalize the industry, introducing modern machines and technology and giving a new purpose to the workers. If it gave a sort of satisfaction to the miners in his father's time to work under a benevolent rich man (the ideal image of a Christian humanist), a new satisfaction for the miners should now come from the power of the machine, the large and inhuman rationalizing system, which they serve to make more profit and get a generally higher payment. Gerald puts an end to the humanitarian image of business and enters upon the worship of the machine. And in this he sets up another exalted image of man, a principle incarnate.

This was the sole idea, to turn upon the inanimate matter of the underground, and reduce it to his will. And for this fight with matter, one must have perfect instruments in perfect organisation, a mechanism so subtle and harmonious in its workings that it represents the single mind of man, and by its relentless repetition of given movement, will accomplish a purpose irresistibly, inhumanly. It was this inhuman principle in the mechanism he wanted to construct that inspired Gerald with an almost religious exaltation. He, the man, could interpose a perfect, changeless, godlike medium between himself and the Matter he had to subjugate... He found his eternal and his infinite in the pure machine—principle of perfect co-ordination into one pure, complex, infinitely repeated motion, like the spinning of a wheel; but a productive spinning, as the revolving of the universe may be called a productive spinning, a productive repetition through eternity, to infinity. And this is the God—motion, this productive repetition ad infinitum. And Gerald was the God of the Machine, Deus ex Machina. And the whole productive will of man was the Godhead. (WL, pp. 227–8)

Over and above the inhumanity and strength of his will to fight against resistant Matter and to subjugate it into a perfectly controlled and repetitive motion—the mechanical will directing a mechanical motion—what is striking is the religious terms and the "almost religious" excitement which go with Gerald's ideas.

It is important that his motive lies in no greed for money or for social position and that there is a basic continuity from his father to himself, in spite of his resistance to and elimination of the older man's "cant".

Gerald had feared and despised his father, and to a great extent had avoided him all through boyhood and young manhood. And the father had felt very often a real dislike of his eldest son, which,
never wanting to give way to, he had refused to acknowledge.

Since, however, Gerald had come home and assumed responsibility in the firm, and had proved such a wonderful director, the father, tired and weary of all outside concerns, had put all his trust of these things in his son, implicitly, leaving everything to him, and assuming a rather touching dependence on the young enemy. This immediately roused a poignant pity and allegiance in Gerald’s heart, always shadowed by contempt and by the unadmitted enmity. For Gerald was in reaction against Charity, yet he was dominated by it; it assumed supremacy in the inner life, and he could not confute it. *(WL, pp. 218–9)*

Why has Gerald, young, rational, and with a strong independent will, feared and been dominated by his father and what seems like the iron hand of his Charity? It is essential to regard Gerald’s reaction against his father as an act, even a ritual, of ‘purgation’. The term “pure” is frequently used in relation to himself and to the machine, as in “pure motion” and “pure instrument”. The element of willed disregard of the other person’s independent will—or, if it is a thing, to ignore the resistance of inanimate matter—and to conquer and subjugate a person or a thing to a proposed course of action, in other words, the will to replace reality with a principle, has been an unacknowledged but dominating force in Thomas Crich, the charitable mine-owner, the pitying and loving husband, the benevolent father of Gerald and other children. In reality, there has been a lack of genuine love, genuine trust, and genuine generosity between mine-owner and miners, between husband and wife, and between father and son. Thomas Crich has substituted his ideal love for reality, deliberately shutting his eyes to it, and forcing others to accept his ideal as the truth which no one can deny. His illusion and the hypocrisy of it has been the target of Gerald’s revolt throughout his growth into manhood, the muddle which he has attempted to clarify with the passion of youth and purity. However, what is common to father and son is their deliberate disregard of the “hate” and “dislike”, the horrifying reality of the relationship between them. Perhaps there is a deep frustrated hunger in both of them for a genuine satisfying relationship, but neither of them would dare to face and struggle with it.

Also behind their different attitudes to the mines, there is a mute implication that they share a deep frustrated hunger for a genuine inner connection with the miners, which neither of them would dare to face and think out.

