# ART DEVICES IN THE FICTION OF GEORGE ELIOT

by

PAUL N. LEBLOND

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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## ABSTRACT

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This study of the fiction of George Eliot is concerned exclusively with her narrative form. Admittedly, form and content are generally inseparable, but for the sake of this analysis, the distinction is necessary.

Most critics, especially art critics, are of the opinion that a work of art must have certain basic formal qualities. Structure, rhythm, design, and colour are the characteristic formal traits of music and painting most often pointed out by critics in these arts. The literary critics generally overlook these elements in narrative prose, and yet they are of the utmost importance in a study of the literary merit of works of fiction. In consequence, I shall attempt to apply artistic formal criteria, that is, standards of judgment normally applied to painting and music, to the art of George Eliot. In other words,

the emphasis will be on the artistic rather than on rhetoric, on George Eliot, the artist and on her words as artistic devices, just as a critic would analyze the work of a painter or musician. I realize, of course, that I run the risk of being accused of attempting art criticism rather than literary criticism and I am aware that prose is neither painting nor music. Yet I believe that there are qualities common to all that bear analysis and comment.

The examples used were taken from three of George Eliot's best-known novels, Adam Bede, The Mill on the Floss, and Middlemarch.[1]

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[1]The following editions were used: Adam Bede, Signet CT76, New York, 1961; The Mill on the Floss, Signet CQ438, New York, 1965; Middlemarch, Riverside Edition, Boston, 1956. (Abbreviated A.B., M. on F., Mid.)

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# I - I N T R O D U C T I O N

George Eliot has often been called an artist. A contemporary, Edward Dowden, wrote that her works "are primarily works of art, and George Eliot herself is an artist as much as she is a teacher."[1] Anthony Trollope remained impressed by the descriptions of her actors, which are "singularly terse and graphic,"[2] and Algernon Swinburne attributed to her "a great and absolute genius for the painting and handling of human characters."[3] But it is Henry James, himself the most accomplished artist in American fiction, who best sums up George Eliot's artistic abilities: "Her novel is a picture, -- vast, swarming, deep-coloured, crowded with episodes, with vivid images, with lurking master-strokes, with brilliant passages of expression . . . ."[4]

Her novels are works of art, and in consequence can be studied as such. Certain principles of painting, sculpture, or music can be applied to her writing. Before applying critical principles to a work of art, however, one must make note that Eliot's novels are usually "framed" an admission that the work is not real but artificial.

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[1]Quoted in Gordon S. Haight, A Century of George Eliot Criticism, Boston, 1965, p. 65.
[2]Ibid., p. 150.
[3]Ibid., p. 124.
[4]Ibid., p. 81.

The prelude of Middlemarch not only introduces the heroine, but together with the Finale, encloses the novel much as a frame does a painting. The author tells us that Saint Theresa "was not the last of her kind" (Mid., p. 3), and the reader knows right away that a saint-like person will dominate the story -- an admission that the tale is not a representation of life. At most it will be life-like. It is this factor which distinguishes a work of art from a work of nature; it has selected content and arranged form. George Eliot herself, in her "Notes on Form in Art" emphasized this distinction: "Artistic form, as distinguished from mere imitation, begins in sculpture and painting with composition or the selection of attitudes and the formation of groups . . . ."[5]

Framing thus introduces the work of art. It serves various other purposes, as pointed out by Viola Hopkins: "It may integrate description with action or with characterization, especially if the scene is presented through the consciousness of a character with a painter's eye; it may convey with great precision the particular tone of the setting or appearance of the character."[6] Various examples of framing are found in Eliot's novels.

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[5]Thomas Pinney, ed., Essays of George Eliot, London, 1963, p. 433.

[6]Viola Hopkins, "Visual Art Devices and Parallels in the Fiction of Henry James", in Tony Tanner, ed., "Henry James -- Modern Judgments", London, 1968, p. 46.

Mr. Casson is first seen standing in the embrasure of the door "with his hands in his pockets, balancing himself on his heels and toes" (A.B., p. 25). Chad Cranage, on the other hand, "stood with his black brawny arms folded, leaning against the doorpost" (A.B., p. 30). While Mrs. Bede, Mrs. Poyser, and Mrs. Moss survey their respective worlds from the doorsteps (A.B., p. 24, p. 447, and M. on F., p. 472), Maggie Tulliver's first impression of Stephen Guest is as the "drawing-room door was opening [for] the entrance of a tall gentleman who ... seemed to indicate that he was unconscious of any other presence" (M. on F., p. 292). Whereas the lesser characters appear in doorway enclosures, heroines see their worlds framed by windows. Dinah Morris, Maggie Tulliver, and Dorothea Brooke constantly peer from an upstairs window, and many of their prominent thoughts occur as they look down at the goings-on outside. In fact, one of the frequent recurring images in Middlemarch centers on Dorothea's impressions as she gazes from the window of her boudoir. In this particular case, the author parallels the state of her heroine's mind with the description of the room and its view:

The bow-window looked down the avenue of limes; the furniture was all of faded blue, and there were miniatures of ladies and gentlemen with powdered hair hanging in a group. A piece of tapestry over a door also showed a blue-green world with

a pale stag in it. The chairs and tables were thin-legged and easy to upset . . . .

(Mid., p. 55)

Mr. Brooke suggests alterations once Dorothea has made her choice, but she adamantly waves his suggestion aside. Upon her return from her wedding trip, she is again in her room looking out of the bow-window, but the view now has a "ghostly ... whiteness" (p. 201) that reflects her realization that her marriage was perhaps a mistake: "The duties of her married life, contemplated as so great beforehand, seemed to be shrinking with the furniture and the white vapour-walled landscape . . . ." (Mid., p. 202). She then views Featherstone's funeral from the window "which aloof as it seemed to be from the tenor of her life, always afterwards came back to her at the touch of certain sensitive points in memory..." (p. 238). She often peers from this window, and each time, the view reflects her inner state. Where the frame of a painting defines the limit of composition, the window frame here delimits the extent of the thoughts of Dorothea.

George Eliot's interest in painting is obvious throughout her work. Not only does she underline the importance of the frame itself -- "the frame alone is worth pounds" (Mid., p. 445) -- but she makes numerous references to the art of different periods. Eliot was

a realist and liked the Dutch Masters for this particular reason:

> It is for this rare, precious quality of truthfulness that I delight in many Dutch paintings ... I find a source of delicious sympathy in these faithful pictures of a monotonous homely existence . . . .
>
> (A.B., p. 176)

Frequent mention of this affinity for the Dutch is found in her novels; Eliot does not, however, hesitate to express her dislike for the Italian artists. Her description of Mrs. Tulliver as "healthy, fair, plump and dull-witted" is compared to "those early Madonnas of Raphael, with the blond faces and somewhat stupid expression" (M. on F., p. 19). Dorothea's dislike for the Grange stems partly from her repugnance for "these severe classical nudities and smirking Renaissance-Corregiosities" that lined the walls of her uncle's home (Mid., p. 54). In Adam Bede, she states that she turns "without shrinking from cloud-borne angels, from prophets, sibyls, and heroic warriors, to an old woman bending over her flower-pot, or eating her solitary dinner" (A.B., p. 176). A little further, she sums up her feelings on painting:

> Paint us an angel if you can, with a violet floating robe, and a face paled by the celestial light; paint us yet

oftener a Madonna, turning her mild face upward and opening her arms to welcome the divine glory; but do not impose on us any aesthetic rules which shall banish from the region of Art those old women scraping carrots with their work-worn hands ... those rounded backs and stupid weather-beaten faces that have bent over the spade and done the rough work of the world. Therefore let Art always remind us of them; therefore let us always have men ready to give the loving pains of life to the faithful representing of commonplace things, and delight in showing how kindly the light of heaven falls on them . . . .

(A.B., p. 177)

She frequently underlines the links between painting and the other arts and often thought of her own in terms of others. Dorothea seems to reflect her feelings, as she talks to Will in Rome:

Art is an old language with a great many artificial affected styles, and sometimes the chief pleasure one gets out of knowing them is the mere sense of knowing. I enjoy the art of all sorts here immensely; but I suppose if I could pick my enjoyment to pieces, I should find it made up of many different threads . . . .

(Mid., p. 153)

The various arts all use the same ways to elicit a reaction in the mind of the observer; through the creation of images, the author, the painter, the composer

will use respectively words, colours, or sounds to produce an emotional reaction. For example, in the opening scene of Adam Bede, colourless and lifeless words produce images that exude warmth and movement, and give life to a description of a workshop:

> The afternoon sun was warm on the five workmen there, busy upon doors and window-frames and wainscoting. A scent of pine-wood from a tentlike pile of planks outside the open door mingled itself with the scent of the elder-bushes which were spreading their summer snow close to the open window opposite; the slanting sunbeams shone through the transparent shavings that flew before the steady plane, and lit up the fine grain of the oak panelling which stood propped against the wall. On a heap of these soft shavings a rough, gray shepherd dog has made himself a pleasant bed, and was lying with his eyes between his forepaws, occasionally wrinkling his brows to cast a glance at the tallest of the five workmen, who was carving a shield in the center of a wooden mantlepiece. It was to this workman that the strong barytone belonged which was heard above the sound of plane and hammer singing . . . .
>
> (A.B., p. 17)

A closer examination of the opening scene underlines the relationship of author and painter. Eliot's lines are graphic, her colours are vibrant, and there is a sense of balance to the entire composition. The workmen fill one part of the canvas; they are described in motion.

A dog occupies another part of the picture. "Rough and grey", he was "wrinkling his brows". The eye is led from the dog to the tallest of the five men and then to his work. The entire passage, alive and to the point, exemplifies Eliot's graphic abilities. The scene, however, is not only two-dimensional, as is a painting, but has depth. First, the workshop and the weather are described. Then the glance is led inside. A pile of shavings lies in front of the wall, and a dog sits on the heap. The author has used certain techniques to build a total impression in the mind of the reader. Just as the musician will, for example, change the tempo, or repeat chords, or build crescendos to elicit an emotional reaction in the mind of his listener, so the writer must employ certain devices to stimulate the reader: words, phrases, or descriptions will be repeated throughout a story; settings will contain striking contrasts; colours, masses and movement will be emphasized; and the author will build his story up to one or more climaxes. This narrative technique, with its particular pattern, its rhythm, colour, contrast, and movement is the 'artistic' form used by the writer and contains the important elements used in any work of art. It is this artistic form that I have attempted to study in the work of George Eliot. I have purposely overlooked some of the more important

elements of a work of art, such as significance, verisimilitude, relevance, and humanity, all elements that have often been discussed in relation to Eliot's work. Form, however, is as much a component of art as is content, and no one was more aware of this than George Eliot herself:

> Form in art means something else than mere imitation of outline ... It refers to the impression of a work considered as a whole ... to the limit of that difference by which we discriminate one object from another . . . .[7]

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[7]Pinney, Essays, pp. 433-434.

