MISCELLANEOUS THOUGHTS ON "SILAS MARNER"

Yukiye Kiriyama

I Can Silas Be a Miser?

George Eliot's letters provide us wiith her initial motiive which drove her to write "Silas Marner." She declares as follows on page 382 of The George Eliot's Letters: Vol. III (by Prof. Haight, Yale University Press):

> It came to me first of all, quite suddenly, as a sort of legendary tale, suggested by my recollection of having once, in early childhood, seen a linen-weaver with a bag on his back; but, as my mind dwelt on the subject, I became inclined to a more realistic treatment. (p. 382)

First, at a time, she attempted to write "Silas Marner" in verse, but finally she completed it in prose fiction, as it is seen today. Yes, indeed, there are somewhat fairy-tale-like elements in it, perhaps due ot the origination of this story, as is seen in the above quotation. For instance, Eppie rolls down from the bosom of its mother lying in the snow, toddles through the snow, too skillfully, up to the Silas's cottage. It is nobody else but this very Eppie who redeems Silas to his former wholesome human being. Taking just this incident, I think, the author, using this chance incident, made out a story with a happy ending, and this making out-a-story-attitude hardly appeals to us as a realistic novel.

This author, however, in Chapter 17 of "Adam Bede," has declared as follows:

> But it happens, on the contrary, that my strongest effort is to avoid any such arbitrary picture, and to give a faithful account of men and things as they have mirrored themselves in my mind. The mirror is doubtless defective; the outlines will sometimes be disturbed, the reflection faint or confused; but I feel as much bound to tell you as precisely as I can what that reflection is, as if I were in the witness-box narrating my experience on oath.

This passage is well known, and she herself, no doubt, made painstaking efforts to live up to the standard she had set up for herself. Even in this "Adam Bede," however, the author fails here and there, going into too idealistic delineation of Adem Bede and Dinah Morris, two main characters of the novel. Furthermore in construction, of plots, we can find treatments far from realistic. Even so, the author spares no efforts towards the goal she is striving for. No wonder, in "The LiftedVeil," a short story following "Adam Bede," her realistic treatment of the characters in their psychological aspects improved considerably.

Further in the next novel, "The Mill on the Floss," she puts much of her autobiographical elements into the female main character, Maggie, thus giving vivid delineation and at the same time, showing the author's firmer steps towards a realistic writer.

George Eliot's realism had shown gradual progress till she wrote "The Mill on the Floss," but did it exhibit further advance in the next novel, "Silas Marner"? It seems that every one does not necessarily nod to this question. I do not intend here to answer "yes" or "no." Neither am I satisfied with just those criticisms dependent on the impressions on the novel. In the treatment of this problem, I would like to examine the contents of the work materially, and study them minutely, in just the same way as we treat many other literary problems.

In this paper, I decided to take up Silas, the most important character of the novel, and study how the author is delineating him. Upon furthering my study I have come to notice that there is at least one considerably big discrepancy between my point of view and those of our various predecessors mainly on Silas's character itself and its development. First I will present the opinions of our bredecessors.

Joan Bennett's "George Eliot, Her Mind and Her Art" (the University Press, Cambridge) gives us the following statement on page 131:

> The story of The Weaver of Raveloe is a poetic conception and it was in this light that George Eliot herself thought of her story of a man, simple and trusting by nature, who, by the deliberate act of a false friend, is accused and convicted of theft. He is sundered from the community in which he was rooted and deprived at one blow of his faith in man and God---for his guilt had been 'proved' by the simple method of drawing lots and he and his co-religionists believed that the divine hand would point out the sinner. Isolated from his kind, he goes to live among strangers, and gives heart to the lonely accumulaton of gold. Then he is drawn back into the health-giving life of the community by a child. (p. 131)

To me, the following statement taken out of the above quotation, "The story of The Weaver of Raveloe is a poetic conception," too, presents, more or less, a problem, but I will not touch it now. I will rather take up the following part, also taken out of the above quotation, "... gives his heart to the lonely accumulation of gold;" that is to say, I have a question on this view of Joan Bennett's concerning the psychological aspeces of Silas's mind when he was spending a lonely life in Raveloe. Next I will cite another predecessor's study on the same point.