Without bothering to *think* to a conclusion, Gerald jumped to a conclusion. He abandoned the whole democratic–equality problem as a problem of silliness. What mattered was the great social productive machine. Let that work perfectly, let it produce a sufficiency of everything, let every man be given a rational portion, greater or less according to his functional degree or magnitude, and then, provision made, let the devil supervene, let every man look after his own amusements and appetites, so long as he interfered
with nobody. (WL, p. 227)
So the father withdrew more and more out of the light. ... He had been right according to his lights. And his lights had been those of the great religion. Yet they seemed to have become obsolete, to be superseded in the world. He could not understand. He only withdrew his lights into an inner room, into the silence. The beautiful candles of belief, that would not do to light the world any more, they would still burn sweetly and sufficiently in the inner room of his soul, and in the silence of retirement. (WL, p. 229)
Neither Gerald nor his father would think to a conclusion the conflict between his 'lights' and the light of the world, the reality which is not simply the material condition or the clamour of the miners but the whole human condition of physical, spiritual and social need at a particular time in a particular relationship. On the other hand, Gerald, who is apparently more clear-headed and would not permit hypocrisy, has "abandoned the whole democratic-equality problem" and switched to the idea of "the great social productive machine" and of man’s "functionality" abstracted from life. It is important to remember that what he has abandoned is not just the 'theory' of democratic-equality but "the whole... problem," which involves needs and conflicts of all kinds in man's living condition in the course of history. The Western tradition of Christian humanism and democratic principle has entered and ruled willy-nilly the inner recesses of the people's minds, and if disillusion and reaction have made those theories seem obsolete and incompatible with the actual conditions, still the tradition and the problems it has brought stay with them. Gerald cannot let the whole problem "retire" with his father, but he believes, or prefers to believe, he can. Believing this, he leaves the whole problem of human relationship untouched, letting "the devil supervene". The implication is that he has to pay for what he has sold to "the devil". Behind his plausible excuse or even 'motto', "... let every man look after his own amusements and appetites, so long as he interfered with nobody", Gerald unconsciously hides his sinister view of human nature: that there is nothing of consequence there, moral, spiritual or even emotional. In private or public life, what exists is just a function—or 'functions' of man which have no connections either between them or beyond them.

Gerald himself is left to "look after his own amusements and appetites", but where can he find amusement or satisfaction, avoiding human relationship, except in his mechanical enjoyment of the mechanical rhythm of his own body and the woman's? True, he does seem to get some genuine pleasure for the moment out of an affair with Pussum, a young model who lives among the artists in Soho, London, but his pleasure derives from a modern fantasy of megalomania in the unrealistic Bohemian atmosphere, where he can be described and accepted as follows:

"He's a soldier, and an explorer, and a Napoleon of industry," said Birkin, giving Gerald his credentials for Bohemia.

"Are you a soldier?" said the girl, with a cold, yet lively curiosity.

"No, I resigned my commission," said Gerald, "some years ago."
"He was in the last war," said Birkin.
"Were you really?" said the girl.
"And then he explored the Amazon," said Birkin, "and now he is ruling over coal-mines."

The girl looked at Gerald with steady, calm curiosity. He laughed, hearing himself described. He felt proud, too, full of male strength. His blue, keen eyes were lit up with laughter, his ruddy face with its sharp fair hair was full of satisfaction, and glowing with life. He piqued her. (WL, p. 64)

The half romantic and half-narcissistic picture is of the strong, soldierly male, who has fought in the war, explored an unknown, perhaps dangerous part of the world, and is ruling one of the industrial bases which produce money and direct the mechanism of society. The picture is slightly comic, from Birkin's vantage point. But Gerald does not mind. With the girl, whose mind is not so sharp but is easily piqued by anything glamorous, he can readily convince himself that he is the romantic hero of the picture, forgetting the emptiness and the dead feeling which sometimes frightens him in real life. The cold, sophisticated mask of the young model, who is supposedly liberated morally and sexually, hides an intellectual naivety which is exploited by the young artist, Halliday, who adores another girl spiritually and uses Pussum for his physical satisfaction. Pussum's obtuseness to the comical and sinister aspect lurking behind their relationship, together with Gerald's easy self-indulgence and pompous pride, highlights the dazzling and self-deceiving nature of the social myth which I have already described. The fantasy of "Deus ex Machina", which ran through the whole system of his mine like "a furious and destructive demon" (WL, p. 229), has turned into a modern three-penny opera in his relationship with Pussum. The irony is that neither of them realizes it.