## II - S T R U C T U R E

"Form in a work of art depends to a great extent on the best possible arrangement of the parts which make up the whole".[1] The criteria of artistic structure, including proportion, harmony, balance of parts, can assuredly be applied to literature. George Eliot herself, in her notebooks, emphasized the importance of structure:

Form ... refers to structure or composition, that is, to the impression from a work considered as a whole. And what is structure but a set of relations selected and combined in accordance with the sequence of mental states in the constructor, or with the preconception of a whole which he has inwardly evolved?[2]

Artistic principles no doubt influenced her structural techniques. For example, of Adam Bede, she said that her intention had been "to take a large canvas"[3] and write a novel made up of "a series of scenes"[4]. She was also particularly aware of structure in the other arts. She was fascinated by architectural proportion -- by the "vastness

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[1]Gorham B. Munson, Style and Form in American Prose, New York, 1929, p. 18.

[2]Pinney, Essays, p. 435.

[3]Quoted in the Forward to the Signet Edition, written by F. R. Leavis, p. vii.

[4]Quoted in Joan Bennett, George Eliot, Her Mind and Her Art, Cambridge, 1966, p. 103.

of Saint-Peter's" (Mid., p. 144), and the "dark, square and massive" tower of St. Botolph's (Mid., p. 122). She said that the "Rhine castles thrill me with a sense of poetry", whereas the "dead-tinted ... angular skeletons of villages on the Rhone oppress me" owing to their "vulgarity of conception" (M. on F., p. 286). Arthur's ballroom with "its stucco angels, trumpets, and flower-wreaths on the lofty ceiling, and the broad stone staircase" (A.B., p. 270), offers a striking architectural contrast to the Bede residence, a "low house with smooth grey thatch and buff walls" (A.B., p. 24). Her detailed descriptions of the physiognomy of her rural towns, the "dismal, wide-scattered greystone houses" (A.B., p. 374) of Snowfield, the "broken line of thatched cottages" in Hayslope (A.B., p. 28), the "aged, fluted red roofs" of Saint-Ogg's (M. on F., p. 11), all confirm her fascination for architectural design.

Certainly the author was concerned with proportion and style. Some of her novels reflect this in their harmonious structural make-up. Most, however, seem to be characterized by a more informal organization. Perhaps this is due to her preference for the lived-in laxity of the romantic panoramas typical of the Dutch over the more formal, classic and Neo-classic scenes of the past. This

preference is apparent in her Essays and Letters as well as in most of her novels. The repetition of terms such as "growth", "germ", "conception", bear witness to the romantic in Eliot, for whom formal structure is secondary to emotional development. "The form itself becomes the object and material of emotion", she said in her Notebooks[5], and a closer examination of the construction of the three novels in question is ample demonstration of this feeling.

Certain classical and formal elements are evident in Adam Bede due to the story's strong emphasis on its temporal pattern. It was compared to The Winter's Tale by M. Hussey, who found a two-part structure with a 'chorus' acting as transition.[6] The birthday feast of the younger Donnithorne, taking place at a time when "Nature seems to make a hot pause" (A.B., p. 241), is equivalent to the sheep-shearing festival in The Winter's Tale. Each half of the novel corresponds to two different phases in the emotional development of the hero, the first being his somewhat empassioned attempt to conquer the object of his desires, marked by hidden snares, symbolically represented by gloomy weather and tragic events. The second half, where the lurking threats come out in the open, where the

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[5]Pinney, Essays, p. 436.

[6]Maurice Hussey, "Structure and Imagery in Adam Bede", Nineteenth-Century Fiction, X (Sept., 1955), p. 119.

imagery is more straightforward, and where the hero realizes his predicament, as exemplified by his meeting with the Rector, when "he saw the whole history now by that terrible illumination which the present sheds upon the past" (A.B., p. 403), ends with another festive occasion, a wedding.

Reva Stump, who studied Eliot's novels in terms of the visual imagery,[7] found three divisions in Adam Bede, a beginning, in which a movement towards a moral life and a movement away from it are introduced, a middle section, in which the 'negative movement' predominates, culminating in tragedy, and a third section, wherein the 'positive movement' has taken over completely, and the result is a happy ending.

As George Eliot wrote more novels, the formal structural conventions disappeared. The Mill on the Floss, says Miss Stump, has "only one primary movement, in spite of the negative elements in the book".[8] Society, which opposes the intentions of the heroine, constitutes the forces which do obstruct her from achieving her goal.

It seems, nevertheless, that a three-fold division,

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[7]Reva Stump, Movement and Vision in George Eliot's Novels, Seattle, 1959.

[8]Ibid., p. 69.

each part ending with brother and sister clinging to one another, characterizes her second novel, The Mill on the Floss. The first two books describe the relatively happy childhood and schooling of the Tulliver children, and ends with them going "forth together into their new life of sorrow", as "the golden gates of their childhood had forever closed behind them" (M. on F., p. 206). Books Three, Four and Five describe the late adolescence of Tom and Maggie, as they fight off bankruptcy, humiliation and personal tragedy, culminating in the death of their father, as they cling together, promising to "always love each other" (M. on F., p. 377). The last two books find them overcoming their personal misfortunes, but unable to conquer the oppression and apprehension of society around them, and as the novel ends, they drown in the flood in "an embrace never to be parted" (M. on F., p. 546).

The structural defects of The Mill on the Floss have often been pointed out by the critics. Jerome Thale underlines the "disproportionate fullness in the account of the early years"[9]. The main criticism, however, is the sudden resolution of the novel. Henry James said:

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[9]Jerome Thale, The Novels of George Eliot, New York, 1959, p. 37.

Such a conclusion is in itself assuredly not illegitimate, and there is nothing in the fact of the flood, to my knowledge, essentially unnatural: what I object to is its relation to the preceding part of the story. The story is told as if it were destined to have, if not a strictly happy termination, at least one within ordinary probabilities.[10]

Eliot was aware of the criticism and said that she could "not develop as fully as [she] wished the concluding 'Book' in which the tragedy occurs, and which I had looked forward to with much attention and premeditation from the beginning."[11]

Middlemarch is another situation altogether. Any formal structural schema has been forsaken in favour of a far more romantic fictional pattern. The subdivisions owe their existence exclusively to the interrelationships of the principal characters, and the attention of the reader is constantly shifted from one story to another. Miss Stump calls the effect "a structure made up of many threads rather than a single narrative line,"[12] and thus points out the dominant image of the book, which the author herself emphasized:

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[10]Quoted in Gordon S. Haight, A Century of George Eliot Criticism, Boston, 1965, p. 52.

[11]Quoted in Thale, p. 37.

[12]Stump, Movement and Vision, p. 138.

I have so much to do in unravelling certain human lots, and seeing how they were woven and interwoven, that all the light I can command must be concentrated on this particular web, and not dispersed over that tempting range of relevancies called the universe.

(Mid., p. 105)

The structure of Middlemarch is neither temporal nor spatial; yet artistic unity is achieved by linking the various individual strands with one another via blood or money. The five main stories, as explained by Mark Schorer,[13] have no romantic relationship with one another, and yet they come together during family reunions, or through financial distress. The more formal and classical structural techniques, typical of Eliot's earlier novels, have given way in Middlemarch to a more human construction based on emotion.

A study of the structure of an Eliot novel should not be confined to an examination only of the overall story. A sense of balance is noticeable, as well, within particular chapters, within certain passages, and within

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[13] Mark Schorer, "The Structure of the Novel -- Method, Metaphor and Mind" in Hardy, Barbara, Middlemarch -- Critical Approaches, London, 1967, pp. 12-24. Charting the novel, Mr. Schorer found five prominent stories: The Brooke-Casaubon-Ladislaw story (Love is the binding factor); The Vincy-Lydgate story (love and money); the Garth-Vincy story (love and money); the Bulstrode story (money); the Featherstone story (money).

single images.

Chapter X of Middlemarch exemplifies the well-proportioned chapter. Itself a transitory chapter since it introduces characters of great importance outside Tipton Grange -- for the first time the reader realizes that Dorothea is not the novel's only heroine -- this chapter is made up of two sections of equal length, as well as an inherent introduction, transition and conclusion. The opening paragraph tells us of Will's departure for Europe. Then a first half, itself divided into two sections, wherein Mr. Casaubon's impressions of his marriage to Dorothea contrast with hers. A transitional dinner party, which introduces many of the Middlemarchers, leads to a second half wherein they give their views on the impending betrothal. A short conclusion mirrors the introduction by announcing a trip to the continent, in this case the wedding journey of Dorothea and Casaubon.

Chapter XVIII of Adam Bede has a symmetrical structure. The introductory passage describes the Poysers' journey to church for the funeral of Thias Bede. A paragraph reserved for each character description proceeds from the clothes they are wearing to their thoughts. The conversation of Mr. and Mrs. Poyser as they walk, occupies the first half of the chapter. A transition portrays the rector and his

church, while the second half finds Adam thinking of Hetty at the end of the service and concludes with the return home of the parishioners.

A conversation between Mrs. Poyser and Bartle Massey in chapter LIII of Adam Bede is a good example of balance within a passage. As the two humorously attempt to outdo each other, their respective rebuttals work up through a series of associative links to a biting climax (A.B., p. 494-495).

Many of the descriptive passages present a fine sense of visual balance. A painting-like symmetry characterizes some of the scenes. The overly romantic view of Mr. Irwine riding off into the horizon with the "grey church-tower and village roofs ... to the left and ... to the right ... the chimneys of the Hall Farm" (A.B., p. 77), has obvious visual balance, as has the description of the Hall Farm itself with "that grand double row of walnut-trees on the right hand side of the enclosure" and the "gorse-built hovel against the left-hand wall" (A.B., p. 78). Similarly in Middlemarch, Fred and Rosamond approach Stone Court, which looked "as if it had been arrested in its growth toward a stone mansion by an unexpected budding of farm-buildings on its left flank ... which balanced the fine row of walnuts on the right" (Mid., p. 77).

