

## The Maintenance of Social Body George Eliot's Humanitarian Paternalism

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### Abstract

*This article elaborates the idea of paternalism as a governing authority presented by George Eliot in her novels Adam Bede, Middlemarch and Felix Holt. For this purpose, it tries to find out how changing economical, social and political practices, in the nineteenth century brought a decline to the governing authority through so called liberty (i.e. laissez faire and Utilitarianism) and as a result, how Victorians yearned for a fatherly authority to govern them. Eliot is one of those writers, who depicted the problems afflicting workers, and suggested reforms to improve the condition of society. The article tries to indicate that she, like other contemporary writers, felt the dwindling government authority and created her own world in her fictional stories where the society can comply with and overcome social evils. Moreover, the article seeks that how her concerns were influenced by her contemporary social theorist Thomas Carlyle who advocated for the workers during 1830s and 1840s.*

**Keywords:** Paternalism, George Eliot, Society, Working class.

### Introduction

By the 1830s and 1840s the Industrial capitalism was prevailing as the economical structure in England. This economic transformation had defects and negative effects too. The notion of laissez faire economy was growing, by which working class got liberty but less protection. During this time, many solutions to these negative effects of social capitalism were proposed. According to Julia Nash, "post revolutionary, newly industrial world, a carefully controlled social hierarchy modelled after the patriarchal family nostalgically appealed to the people across the social spectrum". (Nash, 2007). Among them Thomas Carlyle was foremost who spoke for the working class and analysed the evils of capitalism. He advocated that workers should be inspired to be loyal rather than only giving them orders and paying wages. (Diniejko, 2010)

Carlyle's notion of "noble loyalty in return for noble guidance" (Rob, 2005) appealed to many people in England. He coined the term "Condition of England" in his *Chartism*, which arose a series of debate and influenced many fiction writers of the time and they produced novels highlighting the social problems. Among these works written about the Condition of England included, Benjamin Disraeli's *Coningsby* and *Sybil*, Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* and *North and South*, Charles Dickens's *Dombey and Son* and *Hard Times*, Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley*, George Eliot's *Adam Bede* and *Felix Holt* and Charles Kingsley's *Alton Locke*, and *Yeast*. These novels portray the contemporary social and political issues and particularly highlight the issues related to class, gender and labour. They bring forth the social unrest and growing antagonism between rich and the poor in England. These novels are also called Industrial Novels, social novels or social problem novels give a social analysis and present reforms to the issues of the time. As Robin B. Colby points out:

"The industrial novels all share some common characteristics: the detailed documentation of the suffering of the poor, the reproduction of working-class speech through dialect, criticism of the effects of industrialism, the discussion of contemporary reform movements like Chartism and Utilitarianism, and some attempt — usually individual and internal — at a solution to social problems. (Diniejko, 2010)

The most popular among these solutions was to revive, in Robert's words, "patriarchal social relationships of the past" and "hierarchal social structure in which those with wealth and authority would protect the poor, and poor would, in return, give respect and deference to the rich." (Robert, 2002) Robert names these set of ideas as "paternalism" which as a term was never used in 1830s and 1840s and it was dominant outlook that looked to property, the church and local justice of the peace to govern the society and deal with its evils.

According to Robert, Paternalism, held four basic assumptions about the structure of society: they all believed that society should be “authoritarian, hierarchic, organic and pluralistic”. Furthermore, they believed that those in authority had “three principal sets of duties”, namely, “ruling, guiding and helping”.(Robert.) They were motivated by the admirable humanitarian impulses and advocated, almost uniformly, as an alternative, a paternalistic model of society--- Louis Cazamian calls the “interventionist ideal reaction”. (Cazamian, 2013) Carlyle in his *Chartism* (1839) and *Past and Present* (1843), like other social theorists advocates for a governing, protecting, guiding and commanding authority. I will show how George Eliot implies these ideas in her fictional works.