However, Gerald cannot take Pussum seriously because their relationship never touches him vitally. It is an adventure for the moment, but his real problem remains untouched. Although he seems secure and comfortable behind this adventure, his uneasiness or queer sense of guilt somehow suggests it is not just on her account but on his own account that he is troubled by the superficiality of their experience:

"I still think I ought to give the Pussum ten pounds."
"Oh God," said Birkin, "don't be so matter-of-fact. Close the account in your own soul, if you like. It is there you can't close it."
"How do you know I can't?"
"Knowing you." (WL, p. 96)

"I can't see what you will leave me at all, to be interested in," came Gerald's voice from the lower room. "Neither the Pussums, nor the mines, nor anything else."

"You be interested in what you can, Gerald. Only I'm not interested myself," said Birkin.

"What am I to do at all, then?" came Gerald's voice.

"What you like.—What am I to do myself?"
In the silence Birkin could feel Gerald musing this fact. 

"You see," said Birkin, "part of you wants the Pussum, and nothing but the Pussum, part of you wants the mines, the business, and nothing but the business—and there you are—all in bits—"

"And part of me wants something else," said Gerald, in a queer quiet, real voice. (WL, p. 97)

With the consciousness of Birkin's disinterested, deromanticizing gaze, which is, nevertheless, friendly and disarming, Gerald is gradually awakened to his unsure, forlorn self stripped of his fantasies of the mine and of the Pussum. He realizes a deep hunger, deeper and unappeased by the lure of those fantasies.

That the real problem, his deepest hunger, remains untouched is the key to Gerald's relationship with the mine, with Pussum, and also with his father. Although it was his reaction to his father's sentimental insistence on love and equality that made him undertake the demonic mechanization of the mine, in the last issue they avoid the battle with each other's fantasy. Especially since Gerald took over the firm, Mr. Crich has put an absolute trust in his son, and Gerald is really "touched" by this dependence. In return, he remains a faithful and respectful son, though detached, who would never raise his hand nor let anybody else raise his hand against his father. The father still stands for everything good and worthy that ever was. In fact, the mutual dependence, even the deal, between the father and the son hides emptiness and horror in their public and private life. The other side of this transaction is that when one of them ceases to be, the other is unable to "close the account" in his own soul. As the old Mr. Crich refuses to recognize his approaching death and yet is driven to it inch by inch, Gerald's horror increases, and he is no longer able to ignore it. The real "devil" with whom he makes a deal, beneath the mask of fantasy and deception, is perhaps his deepest hunger, thwarted and repressed, which will inevitably attack him from the back. He will have to pay with his own flesh and blood.

It is in this light that we will, in the next chapter, look at Gerald's relationship with Gudrun, particularly after his father's death. Gerald is the hero or the demon with an open wound, the destroyer and his own victim in one, who cannot close the account of his own fantasy.

Gerald's drama in the novel starts almost from the moment he becomes aware of the open wound in his soul, in other words, the moment the myth of the Machine, for which he has destroyed everything else, has proved unable to provide any consolation to the emptiness within. Quite differently, Henry Wilcox in Howards End does not realize the emptiness in his soul almost till the end of the novel. Until then, he is a confident, rather charming businessman, shrewd and strict in business matters but generous and good-humoured in private life, and he is convinced that his business is contributing to the betterment of society. In spite of the attractions and conflicts which develop out of the contact between the Wilcoxes and the Schlegels, even when his wife dies, or when his secret affair in the past is revealed before Margaret to whom he is engaged, or when Margaret, now his second wife, rages against his obtuseness to Helen's feelings... always
his confidence remains undisturbed. Only towards the end of the novel, when his elder son, Charles, brings the sword down on Leonard Bast and causes him to die, Henry Wilcox suddenly collapses and becomes an invalid, to be nursed by Margaret and to live a reflective life of retirement at Howards End.

