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2009

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Rignall, John, "Death and Recollection: The Elegiac Dimension of Scenes of Clerical Life" (2009). *The George Eliot Review*. 698.

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**DEATH AND RECOLLECTION: THE ELEGIAC DIMENSION OF  
*SCENES OF CLERICAL LIFE***

By John Rignall

Perversely, though perhaps appropriately for a paper on death, I want to begin at the end. George Eliot's last novel, *Daniel Deronda*, ends with a good death: that of Ezra Mordecai, dying with the arms of Mirah and Deronda around him, and feeling 'an ocean of peace beneath him'.<sup>1</sup> The deaths that immediately precede it in her fiction, Grandcourt's drowning in the same novel, or the deaths of Featherstone, Casaubon and Raffles in *Middlemarch* are of a different order: those figures go more or less unlamented to their graves, and their passing may even be a form of liberation for those who outlive them. Death can, of course, work in different ways in the novel, but it is striking how in George Eliot's case, to adapt the words of the other Eliot, in her end is her beginning, for the central event of her first story, 'Amos Barton', is another 'good' death, that of the much loved, angelic Milly Barton in the company of her grieving family. Death frames George Eliot's life's work as a novelist and it marks her first book with particular intensity, with the deaths of Wybrow and Caterina, and of Dempster and Tryan playing a central part in the other two stories. What I want to reflect upon here are the implications of this prominent concern and what I see to be the resulting elegiac strain in *Scenes of Clerical Life*.

The full title of her first story that famously came to her in a doze at Tenby in July 1856 is, of course, 'The Sad Fortunes of the Reverend Amos Barton'. Sadness is intrinsic to the original germ of the tale, and it raises the question of whether there is something essentially elegiac about the act of recollection, about the imaginative recovery of the past, that is involved in the writing. Significantly the narrator states in the opening description that 'I recall with a fond sadness Shepperton Church as it was in the old days'.<sup>2</sup> A sense of loss informs the act of recall and there is an awareness that the improvements that have changed the face of Shepperton are not unambiguous: picturesque inefficiency has its claims on the affections that 'new-painted, new-varnished efficiency' does not. But why should recollection of the past be darkened by sadness at this early stage of the novelist's creative life? It seems to have little to do with the pressure of immediate personal experience; the death of her father lay more than seven years in the past, and much later, in 1869, writing about how the death of Lewes's son Thorne affected her at that time, she was able to claim that 'Death had never come near to me in the twenty years since I lost my father'.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, this was the time of her early happiness with Lewes: her journal for 1857, the year in which *Scenes* were published in *Blackwell's Magazine*, ends with a well-known backward glance that is marked by relief rather than sadness or nostalgia: 'And my happiness has deepened too; the blessedness of a perfect love and union grows daily. [...] Few women, I fear have had such reason as I have to think the long sad years of youth were worth living for the sake of middle age'.<sup>4</sup>

Backward glances, with their attendant awareness of time and change and mortality, have their dangers for a writer (particularly though not exclusively a novelist), as George Eliot well knew. As she put it at the other end of her career in the 'Looking Backward' chapter of *Impressions of Theophrastus Such*, 'the looking before and after, which is our grand human privilege' runs the 'danger of turning to a sort of other-worldliness',<sup>5</sup> by which she means an indifference to,

