

**Chapter 1 : "BOOK REVIEW: The Clarendon Edition of the Novels of George Eliot (Clar" by Richard Fread**

*Women's rights and education Eliot began working on what would become Middlemarch in , the same year that J S Mill published The Subjection of Women, his passionate call for women to be allowed the same social, political and economic rights as men.*

See Article History Alternative Titles: She went as a boarder to Mrs. At her last school 1835 , conducted by the daughters of the Baptist minister at Coventry , her religious ardour increased. She dressed severely and engaged earnestly in good works. In she moved with her father to Coventry. There she became acquainted with a prosperous ribbon manufacturer, Charles Bray, a self-taught freethinker who campaigned for radical causes. Various books on the relation between the Bible and science had instilled in her keen mind the very doubts they were written to dispel. In she told her father that she could no longer go to church. The ensuing storm raged for several months before they reached a compromise, leaving her free to think what she pleased so long as she appeared respectably at church, and she lived with him until his death in 1837. When Charles Hennell married in 1838, she took over from his wife the translating of D. After the wedding Mrs. Brabant, invited Evans to visit at Devizes. A rather silly man, he had worked for years on a book never completed , which was to dispose of the supernatural elements in religion. They read German and Greek together and discussed theology on long walks; soon Mrs. Brabant became jealous of their intimacy, and, before the term of her visit, Evans was forced to leave. Hennell felt that her father had acted ungenerously. Out of the humiliation of this episode George Eliot drew the horrible vividness of Mr. Like those by Mrs. Bray and Sir Frederic Burton , all in the National Portrait Gallery, it shows her with light brown hair, gray-blue eyes, and a very fair complexion. Doubtless her feelings were strongly attracted to the magnetic Chapman, whose diary supplies this information, but there is no evidence that she was ever his mistress. A few months later he bought The Westminster Review, and Evans, contrite at the domestic complications she had unwittingly caused, returned to London. For three years, until 1841, she served as subeditor of The Westminster, which under her influence enjoyed its most brilliant run since the days of John Stuart Mill. Though he did not become her husband, he introduced her to the two men who did. George Henry Lewes was the most versatile of Victorian journalists. In he had married Agnes Jervis, by whom he had four sons. In Lewes and a friend, the journalist Thornton Leigh Hunt , founded a radical weekly called The Leader, for which he wrote the literary and theatrical sections. In April 1840, two weeks after the first number appeared, Agnes Lewes gave birth to a son whose father was Thornton Hunt. Lewes, being a man of liberal views, had the child registered as Edmund Lewes and remained on friendly terms with his wife and Hunt. But after she bore Hunt a second child in October 1841, Lewes ceased to regard her as his wife, though, having condoned the adultery, he was precluded from suing for divorce. At this moment of dejection, his home hopelessly broken, he met Marian Evans. They consulted about articles and went to plays and operas that Lewes reviewed for The Leader. Convinced that his break with Agnes was irrevocable, Evans determined to live openly with Lewes, as his wife. They obtain what they desire and are still invited to dinner. She turned to early memories and, encouraged by Lewes, wrote a story about a childhood episode in Chilvers Coton parish. Two more tales, Mr. Adam Bede , 3 vol. The book is rich in humour. The germ of the plot was an anecdote her Methodist aunt told of visiting a girl condemned for child murder. The dialect of the Bedes she had heard in the conversations of her Derbyshire uncles with her father, some of whose early experiences she assigned to Adam. But what was new in English fiction was the combination of deep human sympathy and rigorous moral judgment. In The Mill on the Floss , 3 vol. The first half of the book, with its remarkable portrayal of childhood, is irresistibly appealing, and throughout there are scenes that reach a new level of psychological subtlety. At this time historical novels were in vogue, and during their visit to Florence in Lewes suggested Girolamo Savonarola as a good subject, George Eliot grasped it enthusiastically and began to plan Romola 1850. First, however, she wrote Silas Marner , which had thrust itself between her and the Italian material. Its brevity and perfection of form made this story of the weaver whose lost gold is replaced by a strayed child the best known of her books, though it has suffered unfairly from being forced on generations of schoolchildren. Details of Florentine history, setting, costume,