The first edition of "Marian Evans and George Eliot, A Biography" (Oxford University Press) by Lawrence and Elisabeth Hanson was published in 1952, and

on page 238 of the same book is stated the following:

> Fortunately, she did not carry out her threat to write Silas Marner in verse, but her conception of the story is a poetic one, and the discipline of verse remains in her prose treatment of it. The story is improbable and sentimental---Silas, embittered by treachery and injustice, turns miser and a solitary but is brought back to happiness and usefulness in the corporate life by a girl child left on his doorstep---but it is saved by this poetic conception and treatment. (p. 238)

In this passage, I specially want to make much of the portion, "Silas, embittered by treachery and injustice, turns miser..." This is the very point identical to Joan Bennett' s "gives his heart to the lonely accumulation of gold," and the both parts explain what the Silas' s state of mind was after he came to live at Raveloe and till he found Eppie and was redeemed to the healthful community-life. First, I examined whether or not there was any important difference between these two interpretations; that is, between Joan Bennett's "gives his heart to the lonely accumulation of gold" and Mr. and Mrs. Hanson's "turns miser," but it was a diffcult question to solve. So I have made up my mind to take into consideration what some other scholars are saying about the matter.

As my doubt and interest in this point increased, I wanted to study the opinions of some other leading students of George Eliot and reached the following results:

The quotation below was cited from page 60 of "The Novels of George Eliot" by Jerome Thale (Columbia University Press, 1959):

> Silas is first seen as a member of a grubby dissenting chapel. His best friend falsely accuses him of theft, the congregation expels him, and he loses his faith and becomes a miser. After fifteen years of isolation he finds Eppie and is redeemed by his love for her. (p. 60)

Furthermore, we find the following statement on page 121 of "George Eliot" by Walter Allen (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964) :

> Uuwittingly, Marner is caught in the "strange lingering echoes of the old demon worship" of the villagers. His very strangeness makes him an object of superstitious fear, and for want of an alternative, he becomes a miser. (p. 121)

The above materials are rather new, that is, published recently. The followings are somtwhat old ones.

The following quotation was taken out of page 191 of "George Eliot" by Blanche Colton Williams (Macmillan Co., 1936) :

The weaver of Raveloe has changed from the spirituality minded member of the Methodist Little Bethel of Lantern Yard to the miser whose sole object in life is to add to his gold hoard. But his formerly affectionate nature is restored through Eppie; in the restoration is clear his constant characteristic: Silas needed an object on which to support his timorous, faltering nature. (p. 191)

The last puotation I cite is the following taken from page XXXVIII-XXXIX of "A George Eliot Dictionary" by I. G. Mudge and M. E. Sears (George Routledge and Sons, 1924) :

With all faith in both God and man utterly shattered, he had wandered to Raveloe, where he had settled near some deserted stone pits. Though awed by his cataleptic attacks, the villagers would have taken him into their life, but his numbed mind and soul were incapable of responding. His one emotion is love of the gold in which his unremitting toil is paid, and his one pleasure is handling this gold after his work is done. (p. 38-9)

I've given in the above six quotations to show Silas's state of mind in the period of first fifteen years in Raveloe. Now, four of them are using the word "miser" to express Silas's state of mind in this period, while one of the two left is using th∍ following phrase, "gives his heart to the lonely accumulation of gold," and the other, the clause, "His one emotion is love of the gold..." Recognizing thus far I was driven to find out exactly what each of these two words, "miser" and "gold," means, and I cited the dictionaries, getting hold of the following results:

Miser:

(a) P. O. D.

p. 502 Person who hoards instead of using money.

(b) Webster

p. 1442 (2) a mean grasping person; esp: a person who lives miserably in order to hoard his wealth (the unenjoying --'s treasures---S. T. Coleridge)
(a--who inherited a fortune but lives in a shanty)

(c) The Century D. vol. I

p. 1070 A wretched or unhappy person; a wretch, or contemptible person; now, one who lives in wretched circumstances in order to save and hoard money; a meanly penurious hoarder of wealth; a niggardly, avaricious person.

(d) N. E. D. VI

p. 509 One who hoards wealth and lives miserably in order to

increase his hoard. Also, in wider use, an avaricious, grasping person, a niggard.