and slighting of, the present world before our eyes. And in another striking illustration of how her end and her beginning meet, it is precisely this danger of 'otherworldliness' that preoccupies her as a critic in 1856 when she is working on her essay on the poet Young, which she interrupts to write 'Amos Barton'. Knoepfelmacher has examined the connection between her characterization of Young and her characterization of Barton, the evasion of the factual world that they have in common,<sup>6</sup> but I wish rather to pursue the relationship between her critique of the poet and her own practice as a writer of fiction. In her wonderfully witty and acerbic demolition of Young in 'Worldliness and Otherworldliness', she castigates him precisely for being otherworldly in the sense I have outlined, for his retreat into otherworldly abstraction in his insistence on mortality and the imminence of death, 'as if this rich and glorious life had no significance but as a preliminary of death'. 'In a man under immediate pressure of a great sorrow', she maintains, 'we tolerate morbid exaggerations; we are prepared to see him turn away from sunlight and flowers and sweet human faces' [...] but when he becomes didactic rather than complaining [...], when that distaste for life which we pity as a transient feeling, is thrust upon us as a theory, we become perfectly cool and critical',<sup>7</sup> as she so eloquently and effectively demonstrates in her brilliantly cool and critical essay. Young's characteristic antithesis of the worldly world of 'lords and levees' on the one hand and 'eternity and the stars' (*Essays* 368) on the other, renders him blind, she argues, to the natural world before his eyes:

Place him on a breezy common, where the furze is in its golden bloom, where children are playing, and horses are standing in the sunshine with fondling necks, and he would have nothing to say. (*Essays* 369)

The opposite kind of poet is Cowper who, despite his gloomier religion and the real sadness in his personal life, manifests 'a lovely, sympathetic nature' (*Essays* 381) and demonstrates in his poetry a grasp of particulars such as the furze, the children and the horses on the breezy common. In his work there is

no vague rant about human misery and human virtue but that close and vivid presentation of particular sorrows and privations, of particular deeds and misdeeds, which is the direct road to the emotions. (*Essays* 382)

It is this direct road that George Eliot herself could be said to take in her first story, showing herself to be true to her own critical principles in bringing to life the world of Shepperton and Milby in closely observed and vividly presented detail – character-revealing dialogue and telling description, sometimes ironic, often satirical, occasionally warm and celebratory as in the case of Mrs Patten's farmhouse, more often grim as in the College, or in this passing glimpse of the working-class reality of Shepperton:

The roads are black with coal-dust, the brick houses dingy with smoke, and at that time – the time of the handloom weavers – every other cottage had a loom at its window, where you might see a pale, sickly-looking man or woman pressing a narrow chest against a board, and doing a sort of treadmill work with legs and arms. (60)

The scene may be a brief, atypical insight into the life of the working class but it is typical

enough in its grimness. In the wintry world of 'Amos Barton' there is not much of the breezy common and the play of sunlight, but there *is* vivid particularity.

The common criticism of 'Amos Barton' is that George Eliot's grasp of the particular falters in the presentation of Milly who, as Knoepfelmacher for instance argues,<sup>8</sup> is insufficiently individualized, but rather idealized and sentimentalized into an emblematic figure of the suffering, self-sacrificing mother and wife: 'They laid her in her grave – the sweet mother with her baby in her arms – when the Christmas snow lay thick upon the graves' (109). The association of Milly with the Christian icon of motherhood is unmistakable, and it both elevates her and detracts from her individuality at the same time. Yet Milly's death is the central and determining event in the story. We know from George Eliot's account of 'How I came to write fiction' and G. H. Lewes's remarks recorded by Lady Holland in 1877, that it was this scene that convinced him, and through his encouraging mediation George Eliot herself, that she had the powers of a successful novelist. When he saw that she could do pathos, 'Then' he said to Lady Holland, 'I felt all was right – no one could doubt that success was assured' (*L*, IX, 198). This was confirmed when he sent the story to John Blackwood who singled out the death of Milly for praise as 'powerfully done' and said that it affected him much (*L*, II, 272). Pathos was not just for Lewes a necessary ingredient of fiction, it was a vital device in the realism of the ordinary life that George Eliot was attempting. The problem, of course, was how to transform the undistinguished, mediocre Amos, an object of mild mockery in the early part of the story, into a movingly human figure, and the means she reaches for is the pathos generated by death and its attendant grief. The problem is explicitly aired at the beginning of chapter five when the narrator acknowledges boldness in bespeaking 'sympathy on behalf of a man who was so very far from remarkable' (80). As the passage continues the particular is significantly elided into the general, Amos's singular mediocrity is merged with that of the commonplace majority of the population – 'these commonplace people' – and death is invoked not as a leveller but as a dignifier, making these ordinary lives worthy of our fellow-feeling:

Yet these commonplace people – many of them [...] have their unspoken sorrows, and their sacred joys; their hearts have perhaps gone out towards their first-born, and they have mourned over the irreclaimable dead. (81)

The meditation moves towards the elegiac mode and, as it proceeds, a suspicion of something like otherworldliness appears:

Nay, is there not a pathos in their very insignificance – in our comparison of their dim and narrow existence with the glorious possibilities of that human nature which they share? (81)

The rhetoric here has echoes of the pulpit: 'dim and narrow existence' as opposed to 'the glorious possibilities' of what we might expect to be the hereafter but which is in fact given a Feuerbachian turn and becomes secular 'human nature'. The departure from vivid particularity into loftier generalizing reflection in this passage points up a tendency apparent in other places in *Scenes*, a tendency towards forsaking the 'direct road to the emotions' in favour of the elegiac mode which evokes pathos through dwelling on death and loss as the common lot of humanity. There is even a hint of this, and an indication of what is to come, on Amos's first appearance in the story when we are alerted both to the undistinguished ordinariness of a man

complacently unaware of his own limitations and at the same time to the lurking presence of death – the death that is to transform him through his suffering into someone who is not merely the object of the narrator's ironic condescension.

Look at him as he winds through the little churchyard! The silver light that falls  
aslant on church and tomb, enables you to see his slim black figure, made all  
the slimmer by tight pantaloons, as it flits past the pale gravestones. (53)

Irony and pathos are still held in balance here, but in the pale gravestones there are intimations of the mortality that is to beset him and his family and bring him into the pale of our common humanity.

George Eliot's recourse to death and the elegiac mode have then their aesthetic problems of which, as a critic, she was all too aware but which in her first work of fiction she was not always able to avoid. In her early evangelical years she had been susceptible to the attraction of elegiac reflection on transience, as her earnest letters and her poem of 1839, appended to a letter to Maria Lewis, reveal:

As o'er the fields by evening light I stray  
I hear a still, small whisper – 'Come away'  
Thou must to this bright, lovely world soon say  
Farewell. (*L*, I, 27)

And at the other end of her life, after the death of Lewes, she found solace in copying into her journal elegiac verse of a superior kind by Shakespeare and Goethe, Heine and Emily Brontë, and pre-eminently Tennyson. At that point she had good cause, but even in those years in which death had not come near her, her mind seems to be one of those that she defines in the essay on Young:

Nay, to us it is conceivable that in some minds the deep pathos lying in the thoughts of human mortality – that we are here for a little while and then vanish away, that this earthly life is all that is given to our loved ones and to our many suffering fellow-men – lies nearer the fountains of moral emotion than the conception of extended existence. (*Essays* 375)

Conceivable it certainly is, for what she is conceiving or describing here is very much her own kind of mind, one that is dismissive of the extended existence of the Christian afterlife, but susceptible to the elegiac pathos of earthly transience and human mortality. That pathos may lie near the fountains not only of moral emotion but of the creative urge to give expression to such emotion, for there are good grounds for arguing, as Rosemarie Bodenheimer has, that 'melancholy was a source of her creative drive'.<sup>9</sup> 'Elegy', Coleridge maintained, 'is the form of poetry natural to the reflective mind',<sup>10</sup> and this most reflective of novelists shows herself to be drawn to it, particularly but not exclusively in her first work of fiction. In this respect she is a representative figure in an age which has been dubbed 'the elegiac century',<sup>11</sup> and the elegiac strain in her fiction can be seen as part of a larger development in nineteenth-century writing from the Romantic poets onwards, a shift from the *genre* of elegy to the elegiac *mode*.<sup>12</sup>

That mode is most in evidence in 'Mr Gilfil's Love-Story' which begins with a death recalled,

Gilfil's own, and ends with a retrospect on his lonely life after the death of Caterina. In the first section of the story as the narrator works back from his funeral to his life as a much loved country parson, there is another passage of general reflection of an elegiac kind:

I, at least, hardly ever look at a bent old man, or a wizened old woman, but I see also, with my mind's eye, that Past of which they are the shrunken remnant, and the unfinished romance of rosy cheeks and bright eyes seems sometimes of feeble interest and significance, compared with that drama of hope and love which has long ago reached its catastrophe, and left the poor soul, like a dim and dusty stage, with all its sweet garden-scenes and fair perspectives overturned and thrust out of sight. (128)

That drama of hope and love at the centre of the story touches on melodrama in the fortuitous death of Wybrow, but elegy also has a significant role in the denouement. Carol Christ has argued that this providential death, like others in the later work – notably *Casaubon's* – is evasive, stifling the aggression that the female character is justified in feeling and thus limiting her heroic and tragic potential.<sup>13</sup> There is, indeed, a movement away from melodrama and potential tragedy after Wybrow's death and the remorse and guilt it leaves in its wake, and it is at the same time a movement towards elegy or the elegiac mode. This has the effect of draining Caterina of vitality and individuality so that she becomes less interesting as a character and more a figure of pathos, an emblem of life's transience. Rather than the spirited young woman who gave as good as she got from Miss Assher, she becomes passive and shadowy. In running away from Cheverel Manor she seems to be running away from her life as an adult, and is found by Gilfil lying in Dorcas's bed, with her 'tiny face and hands' looking as though they might have belonged to 'a little girl of twelve' (233). Her body is so enfeebled and her soul so bruised that she appears to belong already to the realm of the shades, and nothing can bring this Eurydice securely back to the land of the living. Even after marriage to Gilfil she is still characterized by her 'continual languor and want of active interest'.

This shift towards the elegiac, and its aesthetic consequences, can be seen in the two occasions that she sings an actual lament, Orpheus's aria '*Che faro senza Euridice*' whose psychological implications for an understanding of the pattern of desire are subtly analysed by Kenichi Kurata in another paper in this collection. My emphasis is rather on its formal and contextual significance. When Caterina first sings the aria, her passionate feelings about Wybrow and his wooing of Miss Assher give her additional power:

Her singing was what she could do best; it was her one point of superiority, in which it was probable she would excel the high-born beauty whom Anthony was to woo; and her love, her jealousy, her pride, her rebellion against her destiny, made one stream of passion which welled forth in the deep rich tones of her voice. (143)

On the second occasion, when she is apparently roused from her semi-catatonic languor and feebleness by the sound of a deep bass note struck inadvertently on the harpsichord by Ozzy's whip-handle, the aria is given a very different significance by the narrator:

Its notes seemed to carry on their wings all the tenderest memories of her life,

when Cheverel Manor was still an untroubled home. The long happy days of childhood and girlhood recovered all their rightful predominance over the short interval of sin and sorrow. (240)

The commentary peremptorily dismisses the complex adult emotions of the first occasion, and by implication Caterina's adult life itself, as merely 'a short interval of sin and sorrow', and turns her singing of the aria into a general lament for a lost past of innocence and happiness rather than a specific lament for the loss of the man she loved. The narrator appears not to be taking the full measure of the scene and to be preferring the general tenor of elegy to the more disturbing, and interesting, personal drama, whose destructive and insuperable emotional consequences overwhelm Mr Gilfil's redemptive love.

Caterina's early death compounds the shift towards the elegiac mode, which finds its fullest expression in the Epilogue:

This was Mr Gilfil's love-story, which lay far back from the time when he sat, worn and grey, by his lonely fireside in Shepperton Vicarage. Rich brown locks, passionate love, and deep early sorrow, strangely different as they seem from the scanty white hairs, the apathetic content, and the unexpectant quiescence of old age, are but part of the same life's journey; as the bright Italian plains, with the sweet *Addio* of their beckoning maidens, are part of the same day's travel that brings us to the other side of the mountain, between the sombre rocky walls and among the guttural voices of the Valais. (192)