and dialogue were scrupulously studied at the British Museum and during a second trip to Italy in 1848. It was published in 14 parts between July and August 1849. Though the book lacks the spontaneity of the English stories, it has been unduly disparaged. In Felix Holt, the Radical, 3 vol. The initial impulse of the book was not the political theme but the tragic character of Mrs. Transome, who was one of her greatest triumphs. The intricate plot popular taste then demanded now tells against the novel. Under her hand the novel had developed from a mere entertainment into a highly intellectual form of art. Every class of Middlemarch society is depicted from the landed gentry and clergy to the manufacturers and professional men, the shopkeepers, publicans, farmers, and labourers. Several strands of plot are interwoven to reinforce each other by contrast and parallel. The less convincingly realized hero, Daniel, after discovering that he is Jewish, marries Mirah and departs for Palestine to establish a home for his nation. The picture of the Cohen family evoked grateful praise from Jewish readers. There on November 30, 1849, Lewes died. For nearly 25 years he had fostered her genius and managed all the practical details of life, which now fell upon her. Most of all she missed the encouragement that alone made it possible for her to write. For months she saw no one but his son Charles Lee Lewes; she devoted herself to completing the last volume of his Problems of Life and Mind (1849) and founded the George Henry Lewes Studentship in Physiology at Cambridge. For some years her investments had been in the hands of John Walter Cross (1812-1880), a banker introduced to the Leweses by Herbert Spencer. Drawn by sympathy and the need for advice, George Eliot soon began to lean on him for affection too. On May 6, 1850, they were married in St. Cross was 40; she was in her 61st year. After a wedding trip in Italy they returned to her country house at Witley before moving to 4, Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, where she died in December. She was buried at Highgate Cemetery.

Chapter 2 : 18 January ( ): Charles Dickens to George Eliot | The American Reader

*Mary Anne Evans (22 November - 22 December ; alternatively Mary Ann or Marian), known by her pen name George Eliot, was an English novelist, poet, journalist, translator, and one of the leading writers of the Victorian era.*

In early the family moved to a house named Griff House , between Nuneaton and Bedworth. Because she was not considered physically beautiful, Evans was not thought to have much chance of marriage, and this, coupled with her intelligence, led her father to invest in an education not often afforded women. The other important early influence in her life was religion. She was brought up within a low church Anglican family, but at that time the Midlands was an area with a growing number of religious dissenters. Move to Coventry[ edit ] In her mother died and Evans then 16 returned home to act as housekeeper, but she continued correspondence with her tutor Maria Lewis. When she was 21, her brother Isaac married and took over the family home, so Evans and her father moved to Foleshill near Coventry. The closeness to Coventry society brought new influences, most notably those of Charles and Cara Bray. Charles Bray had become rich as a ribbon manufacturer and had used his wealth in the building of schools and in other philanthropic causes. Evans, who had been struggling with religious doubts for some time, became intimate friends with the radical, free-thinking Brays, whose "Rosehill" home was a haven for people who held and debated radical views. Through this society Evans was introduced to more liberal and agnostic theologies and to writers such as David Strauss and Ludwig Feuerbach , who cast doubt on the literal truth of Biblical stories. Instead, she respectfully attended church and continued to keep house for him until his death in , when she was She commented happily that "one feels in a downy nest high up in a good old tree". Her stay is commemorated by a plaque on the building. While residing there, she read avidly and took long walks in the beautiful Swiss countryside, which was a great inspiration to her. She stayed at the house of John Chapman , the radical publisher whom she had met earlier at Rosehill and who had published her Strauss translation. Chapman had recently purchased the campaigning, left-wing journal *The Westminster Review* , and Evans became its assistant editor in Although Chapman was officially the editor, it was Evans who did most of the work of producing the journal, contributing many essays and reviews beginning with the January issue and continuing until the end of her employment at the Review in the first half of During this period, she formed a number of unreciprocated emotional attachments, including one with Chapman who was married but lived with both his wife and his mistress , and another with Herbert Spencer. Lewes was already married to Agnes Jervis, although in an open marriage. In addition to the three children they had together, Agnes also had four children by Thornton Leigh Hunt. By contrast, Lewes and Evans declined to conceal their relationship, and it was this refusal which perhaps gave an additional edge to the reproaches of contemporary moralists. Career in fiction[ edit ] While continuing to contribute pieces to the *Westminster Review*, Evans resolved to become a novelist, and set out a pertinent manifesto in one of her last essays for the Review, "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists" [19] The essay criticised the trivial and ridiculous plots of contemporary fiction written by women. In other essays, she praised the realism of novels that were being written in Europe at the time, an emphasis on realistic storytelling confirmed in her own subsequent fiction. She also adopted a nom-de-plume, George Eliot. This pen-name has been said to be an homage to George Lewes, obviously in the first name, while the surname, Eliot, may have been a code for "to Lâ€™I owe it". The *Scenes* published as a book in , was well received, and was widely believed to have been written by a country parson , or perhaps the wife of a parson. Her relationship with Lewes afforded her the encouragement and stability she needed to write fiction, but it would be some time before the couple were accepted into polite society. Acceptance was finally confirmed in when they were introduced to Princess Louise , the daughter of Queen Victoria. Within a year of completing *Adam Bede*, she finished *The Mill on the Floss* , dedicating the manuscript: Although the marriage courted some controversy due to the difference in ages. However it pleased her brother Isaac, who had broken off relations with her when she had begun to live with Lewes, and now sent congratulations. While the couple were honeymooning in Venice , Cross, in a fit of depression, jumped from the hotel balcony into the Grand Canal. He survived, and the newlyweds returned to England. They moved to a new house in Chelsea, but Eliot fell ill