"Meg, is or isn’t he ill?"

"Not ill. Eternally tired. He has worked all his life, and noticed nothing. Those are the people who collapse when they do notice a thing."

"I suppose he worries dreadfully about his part of the tangle."

"Dreadfully." (HE, p. 334)

And the novel ends almost immediately after this conversation between Margaret and Helen.

In the end, Henry may have become spiritually a better man (which itself is open to question), but he is socially bankrupt, his myth is in pieces. He is not able to sustain the myth, once he notices “a thing”; in other words, he has never noticed anything of spiritual depth before. His myth of the confident businessman with his happy family, if we may call it a ‘myth’, is based on spiritual ignorance or obtuseness alone; it is not supported by the will of the man, as Gerald’s is by his will which resists the conflicts tormenting his soul. For this reason, though we can call Gerald a Hamlet, a modern hero, we could never do so with Mr. Wilcox. Nor do we get the impression that Mr. Wilcox is magnifying his power to a superhuman image of himself. He is just content with what he has acquired with his talent and his fortune, not bothering either to idealize it or to confront it with other values. When his past affair with a prostitute, who happens to be Mrs. Bast, becomes known to Margaret, she reflects on Henry’s claim that he has been “through hell”:

Had he suffered tortures of remorse, or had it been “There! That’s over. Now for respectable life again”? The latter, if she read him rightly. A man who has been through hell does not boast of his virility. . . . Only in legend does the sinner come forth penitent, but terrible, to conquer pure woman by his resistless power. Henry was anxious to be terrible, but had not got it in him. He was a good average Englishman, who had slipped. (HE, p. 243—my italics)

Henry himself, when Helen blames him for giving a wrong piece of business information which made Leonard Bast change his company and lose financially, protests that no one in business can have perfect knowledge, that “it is all in the day’s work. It’s part of the battle of life”, and that Helen is “taking it far too seriously”. (HE, p. 187) In both instances, the gap between “legend” and Henry’s “ordinary” life–story is clearly presented.

Henry is not a theorist, though he often complacently gives “a piece of advice” to the Schlegels from the vantage point of success and experience in the business world. His theory of political economy is a patchwork of social Darwinism, economic realism, self-conceit, self-indulgence, lack of moral responsibility, upper-class common sense, good humour, natural kindness, and optimism, which he never bothers to inspect critically or
to pursue to any conclusion.

"But he must be one of those men who have reconciled science with religion," said Helen slowly. "I don't like those men. They are scientific themselves, and talk of the survival of the fittest, and cut down the salaries of their clerks, and stunt the independence of all who may menace their comfort, but yet they believe that somehow good—it is always that sloppy 'somehow'—will be the outcome, and that in some mystical way the Mr Basts of the future will benefit because the Mr Basts of today are in pain."

"He is such a man in theory. But oh, Helen, in theory!"

"But oh, Meg, what a theory!" (HE, p. 189—my italics)

It is the 'ordinariness' of his mind that allows the mixture. Considered carefully, it is this ordinariness, not his theory, that Helen ultimately criticizes. Paradoxically, it is this ordinariness that allows Margaret to love him in spite of his theory. Mr. Wilcox, having some power and respectability in society which influences the life of others, fails to have the consistency of an ideal which can sustain a myth. Helen hates him for this. That Margaret seems to find in this a possibility for his salvation produces a further complication in the matter of myth or no myth, which will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

* * *

When Mr. Wilcox, or the Wilcoxes, fails to supply Helen with a sustaining image of a powerful, experienced mail, she seeks another sort of fantasy in Leonard Bast, a common clerk suffering from financial and social disadvantage, yet having a romantic aspiration for higher cultural and spiritual experience. As we read about his rather shabby appearance and about the comic incident where he suspects that Helen may be a thief because she leaves the concert hall carelessly with his umbrella, we realize that his stature is too small for a hero and that his story will not be a tragedy but a tragi-comedy at best. And yet Leonard Bast becomes a sort of modern Hamlet, first, because of Helen's romanticization of his 'poverty' and cultural aspiration and, secondly, because of his strong sense of responsibility and remorse over the one night he spent with Helen, who was his ideal, which he would have liked to keep pure and untouched.

