



## **NOVELS OF GEORGE ELIOT: SILAS MARNER & ROMOLA (THE STORY OF A TRANSFORMED LIFE AND ETHICS REGENERATION)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The main purpose of this research is to study transformed life and ethics regeneration in the novels of George Eliot. Though there are discreet remarks and sporadic discussions from eminent critics and scholars on George Eliot's preoccupation with the theme of morality, there is hardly any comprehensive and cohesive study of George Eliot's major characters from the perspective of morality. For this purpose I have arranged the two novels namely Silas Marner and Romola to assess the evolution of the transformed life and ethics regeneration respectively in her major characters. In Silas Marner (1861), George Eliot shows Silas' ethical transition from a brutal money-grabber to a sensitive human being through the touch of an abandoned new-born infant named Eppie. And Romola (1862), despite its historical views, focuses on Romola's extreme choice to divorce her husband Tito and her desire to live a meaningful and virtuous life.*

**Keywords:** *George Eliot, Ethical issues- the story of a transformed life and ethics regeneration, Silas Marner (1861) & Romola (1862) novels*

### **INTRODUCTION**

In terms of George Eliot's writing style, Leslie Stephen believes that the author strives to instil an ethical urge in her writings. In her opinion, two broad notions are pervasive: first, a focus on compassion, and second, a reliance on intuition as a technique of reaching ethical judgments. She feels that men's actions determine them just as much as men's actions decide them. Suffering and nemesis are unavoidable if we succumb to temptation and sin. We must bear the repercussions of our conduct. Her characters suffer as a result of breaking some ethical rules and succumbing to temptation, sometimes knowingly and often unwittingly. This causes problems for Hetty Sorrel in Adam Bede, Maggie Tulliver in Mill on Floss, Romola in Romola, Lydgate and Dorothea in Middlemarch, and Gwendolen in Daniel De ronda.

However, identifying George Eliot's ethical beliefs within the framework of any typical philosophical concept is challenging. She is adamant that there can be no specific rule to determine ethicality. Any ethical judgement must be formed in light of the event's complicated background. According to George Eliot, ethical behaviour requires a type of impartiality, the ability to see grandeur and kindness in man and woman while ignoring their selfish impulses. George Eliot despises the triumph of the self over the ethical fibre of existence. Her fervent



belief is that man's feeling of imethicality is rooted in his self-love. There can be no escape from the shackles of the self unless there is a concurrent ability to flourish in compassion for others.

Unlike her Victorian contemporaries such as Dickens and Thackeray, George Eliot's concern in character analysis from ethical and psychological perspectives has given her art of characterization depth and durability. The next chapters are devoted to discussing this outstanding Victorian novelist's literary artistry and creativity.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The main purpose of research “Novels of George Eliot: Silas Marner & Romola (the story of a transformed life and ethics regeneration)”, is to trace, in whatever detail possible, the ethical elements which have been, by and large, woven into the texture of George Eliot’s two novels (Silas Marner, 1861 & Romola 1862). As such, no attempt will spared to uphold the ethical traits in the major characters of her novels. In doing so, ethical principles of George Eliot as is represented in the characters of her novels are taken up for a critical analysis.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Though there are discreet remarks and sporadic discussions from eminent critics and scholars on George Eliot’s preoccupation with the theme of ethicality, there is hardly any comprehensive and cohesive study of George Eliot’s major characters from the perspective of ethicality. For this purpose researcher will arrange the novels to assess the evolution of the ethical tone in her major characters. Researcher cannot but marvel when researcher notice the high excellence she has achieved in her art of characterisation and the tonal variation she has used to uphold, in keeping with the spirit of the age, the ethical principles in her novels. The references and citations from the novels - Silas Marner, (1861) & Romola (1862) are from Wordsworth Classic Publications. In citing the references and preparing the bibliography, researcher will followed the traditional style and method.