### **Literature Review**

The tendency of Victorian novelists towards paternalism is felt and discussed by many critics. Catherine Murphy argues that variety of writers “interested in the condition of England debate resorted to paternalist plot resolutions, regardless of their political affiliations” and they “revert to a paternalistic vision of history and social life”. (Murphy, 1999.) Among these writers Rosemarie Bodenheimer in *The Politics of Story in Victorian Social Fiction* and Catherine Gallagher in *The Industrial Reformation of English Fiction* consider how writers of industrial fiction use strategies such as paternalism to resolve the challenges of industrialism. Bodenheimer argues that the narrative in these novels create fantasies of power and government by imagining social change through their fictional plots. She suggests that these texts develop such possibilities for change through a model of paternalism that these authors set up in both the private and public worlds imagined in their novels. (Bodenheimer, 1988) Gallagher indicates that industrial fiction through the ideologies of domestic and social paternalism reconciles the need of both the public world of labour and commerce and the private world of the family. (Gallagher, 1985) Catherine Murphy in her doctoral dissertation also considers the fiction of industrialization and shows how a variety of writers interested in Condition of England debate resorted to paternalist plot resolution. According to her, social investigators, novelists and social theorists often “demonstrate similar concern with regard to the status of workers and deploy workers to register and mitigate anxieties about industrialism and its effects”. (Murphy,1985)

Melissa A. Schaub asserts in her *Comedy without a purpose : politics and the British Victorian novel*, though, Gaskell values the past less than some other novelists, her novels also embrace the “values of paternalism as correctives to the prevailing political climate industrial cities”, and she emphasizes “common responsibilities, as a standard paternalist position”. (Schaub, 2000) For Schaub, Bronte’s paternalism is conservative, “but not narrowly authoritarian”. Bronte rejects all of standard political positions available like Gaskell and Eliot, but her politics is a “complex mix of tradition attitudes towards class and human relations tempered by libertarian impulses that are implied in Romanticism and the insight of disempowered sex”. (Schaub, 2000) These novelists were motivated by humanitarian impulses and as an alternative political model they advocated for a conservative paternalist model of society, which Rosemarie Bodenheimer calls their “political story” while Patricia names it as “narrative syntax”. (Bodenheimer, 1988) This paternalism in Schaub’s words “requires, in part, a return from the language of class (which emphasizes the similarities and common interests of people a similar position on the social scale) to the older language of rank or order (which emphasizes the bonds of obligation between people above and below each other on the Great Chain of Being)”. (Schaub, 2000)

I am concerned how paternalism is presented by Eliot to describe social and economical practices to manage the social hierarchies. Eliot stresses on the interdependency of different social classes, and more specifically she emphasizes on the duties and responsibilities of the individuals. George Eliot felt that the traditional sources of authority, i.e. God the father, government authorities and biological fathers were on the wane, so she created her own world where she can reign as the undisputed authority. She, like other Victorians mourn for the declining fatherhood and seeks and yearn for a perfect fatherly authority at the domestic level as well as broader social and political levels and “aims to finding ways to refine it without shunning” these authorities. (Jabeen, 2013) Eliot imagines an unquestionable authority on the top of the social order, which can govern by managing, protecting and dictating the society. If this authority was derived from God the father, then what is similar and different between patriarchy and paternalism?

Before moving ahead it is necessary to clear the difference between patriarchy and paternalism used here. Patriarchy refers to the gender management when men have absolute power over women.

“A patriarchy is a sex/gender system in which men dominate women, and what is considered feminine.”(Renztel & Curran. 1999. P3) On the other hand, paternalism is both “social control and social provision” (Gurevich, 2008) Davis (1988) defines paternalism as “paternalism implies a relationship of asymmetry. The origin model for a paternalist relationship is that of a parent and child.”(Davis 1988. P-23) Furthermore, Julia Nash’s description of the paternalism and patriarchy makes it clearer:

“Paternalism and patriarchy are related terms, but not interchangeable: it is possible for individuals to live in a patriarchal society but not adhere to the paternal philosophy that dependants (women, servants, tenants) are like children, in need of wise guidance of a benevolent father’.(Nash, 2007) The article looks paternalism as a fatherly authority, as Arthur Arian looks the inactive domestic fathers and ineffective government leaders and practices in his study of Dickens, “just as family after family is portrayed with the natural guardian assuming no control, so Victorian England is to be viewed as one vast family with indifferent and incompetent leadership”.(Arian, 1984) On the broader level of social and political authority paternalism too was on the decline due to the growing influence of laissez faire ideology. The writers of the time tried to speak for the general public because laissez faire and Unitarianism practices could not improve the condition of people. I argue that Eliot advocated for the humanitarian paternalism, which could provide fatherly benevolence and authority to the poor.