with a throat infection. This, coupled with the kidney disease with which she had been afflicted for several years, led to her death on 22 December at the age of 65. She was buried in Highgate Cemetery East, Highgate, London, in the area reserved for societal outcasts, religious dissenters and agnostics, beside the grave of her husband, George Henry Lewes. The graves of Karl Marx and her friend Herbert Spencer are nearby. Several landmarks in her birthplace of Nuneaton are named in her honour. Portrait by Frederick William Burton, 1855. Throughout her career, Eliot wrote with a politically astute pen. *Felix Holt, the Radical* and *The Legend of Jubal* were overtly political, and political crisis is at the heart of *Middlemarch*, in which she presents the stories of a number of inhabitants of a small English town on the eve of the Reform Bill of 1832; the novel is notable for its deep psychological insight and sophisticated character portraits. Readers in the Victorian era praised her novels for their depictions of rural society. Much of the material for her prose was drawn from her own experience. She shared with Wordsworth the belief that there was much value and beauty to be found in the mundane details of ordinary country life. Eliot did not, however, confine herself to stories of the English countryside. *Romola*, an historical novel set in late fifteenth century Florence, was based on the life of the Italian priest Girolamo Savonarola. Elements from these works show up in her fiction, much of which is written with her trademark sense of agnostic humanism. The religious elements in her fiction also owe much to her upbringing, with the experiences of Maggie Tulliver from *The Mill on the Floss* sharing many similarities with the young Mary Ann Evans. Eliot also faced a quandary similar to that of Silas Marner, whose alienation from the church simultaneously meant his alienation from society. This was not helped by the posthumous biography written by her husband, which portrayed a wonderful, almost saintly, woman totally at odds with the scandalous life people knew she had led. In the 20th century she was championed by a new breed of critics, most notably by Virginia Woolf, who called *Middlemarch* "one of the few English novels written for grown-up people".

Chapter 3 : George Eliot: is this a new portrait of the author as a young woman? | Books | The Guardian

*If this really is Evans, then the artist, whoever he is, has found the perfect object to place next to the woman who, as George Eliot, would one day change the reach and shape of English.*