Gold:

(a) P. O. D.

p. 344 Precious yellow non-rusting malleable ductile metal: coins of this, wealth;

(b) Webster

p. 974 2 a (1): gold coins (2): a gold piece b: money, riches

(c) The Century D. vol. I

p. 666 coin made of gold; hence, money; wealth;

(d) N. E. D. IV

p. 278 (2) Thd metal regarded as a valuable possession or employed as a medium of exchange; hence, gold coin; also, in rhetorical use, money in large sums, wealth.

When I ponder on the above-stated meanings of these two words, "miser" and "gold," my mind wonders if those above-mentioned six character delineations of silas Marner in this period is true or not.

The author seems to have delineatd various characters in this novel, "Silas Marner," considerably realistically when examined minutely, though the work itself is fairly romantic. I cross-examined the author's delineation of this character, Silas Marner, and I would like to believe that the author had realized, to a certain extent, her ideal to write a realistic novel.

Now, a question arises whether the author has written, sonewhere in the novel, or as to the change of Silas's state of mind, that Silas is a miser, or some such passages or words. Then I examined this work all over again in detail, and found that the word "miser" is used twice and the word "miserliness," once. Let me study them one by one as follows: (Quotations are from the Everyman's Library Edition.)

> How was it that he, Dunstan Cass, who had often heard talk of Marner's mislrliness, had never thought of suggesting to Godfrey that he should frighten or persuade the old fellow into lending the money on the excellent security of the young Squire's prospects? (p. 42)

It is, of course, not the author's description of Marner, but the villagers' rumor, that Marner is a miser, and Dunstan knew of this rumor; though the word "miserliness" is used in the narrative part of the book.

> Doubtless, he had made his observations when he saw Marner at the door. Anybody might know---and only look at him---that the weaver was a half-crazy miser. It was a wonder the pedlar hadn't murdered him; men of that sort, with rings in their ears, had been known for murderers often and often..... (p. 84)

This is again not the author's description, but the villagers' supposition, made, when Marner was robbed of his money and went to the villagers for help, on one of those incredible peddlers: that is, that he must have called on Marner's cottage and considered him "a half-crazy miser" with plenty of money stored somewhere, and so he must have stolen that money, and so on and so on. This passage looks as though the author's narrative, but in reality, what the villagers thought and talked are ingeniously woven into the narrative; the author never asserts that Marner is a miser.

> This morning he had been told by some of his neighbours that it was New Year's Eve, and that he must sit up and hear the old year rung out and the new rung in, because that was good luck, and might bring his money back again. This was only a friendly Raveloe-way of jesting with the half-crazy oddities of a miser, but it had perhaps helped to throw Silas into a more than usually excited state. (p. 150)

In this case, too, the delineation of Silas as a miser is not due to the author's idea but the villagers' interpretation of Marner.

In this novel we find the word "miser" only in these three instances. We observe that Marner must have appeared a miser and even acted one, indeed. In order to be a true miser, however, it is not enough for a man to act and appear like a miser. Nevertheless, the villagers were intent on talking of him as a miser. Here we must admit that the author delineated the villagers' talks as their talks, just as they were talkiug. For this novel to be a truly realistic novel, it was necessary for the author to have expressed and delineated even such rumors of the villagers, just as they were being aired.

I wonder, though, why all the critics have adopted this Marner-being-a-miser view, established solely on the villagers' impressions on him, and have written that he is a miser. Entertaining such a doubt in mind, I examined closely the descriptions on Marner in the novel, studying and trying to find out whether or not the authors' mighty pen might have left such traces as suggesting Marner's being somewhat like a miser, if not altogether a miser itself. The followings are my reports on this:

> He seemed to weave, like the spider, from pure impulse, without reflection. Every man's work, pursued steadily, tends in this way to become an end in itself, and so to bridge over the loveless chasms of his life. Silas's hand satisfied itself with throwing the shuttle, and his eye with seeing the little squares in the cloth complete themselves under his effort. Then there were the calls of hunger; and Silas in his solitude, had to provid his own breakfast, dinner, and supper, to fetch his own water from the well, and put his own kettle on the fire; and all these immediate promptings helped, along with the weaving, to reduce his life to the unquestioning activity of a spinning insect. (p. 18-9)

Here in this passage is described the picture of Silas's weaving the cloth with no matter of concern whatsoever, as innocently as it can be done from instinct. He had neither ambition nor a trace of avarice on money.