At times, George Eliot was obviously trying to make the reader aware of the visual symmetry. The following passage in Adam Bede shows the close relationship between her artistic talent and that of the Dutch:

> There were two pretty pictures on the two sides of the wall in the cottage. On one side, there was the broad-shouldered, large-featured, hardy old woman, in her blue jacket and buff kerchief, with her dim-eyed anxious looks turned continually on the lily face and slight form in the black dress that were either moving lightly about in helpful activity, or seated close by the old woman's arm-chair, holding her withered hand, with eyes lifted up towards her . . . .
>
> On the other side of the wall, there were two brothers so like each other in the midst of their unlikeness: Adam, with knit brows, shaggy hair, and dark vigorous colour, absorbed in his 'figuring'; Seth, with large rugged features, the close copy of his brother's, but with thin, wavy, brown hair and blue, dreamy eyes, as often as not looking vaguely out the window . . . .
>
> (A.B., p. 459)

Balance often characterizes certain images. A sustained image may be broken into parts, thus adding to the structural balance of the entire book. George Eliot's works are replete with recurrent imagery which emphasizes the particular traits of the main characters -- a later chapter is devoted to this rhythmic repetition of

certain images. Nevertheless, certain single images give a sense of balance to a passage when they are broken into parts. The two-part image is the most common. Mr. Casson's person, standing on the step of the Donnithorne Arms, seems "to consist principally of two spheres, bearing about the same relation to each other as the earth and moon". His head, however, "was not at all a melancholy-looking satellite, nor was it a 'spotty globe'" (A.B., p. 25). In The Mill on the Floss, during one of her frequent asides to the reader, Eliot mentions, in relation to Mr. Stelling, that "there is nothing more widely misleading than sagacity if it happens to get on a wrong scent". She then balances this statement in the next paragraph by saying that "doubtless there remained a subtle aroma from his juvenile contact with the De Senectute". . . . (M. on F., pp. 30-31). The three-part image also occurs frequently in Middlemarch. Will Ladislaw felt that Dorothea was "throned out" of his reach, but longed for some "queenly recognition", and some sign "by which his soul's sovereign may cheer him"... (Mid., p. 162). Rosamond is compared to a panther who would have "to bear the javelin wound without springing and biting" . . . . Later, she is the prey for Will's animal-like restlessness", and finally, cringes "while these poisoned weapons were

being hurled at her" (Mid., pp. 570-571).

A single image may be broken into many parts. Mrs. Tulliver's attachment to her children is emphasized in a paragraph wherein Eliot extracts from a common metaphor every possible image:

> Mrs. Tulliver was brooding over a scheme by which she, and no one else, would avert the result most to be dreaded and prevent Wakem from entertaining the purpose of bidding for the mill. Imagine a truly respectable and amiable hen, by some portentous anomaly, taking to reflection and inventing combinations by which she might prevail on Hodge not to wring her neck or send her and her chicks to market; the result could hardly be other than much cackling and fluttering . . . .
>
> (M. on F., p. 260)

A frequent descriptive technique amongst nineteenth century writers was to describe a character in metaphoric terms by concentrating first on the face, then on the clothes, then on the personality. Henry James, in The Portrait of a Lady, gave the Countess Gemini "features that suggested some tropical bird -- a long, beak-like nose, a small, quickly moving eye, and a mouth and chin that recede extremely". The description of her attire adds to the resemblence: "the soft brilliancy of her toilet had the look of shimmering plumage". The sketching

in of her manner completes the picture: "Her attitudes were light and sudden as those of a creature who perched on twigs".[14] In Adam Bede, Mrs. Irwine is described in a similar manner, as her physiognomic features are initially highlighted: "She is as erect in her comely embonpoint as a statue of Ceres; and her dark face, with its delicate aquiline nose, firm proud mouth and small, intense, black eye, is so keen and sarcastic in its expression that you instinctively substitute a pack of cards for the chess men and imagine her telling your fortune." Then her regal accoutrements are pointed out: "The small brown hand with which she is lifting her queen [appropriately so] is laden with pearls, diamonds and turquoises; and a large black veil is very carefully adjusted over the crown of her cap." Finally, a comment about her personality rounds out the description: "She is clearly one of those children of royalty who have never doubted their right divine, and never met with anyone so absurd as to question it" (A.B., pp. 63-64). The 'queen' image is employed first with reference to her face, then to her attire, and finally to her character.

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[14]Henry James, The Portrait of a Lady, Signet Edition, New York, 1963, p. 235.

A final element of balance in George Eliot's fiction, though rhetorical rather than visual, further underlines her artistic talents. Within a single sentence, she may rhythmically repeat a noun-adjective combination to inject symmetry to her statement. Maggie thinks over what has happened as she senses the impending danger: "Anxiety about Stephen, Lucy, Philip, beat on her poor heart in a hard, driving, ceaseless storm of mingled love, remorse and pity" (M. on F., p. 515). Similar musical cadence is found in her portrait of Mr. Wrench: He had a laborious practice, an irascible temper, a lymphatic wife" (Mid., p. 191).

The structural technique may be progressive rather than composed of balanced parts. The author's description of Saint Ogg's begins with a panoramic view of the town, pinpointing its location on the Floss estuary, as if approaching by air: the ocean with "black ships" arriving to one side, while the rich pastures and the patches of dark earth stretch towards the horizon on the other side; the "fluted red roofs and the broad gables" of the wharves then come into view, followed by individual landmarks, such as a stone bridge and the Dorlcote Mill. From the Mill, described visually and aurally, the reader is brought in even closer to the "Mill-wheel sending out

its diamond jets of water" to concentrate first on a little girl and her dog, right down to the "brown ear" of the animal and the "beaver bonnet" of its mistress (M. on F., pp. 11-13). The author has carried the reader from an overall view to a minute detail. In Adam Bede, the description of the Hall Farm proceeds in similar fashion. Starting at the gate with "the great hemlocks [that] grow against it," the author progressively concentrates, as with a "zoom" camera first on the house itself, with its walls of "red brick, softened by a pale powdery lichen", then on the door and windows, at which point the reader is invited to put his "face to one of the glass panes" and observe the "large open fire-place, with rusty dogs in it, and a bare-boarded floor" (A.B., pp. 78-79). This voyage from generality to particular is a favorite device of George Eliot's, and is repeated throughout the descriptive passages of her novels.

If these passages are examined in temporal terms rather than in spatial terms, a different structural pattern emerges. A climactic scene, for example, can be viewed as a piece of music, as something progressing through time. Like Dvorak's Bratislava symphony,[15]

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[15] Dvorak's Symphony No. 8 (old no. 4), opus 88, (1889), is characterized in its second movement by a ten-minute gradual crescendo.

Beethoven's Pastoral or Ravel's Bolero, the narration of a passage may mount in intensity. The Bolero depends for its increase in tension not so much on a stepping up of tempo as on the use of a greater number of instruments, on a changing in the quality of the instruments, and on a rising pitch level. Eliot's pattern in the climactic scene in The Mill on the Floss suggests musical structure. If the final drowning scene is examined in musical terms, a different interpretation may be attempted. At the beginning of the chapter, Maggie is sitting in "her lonely room, battling with the old shadowy enemies that were forever slain and rising again" (p. 535); there is a repetitive, lyrical melody, low and calm. Then all her thoughts are "thrust aside by the image of Stephen waiting for the single word that would bring him to her" (p. 538), and the melody becomes slightly more involved: she fights the temptation to summon him back; the tempo is still soft and low but more intense. Counteracting thoughts, intermittently of Stephen and of Lucy and Philip, run through her mind: the music becomes even more intense, as the melody breaks up, first into two and then three strains, and elaborate, as the three characters elicit different reactions. Although she remains seated "with no impulse to change her attitude" (p. 539), a

temporal change, as she remembers the words of Thomas à Kempis, introduces an 'andante'. Ravel's counterpoint would shift to the simple chords of the waltz. Suddenly, Maggie "felt a startling sensation of sudden cold," and she puts aside her troubling thoughts and springs into action; the music resumes at a feverish pace. In the rowboat, she paddles madly towards her brother against insurmountable odds: "floating masses might dash against her boat ... she must use all her skill and power to manage the boat ... she could hear shouts from the people". . . . (pp. 543-544); the music breaks into six-eight time, and the simple chords fly off in all directions, as Maggie's longing for her brother becomes more intense, until she reaches him. Together in the boat, they perceive a new danger: masses of wooden machinery floating towards them; the pitch becomes higher, the notes more rapid and irregular until in a high discordant climax "the boat is no longer seen upon the water, and the huge mass was hurrying on in hideous triumph" (p. 546), and the entire pattern of notes reverses itself as "the keel of the boat reappeared, a black speck on the golden water" (p. 546). The initial melody, now in a different key, is heard once more, as the author mentions that "brother and sister had gone down in an embrace never to be parted" (p. 546).

Comparisons of this kind are of course subjective and impressionistic. They are, nevertheless, a reflection of the tremendous emotional impact of the conclusion of the story and underline as well, the unusual structural techniques characteristic of the author's climactic scenes.

## III - D E S I G N

The various elements of design become evident upon close examination of a work of art. In a painting, for example, the element of "line" stands out: certain lines seem to predominate, and in effect focus the attention on the main points of interest in the picture. Other characteristics catch the eye: masses, colours, lights and shadows, and the contrasts that relate them or set them one against the other.

The prose writer uses similar distinctive elements of design. In the three novels under study there is evidence of close relationship between the descriptive methods of the painter and sculptor and those of the writer.

The concept of "mass" is difficult to convey in prose writing. George Eliot occasionally creates a sense of mass through descriptions of sheer bulk and weight as in the reader's first view of the Hall Farm:

> Evidently that gate is never opened, for the long grass and great hemlocks grow close against it, and if it were opened, it is so rusty that the force necessary to turn it on its hinges would be likely to pull down the square stone-built pillars, to the detriment of the two stone lionesses which grin with a doubtful carnivorous affability above the coat of arms surrounding each of the pillars ...

It is a very fine old place of red brick, softened by a pale powdery lichen, which has dispersed itself with happy regularity, so as to bring the red brick into terms of friendly companionship with the limestone ornaments surrounding the three gables, the windows and the door-place. But the windows are patched with wooden panes, and the door ... is like the gate -- it is never opened. How it would groan and grate against the stone floor if it were! For it is a solid, heavy, handsome door, and must once have been in the habit of shutting with a sonorous bang . . . .

(A.B., p. 78)

A feeling of immensity and solidity pervades this passage. Size and weight, even colours and sounds contribute to the massiveness of the old estate. Eliot has given mass to a description without depriving any of its parts of their normal proportion. Similarly, the ominous size of the chunks of wood floating towards Tom and Maggie at the end of The Mill on the Floss are underlined by the author:

A new danger was being carried towards them by the river. Some wooden machinery had just given way on one of the wharves, and huge fragments were being floated along. The sun was rising now, and the wide area of watery desolation was spread out in dreadful clearness around them -- in dreadful clearness floated onwards the hurrying, threatening masses. A large company in a boat that was working its way along under the Tafton houses observed

the danger and shouted, "Get out of the current!" ... Huge fragments, clinging together in fatal fellowship, made one wide mass across the stream ... The next instant the boat was no longer seen upon the water, and the huge mass was hurrying on in hideous triumph.

