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## BETWEEN DEAFNESS AND SOUND: AURALITY AND THE LIMITS OF SYMPATHY IN *THE MILL ON THE FLOSS*

By Kyriaki Hadjiafxendi

In his review of *The Mill on the Floss* on 19 May 1860 for *The Times*, E. S. Dallas began by arguing that Eliot's first novel *Adam Bede* was successful because 'the temporary delight of listening to a pleasant tale' it gave its readers helped to achieve 'the permanent good of an increased sympathy with our kind'.<sup>1</sup> Although the publication of *The Mill on the Floss* proved, according to Dallas, that 'George Eliot' was 'as great as ever', it could not match the triumph of *Adam Bede* because she was determined not to repeat the idealism of a world that promoted human fellowship by being 'too good and sugary' (p. 130). Dallas's review is of particular relevance to my essay because of the telling connection it makes between aurality, psychology and sympathy in *The Mill on the Floss*. The musical tropes that Eliot uses in the novel to advocate social solidarity have, of course, been discussed at length,<sup>2</sup> as has the breaking down of her ethics of sympathy,<sup>3</sup> and her engagement with Victorian debates about the mind.<sup>4</sup> However, less work has been done on the way in which her experimentation with the sensations of tone in her second novel is keyed into her growing disbelief in the social applicability of sympathetic feeling. Reading *The Mill on the Floss* in the light of its reviews, and Dallas's in particular, this essay will explore the role that aurality plays in its attempt to understand the vicissitudes of modern life through an encounter with the feelings of others.

While *Adam Bede* tries to give the promise of a better future by asking its readers to witness, as if in an Egyptian sorcerer's mirror, 'far-reaching visions of the past' that they should strive to hold onto, *The Mill on the Floss* considers what their thoughts and emotion may be capable of, by tempting them to overhear 'what Mr and Mrs Tulliver were talking about, as they sat by the bright fire in the left-hand parlour, on that very afternoon I have been dreaming of'.<sup>5</sup> In a letter of 30 November 1874 to Alexander Main, George Henry Lewes argued that, in contrast to the reader, who 'brings his views, theories, superstitions to disturb the effect of a proposition', the listener 'seldom brings any prepossession which will disturb the effect of the jest'.<sup>6</sup> Casting her readers in the role of listening confidants who need to struggle with their own temptations, Eliot built a different kind of readerly activity into the form of her second novel, which was informed by her concern with sympathetic resonance and the non-conscious mind.

*The Mill on the Floss* is a psychological novel because of the way in which the narrative makes its readers conscious of the limits of their own sympathy in the act of reading. As Dallas points out, compared to *Adam Bede*, it was not as easy for *The Mill on the Floss* to excite interest in the doings of characters 'who are unpleasant companions' and for whom the reading public expected to entertain friendly feelings (p. 130). However, what makes its social evolutionism with its focus on 'insect life' in society less repulsive, in his view, is the way in which 'the bigger insects [the Dodsons and the Tullivers] all revolve around these two little creatures, Maggie and Tom Tulliver' (p. 134). Arguing for the importance of reading *The Mill on the Floss* as a novel concerned with sympathy as a psychological problem, this essay aims to draw attention to the extent to which the spectrum of sound and silence – through which Maggie's agency is socially determined – indicates some of the contradictory impulses in its novelistic structure of feeling. Eliot's engagement with the limits of sympathy in *The Mill on the Floss* is

an important part of her growing awareness of the subjective nature of sensation.

In the mid-1850s when Eliot embarked on writing fiction, empirical studies of the relationship of sensation and thought – ranging from Alexander Bain’s *The Senses and the Intellect* (1855) and Hermann von Helmholtz’s *The Sensations of Tone* (1856) to Herbert Spencer’s ‘The Origin and Function of Music’ (1857) and George Henry Lewes’s *The Physiology of Common Life* (1859) – created a climate in which ‘sound began to assume the status as ideal function that sight had earlier held’.<sup>7</sup> In contrast to *Adam Bede* which confronts its readers with their own preconceptions and prejudices by drawing their attention to the illusion of reality that visual and pictorial verisimilitude creates, the narrator of *The Mill on the Floss*, drawing on contemporary views on the involuntary physiological reaction to sound, lures its reader into a web of relations, within which they are expected to feel rather than know what it means to be entrapped. In her introduction to *The Feeling of Reading*, Rachel Ablow has pointed out that reading for the Victorians was an affective experience:

By stressing feeling rather than knowing, a very different world of reading comes to light—one in which the intended reader’s reactions to the text may be ‘micromanage[d]’, as Garrett Stewart has argued [in ‘Reading Feeling and the “Transferred Life”: *The Mill on the Floss*’], but in which that micromanagement involves autonomy as well as determination, escape as well as assimilation to the world outside the text.<sup>8</sup>

The attention Stewart draws to the double-edged character of the reader’s sensibility, whereby it oscillates between self-fashioning and passivity, provides an alternative model to Raymond Williams’s critique of the narrative as an entrapping web because of the way it deprives individuals of social agency. Eliot’s trope of the web, through which the reading public felt the limits of their sympathy, cannot be seen separately from the affective experience she turned reading her fiction into. In his review, Dallas points out that the opening of Book IV in *The Mill on the Floss* is the equivalent of chapter 17 of *Adam Bede*, where the story pauses a little in that Eliot commences her fourth book ‘by uttering against her story all that the most savage critic can have it in his heart to say’ (p. 133).

Whereas in chapter 17 of *Adam Bede*, the narrator interrupts the flow of her narrative in order to compare its power to summon images of ordinary people to the authenticity of seventeenth-century Dutch painting, in Book IV of *The Mill on the Floss* there is a shift away from Romantic narratives to a novel based more on deterministic principles. By sharing ‘this sense of oppressive narrowness’ with the reader, the narrator is aware of the limitations of the narrative to voice the characters’ own feelings and idioms:

Perhaps something akin to this oppressive feeling may have weighed upon you in watching this old-fashioned family life on the banks of the Floss, which even sorrow hardly suffices to lift above the level of the tragi-comic. [...] You could not live among such people; you are stifled for want of an outlet towards something beautiful, great, or noble; you are irritated with these dull men and women, as a kind of population out of keeping with the earth on which they live—with this rich plain where the great river flows for ever onwards, and links the small pulse of the old English town with the beatings of the world’s

mighty heart. [...]

I share with you this sense of oppressive narrowness; but it is necessary that we should feel it, if we care to understand how it acted on the lives of Tom and Maggie—how it has acted on young natures in many generations, that in the onward tendency of human things have risen above the mental level of the generation before them, to which they have been nevertheless tied by the strongest fibres of their hearts. (p. 222)

In this passage, by connecting Maggie and Tom to their past and equally forcing them to move on in the narrative, Eliot forces her readers to think through the reasons for their limits of sympathy with the characters (a fact lost on some reviewers who disliked the 'coarse' matter and characters of the novel). It is only when readers acknowledge the limits of their capacity for sympathetic identification that they can understand their relationship to the world of the novel and its evolution as a whole and realize that like the small community of St Oggs, which is only a small pulse but one linked organically to the 'beatings of the world's mighty heart', they are part of something much larger.

Dallas was not the only one to acknowledge the synaesthetic model of reading through which Eliot tried to widen her readers' psychology by alerting them to the difficulty of developing and sustaining sympathetic ties through her appeal to their senses – both hearing and sight. An anonymous review of *The Mill on the Floss* in the *Saturday Review* praised Eliot's 'minuteness of painting' but went onto to declare, in a fashion akin to Dallas, that her genius derives from 'taking the reader into her confidence'.<sup>9</sup> This interpretation was again tellingly figured in aural terms, whereby the reader 'seems to share with the authoress the fun of the play she is showing us', and joins her in 'laughing at' her 'characters'. The reviewer for the *Saturday Review* suggests a familial bonding between author and reader which was not sustained in the novel. The review in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* deployed a similar set of aural tropes to praise the immediacy of its soundscape:

[T]he present book seems to us superior to *Adam Bede*; exquisite as the dialogue was there, it sometimes saw the marks of the artist's hand; the reader felt, from time to time, that he was listening to the writer in his study – not to the speaker in his carpenter's shop.<sup>10</sup>

Intriguingly, the desire for a friendly connection is in marked contrast with the difficulty that Eliot had in relating to Blackwood's imagined community of readers.