## **SILAS MARNER**

If George Eliot deals with ethical hesitation & conflict of sensitive and passionate protagonist in Mill on Floss, the author investigates how a sick & unhappy soul is restored by effect of pure & unselfish love of a child in Silas Marner. Silas Marner is a normal, honest man who gets deceived by a close & trusted friend. He is wrongfully accused of stealing church funds, found guilty by community, & finally exiled from Lantern Yard, his town. As a result, an innocent young man is unfairly sentenced to seclusion and perpetual darkness by his peers. His experience suggests that "there is no just God who controls globe justly, but a God of falsehoods who bears testimony against innocent." [1] When it appears to Silas that God does not defend innocent, his religious faith is broken, & his existence looks to be meaningless.



He is plagued by the sorrow of betrayed confidence. So, from the beginning of the narrative, Silas lives in this world of duality.

The people of Lantern Yard frequently respect & venerate a good transformation. They attempt to gamble for salvation by submitting an ethical dilemma to a lottery that determines an innocent man's guilt & favours his betrayer. The following is the author's take on the subject:

We are inclined to believe that a man in Marner's position would have begun to doubt validity of an appeal to divine judgement by drawing lots; but to him, this would have been an effort of independent thought like he had never known, & he must have made effort at a time when all his energies were turned into the anguish of disappointed faith. If there is an angel who recalls men's pains as well as their wrongdoings, he realises how deep sorrows that result from false beliefs for which one is accountable are. [2]

Silas withdraws from Lantern Yard & from society almost entirely, retiring to Raveloe, where he knows no one & can weave at his loom, stockpile his money, & forget his past. Raveloe's orchards are lazy with neglected plenty, & its inhabitants live in carefree abundance, but he feels cut off from Power in which he had foolishly believed, & he believes there is no Unseen Love that cares for him. He shrinks into a lonely insect-like existence, always weaving on his loom. The Lantern Yard cult is a small secret realm apart from worldly issues. Silas too withdraws to Raveloe, a spot isolated from the bustle of life. In this emptiness, the desire to amass wealth becomes an all-consuming obsession for him. Handling & counting his coins each night is like quenching a craving for Silas. As his attachment to money deepens, his existence is reduced to weaving and hoarding. He became a human being without any connection to any living soul. Silas hides himself from his neighbours within his secluded cottage, and he hides his growing horde of gold—fruit of his own activity—under his floor in a hole. Despite his inherent decency, Silas regresses to the margins of mankind like an insect weaving its means out of itself, with only slenderest nutrition. His oddities instil dread and aversion in the rustic country folk, furthering his seclusion. Silas' love of gold supports Eliot's indictment of Victorian materialism & mercantile ethics required for higher goals. In truth, the gold represents Silas' metamorphosis from a vivacious human being to a harsh, sterile, & callous man.

Silas sustains this 'withering' state for fifteen years. Meanwhile, he gets another surprise when his hard-earned gold is taken one night. Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth, on the other hand, perceives this act of theft as a "violation of Silas's hidden existence & pushing him into company." [3] Even in this condition of pain & despair, Silas harbours no ill will toward anyone; he doesn't care if the thief is punished or not as long as he gets his riches back. There is little dispute about Silas' inherent nobleness. Silas Marner isn't a natural miser. The craving for gold in him is revealed to be a result of the abuse he suffers, which taints his inherent noble nature. The second nature is habit, & miserly habit becomes deeply ingrained in Silas; nonetheless, even second nature lacks invincible force of instinctive nature. As a result, Silas'

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ethical conversion is well-conceived and congruent with his character. Hugh Walker correctly observes, "If Silas' miserliness had been instinctual & inborn, awakening that would have resulted from it would have been amazing." [4]

Eppie restores Silas to normalcy and happiness. When he discovers the infant Eppie, who reminds him of his own little sister, his capacity to feel and reciprocate is reawakened. Silas' first contact with Eppie is described with an epiphany that carries a clear ethical lesson. Silas Marner, who is entirely engrossed in the worldly world, sees a sweetly warm, abandoned kid as a mound of gold:

Under his frantic gaze, the pile of gold appeared to shine and grow larger. He finally reached over and extended out his hand, but instead of hard coin with familiar resistant form, his finger met a soft warm curl. Silas dropped on his knees & bowed his head low to check ma Ne I; it was a sleeping infant. [5]

Silas Marner is transformed into a kind, loving, and sensitive human being as a result of Eppie's affection and warmth. The youngster established a new link between his existence & lives from which he had previously retreated into ever-increasing isolation. Eppie was a creature of boundless claims & ever-growing demands, seeking & adoring sunlight, live noises, and living motions, and rousing human affection in all eyes that looked on her. Silas's scary appearance was diminished by Eppie's presence. When Eppie was near Silas, no youngster was scared to approach him; there was no aversion around him anymore. The love b/w him & infant had merged them, & there was love b/w child & rest of the world—from men and women with parental faces & tones.

Eppie's drive to explore new areas of knowledge contrasts sharply with Silas' desire to unearth fragments of his old existence. The following text emphasises this:

His mind was expanding into recollection as the child's intellect grew into understanding; as her life unfolded, his soul, long stupefied in a frigid tight cage, • was unfolding as well, & quivering gently into full consciousness. [6]

The phrase "full consciousness" refers to both an integrated sense of self based on continuous recollection and an open, welcoming knowledge of surrounding social life. Silas, influenced by Eppie, looks outside the recognised group of individuals and attempts to develop contacts and ties with neighbours. He learns to channel his previously dormant emotions into forms of tradition & belief that shaped Raveloe existence. With reawakened sensitivities, he began to consider the parts of his old religion & merge them with his new experiences, until he regained a sense of oneness b/w his past & present. Integration replaces social isolation & personal disturbance. Silas began to conceive of Raveloe life solely in terms of Eppie; she had to have everything wonderful in Raveloe, & Silas learned to comprehend this life more than his previous existence. He had kept himself unnaturally apart from the people around him for far too long.



Silas' liberation from societal and ethical morbidity is encapsulated in creative imagination and romantic flavour. The following is the description:

Angels used to come and take men by hand & lead them away from city of disaster. We no longer see any white-winged angels. But mankind are taken away from frightening destruction; a hand is placed in theirs, gently leading them off towards a peaceful & bright area, so that they no longer look back; & the hand may be that of a small kid. [7]

The story picks up sixteen years later in chapter sixteen. Silas, now fifty-five, shielded Eppie, now eighteen, from lowering influences of village conversation & customs, preserving in her freshness that is sometimes mistakenly assumed to be an invariable quality of rusticity.

It was so because pure love may elevate even most uneducated people's relationships. She has gained a touch of refinement and passion that has come from nothing but gently cultivated sentiments.

The novel's ultimate "ethical drama" occurs when Godfrey Cass, Eppie's natural father, arrives at Silas' cabin to retrieve his daughter from Silas. The argument b/w Godfrey & Silas reveals two opposing perspectives on parenthood. Godfrey's beliefs based on biological paternity are refuted by Silas' appeals to a ethical rule that transcends it, as demonstrated by George Eliot. Despite his appeal to a higher Divine Authority in rejecting Godfrey's proposals, Silas eventually declines to speak for Eppie. In Eppie's situation, Silas establishes a ethical authority that supersedes natural & civil law: 'God handed her to me since you turned your back on her, and He looks upon her as mine; you have no claim to her.' [8] Despite his intense wish to retain her, Silas ultimately yields to Eppie's will, stating, 'Eppie, my child, I won't stand in your way,' [9] and later tells Godfrey that he would not negotiate for kid he loves. In this way, Silas demonstrates that he has overcome misconception that led him to want foundling instead of his lost money.