The metaphor of a life's journey, given an Italian colouring appropriate to Caterina's central role in Gilfil's experience, creates an eloquent and moving image of life's brevity and transience. It closes the story with a dying fall which is in some respects highly effective, and yet there is some force to John Blackwood's criticism that she tends to 'huddle up' the conclusion of her stories (*L*, II, 323). It was in response to his observation that George Eliot made her well-known statement about endings: 'Conclusions are the weak points of most authors, but some of the fault lies in the very nature of a conclusion, which is at best a negation' (*L*, II, 324). And it is clear from her critical writings and reviews in the months before she began writing fiction, that the problem of endings was on her mind. In July 1855 in the *Belles Lettres* section of the *Westminster Review* she asks:

How is it that novels and tales are so often like the baskets of strawberries which tempt the thirsty pedestrian at Kew or elsewhere on a bright summer's day – all inviting ripe and fresh at the beginning, and, as you near the end, poor, crude and stale? Perhaps many reasons might be given for the declension, if this were a place for a dissertation on the subject. (306)

And then on the next page she reflects on the specific problems of shorter fiction:

'We no longer travel, we arrive at places', says Thackeray, regretting the incident and variety of the old-fashioned journey; and perhaps there is the same sort of disadvantage in short tales, which are always bringing one to the shock or terminus of a denouement. (307)

The frame structure of 'Mr Gilfil' dispenses with the problem of the declension towards the end in one respect, since we return to the tenor of the opening; but the metaphor of the life's journey sums up the nature of the ending of the story in that it has the effect of arriving too abruptly at a terminus, proceeding all too quickly from the Italian plains to the rocky north alpine valley. In the precipitate transition from the drama or melodrama of Wybrow's death to Gilfil's old age I would argue that we witness the generalized note of elegy getting the better of the novelist's grasp of the multiplicity and particularity of lives in all their rich and sensuous detail.

Now this is not just a feature of her early fiction that could be considered prentice work, for it is a note struck on significant occasions in the later and greater works, for instance in *The Mill on the Floss*. If there is an elegiac strain in *The Mill*, it comes from a sense of the irretrievable nature of the past and of the loss inevitably incurred in the passage of time. This elegiac awareness is made explicit in the narrator's observation in the Conclusion that 'to the eyes that have dwelt on the past, there is no thorough repair'; but it is intermittently present throughout the text, beginning with the moment in the opening chapter when the vivid evocation, in the present tense, of the landscape of the Floss and the Tullivers' mill suddenly recedes into the distant past as it is revealed to be the narrator's dozing dream of 'one February afternoon many years ago' (4).<sup>14</sup> The same awareness intrudes upon the narrator's Wordsworthian reflections on the formative effect of early experience that punctuate the childhood section of the novel. The 'sunshine and the grass in the far off years' may still live in us (34), and 'one's delight in an elderberry bush' overhanging a hedgerow bank may be due to the fact that 'it stirs an early memory' (136), but there is an accompanying melancholy sense that the time 'when joys were vivid' is long gone. The narrator's rhetoric may seek to persuade us, against all the evidence of Maggie's actual experience as a child, that childhood is a time of Edenic fullness and harmony, but the implied image of Eden is inseparable from knowledge of its inevitable loss, as becomes apparent when childhood is brought to a premature close by Mr Tulliver's ruin. The scene of Maggie and Tom walking away from Mr Stelling's school presents an elegiac image of the childhood present receding into the past, of an exit from paradise:

The two slight youthful figures soon grew indistinct on the distant road—were soon lost behind the projecting hedgerow.

They had gone forth together into their new life of sorrow, and they would never more see the sunshine undimmed by remembered cares. They had entered the thorny wilderness, and the golden gates of their childhood had for ever closed behind them. (172)

When this novel attempts to imagine happiness, it is almost always as something now out of reach, merely glimpsed in the distance down the long vista of years, like those imagined days invoked in Tom and Maggie's final embrace, 'when they had clasped their little hands in love and roamed the daisied fields together' (473).

