

Rocking the Boat and Sinking the Ark:
the Humanist Novel as Vehicle for the Victorian Religious Crisis

Melissa Ruth Marini

A dissertation
submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Washington

2015

Reading Committee:

Paul Remley, Chair

Charles LaPorte

Michael Harrell

Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

English

©Copyright 2015

Melissa Ruth Marini

University of Washington

Abstract

Rocking the Boat and Sinking the Ark:
the Humanist Novel as Vehicle for the Victorian Religious Crisis

Melissa Ruth Marini

Chair of the Supervisory Committee:
Professor Paul Remley
English

Novel reading was a popular pastime among women in the Victorian period. During the same time period, scientific publications were being produced that were questioning the role of (and the existence of) God and His involvement in the world: its creation and its inhabitants. Elements of those scientific works (evolution, geological time, adaptation, survival of the fittest, etc.) were woven into the texts of humanist novels by the authors who attended meetings where those ideas were presented. As a result, uneducated women were introduced to ideas that they could not incorporate into their lives, and as a result the religious crisis in Victorian Britain, already underway, was furthered and more widespread by the popularity of the humanist novel.

Abstract.....	ii
Introduction	1
Chapter One: George Eliot and the Victorian Women’s Dilemma.....	22
Chapter Two: Thomas Hardy and Religion in Victorian Fiction.....	47
Chapter Three: The Reconciliation Attempts between Religion and Science	72
Chapter Four: Marie Corelli: Unwitting Accomplice	86
Conclusion: The Humanist Novel as Vehicle for Loss and Hope.....	98
Works Cited	116

Introduction

11/19/2014

This study will attempt to demonstrate that the religious crisis in Victorian Britain, although widespread of itself, and not merely caused by any one specific event, was furthered, deepened, and strengthened by the specific scientific language and ideas used in popular humanist novels of the period: language and theories that would normally be limited to the scientific community, and remain within the walls of scientific institutions, such as meeting halls, universities, and laboratories; places that would not normally be frequented by women. However, specific language that directly challenged religious absolute authority was sometimes used by popular authors (who had challenged their own belief systems) who penned widely-read Victorian novels. This contentious language found new audiences: laypeople, and more notably, women. Housewives and young unmarried women, who were often very fond of reading (since employment outside the home was extremely limited), would sometimes unwittingly encounter anti-religious ideas and terminology during their favorite pastime, which might further natural feminine curiosity (I say natural because Victorian women were not

granted the same education as Victorian men), and cause cognitive dissonance where religious authority was concerned.

The Church was often the center of Victorian British life, and especially the lives of women: “Anglican women played a key role in directing their family’s religious observation. Within the domestic setting, women represented moral and spiritual models. On Sundays, women usually attended the morning church service or, less frequently, the Evening Prayer service . . . Only the most pious Anglican women would attend both. During the week, many Anglican women also joined with their families for family prayers and devotionals at least once each day” (Murdoch 43). Women, who were rarely (if ever) employed outside domestic situations¹ (if they were married to wealthy men), were often deeply involved in charitable work that was closely associated with their local parishes. Thus, it could be expected that women held deeply religious sentiments, since church and home often comprised their entire world². To be introduced to ideas that did not have God at their center was deeply disturbing to many, confusing to some, and outrageous to

¹ If young Victorian women were employed, it was often as governesses or teachers, which were jobs in private homes of wealthy families, and thus still within a home environment.

² “Women as workers did not harmonize with the philosophy of the Victorians, their deification of the home. Women ought to marry. There ought to be husbands for them. Women were potential mothers . . . Classing women and children together as helpless creatures needing the protection of strong men, they were indignant at the knowledge that women had to support themselves, that they suffered degrading wrongs as working women” (Neff 14).

most. Outrage did not simply mean outright denial, though: outrage sometimes induced curiosity, which prompted investigation into ideas which were not quite yet fully developed, but were increasing in popularity and acceptance. This could cause a crisis involving the wholesale abandonment of one's professed faith, or at the very least, the idea that perhaps one did not fully understand one's own beliefs, no matter how long they were held or how deeply they had been previously ingrained. However much people were affected, there was indeed an effect, which was widespread and problematic in Victorian England.