Margaret says:

Helen daren't slang the rich, being rich herself, but she would like to.

There's an odd notion, that I haven't yet got hold of, running about at the back of her brain, that poverty is somehow 'real'. (HE, p. 177)

It is ironic that the same word "somehow" is used to describe the confusion both in Mr. Wilcox's mind and in Helen's mind. Although the two minds are apparently different, they share the tendency to confuse their wish reality and to avoid the painful process of thinking before "slanging" the offender in a "high-handed manner". What fascinates Helen is not the reality of poverty but the image of poverty which may fulfill her wish to "slang the rich". Leonard's poverty and his degrading bond with a cheap and weak-minded woman (he feels responsible for her and cannot afford to pay her off) is fantasized
by Helen as the very picture of a social victim, the innocent and the sincere, exploited and deserted by the Wilcoxes. At the same time, he becomes the victim of Helen's fantasy, which convinces her for just half an hour that she is in love with him. She makes him tell her all his misfortune, in deep sympathy, and they become lovers in the height of their emotion. However, before the night is out, Helen disappears, leaving a note, sweet and hysterical, which hurts him and puts him in an endless horror that he has profaned his goddess, the only flawless image of goodness and culture in his life. Although Helen has tried to help him, and even after the incident attempts to give him money through her brother, she deprives him of what little chance he may have had financially as well as spiritually, for his fear and sense of sin only make him withdraw into poorer and obscurer quarters.

It is not too much to say that his wounded conscience bleeds him to death, though in a theatrical, even melodramatic, turn of events he comes to Howards End to confess his sin to Margaret, is attacked with the sword by Charles Wilcox and dies, presumably from a heart-attack. Leonard is at least as much a victim of Helen's as a victim of Mr. Wilcox's. And he is also a victim of his own conscience.

In a way, Leonard's thorough blindness to Helen's fault of fantasising makes him a boringly naive or stupid character. He has no need to be guilt-conscious because it was she who took him into her fantasy. He, in turn, took her outbursts of emotion as often beyond his understanding but real, weaving his own version of the fantasy and finding in her an ideal human being. But the irony is that his initiative or active part in the fantasy really starts when Helen's fantasy collapses. His own fantasy moves on independently while Helen cannot even imagine what painful thoughts he may be immersed in. His remorse is useless. It is a phantom, and yet it doesn't even gratify any wish of his. Moreover, all his pain, which may be well worth sympathy or repentance, remains unknown to the others because he dies before he can tell Margaret why he has come. The utter uselessness, futility, and naive sincerity brings about a sense of tragedy, but it derives from our anger, rather than our sympathy, at the gap between reality and his fantasy. Although he manages to be the victim of his own fantasy, being true to it to the end, he lacks understanding of what is happening to himself. And so, failing to have a modern intellect, he cannot be a modern Hamlet.

Forster attributes Leonard's dullness to his class, and lack of proper education. Leonard is "at the extreme verge of gentility", not belonging either to the middle classes nor to the lower class, not being a proud and ruddy country boy, either, which he might have been had he lived "some centuries ago, in the brightly coloured civilizations of the past" (HE, p. 43) and owned "a definite status" in the unurbanized country where "the angel of Democracy" had not risen. As it is, with his romantic passion he aspires to but fails to attain the cultural refinement which the Schlegels represent to him, and tries to remain true to this romantic value, with tragic consequences. Many critics have expressed their dissatisfaction with Leonard Bast: that his characterization fails to reach the standard required to support his significance in the plot. However, it is not simply a problem of characterization. Leonard Bast's limitation involves Forster's own
ambiguous and complex relation to the problem of social classes and education, illustrating his limitation as well as deep interest and realism in the matter. Moreover, it is not easy to see this apart from Forster's other fantasy of 'the countryside' and its glorious past.