(M. on F., p. 546)

Again, in this passage, the repetition of words relating to size, weight and bulk, evokes in the reader's mind a sense of mass. In the next scene, the concept of mass is created by emphasis on volume and height:

It would have been worthwhile to come, even from a distance, to see the fine old hall, with its open roof and carved oaken rafters, and great oaken folding-doors, and light shed down from a height on the many-coloured show beneath -- a very quaint place, with broad faded stripes painted on the walls, and here and there a show of heraldic animals of a bristly long-snouted character, the cherished emblems of a noble family once the seigniors of this now civic hall. A grand arch, cut in the upper wall at one end, surmounted by an oaken orchestra, with an open room behind it where hothouse plants and stalls for refreshments were disposed -- an agreeable resort for gentlemen, disposed to loiter, and yet to exchange the occasional crush down below for a more commodious point of view. In fact the perfect fitness of this ancient building for an admirable modern purpose that made charity truly elegant, and led through vanity up to the supply of a deficit, was so striking that hardly a person entered the room without exchanging the remark more than once. Near the great arch over the orchestra was the

stone oriel with painted glass, which was one of the venerable inconsistencies of the old hall . . . .

(M. on F., p. 450)

In this passage not only is the description that of an impressive high-ceilinged hall, but the words used to create the sense of height, 'heraldic,' 'cherished,' 'noble,' 'surmounted,' 'commodious,' 'admirable,' 'elegant,' 'venerable' are themselves connotative of elevation and impressiveness.

When Eliot attempts 'plasticity', -- that is, mass in three dimensions -- she prefers the human face. A short passage from Adam Bede illustrates this malleable sculpture-like quality:

The face wore its mildest expression: the grizzled bushy eyebrows had taken their more acute angle of compassionate kindness, and the mouth, habitually compressed with a pout of the lower lip, was relaxed so as to be ready to speak a helpful word or syllable in a moment. This gentle expression was the more interesting because the schoolmaster's nose, an irregular aquiline twisted a little on one side, had rather a formidable character; and his brow, moreover, had that peculiar tension which always impresses one as a sign of a keen impatient temperament: the blue veins stood out like cords under the transparent yellow skin, and this intimidating brow was softened by no tendency to baldness, for the grey bristly hair, cut down to about an inch in length, stood round it in as close ranks as ever.

(A.B., p. 227)

Another example of plastic treatment is evident in the opening description of Adam Bede. Eliot's physiognomic features are set apart and emphasized by bringing the reader closer and closer to the face:

> In his tall stalwartness Adam Bede was a Saxon and justified his name; but the jet-black hair, made the more noticeable by its contrast with the light paper cap, and the keen glance of the dark eyes that shone from under strongly marked, prominent and mobile eyebrows, indicated a mixture of Celtic blood. The face was large and roughly hewn, and when in repose, had no other beauty than such as belongs to an expression of good-humoured honest intelligence.
>
> (A.B., p. 18)

The author carves her heads with simple details, but foreheads and noses are always prominently contrasted with deep-set eyes. The mouth is the object of more refined plastic treatment. Rosamond was characterized by a "delicate neck and cheek and purely-cut lips" (Mid., p. 433), and Mr. Irwine's "finely-cut nostril and upper lip" added to his "benignant yet keen countenance" (A.B., p. 194). Eliot's mention that Mrs. Irwine is "as erect ... as a statue of Ceres" (A.B., p. 63), that Rosamond resembled "a sculptured Psyche" (Mid., p. 469) and that Maggie's arm was like that of the model who "touched the soul of a great sculptor two thousand years ago so that he wrought

an image of it for the Parthenon" ... (M. on F., p. 463), confirms this close affinity to sculpture. As well, the face of both Hetty and Dorothea are repeatedly referred to as "marble-like." (A.B., p. 319, 435 - Mid., p. 213, 360, 396, 464, 538).

Eliot's use of "line" is another artistic technique in which she excels. Line used as an aid to focusing attention is shown in a description of Maggie Tulliver:

> Tom was hanging over his Latin grammar, moving his lips inaudibly like a strict but impatient Catholic repeating his tale of paternosters; and Philip at the other end of the room was busy with two volumes, with a look of contented diligence that excited Maggie's curiosity ... She sat on a low stool at nearly a right angle with the two boys, watching first one and then the other...
>
> (M. on F., p. 192)

The author groups her figures in a triangle, with Maggie at the apex, thus making her the chief figure of the group. Similarly in Middlemarch, the bland looks of Mary Garth stand out through a linear visual convergence: "Rosamond and Mary had been talking faster than their male friends. They did not think of sitting down, but stood at the toilette table ... Mary Garth seemed all the plainer standing at an angle between the two nymphs -- the one in the glass, and the one out of it..." (Mid., p. 83).

Some of Eliot's physiognomic outlines use line rather than mass to convey their impression to the reader. Instead of three dimensional 'plastic' qualities which resemble sculpture, some of the faces of her characters are given only two-dimensions, and a 'graphic' linear-drawing of the face is the result, as in the reader's first contact with Dinah Morris:

It was a small oval face, of a uniform transparent whiteness, with an egg-like line of cheek and chin, a full but firm mouth, a delicate nostril, and a low perpendicular brow, surmounted by a rising arch of parting between smooth locks of pale reddish hair. The hair was drawn straight back behind the ears, and covered, except for an inch or two above the brow, by a neat Quaker cap. The eyebrows, of the same colour as the hair, were perfectly horizontal and firmly pencilled; the eyelashes, though no darker, were long and abundant...

(A.B., p. 33)

There is no mention of depth or relief on the face; every trait has been "pencilled" in as would a portraitist with a piece of charcoal on paper. The facial line-drawing occurs frequently in Eliot's work. Hetty's features consisted of "exquisite lines of cheek and lip and chin, ... eyelids delicate as petals, ... long lashes curled like the stamen of a flower" ... (A.B., p. 153). Stephen Guest had a "square forehead, short dark-brown hair standing erect with

a slight wave at the end like a thick crop of corn, and a half-ardent, half sarcastic glance from under his well-marked horizontal eyebrow" (M. on F., p. 379), while the "defiant curves of lip and chin" which characterized Will Ladislaw are often emphasized (Mid., p. 153, 266, 82).

George Eliot's graphic talents show to good advantage in some of her descriptions of buildings. By means of a few well-placed lines, she is able to establish definite architectural designs:

> There were white railings and white gates all about, and glittering weather-cocks of various design, and garden-walks paved with pebbles in beautiful patterns ... As for the house it was not less remarkable; it had a receding centre, and two wings with battlemented turrets, and was covered with glittering white stucco . . . .
>
> (M. on F., p. 97)

Most of Eliot's homes seem to overwhelm the reader this way: she places the residences on superior elevations, characterized by sloping front lawns. Mr. Deane's "pleasant outlook down a sloping garden" (M. on F., p. 378) from his drawing-room, Mrs. Glegg's view "down the Tofton road" (M. on F., p. 131), Freshitt's turf, which "sloped from the open window towards a lilied pool" (Mid., p. 399), as well as the Chase's "sloping lawn and flower beds" (A.B., p. 247), not only reflect the author's own love

of a view[1], but reflect the personality of the occupant. Indeed, Mrs. Glegg enjoyed her residential perch, as it enabled her to "observe the weakness of her fellow beings" and "note the growing tendency to 'gadding about' in the wives of men not retired from business" ... (M. on F., p. 131).

A variety of lines moving in all directions makes up the picture of the celebrations at the Chase:

> The aged group ... passed on along the least-winding carriage-road towards the house, where a special table was prepared for them; while the Poyser party wisely struck across the grass under the shade of the great trees, but not out of view of the house front, with its sloping lawn and flower-beds, or of the pretty striped marquee at the edge of the lawn, standing at right angles with two larger marquees on each side of the open green space where the games were to be played. The house would have been nothing but a plain square mansion of Queen Anne's time, but for the remnant of an old abbey to which it was united at one end, in much the same way as one may sometimes see a new farmhouse rising high and prim at the end of older and lower farm-houses . . . .
>
> (A.B., p. 247)

Stripes, straight lines and angles make this description an outstanding example of line-drawing. An earlier passage in Adam Bede is remarkable for its use of linear art:

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[1]Cross in his biography mentioned that the author lived in a house very much like the one at Red Deeps.

The Green lay at the extremity of the village, and from it the road branched off in two directions, one leading farther up the hill by the church, and the other winding gently down toward the valley. On the side of the Green that led towards the church, the broken line of thatched cottages was continued nearly to the churchyard gate; but on the opposite northwestern side, there was nothing to obstruct the view of gently swelling meadow, and wooded valley, and dark masses of distant hill. That rich undulating district of Loamshire to which Hayslope belonged lies close to a grim outskirt of Stonyshire, overlooked by its barren hills ... and in two or three hours' ride the traveller might exchange a bleak treeless region, intersected by lines of cold, grey stone, for one where his road wound under the shelter of woods, or up swelling hills ... and where at every turn he came upon some fine old country seat nestled in the valley or crowning the slope, some homestead with its long length of barn and its cluster of golden ricks, some grey steeple looking out from a pretty confusion of trees and thatch and dark-red tiles...

(A.B., p. 28)

This panorama of the village Green uses lines to frame the entire scene: "the rich undulating" terrain is referred to more than once. Each view begins in a land depression with a reference to roads or fences, and the eye is brought upward to the line which forms the crest of the mountains, and the frame of the picture.

Towards the end of the description, to give balance and stability to the "picture" which is seen through the eyes of the traveller, Eliot turns the reader's original downward glance skyward:

> High up against the horizon were the huge conical masses of hill ... wooed from day to day by the changing colours ... left for ever grim and sullen after the flush of morning, the winged gleams of the April noonday, the parting crimson glory of the ripening summer sun...
>
> (A.B., p. 29)

Now, to close out the panoramic description, and to avoid letting the eye run outside the frame, the author must redirect it to the valley below:

> And directly below them the eye rested on a more advanced line of hanging woods, divided by bright patches of pasture or furrowed crops! ... Then came the valley, where the woods grew thicker, as if they had rolled down and hurried together from patches left smooth on the slope, that they might take the better care of the tall mansion which lifted its parapets and sent its faint blue summer smoke among them ... the level sunlight lying among the hedgerows.
>
> (A.B., p. 29)

The renewed downward glance is accompanied by further emphasis on the rows, curves, angles, and lines which form the overall basic design of the picture.