> But at last Mrs. Osgood's table-linen was finished, and Silas was paid in gold. His earnings in his native town, where he worked for a wholesale dealer, had been after a lower rate; he had been paid weekly, and of his weekly earnings a large proportin had gone to objects of piety and charity. Now, for the first time in his life, he had five bright guineas put into his hand; no man expected a share of them, and he loved no man that he should offer him a share. But what were the guineas to him who saw no vista beyond countless days of weaving? It was needless for him to ask that, for it was pleasant to him to feel them in his palm, and look at their bright faces, which were all his own: it was another element of life, like the weaving and the satisfaction of hunger, subsistig quite aloof from the life of belief and love from which he had been cut off. The weaver's hand had known the touch of hard-won money even before the palm had grown to its full breadth; for twenty years, mysterious money had stood to him as the symbol of earthly good, and the immediate object of toil. He had seemed to love it little in the years when every penny had its purpose for him; for he loved the purpose then. But now, when all purpose was gone, that habit of looking towards the money and grasping it with a sense of fulfilled effort made a loam that was deep enough for the seeds of desire; and Silas walked homeward across the fields in the twilight, he drew out the money and thought it was brighter in the gathering gloom. (p. 19-20)

I dared to quote rather too long a passage here. Why? How exquisite the psychological delineation presented here of Silas's delicate feeling towards the guineaas. It is certainly worth noticing. In other words, Silas's love of the guineas was not of a miser but of far gentler, innocent emotion of a child. It might be probable for those ignorant villagers to have considered Silas a miser, unaware of those subtle workings of Silas's psychology, but for us who are engaged in literary studies, it is most important to be more attentive on this point.

> Silas now found himself and his cottage suddenly beset by mothers who wanted him to charm away the whooping-cough, or bring back the milk, and by men who wanted stuff against the rheumatics or the knots in the hands; and, to secure themselves against a refusal, the applicants brought silver in their palms. Silas might have driven a profitable trade in charms as well as in his small list of drugs; but money on this condition was no temptation to him: he had never known an impulse towards falsity, and he drove one after another away with growing irritation, for the news of him as a wise man had spread even to Tarley, and it was long before people ceased to take long walks for the sake of asking his aid. But the hope in his wisdom was at length changed into dread, for no one believed him when he said he knew no charms and could work no cures, and every man and

> woman who had an accidint or a new attack after applying to him, set the misfortune down to Master Marner's ill-will and irritated glances.
> (p. 21-2)

The most noteworthy portion in this paragraph is that Silas, taking advantage of the villagers' ignorance, could "have driven a profitable" business in charms and drugs, and thus earned plenty of money, but he never became inclined to do so. If he had ever been a miser in the slightest, he would have been greedy over the profits. Of course, it will be another story if a miser is to be defined as a person who detests false means of accumulating profits, and is only eager to hoard riches. It seems to me that there is no doubt that the author had not made such a distinction on the definition of "miser". She used the word "miser" in the most ordinary sense. In short, I want to maintain that the contents of this paragraph also prove that Marner was not a miser.

> Gradually the guineas, the crowns, and the half-crowns, grew to a heap, and Marner drew less and less for his own wants, trying to solve the problem of keeping himself strong enough to work sixteen hours a-day on as small an outlay as possible. Have not men, shut up in solitary imprisonment, found an interest in marking the moments by straight strokes of a certain length on the wall, until the growth of the sum of straight strokes, arranged in triangles, has become a mastering purpose? Do we not wile away moments of inanity or fatigued waiting by repeating some trivial movement or sound, until the repetition has bred a want, which is incipient habit? That will help us to understand how the love of accumulating money grows an absorbing passion in men whose imagintions, even in the very beginning of their hoard, showed them no purpose beyond it. Marner wanted the heaps of ten to grow into a square, and then into a larger square; and every added guinea, while it was itself a satisfaction, bred a new desire. In this strange world, made a hopeless riddle to him, he might, if he had had a less intense nature, have sat weaving, weavng---looking towards the end of his pattern, or towards the end of his web, till he forgot the riddle, and everything else but his immediate sensations; but the money had come to mark off his weaving into periods, and the money not only grew, but it remained with him. He began to think it was conscious of him, as his loom was, and he would on no account have exchanged those coins, which had become his familiars, for other coins with unknown faces. He handled them, he counted them, till their form and colour were like the satisfaction of a thirst to him; but it was only in the night, when his work was done, that he drew them out to enjoy their companionship. (p. 22-3)