Leonard Bast's limited figure and image as a social victim reminds us somewhat of Will Ladislaw in Middlemarch, though Will is clearly a modern 'refined' character, Shelley-like, cosmopolitan, and dilettante. Like Leonard, Will has caused dissatisfaction, perhaps even irritation among the readers, for the simple reason that he is not qualified to be Dorothea's husband. The irritation is represented by Henry James's contemporary reaction that Will is "a woman's man", of appearance gentle and pretty enough to attract a woman's fancy but lacking a strength of intellect and personality equal to Dorothea's. He has no definite vocation, no definite purpose in life, no definite opinions or interests (though his interest and appreciation of beautiful objects is wide and unselfish) in anything or anybody—in a word, neither power nor commitment. Even his admiration for Dorothea is dilettante, as Barbara Hardy pointed out, until Dorothea herself steps out and proposes marriage, breaking the 'romantic' vision of a "futile" and "rare" passion.

Do we not shun the street version of a fine melody?—or shrink from the news that the rarity—some bit of chiselling or engraving perhaps—which we have dwelt on even with exultation in the trouble it has cost us to snatch glimpses of it, is really not an uncommon thing, and may be obtained as an everyday possession?... What others might have called the futility of his passion, made an additional delight for his imagination: he was conscious of a generous movement, and of verifying in his own experience that higher love—poetry which had charmed his fancy. Dorothea, he said to himself, was for ever enthroned in his soul... (M, p. 325)

The passage suggests not only the subtle aesthetic value of Will's passion but the lack of vigour, irresistibility or determination, even a complacent delight in renouncing all bodily power which, to him, is somehow inseparable from ordinary possessiveness. When Dorothea takes the initiative in opening their eyes to the greatness of physical passion and also to the significance of "what are called the solid things of life", he seems only to acquiesce mildly. After they are married, we are told, he becomes "an ardent public man" working for reforms, and succeeds in being returned to Parliament "by a constituency who paid his expenses", but there seems little in Will which leads up to this "ardent" public passion, except to please Dorothea perhaps, or in memory of poverty and suffering with his poor mother whom he may have gained the leisure and money (that is, Dorothea's money) to think about. As it is, his public career seems relatively minor, not only in its material effect ("...working well in those times when reforms were begun with a young hopefulness of immediate good which has been much checked in our days..."), M, p. 576) but also in its sentiments, compared with the scale (at least the assumed scale) of his romantic passion for Dorothea, which is described in poetic language. So far as the novel goes, he neither does much nor desires much in public affairs. Neither does he
write poetry as Dorothea once suggests he should. He only *speaks* of poetry. Yet he is called a Shelley, a Dante, and given such natural images as light, spring, and a running brook, the pure and romantic image of youth, freedom, and beauty.

As if turning Will’s weakness paradoxically into a strength, Gilian Beer* points out that Will’s having no position, no authority, nor bondage in society first attracts Dorothea’s sympathy and admiration. Woman’s position in society and her ineffectual anger has much in common with Ladislaw’s, but he, as a man, can travel more freely and act without attracting criticism. Will is a social victim in the sense that his grandmother was wronged and disinherited because of social prejudice against her marriage and that Casaubon, having found Will and his mother sick and poor, becomes Will’s financial benefactor to a calculated degree, and then assumes a right to control Will’s course of action in private as well as vocational matters. Dorothea’s knowledge of his past and her embarrassment and secret anger at Casaubon’s egoistic treatment of Will certainly increase her sympathy for the young man who has already impressed her favourably. In this sense, too, Will and Leonard Bast have much in common. The other side of such sympathy is that both Dorothea and Helen Schlegel have a tendency to romanticize social victims; and this is stimulated by the frustration of their idealistic nature in their disappointing relationship with their husband (Casaubon) or lover (Paul Wilcox). Dorothea has to find out gradually in her marriage to Casaubon that, in trying to escape from the ineffectual narrowness of her maiden life, she has entered a more rigid and darker prison, a sort of maze woven by the mind of her husband to present her freedom of action and speech for reasons she does not fully understand. Gilian Beer is right in stressing their common lot.