However, Silas' increasing reliance on Eppie's affection has rendered Godfrey's claim null and void. Eppie responds to Godfrey's assertion by saying:

We've become accustomed to being happy together every day, & I can't imagine being happy without him. And he claims he had nobody in the world until I was given to him, and that once I was gone, he'd have nothing. And he's taken care of me & loved me since beginning, and I'll cling to him for as long as he lives, & nobody shall ever come b/w him & me... I don't feel like I have any father except one. [10]

Eppie's decision to stay with Silas strengthens his confidence in human relationships and bonding based on pure love & affection: "Since kid was entrusted to me... I guess I shall trusten till I die." [11]

This ethical ideal should serve as the foundation for all human interactions. Above all, George Eliot has demonstrated in this novel that rural life can contain pernicious realities, but Silas Marner comes close to a heavenly vision of rural world as a garden containing benevolent nature, a comfortable life, a gradual change within a framework of

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permanence & order, &, most importantly, loving community. As a result, this work is intended to "highlight the curative impact of pure, natural human contact" [12] & "qualified redemption of ordinary and flawed humanity." [13]

Throughout reality, ethical regeneration is a central topic in Silas Marner's work. With the arrival of Eppie, and Silas's natural affection for her, came beginning of his regeneration. Whatever human affection left in his heart was now being spent on Eppie. It was mostly due to the fact that the gold had already been gone. Silas' natural love was all that remained; yet it was a crucial power, and it was this that led to Silas' absorption into Raveloe culture & a new religious belief that was acceptable to him since it was firmly based on his love for his brethren. This concept was not an escape from, but rather an acceptance of, gap b/w an individual & an alien cosmos. As a result, in the novel's conclusion, the author re-establishes the importance of religion. This religion, however, was painstakingly re-evaluated & formed as an elevation of the human being.

Silas' love for Eppie gradually assumed theological undertones, culminating in a total belief in a new God at the end of the tale. The love of one's fellow human being lies at the heart of this new religion. Dolly Winthrop answers all of Silas' questions regarding why he was treated unfairly at Lantern Yard. Dolly's response is that powers that be know what is best for humans. Dolly is certain that there is some order in cosmos that humans may certainly discern on rare instances, despite the fact that the universe is, on the whole, strange and unfathomable. Dolly believes in a loving but mysterious God, while Silas expresses belief in an orderly cosmos in his concluding remarks in the novel, this trust being inextricably linked to love of one's fellow creatures. This confidence in an ordered cosmos is George Eliot's final attitude in this work, & Silas marner's attainment of it marks Silas' regeneration.

## **ROMOLA**

Romola (1862- 63) is a major work of George Eliot. The Westminster Review has rightly observed: We cannot escape from feelings that chief interest of Romola respond to the ideas of ethical duty & of right which are of very modern growth, and that they would have been more appropriately displayed on a modern stage.[11]

The gradual transformation of Romola's attitude to her struggle to find a ethical vision and direction in life is the central interest of the novel. Romola is endowed with exceptional strength offeeling and energy. However her outlook of life, in the beginning of the novel, is narrow and rigid. She hardly understands the complexities of social experience as she has never really confronted with the problems of the external world. Her father's upbringing has limited her life and given her with only a small outlet for her emotion and secret passion. She had minimal experience meeting individuals beyond her close family and basically little touch with anything in the outside world that may have shaped her. This has resulted in her being very subjective, introverted, and egoistic, and essentially uninfluenced by other causes other than her love for her

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father, Bardo. The first severe repercussion is that she falls in love with Tito, first gorgeous man she encounters, and marries him. It's hardly unexpected that her sentiments, having been so constrained in their expression, should react so quickly to his outer charms.

Romola's attraction towards Tito reminds Maggie's response towards Stephen. In fact, unwrought passions and energies are dangerous and require some means of being controlled & disciplined. One of major problems novel is concerned with is how such a control can be effected.

Romola, at the outset of the novel, is strongly influenced by attitudes of her father, a man of defiant & rebellious nature. Bardo has sought self-realisation through scholarship. He believes in power of personal will & appreciates Romola's love for justice and freedom. Like her father she has an attitude to rebel against any authority that contradicts her personal will and subjective decisions. She, like her father, is contemptuous of Church or of any external authority which might restrict her individuality and freedom of thoughts.