I mean, this is a novel that deals with issues of art, education reform, scholarly Eliot distanced her own work from that of other writers of her sex, deriding "silly novels by lady novelists", purportedly even criticizing the celebrated Jane Austen for dealing with trivialities. Nonetheless, she has continued often to be read as a writer with an insight into human intercourse that is distinctly feminine, despite her penning some of the hardest-hitting, rationalist critiques up to that time. And she has become a lightning rod for feminist criticism, on the positive side for creating strong women and on the negative side for having them yield to male characters. Before the author of *Scenes of Clerical Life* was known to be a woman, Charles Dickens famously guessed the secret, writing to her: I have observed what seemed to me such womanly touches in those moving fictions. If they originated with no woman, I believe that no man ever before had the art of making himself mentally so like a woman since the world began. But this is evidence to me not that George Eliot wrote like a woman, but that she did not write as just a man. Most other readers and critics speculated about various male authors hiding behind the pen name. Eliot wrote with neither an exclusively male nor an exclusively female sensibility, but from a well-rounded human perspective—differently from what had previously been considered either gentlemanly or ladylike writing. *Scenes of Clerical Life* was eventually revealed to be the debut effort of Marian Evans, to use the name by which she was already known in intellectual circles. She was a translator of philosophical works and had been editor of the left-leaning political and literary journal *The Westminster Review*. She was obviously extremely intelligent and well versed in history, science, art and politics. But she could also understand and write about the daily life of people at all levels of English society with great empathy and passion. And, unlike the figures in the novels she had derided in the *Review*, her characters struggled to break from social strictures; they challenged narrow morality. Of these early successes, the most conventional may be *The Mill on the Floss*, which disguises its critical insights with a flimsy romantic and, at times, melodramatic plot. Her first—and arguably only—major misfire came with her historical novel *Romola*. Eliot did voluminous research for the book, including six weeks in Florence studying the talk and manners of the people there. But the sheer weight of her learning, delivered in pages of exposition, crushes the operatic plot of personal and social betrayal amid political intrigue in Renaissance Italy. *Romola* was then and remains today her least regarded novel. However, it has had its defenders, some of whom have declared it her best work. Her next, *Felix Holt, the Radical*, was a partial comeback, returning to social relations in provincial England. The story takes place during elections and labour upheaval, but it soft-pedals the politics in favour of the love story. The "radical" advice of the novel turns out to be that of a moderate reform movement. Throughout this period, apart from publishing five novels in an eight-year span, Eliot was also producing poetry and shorter fiction. But it was six years after *Felix Holt* before her next—and greatest—novel appeared. Subtitled *A Study of Provincial Life*, the novel focuses on a town in the English Midlands, mainly following the progress of its middle-class heroine Dorothea but ranging across all stratas of society, bringing the exterior and interior lives of a wide range of characters to life. Despite its unpromising setting, *Middlemarch* manages to address and challenge all the conventions and ideas of the day—regarding religion, marriage, the sexes, art, politics, medical practice, and education. Not in the lecturing tone of *Romola* nor with the speechifying of *Felix Holt*, but rather growing out of the life experience of her subjects. Her female protagonist are strong but usually find a subservient role to play in their relationships, rather than become the kind of independently brilliant woman George Eliot herself is perceived to be. But Eliot is not writing about herself. Nor about how she wishes other people to be. After *Middlemarch* came her last great novel, *Daniel Deronda*, which some consider her crowning work. The challenge it presented to Victorians—and perhaps still does to many readers today—is its sympathetic treatment of Jews and certain Jewish mystical beliefs. The latter may disappoint some who hold Eliot up as an exemplar of enlightened secularism.

**Chapter 4 : George Eliot Eliot, George (Feminism in Literature) - Essay - calendrierdelascience.com**

*After those enlightening, if sometimes distressing, adventures, Eliot lived for twenty-four years with another married man, George Henry Lewes, in consummately happy defiance of custom.*