The opening description of the river in *The Mill on the Floss* as a living companion, to whose 'low placid voice' the narrative responds through its promotion of the living fellowship that only sympathy can bring, echoes an image that Eliot fashioned for herself as loving but deaf to her own popularity while working on her second novel. Writing in March 1859 to her publisher, John Blackwood, replying to a missive in which he had informed her of the success of *Adam Bede*, Eliot imagined herself as a solitary and sensitive figure, unable to hear the applause and sympathy of public approbation:

It comes rather strangely to me, who lives in such unconsciousness of what is going on in the world. I am like a deaf person, to whom someone has just

shouted that the company around him have been paying him compliments for the last hour. (III, 34)

The metaphor of deafness, which places her out of hearing, gives glimpses into the contradictions in her psychology, which, following the lionization of her authorial figure and the revelation of her identity after the publication of *Adam Bede* in 1859, permeated both her writing of *The Mill on the Floss* and her relationship with her readers. Nancy L. Paxton has pointed out that 'Eliot knew, then, shortly after she began writing *The Mill on the Floss*, that she could not hope to shield herself from similarly malicious attacks on her personal morality and on her authority as a woman writer by continuing to use her male pseudonym'.<sup>11</sup>

Just as the Floss in her second novel resembles the voice of 'one who is deaf and loving', the exhibition of sympathy, for Eliot, needs to be tacit. Thought for her makes a startling sound that can be more powerful in making sympathy audible than any articulation of appreciation in speech. In this light, the imaginary position of absolute authority which the image of deafness represents, figures her as somebody who can hear only the sound of her own thought but finds that difficult to act upon. It is between these two poles of deafness and sound, which form, according to Gillian Beer, a long and crucial continuum 'in her metaphoric life' that 'George Eliot' acquires her 'muffled voice' within a male-dominated literary market-place:

The silent urgency of a style which implies speech; the insistence on voice, dramatized in those recurrent women singers who form the type of the woman artist in her work; her reluctance to speak out directly on issues of the day lest her support do harm to causes she espoused: all these express the extent to which silent writing and reading gave dramatic expression to her particularly psychic position.<sup>12</sup>

Drawing attention to Eliot's exploitation of the power of silence to engage with the -woman question, Beer treats Eliot's novelistic narratives as psychical structures within which her female characters strive to break their imprisoning silence in the world beyond their own.

Of all Eliot's heroines of a poetic temperament, Maggie Tulliver in *The Mill on the Floss* is the one whose stream of consciousness is shaped within the spectrum of deafness and sound. Eliot's preoccupation with aural sensibility played an important role in her reworking of Lewes's notion of stream of consciousness to describe the flowing action of the mind between waking consciousness and dreams or memories. At the very beginning of the novel, the mill and water function as a 'great curtain of sound, shutting one out from the world beyond'. Tellingly sound here creates 'a dreamy deafness' – a state of unconsciousness, absorption and escape that only the thunder of the grain wagon – the sound of hard physical labour and toil – can tempt Maggie out of her reverie to join together with the reader, and Mr and Mrs Tulliver in their parlour, for the narrative to begin. The way in which the narrator lures Maggie and the reader into entering the world of the narrative and places Mr and Mrs Tulliver within their hearing is representative of the extent to which Eliot not only treats her narrative as a sonic environment but, more importantly, represents aural sensibility in *The Mill on the Floss* as the primary and intricate mechanism that constitutes identity and occasions moral growth.

Maggie's girlhood is formed at this nexus between having to listen and not hearing, or speaking

and having no one to hear her. Although Maggie tries to find voice and sympathetic resonance through storytelling, her talking aloud results in a 'mixture of clear-eyed acumen and blind dreams' because, like Eliot, she does not have a listener that she can draw into her confidence with her stories without encouraging a desire to become intimate with her (e.g. Philip). Ironically, Maggie's quest for a compassionate ear within her familial circle echoes Eliot's quest for a reading public who would crave to find sympathy in one another rather than to have an intimate relationship with her as the author. For Eliot the ear is the most deeply receptive organ, and sound is bound to the ego. Maggie's otherness as an outsider to the narrative is paralleled by being out of earshot and hence feeling out of tune with her family. In one episode, when Maggie is nine years old, she goes out of hearing before her mother finishes a remonstrance on her 'wickedness' in wetting her curly locks, an action that Mrs Tulliver sees as an example of her daughter's lack of feminine propriety:

Before the remonstrance was finished, Maggie was already out of hearing, making her way towards the great attic that ran under the old high-pitched roof, shaking the water from her black locks as she ran, like a Skye terrier escaped from his bath. (p. 25)