### 1. Duties of different Classes

George Eliot’s review “The Natural History of German Life,” written for the *Westminster Review* in 1856, criticises the presentation of the image of the workers in art. According to her the art lacks the realistic demonstration of workers which actually shows the higher classes’ misunderstanding of working class. She argues:

“Probably, if we could ascertain the images called up by the terms “the people”, “the masses”, “the proletariat”, “the peasantry”, by many who theorize on those bodies with eloquence, or who legislate for them without eloquence, we should find that they indicate almost as small an amount of concrete knowledge--that they are far from completely representing the complex facts summed up in the collective terms. How little the real characteristics of the working-classes are known to those who are outside of them, how little their natural history has been studied, is sufficiently disclosed by our Art as well as our political and social theories. Where in our picture exhibitions shall we find a group of true peasantry?” (Eliot, 1856)

She points out that the unrealistic portrayal of workers in art actually misdirects the efforts of reform and improvement of the status of workers. According to her, without presenting worker’s real mindset, suffering and character their social problems cannot be solved. Her view of social organization is totally paternalistic, where she sees the appropriate place of workers in the social body. Her model of social relation is based on paternal and hierarchal organization. For her, art should be able to bring forth the sympathy into viewer by the realistic presentation. She calls for a “true conception of popular character to guide our sympathies rightly” and suggests that “we need it equally to check our theories, and direct us in their application.” (Eliot, 1856) *Adam Bede* comes as her realistic depiction of worker she argues for in *The Natural History of German Life*, where Adam is the ideal-working class man who has a firm commitment to the value of work.

In *Adam Bede*, Eliot draws on the same ideal of workers that Carlyle develops in his *Past and Present* 1843. This work manifests some of the central concerns regarding the status of workers in this dynamic industrial era, specifically the “heroic role workers may be assigned when appropriately governed and led by a working (rather than effete) aristocracy”. (Murphy,1999) Bernard calls the community presented in *Adam Bede* the “organic paternalistic community” in which the protagonist has “an entrepreneurial builder, armed with bourgeois faith and God helps those who help themselves”, and has “free spontaneous and entirely moral ascendancy”. (Bernard, 1994)

The novel is a portrayal of traditional society, an English midland village which is turning modern and where Eliot’s characters are not social and political stereotypes. She does not view her characters “from a lofty historical level”(AB.115) rather her characters have weaknesses as human beings i.e. Arthur Dinnithrone wants to be respected by his tenants , and sees the state as “made up of a prosperous contended tenantry, adoring their landlord, who would be model of an English gentleman”.(chapter 12) when he inherits state his tenants are also convinced that there would be “a millennial abundance of new gates, allowances of lime and return of ten percent”.(chapter 7) Eliot presents in *Adam Bede* two rural capitalists, “and “actual” landlord, rapacious and self seeling, belonging to an old generation, and his grandson and heir, the “normal capitalist”.

(Bernard 1994) Adam Bede is a “respector of customary authority” where society is a hierarchal one. When Captain Dinnithrone and clergyman Irwine come to visit tenant Poyser, the narrator notes, “for in those days the keenest off bucolic minds felt a whispering awe at the sight of the gentry, such as old men felt when they stood on tiptoe to watch the gods passing by in tall human shape”.(AB, 162) Mrs. Poyser does not hesitate to accept the authority of the landlord and clergy man and declares, “I know it is christened folk’s duty to submit to their better, but only as for as flesh and blood ‘ul bear it.’ She will not make a martyr of herself for ‘no landlord in England not if he was King George himself’”. (AB, 123)

In *Adam Bede*, the characters not only accept the authority but they feel necessary to live in as authorial regime. Law and mutual sympathy, govern the society where the defects of system could be overcome by remedies within the system itself. Adam feels deference to his superiors and speaks out for wrong management. He is not “a philosopher, or proletariat with democratic ideas, but simply a stout-limbed, clever carpenter with a large fund of reverence in his nature, which inclined him to admit all established claims unless he saw very clear grounds for questioning them”. (AB, 144)

This social novel aspires to engage the sympathy of readers for the lives of working classes. She describes her purpose as:

“These fellow mortals, everyone, must be accepted as they are: you can neither straighten their noses, brighten their wit, nor rectify their dispositions; and it is these people--amongst whom your life is passed--that it is needful you should tolerate, pity, and love: it is these more or less ugly, stupid, inconsistent people, whose movements of goodness you should be able to admire--for whom you should cherish all possible hopes, all possible patience. And I would not, even if I had the choice, be the clever novelist who could create a world so much better than this, in which we get up in the morning to do our daily work, that you would be likely to turn a harder, colder eye on the dusty streets and the common green fields--on the real breathing men and women, who can be cheered and helped onward by your fellow-feeling, your forbearance, your outspoken brave justice.” (AB, 222)