I have done enough of that in my time. But like all Victorian novelists, her consistent, varied, and early literary output would put any modern writer to shame. When she was asked to undertake this monumental work—which questioned the divinity of Jesus and which would earn for her early fame in literary circles—she had already moved through her own tumultuous religious conversions. She would need those experiences as well as German, Latin, Greek and the Hebrew she had already mastered to complete the work. All this to say that, as a young woman, the daughter of an estate agent, Marian or Mary Ann, Mary Anne, Marianne—she varied it for years before settling on Marian Evans had already accomplished more than most so-called late bloomers. Unlike the typical Victorian woman who might know two or three men well Father, Brother, Husband, Evans came to know a series of men who served as models for her flawed heroes. Her emotional development, too, tracked with her artistic development. As she met men who were, successively, more supportive, she began to reveal more of herself and take risks. Marian Evans was fearless in her rejection of orthodoxy and conventional morality. And as she often pointed out herself, her lack of conventional beauty set her apart from other women and the marriage market that consumed her contemporaries. Even so, she was an early and voracious reader of novels; and one way to look at her life and her gradual movement from serious reviews, theological investigations, and editorial duties to her own glorious fiction is to look at how often her pursuits were subsumed by those of the men in her life. For such a thoroughly unconventional woman, this part of the story is conventional enough. Robert Brabant—once doctor to Samuel Taylor Coleridge, acquainted with David Friedrich Strauss, and involved in the new theology coming out of Germany. She met him when she was 22, through his daughter, and when that daughter married a year later, Dr. His wife, who was blind, was ultimately not blind to the growing intimacy between them. Evans was more or less expelled from the house by Mrs. Brabant, with a cowardly Dr. Her next relationship with a mentor, and possible lover, came when Evans was 31—a spinster by Victorian standards. John Chapman, only 29 himself, was the putative editor of the Westminister Review putative because, eventually, Evans became the actual editor. The vigorous and charismatic Chapman asked that Evans join him in editing the re-launch of the journal which earlier had been founded by James Mill in Chapman was another well-connected man of letters: The lower floors of were given over to editorial offices, and the upper to literary tenants, his year old wife Susanna, three children, and a year old mistress, the governess Miss Elizabeth Tilley. After the jealousies cooled, Evans continued to edit The Westminister Review, and even continued to live in the house as she got involved with her next mentor. Throughout this period, Evans had primarily considered the work of others—writing book reviews and longer review essays. Her work as editor of The Westminister had her reading hundreds of books every few months, everything from science to the great, now canonical, works of the day: This on top of her deep reading in German and Greek classics in the original. She also continued to contribute essays to The Westminister and other journals. He was a bachelor and conducted an intense relationship with Evans, but finally claimed never to have been in love with her because she was not beautiful enough. Lewes and Evans, by all accounts, were soul mates. He was vivacious, animated, and playful. Lewes was also ugly, and short. He was said by Mrs. Many thought he was not serious enough. He was also married, but it was a marriage in name only: I am happier every day and find my domesticity more and more delightful and beneficial to me. Affection, respect, and intellectual sympathy deepen, and for the first time in my life I can say to the moments Verweilen sie sie sind so schon. Leave it to Marian to express it in German: I wish them to linger. They are so beautiful. She had already been a leading intellectual, edited one of the most serious journals in a serious age, was as accomplished as any of her male peers, and more accomplished than most. Those who knew her admired her. But in , at the age of 38, she was ready to begin writing fiction. That a marriage and the love of a good man should be the climax of her unconventional life was an irony probably not lost on Evans. It was a plot device she had rejected in Jane Eyre. She would write stories in which

characters pursue ideals only to discover that the ideal is always compromised by the actual world Daniel Deronda , where politics and petty passion interfere with these ideals Adam Bede, Felix Holt , Daniel Deronda, Romola. She would explore the intersections of faith, religion and goodness Adam Bede and Romola. And in , at the age of 52, she would write a masterful work that did all of the above: By the time she came to write the greatest novel in the age of great novels, she was widely considered to be the greatest living English novelist. But, crucially, he softened and encouraged her. Even though Blackwood enthusiastically published the first two installments, he happened to make requests for revisions for the third. And the reluctant admission of authorship was prompted as much by an imposterâ€”Joseph Liggins from her home county of Warwickshire who was allowing authorship to be attributed to himâ€”as it was by the growing whispers fueled by her old friends Spencer and Chapman that George Eliot was Marian Evans. With unprecedented realism, she shows us the petty politics that will undermine high-minded scientific progress. And the psychological and moral costs of those who stand up for what is right and those who do not. She can write clinically, like a scientist overseeing an experiment, and also with warm humor. Characters, like organisms, can only do what their mediums allow. Luckily for us all, George Eliot escaped such absorption into the life of another. Instead, she found an intellectually sympathetic partner interested in promoting her project rather than recruiting her for his own. As she wrote to an old friend after the tremendous success of Adam Bede: Under the influence of the intense happiness I have enjoyed in my married life from thorough moral and intellectual sympathy, I have at last found out my true vocation, after which my nature had always been feeling and striving uneasily without finding it. What do you think that vocation is? I pause for you to guess. I have turned out to be an artist. When she began to write fiction, she was fully prepared. Footnote to the title: Lewes and Strong-Minded woman. His scholarly publications include essays on Matthew Arnold and Frank Sinatra.