Marner's psychological process of accumulating guineas is delineated most skilfully here. Guiueas, not as money, that is, not as the medium of exchange, but as the mere substance called money, as the pretty objects with "bright faces," had

fascinated Marner. Marner was glad to be in possession of those beautiful guineas; they were his own; they were his familiars. No doubt the guineas charmed him endlessly. I think this state of Marner's mind is quite different from that of a so-called miser.

Consequently, it is needless for us to wonder at the author's following description of Silas:

> So, year after year, Silas Marner had lived in this solitude, his guineas rising in the iron pot, and his life narrowing and hardening itself more and more into a mere pulsation of desire and satisfaction that had no relation to any other being. His life had reduced itself to the mere functions of weaving and hoarding, without any contemplation of an end towards which the functions tended. (p. 23)

From this passage we know clearly that the most important factor in Silas's state of mind is that of a hermit, not that of a miser, whose main function is to accumulate riches.

In this stage of Silas's state of mind, the following description is specially worth noting:

> Yet even in this stage of withering a little incident happened, which showed that the sap of affection was not all gone. It was one of his daily tasks to fetch his water from a well a couple of fields off, and for this purpose, ever since he came to Raveloe, he had had a brown earthenware pot, which he held as his most precious utensil, among the very few conveniences he had granted himself. It had been his companion for twelve years, always standing on the same spot, always lending its handle to him in the early morning, so that its form had an expression for him of willing helpfulness, and the impress of its handle on his palm gave a satisfaction mingled with that of having the fresh clear water. One day as he was returning from the well, he stumbled against the step of the stile, and his brown pot, falling with force against the stones that overarched the ditch below him, was broken in three pieces. Silas picked up the pieces and carried them home with grief in his heart. The brown pot could never be of use to him any more, but he stuck the bits together aud propped the ruin in its old place for a memorial. (p. 24)

In the above description we find the passage running as follows: "the sap of affection was not all gone." Some scholars seem to have interpreted this passage as Silas having a little affection still remaining in him, in spite of the fact that he had become a relentless miser altogether. I want to interpret this way: Silas, though his heart shrunk and hardened after experiencing that misfortune, did never lose a speck of his innate, rich, affectionate nature inside himself. Accordingly, from

this passage, too, we can secure a disproof of his becoming a miser.

> But at night came his revelry: at night he closed his shutters, and made fast his doors, and drew out his gold. Long ago the heap of coins had become too large for the iron pot to hold them, and he had made for them two thick leather bags, which wasted no room in their resting-place, but lent themselves flexibly to every corner. How the guineas shone as they came pouring out of the dark leather mouths! The silver bore no large proportion in amount to the gold, because the long pieces of linen which formed his chief work were always partly paid for in gold, and out of the silver he supplied his own bodily wants, choosing always the shillings and sixpences to spend in this way. He loved the guineas best, but he would not change the silver---the crowns and half-crowns that were his own earnings, begotten by his labour; he loved them all. He spread them out in heaps and bathed his hands in them; then he counted them and set them up in regular piles, and felt their rounded outline between his thumb and fingers, and thought fondly of the guineas that were only half-earned by the work in his loom, as if they had been unborn children---thought of the guineas that were coming slowly through the coming years, through all his life, which spread far away before him, the end quite hidden by countless days of weaving. No wonder his thoughts were still with his loom and his money when he made his journeys through the fields and the lanes to fetch and carry home his work, so that his steps never wandered to the hedge-banks and the lane-side in search of the once familiar herbs: (p. 25-6)

The latter half of the above quotation, I' m afraid, is liable to cause some readers' misunderstanding and their misinterpretation of Silas as a miser, because he is foreseeing the money he is going to earn in the future and rejoicing over it. Of course, Silas in this case is meditating his future remunerations, but we must again make sure whether he is meditating them in terms of money to be used as the medium of exchange and so naturally making much of the amount of money to be earned in the future, or he is picturing those "bright faces" of the coming-in guineas in his mind as mere beautiful objects of admiration. The answer will obviously be the latter. It will be pretty hard, though, to distinguish this way. We must be on the alert when we read this novel, lest we should fall under misunderstanding. This very description, however, suggests that the author is taking that much firm steps towards a matured realistic writer.