Some of the prominent lines in the passage above, those formed by the rays of a setting sun, occur with surprising frequency in Eliot's novels. (In the three novels studied, I counted over forty different descriptions where a horizontal or diagonal sunray was mentioned) From the opening scene of Adam Bede, with the "slanting sunbeams shone through the transparent shavings" (A.B., p. 17) to the last chapter of Middlemarch, when Mary Garth tried "to shade her eyes from the level sunbeams" (Mid., p. 605), the line of the sun provides the source of illuminations for most of her painting-like scenes. Often, the sun filters through particles or through a screen or window to create a kind of mottled effect as in the workshop in Adam Bede or in the following examples:

> The midday light that fell on the close pavement of human heads was shed through a line of high painted windows, variegated with the mellow tints of old painted glass...
>
> (A.B., p. 408)

> the sunshine ... pierced the screen of jasmine on the projecting porch at her right and threw leafy shadows on her pale round cheek...
>
> (M. on F., p. 296)

The filtering sunlight playing on various surfaces suggests movements reminiscent of the Pointillistes of the late

nineteenth century. The mottled surfaces produce a scintillating effect where different spots of colour seem to move on the canvas:

> ...there is always a stronger sense of life when the sun is brilliant after rain; and now he is pouring down his beams, and making sparkles among the wet straw, and lighting up every patch of vivid green moss on the red-tiles in the cowshed, and turning even the muddy water that is hurrying along the channel to the drain into a mirror for the yellow-billed ducks...
>
> (A.B., p. 79)

> ...And over all streamed the delicious June sunshine through the old windows, with their desultory patches of yellow, red, blue, that threw pleasant touches of colour on the opposite wall...
>
> (A.B., p. 194)

The "sparkles" and "patches" of colour give to these descriptions a spotty effect similar to that which characterizes the work of Sisley, Seurat, and Pissaro.

The sun ray may shine directly on someone, illuminating his face, for example, against a dark background. This common feature of the Dutch school called chiaroscuro, was used by Eliot to highlight the facial features, thus giving a saintly glow to the person described: "some of the rays fell on Dinah's finely moulded cheek, and lit up her pale red hair to auburn" (A.B., p. 80).

Later, "She opened the window and let in the fresh morning air, ... and the bright low-slanting rays of the early sun ... made a glory about her face and pale auburn hair." (A.B., p. 463) The illuminating source may be a fire-place ("the dry wood sent out a flame which illuminated every crevice", Mid., p. 235), or a candle ("Maggie was seated in her little parlour ... with one candle, that left everything dim in the room except a letter which lay before her on the table"; M. on F., p. 536), or even lightning ("there came a vivid flash of lightning which lit each of them up for the other"; M. on F., p. 593), and still the chiaroscuro effect is the same.

The use of line can give a description a feeling of actual movement (sometimes empathic). Maggie's visit to the Red Deeps is replete with upward and downward motion:

It was far on in June now and Maggie was inclined to lengthen the daily walk which was her one indulgence ... One of her frequent walks ... was to a spot that lay beyond what was called the "Hill" -- an insignificant rise of ground crowned by trees ... Insignificant I call it because in height it was hardly more than a bank; ... imagine this high bank crowned with trees, making an uneven wall for some quarter of a mile along the left side of Dorlcote Mill and the pleasant fields behind it ... Just where this line of bank sloped down again to the level, a by-road turned off and led to the other side of the

rise where it was broken into very capricious hollows and mounds by the workings of an exhausted stone-quarry ... She could sit on a grassy hollow under the shadow of a branching ash, stooping aslant from the steep above her ... You may see her now as she walks down her favourite turning and enters the Deeps by a narrow path through a group of Scotch firs, her tall figure and old lavender gown visible through an hereditary black silk shawl of some wide-meshed, net-like material...

(M. on F., p. 312-313)

The reader's eye is carried in a linear movement down, in, and out of the "Deeps." Similarly, in a passage in Adam Bede, the attention is made to wander upward and downward:

She roamed up and down, thinking there was perhaps a pool in every hollow ... and she sat down to rest. The afternoon was far advanced, and the leaden sky was darkening, as if the sun were setting behind it. After a little while, Hetty started up again ... to make her way to some shelter for the night. She had quite lost her way in the fields, and might as well go in one direction as another, for aught she knew. She walked through field after field, and no village, no house was in sight; but there, at the corner of the pasture, there was a break in the hedges; the land seemed to dip down a little, and two trees leaned towards each other across the opening ... There it was, black under the darkening sky: no motion, no sound near. She set down her basket, and then sank down herself on the grass, trembling. The pool had its wintry depth now ...

(A.B., p. 367)

This is an excellent example of Eliot's building of a line pattern by direct movement.

The movement may also be simply implied, as in the description of Mr. Casson in Adam Bede:

Mr. Casson's expression ... was one of jolly contentment, only tempered by the sense of personal dignity which usually made itself felt in his attitude and bearing. This sense of dignity could hardly be considered expressive in a man who had been butler to "the family" for fifteen years, and who, in his present high position, was necessarily very much in contact with his inferiors. How to reconcile his dignity with the satisfaction of his curiosity by walking towards the Green was the problem that Mr. Casson had been revolving in his mind for the last five minutes...

(A.B., p. 26)

Not only does the reader see Mr. Casson "balancing himself on his heels and toes" and looking down towards the Green, but, as well, his character assumes superior and haughty attributes through descriptive terms such as 'dignity,' 'high position,' 'inferiors.' In Middlemarch the shifting of social rank is implied in terms of an up-and-down movement in the public view:

Old provincial society had its share of this subtle movement: had not only its striking downfalls, its brilliant young professional dandies who ended by living up an entry

with a drab and six children for their establishment, but also those less marked vicissitudes which are constantly shifting the boundaries of social intercourse, and begetting new consciousness of interdependence. Some slipped a little downward, some got higher footing: people denied aspirates, gained wealth, and fastidious gentlemen stood for boroughs; some were caught in political currents, some in ecclesiastical, and perhaps found themselves surprisingly grouped in consequence; while a few personages or families that stood with rocky firmness amid all this fluctuation, were slowly presenting new aspects in spite of solidity and altering with the double change of self and beholder...

(Mid., p. 70-71)

Here again the movement is only implied. Social aspiration and downfall, the dominant theme of the novel, are summarized in this important passage, as Reva Stump also outlined:

By this series of general details the author indicates the nature of the subtle movement she will present for the reader to see. All of the details have their counterpart in the story itself: Lydgate's striking downfall, the less marked vicissitudes of Dorothea and others, the rocky firmness of the Garths, the political and ecclesiastical currents which catch Mr. Brooke and Mr. Farebrother...[2]

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[2]Stump, Movement and Vision, p. 141.

Contrast is another artistic device upon which Eliot leans heavily. El Greco, Rembrandt, Hogarth, Daumier -- every century has produced painters who relied on contrast to heighten the effect of their work. Beethoven, Wagner -- the romanticists, Debussy, Chabrier -- the impressionists, produced sharp variations in intensity and sound. Byron is a notable example of the poet who builds up images by contrast.

The obvious thematic contrast central to many of Eliot's novels -- rural, provincial, conservative England, as opposed to urban, progressive England -- need not be elaborated on. Many artistic contrasts, however, illustrate and emphasize the central themes. Certainly the contradictory juxtaposition of her central characters reinforces Eliot's stories, such as Hetty and Dinah, Dodson and Tulliver, Casaubon and Brooke, to list just a few of the many pairs. Lesser characters, as well, are vividly contrasted -- Mr. Poyser and Mr. Donnithorne (A.B., p. 329), Mrs. Moss and Mrs. Glegg (M. on F., p. 29), Mr. Vincy and Mr. Bulstrode (Mid., p. 69).

Contrasting movement is used with skill by Eliot. The juxtaposition of upward and downward movement has already been pointed out. The author also took pleasure in opposing activity and quiet solitude, as in the case

of the Park House dance, where the empty conservatory with its "strange and unreal" atmosphere (M. on F., p. 462) contrasts with the bustling drawing-room alive with waltzing couples, or as in the Trumbull auction, where the noisy bidding contrasts with the quiet entrance-way towards which Will heads to escape the crowds (Mid., p. 445).

A passage in Adam Bede (pp. 131-135) merits some attention for similar reasons. It shows some of the ways George Eliot builds up images and offers several good examples of contrast. The first few sentences set the scene and indicate the general mood:

> Arthur's shadow flitted rather faster among the sturdy oaks of The Chase than might have been expected from the shadow of a tired man on a warm afternoon, and it was still scarcely four o'clock when he stood before the tall narrow gate leading into the delicious labyrinthine wood which skirted one side of The Chase ... It was a wood of beeches and limes, with here and there a light silver-stemmed birch -- just the sort of wood most haunted by the nymphs ... You hear their soft liquid laughter -- but if you look with a too curious sacrilegious eye, they vanish behind the silvery beeches, they make you believe that their voice was only a running brooklet, perhaps they metamorphose themselves into a tawny squirrel that scampers away and mocks you from the topmost bough...
>
> (A.B., p. 132)

Here, with but a few well chosen images, Eliot has managed to establish the mood of the entire passage to follow. The dim light of the late afternoon in the forest, the vague sounds like "soft liquid laughter," the tall trees and narrow passages are all that are necessary for the reader to be present in the wood and to be aware of what Arthur sees, hears, and feels. Thus, in two rather vague sentences, the author has stimulated the reader's imagination to produce a setting virtually supernatural. "Labyrinthine" woods "haunted by the nymphs," quasi-mythological references, combined with ominous sounds, and words denoting the extraordinary, "metamorphose," "sacrilegious," complete the mysterious power of the passage. The attention of the reader then shifts to Arthur's impressions as he sees Hetty bouncing towards him:

Arthur Donnithorne passed ... under an avenue of limes and beeches ... the golden light was lingering languidly among the upper boughs ... an afternoon in which destiny disguises its cold awful face behind a hazy radiant veil, encloses us in warm downy wings, and poisons us with violet-scented breath ... Ah! There she comes. First a bright patch of colour like a tropic bird among the boughs; then a tripping figure, with a round hat on, and a small basket under her arm; then a deep-blushing, almost

frightened, but bright-smiling girl, making her curtsy with a fluttered yet happy glance, as Arthur came up to her...