Of course, the mere suggestion that perhaps God was not intimately involved with the universe as described by the Bible³ was not the sole catalyst that began a religious revolution: the real wrench in the works was that scientists, such as biologists, chemists, and especially geologists, were given to citing hard empirical evidence that was often directly contrary to the Bible, which suggested that perhaps God did *not* create the world in six days, and that all things on the Earth were *not* placed here in their perfect, present, final forms. Scientists, both amateur and professional, were insisting that the Earth was much, much older than the Bible claimed it was, even though a concrete number was not yet stated, since different methods were used to produce varied results:

³ "It was Darwin's apparent subversion of traditional teleology that had the most distressing effect of all upon Victorian intellectuals" (Scott Jr. 268).

nonetheless, six days, according to scientists, was not nearly enough time to create the earth, produce the strata that geologists were studying, and produce the various species of birds and beasts that biologists saw. Devout Christians were horrified by such claims, but when irrefutable natural evidence was introduced to back these seemingly outrageous statements, people could not ignore their own senses and their own reasoning. The seeds of doubt were planted, and whether or not they took root and sprouted were major contributors to the religious crises.

These seeds of doubt had many carriers, and universities were practically hothouses to germinate and transplant them. One unexpected delivery system, though, was the seemingly harmless⁴ (to the modern reader) popular novel. A nice, thick romantic novel was often considered (by those who perhaps were unfamiliar with the contents of novels) a perfectly proper and harmless pastime for the pure, dainty (and oftentimes uneducated) female mind. Indeed, it often was: romantic and religious themes that fired the imagination and enthralled the reader were delightful and innocuous in many cases⁵. However, when widely read authors such as Thomas Hardy and George Eliot, who had already

⁴ Women were indeed one of the main audiences for novelists, although "Those who first made novel-reading an indispensable branch in forming the minds of young women have a great deal to answer for. Without this poison instilled, as it were, into the blood, females in ordinary life would never have been so much the slaves of vice" (Starker 219).
⁵ ". . . women not only could but should function as independent readers who were qualified to choose their own reading materials without the guidance of literary critics or magazine editors and without regard to the standard conceptions of high and low culture" (Phegley 111).

renounced their religion and injected their agnosticism into their novels, and even very popular authors such as Marie Corelli, who tried to sway novel readers back towards religion, were being read by the feminine masses, who then encountered at close range the ideas and the exact language⁶ used by supposed “blasphemers” such as Erasmus Darwin, Charles Darwin, and Thomas Huxley (among others), the “harmless pastime” became dangerous; especially since it was not bodily danger, but the eternal human soul at stake.

In the Victorian Period, science and religion weren’t always at odds. In fact, for approximately the first half of the nineteenth century, science and religion coexisted quite peacefully together⁷. Even with the advent of controversial discoveries in the natural sciences, men of religion were able to accept and embrace the new knowledge and reconcile them quite easily with their own professions of clerical work: “Natural Philosophy was a popular and gentlemanly pastime, pursued both for its outdoor amusement and for its edifying religious qualities. It was, moreover, not without social prestige. In the perfection of nature’s holy plan, one could find evidence of God’s hand, and this explains why the

⁶ By “exact language,” I refer to Eliot’s use of words like “dynamic”(1) in *Daniel Deronda* and Hardy’s use of “accepted social law” (84) in *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*. These words implied change, evolution, and social laws which did not correspond to natural law, which had nothing to do with religious sentiment.

⁷ “Religious feelings, especially those of a mystical character, were increasingly taken as valid guides to reality, guides that coexisted with the rational and empirical faculties used by science” (Bowler 13).

clergy were often so eminently engaged in natural studies . . . Moreover, late eighteenth-century utilitarianism combined with religion in a new impulse to study nature as expressly created for man” (Klaver 1). Even though these two camps were living relatively harmoniously, things weren’t perfect, and not everyone was content. As stated previously, the religious crises in 19th-century Britain had already begun well before the scientific publications containing evidence contrary to the Bible were produced: the real “explosion” that threw religion into a tailspin was the fact that people (in particular, Charles Darwin) had actually *said* (and printed) what before had only been thought: that evolution and adaptation were caused by nature⁸. Even Darwin’s peers, established, respected scientists in their own right, were appalled that someone would actually come out and *say* it. They considered it to be a foolish thing to do, even though they themselves might have entertained some speculative thoughts about it. One simply didn’t speak such thoughts *aloud*.

There were some, such as Marie Corelli (a very popular novelist) and Philip Gosse (a cleric) who tried to reconcile religion and science, but

⁸ Charles Darwin’s grandfather, Erasmus Darwin, formulated one of the earliest theories of evolution, but he did not formulate the idea of natural selection. Erasmus Darwin believed in evolutionary change, but he didn’t know the mechanisms by which species might evolve: he theorized that competition for food and sexual selection could effect changes in species. It was his grandson Charles Darwin who realized that the fittest species (for a given environment) will survive and unfit species will die off: “. . . survival of the fittest, which implies that when variations or individual differences of a beneficial nature happen to arise, these will be preserved, but this will be effected only under certain favourable circumstances” (*On the Origin of the Species* 199).

try as they might, it didn't really do much to quell the doubt: in fact, some efforts were actually causing more damage than if they had not been published, even though the author was making a good-faith effort (no pun intended). After all, science is empirical by nature, and experiments must be able to be duplicated in order to be credible: proof is the very essence of science. Religion plays by no such rules: who can say whether or not something is truly a miracle? Who says that the Bible is the absolute inviolable word of God? What proof is there of an afterlife? One cannot compare apples and oranges, so those who would try to reconcile two very different areas are almost doomed to fail even before they begin. It didn't stop them from trying, though: as George Eliot states in *Adam Bede*, "But devout worshippers never allow inconveniences to prevent them from their religious rites" (164), and apparently the trifling inconvenience of an absence of proof didn't prevent religious authors from trying to argue the case for Christ, which is in fact a Christian duty: to spread the word of God and to proselytize.