Here Eliot urges to behave generously to the workers. She wants to “create a world better” than the existing one where she can be sensitive to the sufferings of these working fellows who have “fellow feeling”. Murphy comments in these words, “She spurs her readers toward charitable actions by drawing on their paternalistic values, implicitly suggesting that such actions constitute “needful” ones and as such constitute part of the duties of the upper classes *vis a vis* the working classes”. (Murphy, 1999)

Adam Bede is presents as a morally fit character, which can help to reform the society organized according to the paternalistic principles. This kind of worker cannot be a threat to the social hierarchy and class distinction; can be kept intact and this stable social organization can be a benefit to the politics as well. Eliot describes Adam physical appearance as perfect body made for work. His arms have “feats of strength” and a “long supple hand” that “looked ready for works of skills”. (AB, 50) Before she introduces Adam she tells a hymn he sings in a “strong Baritone”: “Awake, my soul, and with the sun/ Thy daily stage of duty run;/ Shake off dull sloth ...” (AB, 49). This is the idealization of working class which consider working as a duty and appreciate the worth of labour as a moral duty.

“I know a man must have the love of God in his soul, and the Bible’s God’s word. But what does the Bible say? Why, it says as God put his sperrit into the workman as built the tabernacle, to make him do all the carved work and things as he wanted a nice hand. And this is my way o’ looking at it: there’s the sperrit o’ God in all things and all times ...and in the great works and inventions, and in the figuring of the mechanics. And God helps us with our headpieces and our hands as well as with our souls; and if a man does bits o’ jobs out o’ the working hours--builds a oven for’s wife to save her from going to the bake house, or scrats at his bit o’ garden and makes two potatoes grow instead o’ one, he’s doing more good, and he’s just as near to God, as if was running after some preacher and a-praying and a groaning.” (AB, 53-4) Eliot’s working man by engaging in work actually fulfils the work of God and working hours are as valid as church going. “God put[s] his spirit into the workman” --“as such the worker functions as a co-creator” and “by suggesting God’s presence in the worker’s labour, Eliot makes an effort to stabilize the existing order of society through the authority of God”.(Murphy, 1999)

Eliot shows her ideal working class man while showing the lacks of morality and sense of duty in upper class in *Adam Bede*. Through the character of Arthur Donnithorne she criticises the idle and self-absorbing behaviour of aristocracy. The working class people like Adam and tenants like Poyser perform their duties but Dinnithornes do not perform their paternalistic duties. She describes Arthur as:

“It was not possible for Arthur Donnithorne to do anything mean, dastardly, or cruel. . . . You perceive that Arthur Donnithorne was “a good fellow”--all his college friends thought him such: he couldn’t bear to make anyone uncomfortable.... Whether he would have self-mastery enough to be always as harmless and purely beneficent as his good nature led him to desire, was a question that no one yet had decided against him... and we don’t inquire too closely into the character of a handsome generous young fellow, who will have property enough to support numerous peccadilloes--who, if he should unfortunately break a man’s legs in his rash driving, will be able to pension him handsomely; or if he should happen to spoil a woman’s existence for her, will make it up to her with expensive bon-bans . . . .” (AB, 169-70)

Eliot demonstrates in this passage that aristocracy neglects the requisite duties to its social position and the members of aristocracy indulge in immoral activities.

The behaviour of upper class is actually a threat to the sympathy, which connects the different classes in social hierarchy. Arthur is a contrast to Adam concerning their sense of duty and idealism within their social status. “For Eliot, then, the upper classes and workers must all be held accountable to a code of moral conduct that fosters productive relations between the classes and nurtures the health of the social body”.(Murphy, 1999)

Thus Eliot criticises the lapse of paternalism and enforces the reform in governing body instead of reorganization of the social order because for her, characters like Adam and Arthur have instinctive traits suitable for their social status. The performance of their duty is the most important, as Mrs Poyser says:

“I know there’s them as is born t’own the land, and them is as born to sweat on’t,’ ... and I know its christened folks duty to submit to their betters as fur as flesh and blood will bear it; but I’ll not make a martyr o’ myself, and wear myself to skin and bone for no landlord in England, not if he was King George himself”. (AB, 392)