Now I have been dwelling on the danger of a form of otherworldliness in the elegiac mode, but I want to move on to another, more worldly aspect of that mode that I discern in *Scenes* and which has reverberations in the later fiction. In the Conclusion of 'Amos Barton' the widowed clergyman is seen in the serene autumn of his life, but that serenity, like his 'neat linen' tells 'of a woman's care' (115), the care of his daughter Patty. The rhetorical thrust of this ending is



to persuade us of Milly's love living on in her daughter, but there is a more questioning and disturbing subtext. The caring woman 'was about thirty, but there were some premature lines round her mouth and eyes, which told of early anxiety' (115). And the final sentence, 'Patty alone remains by her father's side, and makes the evening sunshine of his life', can be read in different ways, one of which is that the price Patty has to pay for doing her filial duty is that of remaining alone; and having sacrificed the bright noonday of her own life in making the serene evening of his, she may now be condemned to a premature twilight. Recollection may play its part in this elegiac close, for Patty is the age that George Eliot was when she cared for her father in his final year, and Patty's solitary fate is one that she herself might so easily have had to face.<sup>15</sup>

The elegiac ending of 'Janet's Repentance', in which literal rather than figurative 'evening sunshine' plays a prominent part – the sunset scenes that David Lodge has commented on in his introduction to the Penguin edition (27-8) – makes a similar general point about the lot of women. As 'the autumn rolled gently by in its calm decay' and Janet finds solace in the company of the dying Tryan, there is a telling backward glance:

Janet had lived through the great tragedy of a woman's life. Her keenest personal emotions had been poured forth in her early love – her wounded affection with its years of anguish – her agony of unavailing pity over that deathbed seven months ago. (408-9)

The elegiac note of the conclusion of this story is not determined solely by the death of a good man much maligned, for what is also being lamented is the waste of a good woman's life. The peace that Janet has achieved is close to that of the grave:

She thirsted for no pleasure; she craved no worldly good. She saw the years to come stretch before her like an autumn afternoon, filled with resigned memory. (411)

The act of recollection seems to take place in a life so reduced, so far removed from worldly desires as to be deathlike. But if there is a hint of otherworldliness here, it is offset by the very this-worldly experience that has brought Janet to this pass, a miserable marriage to an overbearing and violent man. The generalizing tendency of the elegiac mode casts Janet as a representative figure and asks us to read her story as 'the great tragedy of a woman's life'.

This inflection of the elegiac mode also anticipates later developments in George Eliot's fiction. The simile of an autumn afternoon is echoed in the initial and defining temporal setting of Mrs Transome's life at the beginning of *Felix Holt*. In that quiet September afternoon there is a sense of autumnal decline: 'Here and there a leaf fluttered down; petals fell in a silent shower; a heavy moth floated by, and, when it settled, seem to fall wearily'.<sup>16</sup> The weariness of nature chimes with that of Mrs Transome, worn out by years of anxious waiting for her favourite son to inherit the estate from his imbecile brother, and that weary waiting has hollowed out her whole existence:

Her life had been like a spoiled shabby pleasure-day, in which the music and the processions are all missed, and nothing is left at evening but the weariness of striving after what has been failed of. (23)

Even the change wrought by Harold's eventual inheritance and homecoming is only figured as the last brightness of a dying day: 'A change had at last come over her life, and the sunlight breaking the clouds at evening was pleasant, although the sun must sink before long' (24). The sense of decline is pervasive, and although the figure of Mrs Transome is made dramatic and distinctive by her acute fear of exposure and, after it has happened, by her protest at her fate, her predicament, for all its particularity, is presented as not hers alone. The fleeting sunshine speaks of a more general lot:

A woman's hopes are woven of sunbeams; a shadow annihilates them. The shadow which had fallen over Mrs Transome in this first interview with her son was the presentiment of her powerlessness. (24)

That powerlessness, that inability to fill 'the great void of life' (23) with anything but the small routines of the everyday, casts a shadow over her whole existence, and at the end of the novel she is still looking out on a prospect of 'loneliness and monotony' (432) that echoes the fate of Patty Barton.