(A.B., p. 132)

Here, both contrast and repetition emphasize Arthur's awkwardness in the face of Hetty's arrival. The "cold awful face" of destiny surrounds him with its "warm, downy wings"; the "hazy radiant veil" initially seems to hamper a clear vision of Hetty. She is first a "bright patch of colour" ... almost "frightened," but "bright-smiling," with a "fluttered" yet "happy" glance. A more complex picture now emerges, built of several contrasting suggestions. Eliot goes on. "Arthur would have gone home to his silk-curtained cot, and Hetty to her Home-spun pillow" .... Although "her feet rested on a cloud", she would sleep "without dreams". Eliot continues in the same vein, extending the supernatural atmosphere of the setting, and juxtaposing contrasting images, and then sums up Arthur's feelings:

It may seem a contradiction, but Arthur gathered a certain carelessness and confidence from his timidity: it was an entirely different state of mind from what he had expected in such a meeting with Hetty; and full as he was of vague feeling, there was room, in those moments of silence, for the thought that his previous debates and scruples were needless...

(A.B., p. 133)

After the initial uncomfortable feeling, he now becomes more sure of himself. Then Hetty "felt a strange difference in his look and manner". The "sweet, timid, beseeching look" (p. 134) of Arthur's eyes were now "almost chilling to her" (p. 135). The "wondering rapture" of this "strange dream" was undergoing a change into "contrarieties and sadness". The two young persons part, feeling quite different. Certainly this painstaking use of contrasting images was the result of careful artistic planning on the author's part. It is a convincing, albeit impressionistic and mysterious, descriptive passage.

Other isolated examples of contrast may be pointed out. That of opposing light and dark, perhaps the most prevalent artistic device, occurs frequently in Eliot's works. She may set light against dark in a 'direct' manner, where the reader actually sees the juxtaposition of dark and light; it may be implied, reflecting the setting or the mood of the characters. A frequent direct light-and-dark contrast is the classic opposition of the dark-haired and light-haired heroes (or heroines). The three novels follow this tradition: Dinah and Hetty, Maggie and Lucy, Dorothea and Rosamond. Already mentioned, as well, is the faint light which illuminates the dark night, characteristic of the chiaroscuro painters. Less frequent, however, is an implied light and dark contrast:

When Maggie first read this letter she felt as if her real temptation had only just begun. At the entrance of the chill dark cavern, we turn with unworn courage from the warm light; but how, when we have trodden far in the damp darkness and have begun to be faint and weary -- how, if there is a sudden opening above us, and we are invited to the life-nourishing day?...

(M. on F., p. 538)

In this case, the light and dark do not exist in the story but are only implied by the author to reflect the torment in Maggie's mind. The following passage in Adam Bede combines both direct and implied light and dark contrast:

As Dinah crossed the prison court with the turnkey, the solemn evening light seemed to make the walls higher ... and the sweet pale face in the cap was more than ever like a white flower on this background of gloom. The turnkey ... struck a light as he entered the dark corridor ... A jet of light from his lantern fell on the opposite corner of the cell, where Hetty was sitting ... The door closed again, and the only light in the cell was that of the evening sky, through the small high grating ... Hetty hung on this something that was come to clasp her now, while she was sinking helpless in a dark gulf ... The light got fainter as they stood, and when at last they sat down on the straw pallet together, their faces had become indistinct. Hetty sat in dull despair ... Dinah ... did not know how long they sat in this way, but it

got darker and darker till there was only a pale patch of light on the opposite wall...

(A.B., p. 423-425)

This passage is an outstanding example of Eliot's artistic capabilities. The skilful blending of direct and implied light-and-dark contrasts gives the reader an accurate account not only of the visual setting but of the actual feelings of the two characters -- Dinah brings light to Hetty and attempts to brighten her gloom. As Dinah begins "to doubt whether Hetty was conscious who it was that sat beside her" and thinks that "suffering and fear might have driven the poor sinner out of her mind" (A.B., p. 425), she realizes that Hetty might not be receptive to any form of physical illumination. The cell gets "darker and darker" and she asks for a new light to "pierce the darkness" (A.B., p. 427): "Come, mighty Saviour! Let the dead hear thy voice. Let the eyes of the blind be opened. (A.B., p. 428)

Eliot's writings abound in colour contrasts, (the discussion of colour follows at length in part V). Hetty wore "an old black lace scarf ... to set off the whiteness of her upper arm" (A.B., p. 151); Chad's Bess, Mary, Tommy ... all have "red cheeks and black eyes" (A.B., p. 39, 184); Totty's "small blue pinafored" figure

was "smeared with red juice" (A.B., p. 214); at Dorlcote Mill, the "red light" of the fire "shines out under the deepening grey of the sky", (M. on F., p. 13); the Christmas snow makes "the dark-red gables stand out with a new depth of colour" (M. on F., p. 165); Bob Jakin looked at Tom "with a pair of blue eyes set in a disc of freckles" (M. on F., p. 252): from her window, Dorothea sees "the bright green buds which stood in relief against the dark evergreens" (Mid., p. 557).

The colour contrasts, the opposition of light and dark, the shifts from noisy activity to quiet relaxation, the coalescing upward and downward movement, these are all effective methods of unifying stories, of reinforcing characterization, and of achieving painting-like quality.

## IV - R H Y T H M

Another artistic device cherished by prose-writers is that of rhythm. One of the most characteristic elements of the art of George Eliot, rhythm consists in a more or less regular repetition of motifs, such as certain words or phrases, colours, masses, or whole images. Its main purpose is to focus attention. The painter, for example, calls attention to a certain part of his composition by repeating its colours or its shape in various details throughout the composition.

Eliot takes full advantage of the wide range of rhythmic motifs available to the writer. The concern here, however, is not so-called "prose-rhythm", which is in some way, related to poetry, but the rhythm produced by a repetition of stimuli which evoke in the reader's mind a sequence of images. Several rhythmic motifs appear in George Eliot's novels. Motifs which appear in Adam Bede with almost rhythmic regularity are the various accoutrements associated with Hetty Sorrel. A locket that she wears faithfully, as it contains a lock of her lover's hair, assumes special significance when Adam rescues it from the floor during the dance and realizes that she is being courted by another. The locket then becomes a consolation to her in her troubles and a bitter

thorn to Adam. A pink neckerchief, which frames Hetty's face in the first description, becomes a regular reminder to Arthur of his love for her. After his troubling encounter with Adam in the wood, the presence of the neckerchief disturbs him: "He went cautiously around the room, as if wishing to assure himself of the presence or absence of something" (p. 293). He finds the neckerchief and throws it into the wastebasket. Following the second meeting of Arthur and Adam in the wood, they again retire to the Hermitage, and Arthur notices the pink handkerchief where he had previously put it (p. 441). He then picks it up when Adam leaves (p. 446).

Another rhythmic motif is Hetty's mirror. Her beauty, which is repeatedly emphasized, is a cause of her vanity, and many times she is seen staring at herself in the mirror. The mirror in her bed-chamber was particularly dear to her, as it had "a brass candle-socket on each side, which would give it an aristocratic air to the very last" (p. 150). Broken-hearted by the reception of the letter from Arthur, she returns to the mirror which was now "almost like a companion that she might complain to -- that would pity her," and sat sobbing "till the candle went out" (p. 319-320). Numerous references to certain traits of character in terms of particular associations assume rhythmic quality through repetition.

Just as Hetty's vanity is underlined through recurrent mention of her mirrored reflection, similarly Dinah's saint-like traits are emphasized by the numerous comparisons to religious figures. She is likened to St. Catherine (p. 71), to Martha and Mary (p. 81), to a church statue (p. 86), to an angel (p. 114, 141).

There are several equally effective motifs in The Mill on the Floss. Maggie's fetishistic attachment to her doll during her childhood, reappears whenever she seeks revenge following a dressing-down by her mother. In conjunction with this vicarious vengeance, there is a compulsion on her part to seek refuge in the attic, only to be invariably rescued by her brother. Ironically, when Maggie searches for her brother in the last scene, his voice emanates from the attic window, to which she eventually steers her boat for the final rescue.

Most of the rhythmic characteristics of George Eliot's novels are effected not through the recurrence of simple motifs, but through repetition of fully developed images. This is most obvious in Middlemarch, many of these prominent recurring images have been dealt with exhaustively by the critics. Gordon S. Haight pointed out the close relationship that existed in George Eliot's novels between the recurrent imagery and the traits of character:

The images of Middlemarch grow out of fundamental conceptions of the characters and are applied consistently like the extended metaphors of Donne. They recur throughout the novel like motifs in Wagner's operas, echoing the earlier occasions with a deeper significance ... [They] are always controlled by her intellect and convey nuances of emotion without losing their grasp of the underlying reality...[1]

The three principle series of images found in Middlemarch reflect inner discord. Casaubon is repeatedly described in terms of dark, labyrinthine places, usually unable to reach the relative security of daylight:

Poor Mr. Casaubon was lost among small closets and winding stairs, and in an agitated dimness about the Cabeiri, or in an exposure of other mythologists' ill-considered parallels, easily lost sight of any purpose which had prompted him to these labours. With his taper stuck before him he forgot the absence of windows, and in bitter manuscript remarks on other men's notions about the solar deities, he had become indifferent to the sunlight.

(p. 147)

Into this tomb-like world, he has dragged Dorothea, who feels the discomfort of his gloomy situation:

How was it that in the weeks since her marriage, Dorothea had not distinctly observed but felt with a stifling

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[1]G. S. Haight, Introduction to the Riverside edition of Middlemarch, pp. XIX - XX.

depression that the large vistas and wide fresh air which she had dreamed of finding in her husband's mind were replaced by anterooms and winding passages which seemed to lead nowhither?

(Mid., p. 145)

Closely related to the 'dark-places' imagery is that of the 'web'. Weaving, binding, numerous references to yokes, chains, threads, links, all reflect the unduly close relationship of most of the leading characters. The "threads of connection" (p. 71) between the various social levels form the core of the novel, as pointed out by the author herself in one of the most revealing statements of the book:

I at least have so much to do in unravelling certain human lots, and seeing how they were woven and interwoven, that all the light I can command must be concentrated on this particular web and not dispersed over that tempting range of relevancies called the universe.

(p. 105)

Rosamond and Lydgate are particularly singled out as subjects for the author's "unravelling". Their relationship, bound by love, develops its own embracing network, which stifles all who approach, and eventually themselves. Rosamond, initially preoccupied with "young love-making -- that gossamer web!" (Mid., p. 253), attracts Lydgate who, in turn,

"fell to spinning that web from his inward self with wonderful rapidity" (p. 253). He soon finds, however, that "there are so many strings pulling at once" (p. 363), and the initial gossamer web becomes a yoke which nearly destroys him.

