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On Saturday 29 November 2008, the twelfth Annual Convention of the George Eliot Fellowship of Japan was held at Kinki University.

The morning session began with an opening remark by Yosie Abe (Shoin University), followed by a welcome address by Itsuyo Shimizu (Kinki University). In the morning, we had three papers presented. The first two papers were introduced and commented upon by Chizuko Watari (Kanasai Gaidai University), and the third by Keiji Yata (Tokyo Kasei University).

The first paper was ‘Maggie’s Struggle in The Mill on the Floss’ by Muneaki Shinoda (the Graduate School of Osaka City University). He drew attention to the similarity between Maggie and Antigone, referring to Judith Butler’s interpretation of Antigone, and discussed the question of female education and Maggie. He compared Maggie as the defender of moral law with Tom as the defender of social law.

The second paper was ‘The Tragic Love of Fedalma and Silva – The Spanish Gypsy from the Ethnic Point of View’ by Nanae Hama (the Graduate School of Fukuoka Women’s University). She pointed out the correspondence between 15th century Spain and 19th century Britain as periods of ethnic controversy, and argued that the wedding ceremony of the lovers before their final separation suggests Eliot’s fervent desire for the coexistence of the two different nations, which was difficult to realize in her time.

The third paper was ‘Reading Middlemarch as Gothic Romance’ by Hiromi Takei (The Jikei University School of Medicine). She examined several Gothic elements in Middlemarch: Mr Casaubon and Lowick Manor as a good example of identification of a Gothic house with its owner; Dorothea, a parentless heroine in fetters; Ladislaw, a free-spirited hero and rescuer who is represented in terms of light. She discussed how Eliot made use of the Gothic tradition in her own way, and suggested that Eliot’s desire to analyze psychology necessitated a minute description of characters as well as their houses.

The afternoon session began with an address by Yoshitsugu Uchida, the President of the George Eliot Fellowship of Japan, which was followed by a welcome address by Professor Nobuyuki Inomo, the Dean of the School of Literature, Arts and Cultural Studies of Kinki University. After the addresses, the general meeting was presided over by Yoshie Abe. The meeting’s agenda included financial reports and publications of the Fellowship, one of which is The Bibliography of Works on George Eliot Published in Japan.

After the general meeting, we had a symposium on ‘George Eliot as a Writer of the Short Story’ presided over by Yumiko Hirono (Kyoto University). First, Hirono, as Chair, presented a brief survey of the composition and publication of Eliot’s two short stories, ‘The Lifted Veil’ and ‘Brother Jacob’. She remarked that they were written between writing the novels: one was between Adam Bede and The Mill on the Floss, and the other was between The Mill on the Floss and Romola, and both of the two short stories were published anonymously at the request of the publishers who were afraid that those short stories would damage the reputation...
established by *Adam Bede*. Hiroko suggested that Eliot wrote those short stories not for her fame but for practice in writing novels.

Hiroshi Ikezono (Yamaguchi University) analyzed the two heroes of the short stories, Latimer and David, saying that each of them is presented as a man of literary sensibility first, but is finally criticized as an egoist without sympathy towards others. He concluded that the two short stories seem quite different from the novels, but they actually present a condensed view of Eliot’s art in her early days.

Midori Niino (Kobe City University of Foreign Studies) compared Latimer’s objective and passive narrative and Miss Wade’s subjective and aggressive narrative in ‘The Story of a Self-Tormentor’ in *Little Dorrit* by Charles Dickens. She also referred to ‘The Haunted Man and the Ghost’s Bargain’, one of the Christmas stories by Dickens, and explored the contemporary view of science and pseudo-science in the works of two novelists of quite different characters and interests.

Tadashi Izumi (Nihon University), as a scholar and rising novelist, presented his own experience of writing a short story after the success of his first novel, *Crossroad*. He analyzed some scenes from ‘The Lifted Veil’ and insisted that in the short story we could find clues to Eliot’s own suspicion concerning the too idealized relationship in her first novel *Adam Bede*, and of her thematic confusion in ‘The Lifted Veil’ and the next novel, *The Mill on the Floss*. In his opinion we can find some hints in the short story of the world view she presented in her next novel.

The convention ended with a closing speech by Kiyoko Tsuda. After the conference, the members enjoyed warm and friendly talks at an informal dinner party. Among the speakers at the party, Ayako Tani (the Graduate School of Kyushu University) doing her PhD at Leicester University aroused our envy by telling us that she attended the George Eliot Day in Nuneaton on 17 May this year and was given a copy of *Scenes* and a china mug featuring George Eliot and a copy of the painting of Chilvers Coton Church (Shepperton). She didn’t forget to bring us a greeting from a member of the George Eliot Fellowship in Britain. She was the only Japanese person referred to by Elizabeth Mellor in ‘The First Newsletter from the New Secretary’ published in July 2008.