**Chapter 5 : Feminism in Middlemarch by George Eliot| English Summary**

*Like George Eliot she is also an idealist. Like Eliot, she also breaks the convention of marriage. She remains independent in her decisions. She satiates her desires by marrying twice. Hence George Eliot succeeds in putting forward the ideology of feminism in the novel.*

To make Dorothea a true representative of the struggle for women empowerment, George Eliot has made her very different from other women of her time. I will try to analyse various aspects of her character and nature to vindicate the idea of feminism in the novel. She likes to remain in a simple dress and also to adopt simple nature without desires. She does not like the idea of attaching importance to her attire and hue which was trending during her age. She is beautiful and charming yet she does not prefer to attract males or desire for someone very handsome and rich. She has no liking for jewellery. When her sister brings the box of ornaments of their mother asking her to choose some of them for herself, Dorothea does not like any of them and chooses only a bracelet. Celia does not like this attitude of her because the society of her time held that a woman should have taste in decoration, singing, cooing etc. But on contrary to this convention she likes to study books, and quest for ideal things that later make her miserable. But Dorothea does not like any of them. She has her own likes and dislikes that are far apart from those of her sister. Her Passion for Knowledge During the 18th century, the women were provided limited opportunities for education. Their ability and virtue were judged on the basis of their service to their husbands. Knowledge was thought to be unsuitable for the women. But Dorothea seems to break this convention. Dorothea and Celia lose their parents at a young age. They receive education at boarding schools with the help of their uncle. Though education is meant for their marriage, yet Dorothea rejects this notion and develops her interest in studying science, theology and particularly those subjects that focus on the betterment of the society. She is often criticised by her uncle for showing interest in learning. Reading such books, she becomes an appreciator of all those people who quest for knowledge and also struggle for the development and betterment of the society. For the sake of learning, she falls in love with an old chap who has wrinkles of an oldie on her face. It is her ideal love and thirst for knowledge that makes her find beauty in every dull thing of Casaubon, from his wrinkled face to the jail-like house. It is the pursuit of knowledge that makes her life miserable. She acknowledges this fact later on. Here again we find that she represents independence in the matter of selection both the times; first with Casaubon for the sake of Knowledge and after his death, with his cousin for the sake of love. Such independence from women never existed in the English society. Thus Eliot has challenged this notion of society by presenting such an independent character like Dorothea. Her Quest for Idealism Dorothea is an idealist girl. Being well educated, she loves books and lives the life in her own way. She chooses her first husband just because of her love for knowledge. He is an old chap. But being a lady of ideal thoughts, she finds in him the world of opportunities. From the very day when Casaubon sends her proposal for marriage, she starts dreaming of her life with him. Her eagerness can be found by the fact that she starts learning Greek just for the sake of helping him. She does this all without any external force and just because of her own will. Her marriage does not prove to be successful. Both of them expect too much from each other that results in the emergence of a number of conflicts between them. Ultimately after the death of her husband, she decides to marry Ladislaw because he loves her and cares for her. Thus Time again we find the dominance of idealism in her decision. Because her first husband had declared that she will lose all of her inherited property if she married Will Ladislaw after his death. But Dorothea does not seem to be a realist in this case as well. She renounces her property and marries again to Will. This time again she does so by her own will. Thus the author shows her empowerment in terms of decision. Conclusion From the above analysis of the novel, I conclude that Middlemarch is a feminist novel that upholds the desires and the decision of women. By doing this George Eliot tries to bring women to the status of men. Dorothea holds this ideology. Like George Eliot she is also an idealist. Like Eliot, she also breaks the convention of marriage. She remains independent in her decisions. She satiates her desires by marrying twice. Hence George Eliot succeeds in putting forward the ideology of feminism in the novel. Have you read these?

**Chapter 6 : The Best Books on George Eliot | Five Books Expert Recommendations**

*George Eliot gave Mary Ann distance from the critiques of her personal life and her work (Hughes, ). Scenes of Clerical Life was a success, and she then began her career as a novelist.*