According to Helmholtz, hearing is a bodily form of sympathetic vibration.<sup>13</sup> Maggie's physiological impulse of finding herself already out of hearing, while enabling her to develop a different sensibility from that of her mother and the rest of her family, makes sympathy between them difficult. Discourses of hearing are used in the novel as synonyms for complying with social expectations, whereas being out of hearing signifies Maggie's longing for a full life – a fulfilment she can only achieve in the silent pages of the books in whose characters Philip pictured her as taking pleasure. Just like her reading of unsuitable books, the attic enables Maggie to lose her consciousness within a solipsistic world that is animated by her talking aloud to 'the worm-eaten floors and the worm-eaten shelves, and the dark rafters festooned with cobwebs' (p. 25). This gothic space, however, is not one of radical alterity in that it is part of the family household of the Tullivers to whose financial ruin her fate is tied.

The sonic environment of the attic is defined in opposition to the great spaces of the mill where Maggie loves to linger because of the way they make her aware of the uncontrollable forces of nature. There are numerous references in the novel to Maggie's inability to control the spaces she inhabits and to her positioning within the existing web of relations which constitute the societal structures that try to define her. A good example of this is the way in which Maggie, after a fight with her mother, comments on how solitary the lady-spiders that she observes in the mill must be in their webs: when meeting other spiders of their family, who live outside the unique environment of the mill, there would be a 'painful difficulty in their family intercourse' (p. 26). In this light *The Mill on the Floss* could be the Mill on the spider's web, through whose imagery Maggie comes to understand that family is a complex organism formed by dynamic, interdependent, and constantly evolving elements:

Maggie loved to linger in the great spaces of the mill, and often came out with her black hair powdered to a soft whiteness that made her dark eyes flash out with new fire. The resolute din, the unresting motion of the great stones, giving her a dim delicious awe as at the presence of an uncontrollable force—

the meal for ever pouring, pouring—the fine white powder softening all surfaces, and making the very spider-nets look like faery lace-work—the sweet pure scent of the meal—all helped to make Maggie feel that the mill was a little world apart from her outside everyday life. She wondered if they had any relations outside the mill, for in that case there must be a painful difficulty in their family intercourse—a fat and floury spider, accustomed to take his fly well dusted with meal, must suffer a little at a cousin's table where the fly was *au naturel*, and the lady-spiders must be mutually shocked at each other's appearance. (p. 26)

This passage draws a parallel between Maggie's curly hair and the spiders' webs, which within the floury environment of the mill, are transformed into 'faery lace-work'. Galia Ofek has shown how changing patterns of power relations between women and patriarchy are rendered anew when viewed through the lens of Victorian hair codes (as for example, Maggie's representation as a small medusa).<sup>14</sup> Maggie's hair in this light is not just a marker of difference but also an organ of sensory excitation through which she can attain a higher state of consciousness and feel the hum of the insects, which are as imperceptible as 'the tiniest bells on the garment of Silence' (p. 242).

According to one modern scientific study, female spiders have a heightened aural sensibility compared to male spiders to the extent that they can distinguish their young from prey on the basis of the vibrations from their web, which they feel through the hair on their legs on the web. It is because Maggie feels the social narrowness of her life through her mother's determination to tame her hair that she begins to understand that the spiders' difficulty in forming sympathetic ties with one another arises from their different evolution. In contrast to her mother who sees herself through her possessions such as her lace, patchwork and linen, as if she were a character out of a Dutch realist painting, Maggie's analogy with a lady spider – an insect which is almost imperceptible to our senses but which is defined, according to the nineteenth-century natural historian Eugene Louis Simon,<sup>15</sup> by a sensitivity to musical sounds – reveals the centrality of aurality to the unfolding of her character as well as that of the narrative.

Reworking Spencer's idea that musicality has evolved via the processes of biological inheritance, Eliot distinguishes Maggie from the rest of her family on the basis of the acuity of her senses. It is only when Maggie feels the oppressive narrowness of her father's sorrow when he has lost the mill in Book II that sympathy in the form of a single thought 'acted on her like a starting sound' (p. 138). Although such sharing has the power to raise Maggie and her family into a bond of loving fellowship, as a 'gift of sorrow' it comes with the difficulties of growing up in that the moral development it promises with the process of socialization it initiates marks the end of childhood. It is precisely this desire for 'a sympathetic kinship not to be worn out by separation' that Maggie's response to music evokes in the novel (p. 324).