It is the literal 'word' that is at issue here, and also at the very heart of my argument. The Bible, taken by Christians to be God's word — straight from God Himself — can be taken literally, or it can be open to interpretation. That itself is another whole argument. What I wish to examine is how people reacted to actual words: biblical, scientific, and

novelistic; and how those words contributed to the damage done to religious authority. People would read these words in one or more genres, and have to find a way to make sense of them, to process them, and incorporate them in their daily lives. This was incredibly difficult, since God was taken to be both the Author of the Word (the Bible), and the Author of the Work (the Earth itself). Since God could not contradict Himself, somehow biblical accounts of Creation and physical accounts of creation (rocks, fossils, strata, etc.) *must* agree with each other. The trick was finding out *how*, and not offending anybody's sensibilities in the process while still making Scripture and Nature support each other's claims. At first glance, this seems to be an impossible task: they don't seem to agree *at all*. Science and religion are not two sides of the same argument: they are different camps entirely. Since the scientific publications being produced seemed to support Nature's account only, this fired the fervor of the agnostic novelists who added their voices and their support to the growing anti-religious sentiments.

A prime example of a popular novelist is George Eliot (nee Mary Ann Evans, 1819-1880). Eliot was the author of eight novels, including *Daniel Deronda*, *Silas Marner*, *the Mill on the Floss*, *Adam Bede*, and *Middlemarch*. During the summer of 1854, after a period of inconclusive intellectual activity, Eliot translated Strauss's *Life of Jesus* and Feuerbach's

the Essence of Christianity, and contributed reviews and essays to the intellectual journal *The Westminster Review*, for which she also served as an editor (Allen, Brooke 25). Her translations and her friendship with Charles Bray⁹, and later, Charles Hennell¹⁰, who introduced to her new ideas regarding religion and politics, may have played a role in causing Eliot to abandon her faith, but one cannot point to any one specific thing in that regard. Her incredulity regarding religion was reflected in her writing: Frederick Karl, in his psychological study of George Eliot, asserts that “Eliot is always characterized as our novelist of moderation and balance. But her novels bespeak morbidity, death, and forms of extreme behavior” (552). He notes further that “in her novels, she revelled in failures, in wandering female characters, in depicting poor choices, in cataloguing disastrous marriages” (552). Karl concludes from the evidence of her novels as well as from her extensive correspondence that Eliot in fact suffered throughout her life from a chronic state of depression. He writes: “Frequently, Eliot’s career is viewed as one consistent spiral into success after success. Quite the opposite was true.... She was not only full of self-doubt and had to be protected against adverse criticism; she was often barely able to get through the days without falling into depression

⁹ Charles Bray (1811-1884), a contemporary of George Eliot, was the son a wealthy ribbon manufacturer, a freethinker, and a social reformer (*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography n pag.*)

¹⁰ Charles Christian Hennell (1805-1850) was a religious writer and brother-in-law of Charles Bray (*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography n. pag.*)

and anguish" (546). Karl admits that it is not possible to attribute this depression to anything specific, "except possibly that in her intense effort to transform herself, she had forsaken what could give simple joy" (578). The depression and self-doubt that Eliot had about herself and about God were reflected in her writing, which in turn "infected" her readership, who were already aware (however vaguely) of religious doubt in Victorian Britain.

Thomas Hardy, whose works include *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Jude the Obscure*, and *Far From the Madding Crowd*, was also a perpetrator of agnosticism, although he was well schooled in biblical teachings. "Thomas Hardy had considerable biblical background. His life-dream as a child was to be a parson. He played the violin in church as a youth. He taught Sunday school. His hero, folk-poet William Barnes, was a Christian¹¹. Hardy read numerous theological works up until his mid-twenties, presumably in preparation for the professional ministry. In fact, this agnostic never stopped attending, and taking communion in the Anglican Church – even after his first (evangelical) wife died!

¹¹ Barnes was also a priest as well as a poet: "At Salisbury on the 14th of March 1848 he [Barnes] had been ordained priest" (Levy 136).