I was thinking partly about its chronology—it comes from her first published work. She had formed an unconventional relationship with George Henry Lewes, who was already married. This gave her the security to begin a second life, and to transform from Marian Evans into the novelist George Eliot. Before becoming a novelist, she had been a formidable self-educated intellectual who had virtually run *The Westminster Review* in London. But she was not content with just being an intellectual, because she needed something that is contained in the power of feeling as well as in ideas. It is about a woman, Janet, who is married to Dempster. He is a local lawyer and alcoholic who, in his increasing degeneration, abuses and beats his wife. The first move that George Eliot makes as a realist novelist is this: But this is not a simple category. Where normal people will have one thought, George Eliot will have many. Janet, though the victim, begins to collude in what has happened to her and begins to drink herself. That makes her life more complicated. A new man comes to their small town—a man called Mr Tryan—who is an evangelical, and therefore of a different religious party from Dempster. She joins with her husband in wishing to do this man down. As he talks, Janet cannot see him but she can hear him. Her normal prejudices built around seeing are held in abeyance, and she listens to the tone in which he speaks to the sick woman. Janet no longer thinks of this man as an enemy but suddenly, to her surprise, finds that he is an equal human being. Again, you see the complication. What role does sympathy play in this story? When Janet hears Tryan comforting the dying woman, she hears the pure tones of human sympathy. He asks the dying woman to pray for him too, as he fears death and admits that it is one of his worst weaknesses to shrink from bodily pain. As a result, Janet begins to feel some sympathetic relation to Tryan: So, sympathy here is to do with the sudden forming of a relation. It may not be completely certain, it may be across great distances, but there is some emotional and imaginative connection. In George Eliot, although it looks like a soft word, it becomes complicated and deep. Without sympathy as a small version of love, human beings have very little to call upon. Janet and Tryan go on to develop a close relationship. George Eliot is unafraid, even in a post-religious age, of the idea that people need to be saved. Janet is saved by Tryan in a secular way by the fact that at some level he loves her and she loves him. Their relationship is not sexually consummated, but there is something sexual about it. They develop a relationship in which he is her supporter, her counsellor, the person who is going to help her from the despair of her alcoholism, so that, when he dies, she is his work; she is in memory of him. Their relationship is about having someone to love and be loved by. Suddenly Janet is freed from a situation in her marriage that had seemed endless. The present becomes very abrupt, and separated from the past, but it also seems to have no future. Notionally, you know that there was the past and that there will be a future. She can detect them, whereas we might not have understood or even noticed them. That sense of crisis and predicament where time is almost suspended is crucial for George Eliot. Could you tell us about her relationship to John Blackwood, and how that had an impact on her fiction? The relationship with Blackwood was almost wholly conducted through George Henry Lewes. Marian Evans was a clever but unattractive woman. She had a series of embarrassing and humiliating liaisons with older men, and was variously rejected. It was George Henry Lewes who took over the business end of things. He was the one who provided her with the confidence to try again to be a writer. It was he who, on the basis of his literary contacts, made a connection with Blackwood. Initially, he said that George Eliot was a male, and sought to protect her because Blackwood could be critical. He was a decent man but very conservative. It was up to George Henry Lewes to say to Blackwood that he must not criticize his friend George Eliot because, being very thin-skinned, he would not write any more. Indeed, Lewes had to protect George Eliot throughout her life from reviews and criticism because she was highly insecure. Blackwood became a very loyal supporter. However, there was a difficult moment when, encouraged by George Henry Lewes, George Eliot decided to leave him because a rival publisher was offering her an enormous amount of money for *Romola*. She returned to Blackwood later, contrite that she had left the old firm, and achieved great

success with works such as *Middlemarch*. Is it significant that Lewes claimed that George Eliot was a man in his initial correspondence with Blackwood? Marian Evans was contemptuous of many women novelists. She felt that some women, whether through their own fault or otherwise, were letting down the seriousness of being a woman. So, it seemed to her best to dissociate herself from frivolous lady novelists, in order that the novel should be taken seriously. She had gone through a variety of names—Mary Anne, Mary Ann, Marian and so on—but it was crucial to her that she had this new name. It was crucial to her, essentially, that she was creating a better version of herself.

### Chapter 7 : George Eliot Is a Woman - Essay - Max

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### Chapter 8 : George Eliot: The Last Victorian by Kathryn Hughes

*Did you know that George Eliot was a pen name for - gasp! - a woman? And that wasn't the only thing the *Middlemarch* author was doing against the grain.*

### Chapter 9 : George Eliot | Books | The Guardian

*Kate Flint's chapter "George Eliot and Gender" in the Cambridge Companion to George Eliot is an excellent place to start; touchstone essays include Zelda Austen's "Why Feminist Critics Are Angry with George Eliot" (College English), Lee Edwards's "Women, Energy, and Middlemarch" (Massachusetts Review, reprinted in the Norton Critical edition), Elaine Showalter's "The Greening of Sister George" (19th-Century Literature).*