J. Hillis Miller has pointed through his reading of *Middlemarch* that Eliot's texts are battlegrounds of conflicting metaphors about society which create a web within which her characters, including the narrator, are trapped. This is evident in the way in which the narrator in *The Mill on the Floss* famously laments that 'intelligence so rarely shows itself in speech without metaphor' in that 'we can seldom declare what a thing is except by saying that it is

something else'.<sup>16</sup> The way in which the narrator invites the reader to read the narrative as a 'faery lace-work' rather than as a patchwork is key to the feeling of reading in *The Mill on the Floss*. Whereas Maggie hates doing patchwork, under her mother's instruction, because she considers 'tearing things to pieces to sew' em together again' as 'foolish work' (p. 13), her active reworking of the spider webs into 'faery lace-work' through her imagination is the product of her artistry and industry. It shows how her intersubjectivity is formed through her response to the sound of work in that it is because of the meal that she perceives 'the very spider-nets' like 'faery lace-work'.

As the only paid shirt-maker in Eliot's fiction, Maggie's response to the sound of labour needs to be seen as part of her continuous efforts to develop sympathetic ties with her brother Tom who does not care about anything except work as an adult. Of all the characters depicted in scenes of reading in the novel, Tom is the one who reads his circumstances as a patchwork. This is not only because he tries to sew the Tulliver family together after it is torn to pieces through losing the mill, but also because of the dumbing of his senses through which he tries to keep Maggie within hearing. The 'dreamy music' that she thought she could make through her telling of 'stories to the pictures [of the books she read] out of [her] own head' (p. 17) is displaced by a desire for a bygone childhood which had all the referents that could 'link together' her impressions and 'give her soul a sense of home in it' (p. 194).

In her letter of 8 August 1874 to John Blackwood, Eliot claimed that writing from 'a true individual store which makes a special contribution' is what distinguishes hand-made from machine-made lace: 'Tennyson said to me, "Everybody writes so well now," and if the lace is only machine-made it still pushes out the hand-made, which has differences only for a fine fastidious appreciation' (VI, 76). Reading *The Mill on the Floss* as 'faery lace-work' entails numerous possibilities for widening the psychology of her readers. In his *Principles of Success in Literature*, George Henry Lewes used a similar metaphor to that of the patchwork in order to show the inadequacies of thinking about narrative as a logical arrangement of words where the whole is equal to the sum of its parts that are harmonically pieced together to form a pattern:

A style which rigidly interpreted the precepts of economy, simplicity, sequence, and climax, which rejected all superfluous words and redundant ornaments, adopted the easiest and most logical arrangement, and closed every sentence and every paragraph with a climax, might be a very perfect bit of mosaic, but would want the glow and movement of a living mind. Monotony would settle on it like a paralysing frost. A series of sentences in which every phrase was a distinct thought, would no more serve as pabulum for the mind, than portable soup freed from all the fibrous tissues of meat and vegetable would serve as food for the body.<sup>17</sup>

Although there are major differences in the principles of patchwork and mosaic, both Eliot and Lewes use them as tropes of how not to write or read a literary text. Treating her narrative like the living mind, as 'a process and unfolding' – to quote Lewes's *Problems of Life and Mind* – not a stable entity – Eliot tries to make her readers feel its power and vicissitudes through Maggie's struggle with affection. In contrast to Tom who is unsympathetically portrayed (p.

142), according to an anonymous review in *The Westminster Review*, Maggie is 'almost the only loveable person in the tale' because she is the one who sympathizes with father (p. 140). However, there is 'something in the development of her mind which affects us painfully' (p. 139). Maggie does evolve in a straightforward linear progression towards self-knowledge and integration into the community of St Oggs (as in a traditional tale put together like a patchwork), but through conflict and contradiction, discontinuity and ultimately, death. The way in which Eliot places physiological law above affections and conscience, the reviewer argues, disturbs the 'moral unity of the book' which 'destroys the harmonious impression that every work of art ought to leave upon our minds'.