After the death of her father, Romola begins experiencing many problems of life. She gets to know the true nature of her husband Tito and an extremely awkward situation crops up . Since her father has died, there is none to direct her and therefore she is left alone at the mercy of her own judgement. Romola is totally upset when she discovers that Tito has sold her father's library. She experiences an impulse of fury and 'her whole frame seemed to be possessed by an impetuous force that wanted to leap out in some deed'. [12] In a fit of anger and contempt she says to Tito : 'You are a treacherous man'; [13] Her love for Tito quickly changes into utter despise and complete rejection. She decides to break all her ties with Tito for ever, as she says: 'It cannot be; I cannot be subject to him. He is false. I shrink from him. I despise him'. [14]

She resolves to obliterate all the outward symbols of marriage and engagements with Tito. However, when she finally decides to take off the betrothal ring, she faces an acute ethical conflict, which is beautifully narrated by the author: She placed her thumb and fingers on her betrothal ring, but they did not drag it off. Romola's mind had been racing with an impatient stream towards the deed she was prepared for: abandoning a spouse who had betrayed all her confidence, severing an external tie that no longer matched deep link of love. But the power of outward symbols that knits our active existence together in such a way that our inexorable external identity is not rocked by our wavering consciousness had an odd effect on this simple step towards putting off her ring. But a passionate resolution nullified all her doubts and procrastinations. [15]

Romola, thus sticks to her decision and ultimately leaves her husband, Tito, as well as her homeland, Florence. This leads to her encounter with Savonarola. This act repudiates her claim to be subject to no authority but to her own free will only. Savonarola overcomes Romola's resistance to him by making her conscious about her ethical turpitude of forsaking the duties and denying the solemn obligation which the holy tie of



marriage imposes. She has already experienced an ethical scruple intuitively when she takes off her betrothal ring.

It is a fact that Savonarola cannot accept Romola's decision to forsake her husband and deliberately ignore the bond of love. He directly attacks Romola's conscience when he tells her: 'Ask your conscience, my daughter. You have no vocation such as your brother had. You are a wife. You seek to break your ties in self-will & anger, not because higher life calls upon you to renounce them'. [16]

'There is a link of higher love, my daughter. Marriage is not just for physical pleasure. See where that thinking takes you; it takes you away in a false guise from all duties of your location and name. That would not have been the case if you had known that it is a sacramental commitment from which only God can free you. My daughter, your life is not a grain of sand to be blown by the winds; it is a flesh & blood creature that dies if it is sundered. [17]

Savonarola also reminds Romola of her having a narrow and restricted outlook of life and charges her with the vice of ethical blindness: 'Your life has been spent in blindness, my daughter. You have lived with those who sit on a hill aloof, & look down on life of their fellow men; [18] Romola, in turn, desperately tries to come clean and justify her actions when he tells Savonarola: 'I was not going away to ease & self-indulgence ... I was going away to hardship. I expect no joy: it is gone from my life' [19] 'My husband ... he is not ... my love is gone' [20]

However, Romola miserably fails to convince Savonarola about the integrity of her purpose and she is put in a fix. Her mind is torn by conflict and doubts. In the face of adversities, helpless Romola meekly surrenders to his guidance. For the time being she decides to obey Savonarola; her impulse now was to do just what Savonarola told her. It is more the authoritarian influence and personal charm of Savonarola than her newborn faith in Christian theology, that she accepts the authority of Church as a means of providing ethical form for her life. She now devotes herself to ethical actions and performs charitable work since her newly accepted religion demands this, though she avoids thinking about religious doctrine. She is uneasy in her submission as this is antithetical to her ethical nature and education. As such she constantly suffers from a sense of ethical conflict.