> In his truthful simple soul, not even the growing greed and worship of gold could beget any vice directly injurious to others. The light of his faith quite put out, and his affections made desolate, he had clung with all the force of his nature to his work and his money; and like all objects to which a man devotes himself, they had fashioned him into correspondence with themselves. His loom, as he wrought in it without ceasing, had in its turn wrought on him, and confirmed more and more the monotonous craving for

> its monotonous response. His gold, as he hung over it and saw it grow, gathered his power of loving together into a hard isolation like its own. (p. 54)

Did the auhor use this expression, "the growing greed and worship of gold," in the above quotation to delineate Silas's eagerness to hoard guineas? If so, the author seems to have delineated Silas's attitude towards guineas as greedy, and so she used the word "greed." My answer to this is definitely "no." Why? Well, actually, in the beginning of this passage, we find the following adverbial phrase, "In his truthful simple soul." To this adjective, "truthful," we must give attention. Also, we must be aware of the fact that this quotation is, in fact, the passage following the description of the villagers' impressions on Silas, right after he had been robbed of his gold by Dunstan. In shoort, we must consider this part in the light that much of the villagers' psycholoigy is interwoven in what is expressed here about Silas. It is, therefore, clear that the anthor is not describing Silas as a sort of miser at all.

> It had been a clinging life and though the object round which its fibers had clung was a dead disrupted thing, it satisfied the need for clinging. But now the fence was broken down---the support was snatched away. Marner's thoughts could no longer move in their old round, and were baffled by a blank like that which meets a plodding ant when the earth has broken away on its homeward path. The loom was there, and the weaving, and the growing pattern in the cloth; but the bright treasure in the hole under his feet was gone; the prospect of handling and counting it was gone: the evening had no phantasm of delight to still the poor soul's craving. The thought of the money he would get by his actual work could bring no joy, for its meagre image was only a fresh reminder of his loss; and hope was too heavily crushed by the sudden blow for his imagination to dwell on the growth of a new hoard from that small beginning. (p. 102-3)

The author asserts here that the way of Silas's life was a sort of "a clinging life." From this point of view, we should interpret Silas's accumulation of guineas, and we should not measure it from the worldly sense of a miser. Judging from the delineation of this passage, we can not but recognize the author's firm steps of a realistic writer. Moreover, we can easily understand the reality that Silas's loss of gold, the object of his clinging, became the prerequisite of his redemption by Eppie's appearance, as the most natural psychological transition in Silas's case.

> Gold'!---his own gold---brought back to him as mysteriously as it had been taken away! He felt his heart begin to beat violently, and for a few moments he was unable to stretch out his hand and grasp the restored

> treasure. The heap of gold seemed to glow and get larger beneath his agitated gaze. He leaned forward at last, and stretched forth his hand; but instead of the hard coin with the familiar resisting outline, his fingers encountered soft warm curls. In utter amazement, Silas fell on his knees and bent his head low to examine the marvel: It was a sleeping child---a round, fair thing, with soft yellow rings all over its head. Could this be his little sister whom he had carried about in his arms for a year before she died, when he was a small boy without shoes or stockings? That was the first thought that darted across Silas's blank wonderment. Was it a dream? He rose to his feet again, pushed his logs together, and, throwing on some dried leaves and sticks, raised a flame, but the flame did not disperse the vision---it only lit up more distinctly the little round form of the child and its shabby clothing. It was very much like his little sister. Silas sank into his chair powerless, under the double presence of an inexplicable surprise and a hurrying influx of memories. (p. 151)

This passage is considerably important, because Eppie's golden curls had been reflected as gold on Silas's mind in those circumstances. At the moment, however, when he noticed that it was actually a girl's hair, Silas would have kicked her and thrown her out, if he had been really a miser. Instead, he was reminded of his deceased sister. This shows that he was really a man with truly human emotion at his heart, and naturally it explains how the author is treating Silas.