The association of the elegiac mode with the representation of women's lives is present at the end of George Eliot's greatest novel, a novel which also contains one of the finest elegiac passages, Casaubon's confrontation with the prospect of his own death in chapter 42. Here she avoids the pitfalls of the elegiac mode by holding the personal and the general in careful balance through the mediation of myth – 'To Mr Casaubon now, it was as if he suddenly found himself on the dark river brink and heard the splash of the oncoming oar'<sup>17</sup> – the myth that is at the same time Casaubon's personal obsession and the common cultural property of educated minds.<sup>18</sup> Equally powerful is the novel's final paragraph which famously encompasses Dorothea's unexceptional and yet richly representative life, and pays a moving tribute to the creative legacy of that unrecorded half of humanity to which she belonged; and it closes with an elegiac dying cadence that contrives to be not otherworldly but firmly of this world and oddly uplifting. I can think of no better way to end than with a demonstration of how, at her best, George Eliot is able to exploit the moving power of the elegiac mode without slipping into otherworldliness or generalized abstraction. Those famous last lines capture the elegiac tenor and the eloquence of her prose at its finest:

[...] and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been, is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs.

## Notes

- 1 *Daniel Deronda*, ed. John Rignall, Everyman paperbacks (London: J. M. Dent, 1999), p. 780.
- 2 *Scenes of Clerical Life*, ed. David Lodge (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), p. 42. Further page references to this edition will be given in parentheses.
- 3 *The George Eliot Letters*, ed. Gordon S. Haight, 9 vols (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1954-1978), V, 71. Further references to the volume and page of the letters (*L*) will be given in parentheses.

- 4     *The Journals of George Eliot*, ed. Margaret Harris and Judith Johnston (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 72.
- 5     *Impressions of Theophrastus Such*, ed. Nancy Henry (London: Pickering & Chatto, 1994), p. 17.
- 6     U. C. Knoepfelmacher, *George Eliot's Early Novel: The Limits of Realism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968), p. 41.
- 7     'Worldliness and Other-Worldliness: The Poet Young', *Essays of George Eliot*, ed. Thomas Pinney (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), pp. 365-66. Further page references to the *Essays* will be given in parentheses.
- 8     Knoepfelmacher, *George Eliot's Early Novels*, p. 55.
- 9     Rosemarie Bodenheimer: *The Real Life of Mary Ann Evans: George Eliot, Her Letters and Fiction* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1994), p. 163.
- 10    From *Specimens of the Table Talk* (1835), cited in David Kennedy, *Elegy* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), p. 4.
- 11    Abbie Findlay Potts, *The Elegiac Mode* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), p. 231.
- 12    John Frow, *Genre* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 132.
- 13    Carol Christ, 'Aggression and Providential Death in George Eliot's Fiction', *Novel*, 9 (1975-6), 130-40.
- 14    *The Mill on the Floss*, ed. Beryl Gray, Everyman paperbacks (London: J. M. Dent, 1996), p. 4. Further page references to this edition will be given in parentheses.
- 15    This parallel has been pointed out by Barbara Hardy, *George Eliot: A Critic's Biography* (London: Continuum, 2006), p. 15.
- 16    *Felix Holt, the Radical*, ed. A. G. van den Broek, Everyman paperbacks (London: J. M. Dent, 1997), p. 12. Further page references to this edition will be given in parentheses.
- 17    *Middlemarch*, ed. David Carroll, World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 419. Further page references to this edition are given in parentheses.
- 18    A point made by Barbara Hardy, who has written illuminatingly of how this passage 'combines something piercingly individual with an invocation of communal feeling', through the use of the first-person plural and the 'solemn enlargement of the myth': *Particularities: Readings in George Eliot* (London: Peter Owen, 1982), pp. 90-1. For a later close reading along the same lines see her *George Eliot: A Critic's Biography*, pp. 141-2.