The most frequent recurrent image examines a different side of the leading characters. Casaubon's narrow-mindedness is compared to the shallowness of streams and lakes, and thus reflects George Eliot's own statement that "the early months of marriage are often times of critical tumult -- whether that of a shrimp-pool or of deeper-waters."[2] Water images dominate the imagery of Middlemarch and form the backbone of The Mill on the Floss. From the opening chapter, which introduces the Floss and the Tulliver Mill, to the final drowning scene, the reader realizes that the fate of the principal characters is inextricably bound to the water. Since infancy, Maggie is drawn to the river, and several times her mother warns her about its dangers: "You'll tumble in and be drownded some day an' then you'll be sorry you didn't do as mother told you." (M. on F., p. 18) "They're such children for the water mine are ... they'll be brought in dead and drownded some day. I wish that river was far enough" (M. on F., p. 114). George Eliot often

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[2]Quoted in introduction of Riverside edition, p. xix

described the development of her heroes in terms of water images. Love "flowed" in for Maggie, the Tullivers are "wrecked", the ghostly boatman at St. Ogg's prefigures Maggie's fate, an elaborate comparison of the Rhine and Rhone reflects as Jerome Thale pointed out, "the workings of provincial society on Tom and Maggie ... and Maggie's predicament is dramatized by metaphors suggesting flow, and current too great for its narrow channel."[3]

Certain critics have emphasized the time-factor and the numerous references to timepieces as another regular motif in George Eliot's novels. Adam, initially annoyed by his fellow workmen's dependence on the clock to free them from their work, later becomes extremely conscious of the slow passage of time when he discovers Hetty's betrayal. In Mr. Irwine's office, he looks repeatedly at the clock, intently aware of its "loud, hard, indifferent tick" (A.B., p. 385). Awaiting the trial, he again stares at his watch, "as if he were counting the long minutes" (A.B., p. 404). Later, at the last encounter in the woods, Arthur asks Adam to give Hetty his watch and chain "in remembrance of me ... as I know ... she will use the watch" (A.B., p. 445). The Poysers are also intently aware of

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[3]Jerome Thale, The Novels of George Eliot, New York, 1959, p. 167.

the passage of time. Martin whiles away his old age, watching "even the hand of the clock", and enjoying the detection "of a rhythm in the tick" (p. 146). His wife's "handsome eight-day clock" (p. 79) repeatedly attracts her eye and secures her prompt arrival for any event. Mrs. Glegg's haughtiness is reflected in her disregard for any but her own time pieces:

> Mrs. Glegg held her large gold watch in her hand with the many-doubled chain round her fingers and observed to Mrs. Tulliver ... , that whatever it might be by other peoples' clocks and watches, it was gone half past twelve by hers"...
> (M. on F., p. 62)

Just as the passage of time preoccupies certain of the characters, money is the prime obsession of others. Mr. Glegg, who had an "inalienable habit of saving as an end in itself" (M. on F., p. 133), Mr. Bulstrode, whose life had been marked by "remarkable providences" (Mid., p. 452), in fact the general tendency of the Middlemarchers whose "disposition was rather towards laying by money that towards sprituality" (Mid., p. 57) contrasts with others like Lydgate, to whom "this subservience of conduct to the gaining of small sums [was] thoroughly hateful" (Mid., p. 133) and like Dorothea, who did not know what to do with her money: "I have been thinking about money all day --

that I have always had too much, and especially the prospect of too much . . . ." (Mid., p. 274)

The author must have been fascinated with people's eyes. Facial expressions are marked by enchanted stares or hypnotizing eyes; the "keen glance" of Adam's dark eyes (A.B., p. 18) contrasts with the glare of Hetty's "strange look" (A.B., p. 411): in her cell, her eyes had "that mournful gaze, as if she had come back to him from the dead to tell him of her misery" (A.B., p. 436). Maggie's dark eyes, which remind Philip "of the stories about princesses being turned into animals" (M. on F., p. 228), had a bright glaze like that of "a young lioness" (M. on F., p. 228) and disarmed all who tempted to reason with her: "was it possible to quarrel with a creature who had such eyes -- defying and deprecating, contradicting and clinging, imperious and beseeching, full of delicious opposites..." (M. on F., p. 427). Tom, who as a youngster had coloured a picture of the devil with "eyes red, like fire, because he's all fire inside, and it shines out at his eyes" (M. on F., p. 24) thrills to Philip's stories about Greek mythological beasts, especially to that of Polypheme -- "a more wonderful giant than Goliath ... who had only one eye in the middle of his forehead" (M. on F., p. 177)

Dorothea with her "large eyes that seemed, like her religion, too unusual and striking", (Mid., p. 7), mesmerizes Casaubon whose "deep eye-sockets made him resemble the portrait of Locke" (Mid., p. 12). Will Ladislaw's eyes "rather near together" (p. 55), Rigg's "prominent, frozen eyes" (Mid., p. 304), Solomon's "small, furtive eyes" (Mid., p. 226), Lydgate's "dark steady eyes" (Mid., p. 68) which had a "peculiar light" in them (Mid., p. 490), Mary Garth's deep blue eyes, "deep enough to hold the most exquisite meanings an ingenious beholder could put into them" (Mid., p. 83) all testify to George Eliot's fascination with the eye.

She occasionally shields her character's eyes with a pair of glasses, that not only reflected the reality of the outside world, as in the case of Bartle Massey, who always put on his glasses when he addressed his fellow beings "as if they would assist his imagination" (A.B., p. 398), but also acted as a screen to reality, as in the case of old Mr. Donnithorne, who could read "the small print without spectacles" (A.B., p. 264), but who was so near-sighted . . . .

The critics have extricated from Middlemarch every conceivable image and then proceeded to enumerate, classify, and explain them. Most of them are not typical of Middlemarch

alone, nor of the works of George Eliot, but of all writers, and therefore need not be elaborated on. The purpose here is to show how some images occur with a frequency so as to give a definite rhythmic quality to Eliot's work.

Rhythmic repetition may be effected by the recurrent use of certain words or phrases. The author emphasizes the conservative atmosphere which surrounds the Reverend Farebrother, who has himself declared that "I am not likely to follow new lights", by portraying him in his ancient surroundings:

> The Reverend Camden Farebrother, whom Lydgate went to see the next evening, lived in an old parsonage, built of stone, venerable enough to match the church it looked out upon. All the furniture too in the house was old, but with another grade of age -- that of Mr. Farebrother's father and grandfather. There were planted white chairs, with gilding and wreaths on them, and some lingering red silk damask ... There were engraved portraits ... of the last century ... and old pierglasses to reflect them ... and three ladies to receive him, who were also old-fashioned, and of a faded but genuine respectability.
>
> (Mid., pp. 124-125)

Certainly, the repetition of words reflecting the antiquity of the surroundings adds a certain rhythmic quality to the description.

In the following passage from Adam Bede, the emphasis on sunlight is given a kind of reveletory significance

through periodic use.

The sunshine was on them: that early autumn sunshine which we should know was not summer's, even if there were not the touches of yellow on the lime and chestnut; the Sunday sunshine too, which has more than autumnal calmness for the working man; the morning sunshine, which still leaves the dew crystals on the gossamer webs in the shadow of the bushy hedgerows ... The autumnal Sunday sunshine soothed him, [... as Dinah's] love was so like that calm sunshine that they seemed to make one presence to him, and he believed in them both alike...

(A.B., p. 474)

One of Tom Tulliver's prevalent traits is pointed out by the author through repeated use of a key word, as in the following paragraph:

But to minds strongly marked by the positive and negative qualities that create severity ... prejudices come as the natural food of tendencies which can get no sustenance out of that complex, fragmentary, doubt-provoking knowledge which we call truth. Let a prejudice be bequeathed, carried in the air, adopted by hearsay, caught in through the eye ... it is at once a staff and a baton. Every prejudice that will answer our purposes is self-evident. Our good upright friend Tom Tulliver's mind was of this class; his inward criticism of his father's faults did not prevent him from adopting his father's prejudice; it was a prejudice against a man of lax principle and lax life...

(M. on F., p. 478-479)

Although a reader may not notice these reappearing words and expressions as he runs through a story, and may not be conscious of the descriptive rhythm, it has undoubtedly strong emotional value. Farebrother's "old-fashioned" mentality and Tom's "prejudices" are qualities which remain associated with these characters.

Another use of rhythm employed by George Eliot is prefiguration. Just as the dramatist drops hints along the way, of forthcoming action, the novelist will insert certain subtle images early in his narrative that announce subsequent plot elements centrally relevant. Early in Adam Bede, Dinah thinks about Hetty, and meditates on her unpreparedness to face the realities of the adult world, comparing her to "a child hugging its toys in the beginning of a long toilsome journey in which it will have to bear hunger and cold and unsheltered darkness" (A.B., p. 158). This passage is relatively unimportant. It is not until the actual journey which Hetty undertakes, that the reader realizes that Dinah's initial thoughts would prefigure what did later happen. Dinah promptly offers her cousin assistance should she ever need it (A.B., p. 160); indeed it is to her that Hetty turns when she is later in trouble.

Warnings to stay away from the water occur with rhythmic frequency in The Mill on the Floss, and prefigure the

actual conclusion of the novel. From the initial admonishing on the part of Mrs. Tulliver, who calls Maggie away from the water's edge -- "You'll tumble in and be drownded some day" (M. on F., p. 18), to her subsequent fears that "they'll be brought in dead and drownded some day" (M. on F., p. 114), the river looms as an ominous threat to the well-being of the younger Tullivers. The author's intrusion to recount the legend of St. Ogg and the visitation of the floods (M. on F., p. 128-129) adds to the mysterious aura surrounding the Floss. Philip recalls the tale and forecasts the ending when he tells Lucy that Maggie "will be selling her soul to that Ghostly boatman who haunts the Floss -- only for the sake of being drifted in a boat forever" (M. on F., p. 482).

Similarly, in Middlemarch, Mrs. Cadwallader prefigures the actual estrangement of Dorothea and Mr. Casaubon by stating that "in a year from this time that girl will hate him" (Mid., p. 67). Mr. Vincy forecasts Lydgate's fate by announcing that he doesn't "believe he'll ever make an income" (Mid., p. 251). Prefiguration, therefore, is a rhythmic device that attempts to underline the direction of the story by preparing the reader to expect a certain outcome, just as a painter may control one's attention by repeating certain details so that the overall effect of the work is not something unexpected.

# V - COLOUR AND SELECTION

Most nineteenth century writers relied heavily on an emotional appeal to the senses through the use of artistic devices. George Eliot was no exception. She was deeply interested in the art of painting, as evidenced by the many references to works of art in her novels and notebooks. She gradually developed a keen critical ability, and wrote numerous essays on painting and form in art.

The result was an enviable narrative proficiency in artistic structure, design, rhythm and the use of colour. On the one hand, however, structure, design, and rhythm are devices which, although less evident to the reader, are nevertheless the basic elements required for the development of a work of art. Colour, on the other hand, more readily apparent, is the finishing touch needed to complete the work from both an aesthetic and emotional point of view.