The above materials quoted from this work will show you clearly, without much explanation, that it is most improbable to call Silas Marner in this novel a miser, and that all those critics who are trying to explain Silas in terms of a miser have been loose readers. Even this expression, "love of gold," has neither been used properly. As I have already stated in the above my studies on gold, gold means wealth or riches, and Silas did not love the guineas from his love of riches; therefore, strictly speaking, "love of gold" is not an appropriate expression to describe Silas's love of guineas.

When I draw a generalization from the above argument, I can come to the assertion that the author is delineating far more realistically, even in this fairy-tale-like story "Silas Marner," than usual readers can feel when they read it vaguely.

II Are They Superfluous?

It is generally admitted that "Silas Marner" is an exceptional work of formal perfection, and its merit is greatly valued as such. When I studied it in detail, however, I could find here and there passages somewhat superfluous to me. I have stopped to think how I should interpret them. The followings are my studies on this point.

> Even people whose lives have been made various by learning, sometimes find it hard to keep a fast hold on their habitual views of life, on their faith in the Invisible---nay, on the sense that their past joys and sorrows are a real experience, when they are suddenly transported to a new land, where the beings around them know nothing of their history, and share none of their ideas---where their mother earth shows another lap, and human life has other forms than those on which their souls have been nourished. Minds that have been unhinged from their old faith and love have perhaps sought this Lethean influence of exile in which the past becomes dreamy bcause its symbols have all vanished, and the present too is dreamy because it is linked with no memories. (p. 16)

This is the prssage, presented by the author to help readers imagine the Silas's psychology when he came to Raveloe, sorrow-stricken, and settled in this strange countryside. She seems to have given some unnecessary generalization here in somewhat too stately a manner, but I fully understand and allow her pen, when I consider this the symbol of the author's painstaking efforts to express human psychology as accurately as she could, covering all the minute details of psychological phenomena. My further contemplation, on the contrary, reveals the fact that perhaps the author had to insert such explanatory portion to make up for that fictitious qualities which were indispensable for this novel.

> The sense of security more frequently springs from habit than from conviction, and for this reason it often subsists after such a change in the conditions as might have been expected to suggest alarm. The lapse of time during which a given event has not happened, is, in this logic of habit, constantly alleged as a reason why the event should never happen, even when the lapse of time is precisely the added condition which makes the event imminent. A man will tell you that he has worked in a mine for forty years unhurt by an accident, as a reason why he should apprehend no danger, though the roof is beginning to sink; and it is often observable, that the older a man gets, the more difficult it is to him to retain a believing conception of his own death. (p. 52)

The above passage sounds as though a segment of an essay, rather than that of a novel. This is an additional description showing what a peaceful state of mind Silas had, when his long-saved money had already been stolen by Dunstan, without expecting the robbery because Silas's "sense of security" of his stored money sprung from habit. The author might have tried, in this passage, to delineate the psycholgy cf a given special being called Silas, but it resulted only in the statement of the most common state of human psycholgy which can be applied to anybody in this world. This tendency of presenting such a long statement, irrelevant to the main plot of the novel, seems to be something of an exception in George Eliot's fiction.

> Favourable Chance, I fancy, is the god of all men who follow their own devices instead of obeying a law they believe in. Let even a polished man of these days get into a position he is ashamed to avow, and his mind will be bent on all the possible issues that may deliver him from the calculable results of that position. Let him live outside his income or shirk the resolute honest work that brings wages, and he will presently find himself dreaming of a possible benefactor, a possible simpleton who may be cajoled into using his interest, a possible state of mind in some possible person not yet forthcoming. Let him neglect the responsibilities of his office, and he will inevitably anchor himself on the chance, that the thing left undone may turn out not to be of the supposed importance. Let him betray his friend's confidence, and he will adore that same cunning complexity called Chance, which gives him the hope that his friend will never know; let him forsake a decent craft that he may pursue the gentilities of a profession to which nature never called him, and his religion will infallibly be the worship of blessed Chance, which he will believe in as the mighty creator of success. The evil principle deprecated in that religion, is the orderly sequence by which the seed brings forth a crop after its kind. (p. 99)