Romola's ethical crisis occurs when she loses her faith in Savonarola, and with it her acceptance of religious authority. Her sudden change of attitude towards Savonarola is due to the fact that the latter believes that five men including her godfather Bernardo are guilty of conspiracy and are destined to be executed. Savonarola vindicates the decision of his party in the following words: "The cause of my party is cause of God's kingdom'. [21] Romola, however, strongly opposes it. She unveils the religious masquerade of Savonarola in utter indignation; 'I do not believe it; God's kingdom is something wider--- else, let me stand outside it with beings that I love'. [22]





Romola, who had earlier been prepared to submit to him despite intellectual doubts, now had 'a sudden insurrection of feeling' [23] that resulted into that collision. Romola boldly resolves to reject all forms of religious authorities and she drastically undermines the teaching and influence of Savonarola. But it was a lighting that made everything appear dreadful to her. Where were creatures to whom she could attach, with whom she could labour and endure, believing she was doing the right thing? On other side of ethical impulse came a fanaticism, from which she was fleeing with newly begun aversion.' [24]

Her life seems to be without any direction and meaning: And now Romola had lost her finest ally in the face of that ultimate woman's grief. The vision of any great purpose, any end of existence that could ennoble endurance and exalt the common deeds of a dusty life with divine ardours, had been completely eclipsed for her now by a sense of confusion in human things that made all effort a mere dragging at tangled threads; all fellowship, whether for resistance or advocacy, mere unfairness and exclusivity. What, after all, was the guy who had symbolised utmost heroism for her; the heroism of eager, self-offering love, rather than harsh, self-contained endurance? What was the reason of his struggle? Romola had lost faith in Savonarola, had lost fervour of devotion that had blinded her to his eccentricities.' [25]

As Romola revolts against Savonarola's belief that evil ceases to be evil if it promotes what he regards as good, she is led into rebellion against her role as a wife on learning full extent of Tito's treachery. Romola's decision is right in her spontaneous opposition to actions of both Savonarola & Tito, but Thomas Pinney's sweeping comment that 'Romola is right to rebel against Tito & Savonarola' [26] is certainly debatable. In fact, it is a historical truth that the rebellions though purport to remove every form of authority always give birth to a new and more powerful authority. As Mr. Lyon is of the opinion in Felix Holt that, 'right to rebellion is right to seek a higher rule'. [27]

Romola's rebellion is as mistaken as it was before, when she left Florence & asserted that she needed no authority other than her personal will. Romola leaves Florence incognito. She negates religion as in religion she fails to find any authority which can neither accommodate her feelings nor can guide her in moulding her life. Her defiance, however, has only a bad impact. 'What power was there to produce for her that supremely sacred motive which men name duty, but which can have no internal constraining existence unless via some type of believing love?' she wonders. ?' [28]

She loses any sense of herself when she is deprived of everything that can maintain or direct her existence. This crisis appears to be more serious than last one since, having lost trust in Savonarola, she appears to be without any external support.

Romola's present crisis leads her to find a ethical frame which can refine her impulsive feelings and reckless emotions, while utilising its power and energy. Savonarola's religious authority was also divorced from Romola's personal feelings. But rejecting her seems to have deprived her life of all ethical fibre and left her with immense

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mental conflict and turmoil. In this situation the narrator's observations vis-a-vis Romola's reaction against Savonarola is important:

‘And such fervent belief• is frequently on verge of becoming demon worship. Tender buddy feeling for nearest has its own peril, and is prone to being hesitant & dubious about greater ambitions without life. Romola's tears were blinding her in this way. [29].

Her perspective on life is too limited, and she lacks a broader ethical vision. But where can she discover such a vision that does not distance her from her own feelings? 'She sees no message of affection for her in far off symbolic writing of skies, & with a big sob she longed that she may be gliding into death,' she says. [30]

After initial failure and Savonarola~sfall, Romola emerges as character who is able to survive the adverse experience of life & can discover a positive ethical philosophy which can sustain a strong sense of individuality and personal identity. Instead of submitting herself to an external authority, she discovers this time that in her very quintessential self there lies the basis for larger ethical vision she has been searching earnestly.