Through Mrs. Poyser, Eliot tells if the working class submit to the upper class which is also a Christian code of conduct which cannot be done out of moral boundaries. They cannot obey the immoral obligations even if King George orders it. Eliot shows the working class stuck on the moral behaviour and she feels that this behaviour is needed from all classes for the well being of the social body and healthy social relationships. Eliot emphasizes on the consciousness of one’s social position and losing the consciousness can produce harm to social hierarchy. Through the relationship of Hetty and Arthur, she actually showed the consequences of this notion. Arthur and Hetty, both lose consciousness and forget their social position and duties; Hetty by seducing by her beauty and Arthur pursuing her. Thus, Eliot by showing lapse in paternalism indicates the grave consequences they face. Hetty forgets both her gender and class obligations.

The distinction within social body is presented in the drinking song of labourers at the harvest supper:

Here’s a health unto our master,  
The founder of the feast;  
Here’s a health unto our master  
And to our Mistress!  
And may his doings prosper  
Whate’er he takes in hand,  
For we are all his servants,  
And are at his command.

This hymn shows the hierarchal social body in which the harvesting and celebrating are due to the generosity of the master. Murphy points out to the ending of the novel by this hymn and celebration by indicating the purpose which is “to show how labour functions to consolidate and provide stability for a social body: the ideal of work mitigates potential disturbances to the social body, even when brought on by the governors of that society, who are supposed to assure order. Work itself is the reliable mechanism through which social order may be realized and maintained”. (Murphy, 1999)

## 2. *Educating the Working Class*

*Felix Holt* comes at the time when the debate about the second Reform Bill 1867 heats up. Eliot sets it in the past and shows the situation after the first Reform Bill 1832. To set a valid background or to make it realistic, she read ‘*The Annual Register*’ for 1832 and ‘*The Times*’ of 1832-3 to know about the election which followed the Reform Bill of 1832. Moreover, she also turns to Banford’s *Passage in the Life of a Radical* and Daniel Neal’s *History of Puritans*. (Thomos, 1959)

*Felix Holt* focuses on the ignorance and confusion of the general public on many matters especially about the Reform. It is about the political disputes in a small English town called Treby Magna. *Felix Holt* presents the antithesis between Transoms and Holts, the class holding the political power and class demanding it. The titular character and the protagonist Felix Holt is a respectable and educated fellow who after completing his education pursues the trade of watches and clock-keeping to support himself and his mother. He aims to participate in the politics to improve the condition of his fellow artisans and working men. On the other hand, Harold Transome is also a well educated and financially secure fellow who is to undertake the responsibility of Transome Court, the local manor-house. He wants to enter Parliament as a Radical, contrary to the family traditions as Tories.

The narrator gives the background political history of Treby Magna and tells about the basic problem of the inhabitants; the difficulty in choosing the party affiliations because, “the short and easy method of judging opinions by the personal character of those who held them ...was liable to be much frustrated in Treby. It happened in that particular town that the Reformers were not all of them large-hearted patriots or ardent lovers of justice; indeed, one of them, in the very midst of the agitation, was detected in using unequal scales” (FH, 42). People of Treby are afraid of the consequences of their decision for voting to select the political leader because these men are not merely politically misled, but also have no political consciousness at all. (Guy, 1996) The consequences of wrong choice is shown in the character of Harold who is a contrast of Felix, allows his election agents to bribe colliers, “which would certainly be greatly simplified if corrupt practices were the invariable mark of wrong opinions” (FH, 124).

Felix speaks for the old institutions, which makes some critics to argue *Felix Holt* as a conservative novel. Hilda Hollis asserts, “Felix, under the guise of radicalism, promulgates a conservative message supporting a peaceful continuation of the status quo”. (Hollis, 2001) Joseph Jacobs, also indicates “*Felix Holt the Radical* is rather Felix Holt the Conservative; he is not even a Tory-Democrat.” (Guy, 1996) These arguments make Felix’s position controversial in terms of paternalist hierarchy. Harold seems more fitting paternalist in order to making efforts to retain the authority of his class. Felix and Harold present two forms of Radicalism which actually helps Eliot to delineate her notion of general enlightenment, justice and welfare through the character of Felix who is a political idealist. Though, Harold tries to maintain his class supremacy, he is an opportunist who takes up Radicalism to fulfil his personal goals as a political place seeker and “a thorough Englishman”. On the other hand Felix uses his Radicalism for his humanitarian impulses and speaks for the working men.