However, we are still left with the problem of romantic fantasy and complacency in and around the character of Will. As well as being a social victim, Will is in danger of seeming a parasite, not ungratefully, and only to the degree that as his low evaluation of financial matters demands, *willingly* renouncing his power and social responsibility. This is essentially different from Dorothea’s case. She is never indifferent to money or social power but is always pressed with a heavy sense of responsibility for making “good” use of what she has. Will’s lack of moral action, on the other hand, is somehow forgiven or hidden under the romantic image. A rose or a brook may well be exempted from its moral responsibility. Here is a subtle confusion which George Eliot does not choose to resolve. We should notice that Will’s scornful indifference to worldly power comes from his romantic ‘ideas’ of life, and yet that Will himself is described as if he were a romantic ‘object’.

Forster found it possible for Leonard Bast to have a romantic idea, however simple, but impossible for him to be a romantic figure. By making this clear in his gently satiric narrative and in its distance from Helen’s point of view, Forster avoids confusion. The result is that Leonard is neither romantic nor complacent. He is not clever, not handsome, not impressive, and he knows it, but he has an adventurous spirit, which makes him a pathetic figure. George Eliot runs the risk of confusing the romantic idea with the romantic object. To complicate the matter, there are also signs that she is not blind to
such a danger. In fact, it is Dorothea herself who reminds Will that it is no use just *talking* about poetry. So, how much of this is confusion? When we consider the problem of romantic fancy, the important question is how much Ladislaw is, Dorothea is, and George Eliot is, aware of it and its drawback.

As for Will's awareness, there is a scene at Lowick church where Will becomes aware of the gap between his romantic idea of love and his actual feelings of sitting alone in full view of Dorothea and Casaubon, seeing her pale, tense face, realizing Casaubon's authority, and suddenly fearing that she may take his presence for a blunder. Will cannot even look up at Dorothea but becomes conscious of Casaubon's eyes watching him in this state. He finds himself "utterly ridiculous, out of temper, and miserable" and reflects that "this was what a man got by worshipping the sight of a woman!" (*M*, p. 327). Barbara Hardy, commenting on the scene, says:

In a novel which at least tries to deal plainly with unideal existence, this rejection of worship is an important stand in the pattern of feeling. It would be hard to argue, however, that George Eliot is thoroughly clear and full in analysing the descent of Will and Dorothea into the ordinary world.\(^9\)

Hardy seems right, concerning Will's "descent... into the ordinary world", supposing that George Eliot really meant to show it as that. Will's bad temper goes no deeper than self-consciousness, a painful scratch on his self-complacency, and the unnecessary fear that a lover entertains about the beloved woman's view of himself, which is barely distinguishable from the lyric pattern of love. Actually, Dorothea is not upset to see him. She is pained that she cannot show her sympathy to Will, bound as she is by her loyalty to her jealous, unjust husband. Neither does the worshipped image of Dorothea itself ever become damaged or corrupted. In other words, Will's disillusion is not a disillusion in the real sense. It is only another form of romantic love, and readers know this all the while.

However, Barbara Hardy is questioning not just Will's "descent... into the ordinary world" but also Dorothea's, or 'theirs', and at the same time she is implicitly putting forward a vital question for the whole novel: How much has George Eliot mastered the problem of confusion between ideals and reality? In the light of this large question, Will's self-awareness and his romantic view of Dorothea has only limited significance. In fact, its significance is limited even in his relationship with Dorothea. Will had no hope of marrying her with a social status equal to Dorothea's, and he could not bear to think of the vulgar inferences which people would make, had he remained in her vicinity. Had Dorothea not stopped him from taking a final leave, he would have left her in peace, himself remaining true to her romantic image in the distance, even in hopeless pain and self-disgust. Similarly, without waiting for George Eliot's question, "Why always Dorothea?", we can suppose that Dorothea's view of the people and the world does not stand by itself but in its relationship to other characters. In my opinion, those characters include not only men with certain ideals like Casaubon, Will, and Lydgate but also women with non-idealistic or anti-idealistic minds like Celia and Mary Garth. Rosa-
mond has a "romance of her own" but it is so vain and small as to be an ironically non-idealistic ideal.