As the reviewer in *Westminster Review* points out, what is painful about Maggie's anti-development character is the way in which the narrative subverts the reader's expectations: 'A man writing such a story would have made Maggie transgressing but loveable, would not have taken such care to be yet on the right side of rules declaimed against' (p. 139). For Eliot, cognition was emotional. What ennobled Maggie as a woman who found herself in reduced circumstances – financially, intellectually, and sexually – was not her power of knowing but her evolving mind through which she was alive to the sound of high and generous emotions. As the educationalist Emily Davies put it in her letter of 24 September 1876 to Annie Crow, with regard to Eliot's advice to Adelaide Manning's plans for a series of lessons for Miss Leighton's small boarding school for upper-middle-class girls from age fifteen to nineteen,

Then she [Eliot] hoped my friend would explain to the girls that the state of insensibility in which we are not alive to high and generous emotions is stupidity, and spoke of the mistake of supposing that stupidity is only intellectual, not a thing of the character—and of the consequent error of its being commonly assumed that goodness and cleverness don't go together, cleverness being taken to mean only the power of knowing. (VI, 287)

The aural sensibility that characters like Maggie exhibit as they strive to reconcile cleverness with goodness is key to Eliot's attempt to widen her readers' sensitiveness into a more receptive willingness to interact with others. For her, sympathy found its beginning in the recognition of its limits. There was something about her positioning as a woman writer between deafness and sound in her authorial development from *Adam Bede* to *The Mill on the Floss* which affected her reader painfully.

#### Notes

- 1 [E. S. Dallas], '*The Mill on the Floss*', *The Times*, 19 May 1860, pp. 10-11, in *George Eliot: Critical Assessments*, ed. Stuart Hutchinson, 4 vols (Mountfield: Helm Information, 1996), I, pp. 130-36; p. 130.
- 2 See Beryl Gray, *George Eliot and Music* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989); Alisa Clapp-Itnyre, 'Feminizing the Pastoral in Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*', *The Idea of Music in Victorian Fiction*, ed. Sophie Fuller and Nicky Losseff (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 129-50; Delia da Sousa Correa, *George Eliot, Music and Victorian Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

- 3 See Rachel Ablow, *The Marriage of Minds: Reading Sympathy in the Victorian Marriage Plot* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007); Ellen Argyros, "Without check of proud reserve": *Sympathy and its Limits in George Eliot's Novels* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999); Forest Pyle, 'A Novel Sympathy: The Imagination of Community in George Eliot', *Novel: A Forum in Fiction*, 27/1 (Autumn 1993), 5-23.
- 4 See Nicholas Dames, *The Physiology of the Novel: Reading, Neural Science, and the Form of Victorian Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Michael Davis, *George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Psychology: Exploring the Unmapped Country* (Aldershot; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006); Rick Rylance, *Victorian Psychology and British Culture, 1850-1880* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Sally Shuttleworth, *George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Science: The Make-Believe of a Beginning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).
- 5 George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss*, ed. Carol T. Christ (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Co., 1994), p. 8.
- 6 *The George Eliot Letters*, ed. Gordon S. Haight, 9 vols (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1954-79), VI, p. 96.
- 7 Gillian Beer, "'Authentic Tidings of Invisible Things": Vision and the Invisible in the Later Nineteenth Century', *Vision in Context: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Sight*, ed. Teresa Brennan and Martin Jay (New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 85-98; p. 91.
- 8 Rachel Ablow, 'Introduction: The Feeling of Reading', *The Feeling of Reading: Affective Experience and Victorian Literature*, ed. Rachel Ablow (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2013), pp. 1-10; p. 2.
- 9 'The Mill on the Floss', *Saturday Review*, IX (14 April 1860), 470-71, in *George Eliot: Critical Assessments*, I, pp. 118-22; 119.
- 10 'The Mill on the Floss', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 87.535 (May 1860), 611-23; 614.
- 11 Nancy L. Paxton, *George Eliot and Herbert Spencer: Feminism, Evolutionism, and the Reconstruction of Gender* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 69.
- 12 Gillian Beer, *George Eliot* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), p. 10.
- 13 Hermann von Helmholtz, *On the Sensations of Tone* (New York: Dover Publications, 1954).
- 14 Galia Ofek, *Representations of Hair in Victorian Literature and Culture* (Aldershot: Ashgate,
- 15 Eugene Louis Simon, *Histoire naturelle des araignées (Aranéides)* (Paris, Libr. Encyclopédique de Roret, 1864).
- 16 J. Hillis Miller, 'Optics and Semiotics in *Middlemarch*', *The Worlds of Victorian*

*Fiction*, ed. Jerome H. Buckley (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1975), pp. 125-145; p. 117.

- 17 George Henry Lewes, *The Principles of Success in Literature* (Chicago: Allyn and Bacon, 1891), p. 157.