She travels into a disease and plague-ridden community, hoping to relax and resolve on nothing. The following is an important passage: She had only been in this contemplative state for a few minutes when a piercing cry broke through the silence: not a momentary sound, but a persistent and more powerful cry. Romola was certain it was the cry of a small kid in distress, but no one came to aid. But it carried on and attracted Romola so inexorably, appearing more pitiful to her for sensation of serenity that had preceded it, that she leaped on shore and travelled several paces before she decided which route she would take'. [31]

This cry rouses an immediate and spontaneous ethical feeling in Romola which is in response to another's suffering. No external authority is necessary to justify acting to help others. The prick of conscience and the stimulation of finer human feelings and sentiments added with varied experiences of life and social confrontation are the source of all ethical knowledge and responses. Romola ultimately realises that confronting needs and sufferings of world with natural human potentialities of feeling creates ethical awareness. This gives a form to an individual's existence from which emerges self that guides human life.

It seems clear that village is symbolic of an imperfect world in its suffering & need. The whole world is metaphorically plague-ridden and hence an effort is needed to alleviate human sufferings to make life better. Plague, in this symbolic sense, existed in Florence. Hence it is a whole world seen through microcosm.

Romola miserably fails to understand this human suffering with sufficient intensity and clarity due to her shortsightedness and narrow outlook of life. However the experience of the child crying stimulates her dormant virtues and fellow feelings. It bestows her with ethical enlightenment and creates in her an urge to undertake spontaneous and direct ethical actions to help others. She can now see that Savonarola's ideal vision is an objectification of human feelings and sentiments, & hence has worth, even though he felt it had a religious foundation that

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Romola could not accept. Religion, as Romola realises when she takes on the role of 'Holy Mother' to the people, is the objectification of such human sentiments. Of course, she is the 'Blessed Virgin':

'You will no longer be afraid, father,' Romola continued, encouragingly authoritatively; you will come down with me, and we will see who is alive, and we will seek for the dead to bury them. I've been walking about for months where the plague was, & you can see how strong I am.' [32]

This utter simplicity, in which Romola walks unscathed through pestilence and distinguishes between the living and the dead, is in a strange contrast to the sophisticated difficulties and problems of life which disturbed her earlier. Romola now regards her despair in boat as a mere egoistic complaint:

'It collapsed as soon as she heard the child's scream... yet from the time she awoke & cry drew her in, she had not even, reflected, as she used to do in Florence, that she was glad to live because she could lighten sorrow—she had simply lived, with such a fervent desire to share life around her, to answer the call of need, and to do work that cried aloud to be done, that the reasons for living, enduring, and labouring never took the form of an argument. [33]

This realisation illuminates her soul and enlarges her vision. It brings peace and stability in her and seems to complete her ethical education. Ethical conduct results from immediate, spontaneous emotion rather than rational judgement, intellectual reflection, or religious justification. She had felt self-divided in Florence since her charity activities were driven, commanded, and controlled by an external power unbeknownst to her inner self and feelings, but in the hamlet her entire self is represented in acting to alleviate the people's suffering. She might see her connection with Florence in a new perspective when her job in the community is completed. She may now form a genuine relationship with her own group; the emotions she had separated from the people around her flooded back into the old deep channels of use and attachment. Her entire being can identify with action to assist the Florence community as it had done for the village community.

## CONCLUSION

In the work, *Silas Marner* (1861), George Eliot shows Silas' ethical transition from a brutal money-grabber to a sensitive human being through the touch of an abandoned new-born infant named Eppie. Silas is entirely revitalised by this tiny expression of humanity's love and compassion. He is able to forget the country of his slander and begin a new life, leaving behind the hazy consciousness of the 'Lantern Yard' God, who punishes without good reason and owns the religion of humanity, love, and fellow-feeling. *Romola* (1862), despite its historical views, focuses on Romola's extreme choice to divorce her husband Tito and her desire to live a meaningful and virtuous life. The novel's final theme is her discovery that ethical behaviours are



the result of direct and spontaneous feeling rather than the result of any religious, ideological, or philosophical requirements.

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