Dorothea's relationship with those women (and also with men except for Casaubon and Will) develop mostly by parallels in the text rather than by her actual contact with them. Celia is an important exception. Being Dorothea's sister, Celia has a close and direct relationship with her, and their meeting and conversation, scattered here and there throughout the novel, coincide with the important moments of Dorothea's life and have an inobtrusive bearing on the complex development of her views and actions.

Thus analyzing Dorothea's change of views in its relationship with male and female characters, we can see how George Eliot developed the problem of romantic fancy and awakening to reality. Three points must be considered: (1) the plot which throws Dorothea (and also other 'romantic' minds, spiritual and materialistic) into disillusion, (2) the relationship between Dorothea and more realistic minds, especially Celia, and (3) the parallelism between Dorothea's romances (with Casaubon and Will) and the less idealistic romances (Lydgate and Rosamond, Fred and Mary, Mr. and Mrs. Bulstrode, and Sir James and Celia). And the second point, the relationship between Dorothea and Celia is a key to this entire structure.

Finally, when we speak of materialistic romances and non-idealistic ideals, we cannot forget the special role given to Loerke in Women in Love. He is the negative picture of Gerald Crich, the artist of the Machine, with an old man's face and a child's physique, grown up in sheer poverty and contempt, and despising every individual who is comfortable with or insists on his or her ideal. Even his picture of a defenseless young girl on a massive horse is the exact parallel, with a twist, to Gerald's affair with Pussum. Both men exploit the young model's fear and physical abandonment for the sensual magnification of their idea of themselves. The difference is that Loerke is a homosexual. His view of himself is utterly unromantic and non-ideal. Ursula rages that the horse is so "insensitive" and dead. Loerke's fantasy is a burlesque, the extreme negative form of the male-myth on which we have been working in this chapter. But Gudrun says:

They are all alike. Look at Birkin. Built out of the limitation of conceit they are, and nothing else. . . . Gerald is so limited, there is a dead end to him. He would grind on at the old mills forever.

And really, there is no corn between the mill-stones any more. They grind on and on, when there is nothing to grind—saying the same things, believing the same things, acting the same things—Oh my God, it would wear out the patience of a stone.

I don't worship Loerke, but at any rate, he is a free individual. He is not stiff with conceit of his own maleness. (WL, p. 463)

So Gudrun is attracted by Loerke because of her disgust with the "dutifully" repeated process of magnifying or limiting the old ideas of men. But could she be so sure that Loerke is free? To a much larger extent than in Middlemarch, the problem of mythologizing and de-mythologizing men in Women in Love depends upon the development of the sisters' conflicting views.
Notes

1 The Letters of D. H. Lawrence, II, p. 183.
4 Haight, George Eliot, pp. 131-2.
5 Cf. John Sayre Martin, E. M. Forster: The Endless Journey (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1976), pp. 113-7; Glen Cavaliero, A Reading of E. M. Forster (Macmillan: London, 1979), pp. 116-8. But J. B. Beer, admitting flaws in Leonard Bast’s characterization, finds in it a unique and radically challenging effect which demands a perspective outside ‘the canons of normal criticism’: “And in so far as the Basts participate in the novel’s total effect, they act in the same way as the violences and sudden deaths. They undermine the artistic harmony of the novel and turn it into something else—into a work which tries to include the artistically impotent, a Tempest in which Caliban does not even speak poetry”—The Achievement of E. M. Forster, p. 119. The question hangs on the problem and meaning of realism in different social and literary contexts.
8 Cf. Gillian Beer, George Eliot.
9 Particularities, p. 100.

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