Felix Holt like Adam Bede does not have any desire to rise above his class. His plan requires him to remain the member of his class by reforming it from within. He says, “let a man once throttle himself with a satin stock and he’ll get new wants and motives. Metamorphosis will have begun at his neck-joint, and it will go on till it has changed his likings first and then his reasoning” (FH,55). He wants to be the ideal man of his class and seems aware of the inevitability of class interest. His aim is not to make the proletariat to compete with the authority but train them morally. Felix’s speech during the nomination is perhaps the clearest explanation of Eliot’s own political agenda. The workers without any political education do not deserve to vote. So he does not want to give the worker “power to do mischief- to undo what has been done with great expense and labor, to waste and destroy, to be cruel to weak, to lie and quarrel and to talk poisonous nonsense.”(FH, 287) Felix Holt delineates the importance of education of common people. Malissa argues that the awareness of working class to select their governors can actually help them to achieve their basic rights. “What Eliot finds most important is education or culture..... Since so many members of the lower classes are not yet cultured or imaginative, according to Eliot political freedom for all can only come in some far future, and the real political work that must be done is education”. (Schaub, 2000) Felix takes the responsibility to guide the working class to make them able to perceive what sort of man they should choose as their representatives instead of electing, “platform swaggerers, who bring us nothing but the ocean to make our broth with”, they would give the power to truly wise and those who know how to regulate society, “according to the truest principles mankind is in possession of”.

Eliot does not deny class division. For her, “there are old institutions in which various distinctions and inherited advantages of class” which have shaped themselves along with all the wonderful slow growing system of things made up of our laws, our commerce, and our stories of all sorts, whether in material objects or in knowledge. Felix speaks to preserve public order and emphasizes to persuade each class “to perform its particular work under the strong pressure of responsibility to the nation at large”. (FH, 178)

### 3. Improving the Condition of Working Class: Philanthropic Impulse in Middlemarch:

*Middlemarch* is an extended study of provincial life, which George Eliot started in *Felix Holt*. The contextual period is almost the same before the First Reform Bill of 1832. It also represents the historical process of parliamentary reforms.

Dorothea is regarded Saint Theresa who wants to improve the world and help poor. She is regarded the modern Saint Theresa who has to face new social context to fulfil her philanthropic goals. To reach her goals she wants to learn and for this purpose she marries Mr. Casaubon, an aged scholar and she thinks marriage an institution that can 'perform the function of knowledge' (M,3) and intellectuality of him can serve 'provinces of masculine knowledge' (m p-64) to her. Though, the intellectuality of Mr. Casaubon later proves to be a disillusion, Dorothea's moral and social vision remains unshaken. She is also class conscious and wants to identify those who are out of her own class. When she looks the procession at the funeral of Mr. Featherstone, the narrator tells her feelings:

"The dream-like association of something alien and ill-understood with the deepest secrets of her experience seemed to mirror that sense of loneliness which was due to the very ardour of Dorothea's nature. The country gentry of old time lived in a rarefied social air: dotted apart on their stations up the mountain they looked down with imperfect discrimination on the belts of thicker life below. And Dorothea was not at ease in the perspective and chilliness of that height". (M p-326)

She feels the discrimination of her own class and her humanitarian and philanthropic impulses are not with ease with this "height" through which "thicker life below" cannot be seen. She wants to build cottages for the poor who for her are, "fit for human beings from whom we expect duties and affections" (M,31). This is her paternalistic tendencies through which she wants to make the "life of poverty beautiful". (M,32) On the other hand Sir James declares, "I do think one is bound to do the best for one's land and tenants, especially in these hard times" (M,238).

Bernard declares Dorothea's aim to help poor the "paternalistic fashion of the traditional society of *Adam Bede*", and Sir James' "the voice of the traditional, paternalist order" who makes efforts for improvements. (Bernard, 1994)

"Lydgate, whose idealistic motivation matches Dorothea's, is undone not by need, greed, or appetite, the typical "moral" motives of over expenditure in the realist novel, but purely by a class ideology that has come unglued from its material conditions of possibility; and since his class (un)consciousness is homologous with Dorothea's, the material- economic critique of ethical consciousness that centres on him touches her as well. They are both detached from the material conditions of their existence, conditions from which she continues to be insulated but that prove fatal to his life project". (Staten, 2000)