This is the passage designating the prolonged consideration on Godfrey's reliance on chance, because of his weak will, and it seems to me that the passage may be unnecessary. Taking it into deeper consideration, however, we can take a different point of view on this passage from that on the passage, "The sense of security....." In the present passage, the author is making continuous efforts to analyze the human psychology of such characters as Godfrey, viewing it from various different angles, and is laboriously expressing what she found out as the result of her analysis, and also the consequence of what she had found out. The development of this psychological process and its result are beautifully delineated here in this passage with her exalted pen. In strict sense, therefore, this is an unimportant passage, but it helps us know how the anthor interprets one aspect of

human psychology. Nay, this way of her analysis and her most suitable stylistic expression here cannot but be a credit to the author, we must admit.

> I suppose one reason why we are seldom able to comfort our neighbours with our words is, that our goodwill gets adulterated, in spite of ourselves, before it can pass our lips. We can send black pudding and pettitoes without giving them a flavour of our own egoism; but language is a stream that is almost sure to smack of a mingled soil. There was a fair proportion of kindness in Raveloe; but it was often of a beery and bungling sort, and took the shape least allied to the complimentary and hypocritical. (p. 104)

The first half of this paragraph might be taken as superfluous by some readers, but it is really the expression resulting from the author's most sympathetic contemplation on readers and will help us appreciate the psychological aspects of the characters in the novel as well as their sayings.

> In old days there were angels who came and took men by the hand and led them away from the city of destruction. We see no white-winged angels now. But yet men are led away from threatetening destruction; a hand is put into theirs, which leads them forth gently towards a calm and bright land, so that they look no more backward; and the hand may be a little child's. (p. 180)

This paragraph refers to the fact that Silas' s life was saved by Eppie's love. My criticism on it is that this paragraph has instantly deprived the author of her essential self as a realist. It is said, indeed, that from the materials of this novel, the author first thought it more appropriate to treat it as a metrical fiction, but she dared employ realism in her delineation to a considerable extent, and no doubt successfully. Most of the psychological delineations of Silas himself are realistic; and, as it is already been stated in the above arguments, I might say that it was rather on the part of the commentators that committed an error of romantic criticism of this novel, interpreting Silas as a miser, contrary to the author's realistic presentation of him. It is most regrettable that the author is presenting a romantic treatment of Silas when it comes to his relationship with Epqie, though. what I think is that it was not the angel-like hand of a little child but Silas's humanity itself that led Silas and saved him. That is to say, Eppie need never have been exceptionally a noble and affectionate child, soaring high up above midiocre children in order for her to save Silas. She could have been a most commonplace girl. The salvation had lain in Silas's humanity, his clinging nature, which had worked first on guineas, and then shifted to the human child. I cannot but believe that the life of this story, the very essence of this novel, lies in this

shifting of the object of Silas's clinging life--- from the guineas to the child. Here lies the accomplishment of realism in fiction as declared by the author. But to my great regret, the author has added such a passage to prove her immaturity as a realistic writer, in spite of her eagerness to be one, her real aim as a writer.

In later years, however, the author had presented in her great work, namely, "Felix Holt," a pair of daughter and father, Esther and Rufus Lyon. Rufus was a clergyman and her foster father. He saves a poor mother with her child from thier sad plight, marries her, and thus looks after them. The author delineates all their everchanging vicissitudes of life, and finally it follows that this Esther unexpectedly proves to be the heiress to a wealthy Bycliffe family. Hereupon, the author gives most realistic delineation to Rufus and Esther Lyon's response to this new situation. This is really the shining example of the passage which proves George Eliot to be a modern realistic writer, as she had declared herself to be one. When I compare this response with that shown by Silas and Eppie combination when Godfrey told them of his fatherhood toward Eppie, I am surprised at the latter's too simple romanticism, and discover the author's marvelous development as a realistic writer during the lapse of time between "Silas Marner" and "Felix Holt." Thus considered, this passage can be taken both superfluous and also not superfluous. And I want to make this assertion of mine here as my conclusion of this paper.

(Note: More reference materials were used than referred in this paper, but a list of them was omitted here.)

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