George Eliot, in effect, used colour for descriptive purposes, but it was a means, not an end. Her main concern was not only the accuracy of descriptive phrases, such as: "Grand masses of cloud were hurried across the blue ... and the leaves, still green, were tossed off the hedgerow trees by the wind" (A.B., p. 281), but the way in which the reader responded to the particular colour. It became an emotional rather than a purely descriptive element.

Eliot has woven colour words very carefully through the plot of her novels. Amidst the colours that predominate (red is the most frequent colour mentioned, followed by green and then blue), pastel shades, relatively tame, highlight many episodes. The verdure of the garden scenes is complemented by young ladies with pale pink or lavender dresses, men in buff coats and light blue suits, slate-coloured buildings and silver-grey skies. Grandfather Poyser's nostalgia, for example, is marked by bucolic reflections where "dog-roses were tossing out their pink wreaths, the night-shade was in its yellow and purple glory" (A.B., p. 185); "purple damsons" and "paler purple daisies" and "yellow hedges" surround the Chase Farm (A.B., p. 335); Philip and Maggie exchange tender thoughts in a "green hollow surrounded by an amphitheatre of the pale-pink dog-roses" (M. on F., p. 316).

The author used primary colours to emphasize more intense and troubling events. She seemed to associate the colour red with various facets of religious and spiritual life. Early in Adam Bede, for example, Mr. Poyser, bedecked in a red waistcoat, heads for the Hayslope Church, which is marked by "liberal touches of crimson": "crimson cloth cushions ... and a crimson altar-cloth" (A.B., p. 194). Tom has depicted the devil with "eyes red, like fire, because

he's all fire inside, and it shines out at his eyes" (M. on F., p. 24). The association of spiritual evil with the colour red is made frequently. Tom later appears before Maggie with a red handkerchief wrapped around his head like "a turban", and he wore a red comforter, "an amount of red which ... would suffice to convey an approximate idea of his fierce and bloodthirsty disposition" (M. on F., p. 193). The gypsy woman whom Maggie meets when she runs away sports a red handkerchief on her head (M. on F., p. 120). Hetty also wears red on her death-like trip to Windsor.

Although red is mainly associated with spiritual death in the form of lurking evil and the devil, it may also characterize rebirth and hope for a new life. Red-haired Bob Jakin appears out of the blue (!) when all hope seems lost for the Tullivers, carrying "something ... under his arm, wrapped in a red handkerchief" (M. on F., p. 297). In this red parcel, Maggie finds the copy of the works of Thomas à Kempis which gives her spiritual hope and enables her to overcome her troubles. Later, Bob again appears with a scarlet woollen kerchief and proposes a scheme to Tom, a scheme which is eventually responsible for the acquittal of his financial debts. In the pale and ghostly world of Lowick Manor, a bright red fire "seemed an

incongruous renewal of life and glow -- like the figure of Dorothea herself as she entered carrying the red-leather cases containing the cameos for Celia" (Mid., p. 201). Here again, the colour red is associated with renewal and rebirth.

The happy and carefree young ladies seem to be always clad in red or pink. Hetty's trouble-free childhood finds her immersed in a pink world:

> If ever a girl looked as if she had been made of roses, that girl was Hetty in her Sunday hat and frock. For her hat was trimmed with pink, and her frock had pink spots, sprinkled on a white ground. There was nothing but pink and white about her...
>
> (A.B., p. 183)

Maggie reminisces about her childhood when she sees an earlier portrait by Philip: "What a queer little girl I was! I remember myself with my hair in that way, in that pink frock" (M. on F., p. 315). Later, she is scolded by her aunt for wearing blue: "But you must wear pink, my dear; that blue thing ... turns you into a crowflower" (M. on F., p. 355). Both Celia and Mary Garth also invariably wear pink.

Yellow seems to characterize old age and decline. Aside from the autumnal yellow leaves ("pure decay", A.B.,

p. 341), found in all three novels, Eliot emphasizes the faded antiquity of certain objects in terms of yellow colours. Bartle Massey's wall map of England, which "age had turned ... a fine yellow brown" (A.B., p. 226), resembles his face, marked by "blue veins [which] stood out like cords under the transparent yellow skin" (A.B., p. 227). As Fred and Rosamond approach Lowick, they notice the yellow carriage that belongs to the Waules. "When I see Mrs. Waule in it, I understand how yellow can have been worn for mourning. That gig seems to me more funereal than a hearse" (Mid., p. 77). Yellow, the colour of decay and decline, now has deathly references.

The verdant luxury of vegetation is reflected in the rich green furnishings of most of the interiors of George Eliot's homes. It is of no interest to underline the preponderance of green in the landscape descriptions, but it is interesting to note the emphasis on green in interior decor, although the inside colours are often but pale reflections of the deep verdure outside. The grand hall in St. Ogg's is marked by an "old, faded green curtain" (M. on F., p. 453); Dorothea's boudoir is characterized by a ghostly blue-green colour with drab furniture and books which appear artificial (Mid., p. 201).

Not only by direct colour imagery does Eliot give colour to her novels. Scintillating movement, as mentioned earlier, contributes to this effect, as does the interplay of black and white, of light and dark. In her painting techniques, she may indeed be called an Impressionist. She is aware of the value of light, and her colour schemes reflect an interplay between direct and indirect illumination. The "pointilliste" effect is the result of a mixing of spots of colour with spots of light and dark to produce the effect of living colour, which Seurat and his contemporaries made famous. Indeed, "living colour" perhaps best describes Eliot's ability to blend colour into the artistic fabric of her novels.

The artistic devices, enumerated in this paper are the means at the disposal of the artist for the production of his work. One element has yet to be mentioned: that of choice. "Art", says Henry James, "is essentially selection". The artist has to choose his frame, his setting, his background, and his devices, the lighting, colour, design, etc. This is perhaps the most difficult task which confronts the writer as he has probably the greatest liberty to select. The right characters, and certain particular aspects of their personalities, the right details and, finally, the right words, all determine the mood and theme

of the story.[1]

The main result of selection is that possibility replaces probability: the romantic often replaces the realistic. Rembrandt, in painting Dr. Tulp's Anatomy Lesson, was not disturbed by the fact that five of the seven students who are looking on, are huddled together on one side of the patient, and in a position whereby they interfere with the light. It is improbable that they would stand in this manner; it is more likely that they would have surrounded the operating table, or at least have gotten out of the light. The grouping is improbable, but it is possible. The same is true of Da Vinci's Last Supper. It is unlikely that Diana would have hunted without clothes, as sculptors have pictured her, but she might have. Similarly, it is improbable that Adam should venture through the Grove at the same time that Arthur had arranged to meet Hetty. That they should meet again much later is no more likely, nor is Maggie's fortuitous encounter with Philip in the Red Deeps or Dorothea's encounter with Will in Rome probable. These incidents are all a matter of chance, and consequently a matter of selection.

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[1]Henry James, The Art of Fiction, Boston, (n.d.), p. 75.

Eliot's caution in the selection of details was also pointed out earlier, as for example, her stress on timepieces and spectacles. Many other details not previously mentioned were of primary importance in the creation of her novels, such as the references to keys throughout Adam Bede: at the end, Dinah accompanies the turnkey to Hetty's cell, as she "has a key to unlock hearts" (A.B., p. 423); to a pocket-knife in The Mill on the Floss, object which becomes the symbol of the intimacy between Tom and his deliverer, Bob Jakin (M. on F., p. 252); to candlesticks in Middlemarch, even though they fail to guide the characters most often associated with them (Casaubon, Lydgate) out of the dark "anterooms and winding passages which seemed to lead nowhither" (Mid., p. 145).

In portraying her characters, George Eliot shows a fine sense of selection. She limits characterization to a few well-chosen details, and to an indirect method of delineation, whereby a figure is described in terms of his effect on others, a method which often demands the omission of trivial details. She leans heavily on contrast, here as elsewhere, contrast which may result in characters which tend to become types: the sweet dark-eyed damsels in distress, Hetty, Maggie; the upright and rather colourless young men, Arthur, Stephen, Will; the unsatisfied

lovers, Adam, Lucy, Rosamond. Eliot both loses and gains in this process of selection in characterization. So, for that matter, do most artists. In painting, one notices that Leonardo's women look much alike, as do the figures in the Dutch school. This same fault can be seen in Eliot's settings. Rural England before the railway age furnishes the background of nearly all her novels. This is true of most writers. Their settings are limited to the realm of their experience. Certainly rural England is a good background for Adam Bede and The Mill on the Floss because of its romantic nature, but it is not as necessary to these novels as it is to Middlemarch, where small-town interrelationships provide the skeleton of the story.

# VI - C O N C L U S I O N

The purpose of this paper was to point out certain of the more technical pictorial details George Eliot has made use of, with examples taken from three of her novels, Adam Bede, The Mill on the Floss, and Middlemarch.

Her talents as 'literary artist' have made her perhaps the best representative of a writing technique which flourished in the late nineteenth century, and which was renown for its close affinity with the pictorial art of the period. Henry James, Gustave Flaubert, Leon Tolstoy, and George Eliot among others, must have felt a vocation to act as photographers to the contemporary scene. Their often exacting reproduction of the life of their times betrays, no doubt, a profound interest in painting.

In effect, this study has given examples of the various particular artistic preoccupations of George Eliot. Her overall structural method is characterized by romantic informality reminiscent of the Dutch schools although harmonious proportions are evident in the earlier novels, and within certain individual passages.

The preponderant elements of design in novels by George Eliot are those of the painter and sculptor; mass and height, line and plasticity, recur with regular frequency resulting

in descriptions that the reader can visualize with little difficulty. Certain of her elements of design recall particular schools of painting, such as the Pointillistes, or characteristic artistic methods, such as those referred to as 'chiaroscuro.'

Rhythmic motifs, most obvious in music, dominate George Eliot's novels. Repeated devices or objects stimulate the mind of the reader, as do recurrent chords in a symphony, and give continuity to the work of art. The three novels in question are replete with rhythmic motifs, often the same from one novel to the next, and they add not only tempo to her story, but give it emotional value as well, by preparing the reader for forthcoming action.

Finally, the importance of colour and choice must not be minimized. The most obvious elements of a work of art are certainly the dominant colours and the subject choice. Eliot's emphasis on certain colours was an additional device which completed the emotional impact of her story. Her emphasis on selection put her story in proper perspective, thus enabling the reader to understand the possible world created by the author.

All these elements combine to produce a work of art. George Eliot, conscious of harmonious structure, of aesthetic design, of graceful rhythm, and proficient in her use of

colour, in her selection of characters and situations, certainly deserves the many accolades bestowed upon her by her contemporaries.

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