Dorothea wants to spend money to built cottages for farmers while Lydgate desires to reform medical practices. She has humanitarian impulses. She wishes to "get light as to the best way of spending money so as not to injure one's neighbours, or—what comes to the same thing—so as to do them the most good." But "The laissez-faire doctrines of commercial society are hard for her to accept, for Dorothea has the vocation of Saint Theresa in an age in which such a calling could not be sustained". (Bernard, 1994) Caleb is another *Middlemarch* character who involves in welfare of social body, "his virtual divinities were good practical schemes, accurate works and the faithful completion of undertaking: his prince of darkness was a slack workman". He is delighted to find that Dorothea aims to improve "a great piece of land" and build "a great good cottages". (M, 256)

Thus, all these characters in *Middlemarch* embody the notion of paternalism according to which the upper class i.e. land lords, manufacturers and master had their duty to welfare to the lower class. Arthur Helps, who in 1844 wrote *The Claims of Labour, an Essay on the Duties of the Employer to the Employed*, called for welfare of the lower classes:

"I do not seek to terrify any one into a care for the labouring classes, by representing the danger to society of neglecting them. It is certainly a fearful thing to think of large masses of men being in that state of want and misery which leaves them nothing to hazard; and who are likely to be without the slightest reverence or love for the institutions around them..... I believe that the paternal relation will be found the best model on which to form the duties of the employer to the employed". (M, 156) According to Help this welfare works range housing, drainage, public bath and provision of allotment to the lower class. The paternalism is based on the view that lower class need parental control as well as guidance and concerns for their physical beings.

The limitation of church representative is shown in *Middlemarch*, where prejudice against Catholics is widespread. Eliot accounts the views of people after Catholic Emancipation Act was passed in 1829. The aristocratic Mrs. Cadwallader criticizes Dorothea's charitable work as 'Methodistical'. The clergy men in *Middlemarch* do not have potential to bring reform and enlightenment. So, young man like Fred Vincy who enters the church gives hope to people, as Mary Grath says, "His being a clergyman would be only for gentility's sake, and I think there is nothing more contemptible than such imbecile gentility". Among these clergymen Mr. Farebrother is honest and excellent preacher makes efforts to help his parishioners. He works for the betterment of people and consoles Fred Vincy and Lydgate in their critical moments. Mr. Blustrade is another clergyman who uses his power to his personal gains and people call him a hypocrite. He is wealthy banker and he professes to be Evangelical Protestant, but he could not play his public role according to his position.

Priest and clergy had their own weakness. Many clergy like Mr. Barton, Gilfils and Mr. Crewes in *Scenes of Clerical Life* are not effective reformers of social ills. *Scenes of Clerical Life* concerns different Anglican clergymen to show the tension between Established and Dissenting churches on the clergymen and congregations. In "Evangelical Teaching: Dr. John Cumming," published in *Westminster Review* in 1855, Eliot enforces to revise the traditional Christian ideals to invoke moral sentiments. "The idea of God is really moral in its influence. . . . The idea of a God who sympathizes with all we feel and endure for our fellow-men, is an extension and multiplication of the effects produced by *human* sympathy" (188). Here Eliot insists on social morality as the basis for a belief in God. As Kerry McSweeney puts forth in her book entitled *Middlemarch*, Eliot's 'sense of the 'Religion of Humanity relied heavily on Feuerbach's beliefs:

"Feuerbach passionately argued that all of the enormous positive value of traditional Christianity could be recovered for the modern age once it was recognized that what earlier ages had regarded 'as objective, is now recognized as subjective; that is, what was formerly contemplated and worshipped as God is now perceived to be something human . . . The divine being is nothing else than the human being, or rather the human nature purified, freed from the limits of the individual man [and] contemplated and revered as another, a distinct being. All the attributes of divine nature are, therefore, attributes of human nature". (McSweeney, 1984)

### **Conclusion**

For Eliot, the divinity lies in humanity, so her characters aim to work for human especially to improve the condition of lower or working class. For her, the working class should be empowered in terms of education. They should be managed well for the betterment of the whole society because they are the crucial component of the progress of the whole nation. For this purpose they need the benevolent management and interest of upper class. Social thinkers like Carlyle and Engels also depended upon the paternalistic sensibility to understand history's movement and shape. Eliot presents paternalistic solutions to the industrial ills and working class unrest. Through the model of paternalism, Eliot develops possibilities of change in her novels. She highlights the needs of working class and the duties of upper class to mitigate the anxieties of industrialism.

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