Hardy's works possess a different quality than those of Eliot's: Eliot did not dream of becoming part of the clergy. So Hardy, once devout, soon agnostic, infused his works with religious doubt as well. What added to the problem is that there is no clear progression of the journey: it simply happened:

It is true, of course, that the boy who taught Sunday School in the parish church and who for a time dreamed of taking Orders did, after the London years, develop into a man whose agnosticism was of a piece with the main heterodoxies of his time. But, in the spaciousness of his imaginative scope, in the passion with which he brooded upon the ultimate issues of life and death and eternity, in the whole sweep of his vision, we feel – particularly in the great Wessex novels and many of the poems – that here is no self-assured, complacent secularian of the sort that we met, say, in Meredith or, later on, in Shaw and H. G. Wells. In 1915 he wrote to a friend: "You must not think me a hard-headed rationalist for all this. Half my time . . . 'I believe' . . . in spectres, mysterious voices, intuitions, omens . . ." Which confirms, in a way, one of our most biding impressions of Hardy's fundamental position – that here was a mind divided between two worlds and torn by the kinds of conflicts that made Tennyson, Clough, Arnold and many of the representative figures of the age feel that they were "here as on a darkling plain." And it is in the primitive simplicity, the stern, valorous passion, the solemn, majestic beauty, with which he dramatizes this plight in books like *The Return of the Native*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, and *Jude the Obscure* that make him, in many ways, the richest and most resonant exemplar of a time when a full acceptance of the claims of the Christian faith was perhaps more difficult than it has ever been (Scott Jr. 274).

Marie Corelli (1855-1924), nee Mary Mackay, was also a very popular novelist, whose works sold as well as those of her contemporaries. She was interested in science, but she wrote spiritual works that were very popular. Her most popular work, *the Sorrows of Satan* (1895), was widely read, but although it was a spiritual work that urged a return to God and religion over material goods and worldly concerns, it may have bolstered the cause of science in its wake. Her novel has plenty to do with science, even though it was never explicitly mentioned in the text; her work may have been inadvertently influencing her readers' minds and furthering the opposition's (that is, science's) agenda.

I maintain that Hardy, Eliot, and Corelli were instrumental in contributing to the religious doubt of Victorian women. Personal tragedies in the lives of the authors, similar traits in their characters (such as the wandering young female), as well as eyewitness accounts of events that did not seem to reconcile themselves with orthodox Christianity, practically saturated the novels that young Christian women were fond of, and to which they had ample access. When these novels were produced in the decades following the publication of Darwin's *On the Origin of the Species*, there was a sort of undeniable "trail" being left for laypeople, both religious and agnostic, to follow. Unemployed women with time to spare were the perfect candidates to follow this unhappy trail, and were free to

endanger their own beliefs and add to the already growing religious crisis of the time.

Of course, even though the religious crisis was already underway, it really exploded with the publication of Darwin's extremely controversial publication of *On the Origin of the Species* in 1859. Charles Darwin (1809-1882), a graduate of Cambridge University, was selected as a companion to the captain on the infamous voyage of the Beagle. During his voyage, he made numerous observations, and recorded everything in tremendous detail in his notes. He noted the variations of the beaks of the Galapagos finches, and how each was suited to the different feeding needs of the birds on the many small islands. This led him to think that the birds had evolved in order to survive, and began to note how different species had seemed to accomplish the same ends. If evolution was necessary to survive, then had God placed each species on Earth in its present form? He couldn't fathom that, but he knew what presenting his findings would do to religion as a whole. He kept his feelings private, and chose not to publish; however, another scientist (Alfred Russell Wallace) also stumbled upon the idea of evolution, but instead of beating Darwin to the punch, Wallace chose to co-present his ideas with Darwin. Despite what the theory did to the religious community, it was the language the Darwin used in order to present his theory that the novelists seized. The language of the novelists might not have been so inflammatory, had Darwin not

used it as well in order to describe something *so* controversial, it was almost inconceivable to devout laypersons. If the popular novelists had been the only ones to use the exact words that Darwin had also used, then the novels women were reading might not have had such an impact, and perhaps the religious crisis might not have spread to this tender new audience. Even if the religious doubt had spread to young women without the help of the novels, hearing of it second-hand might have been less convincing.

Right before Darwin had published his theory, another theory had been published. This one, trying not to be so controversial, also had a large impact on the religious community *and* the scientific community: Philip Gosse, trying to show that science and religion need not be mutually exclusive, published *Omphalos*, which was meant to be a bridge between religion and science. However, it didn't quite have the positive and reconciling effect he wanted it to have. Indeed, it did more damage than help. Gosse wanted to show how the Word of God was easily seen in nature, but was unable to demonstrate that the Bible was compatible with nature in a number of ways. Since *Omphalos* was published only two years before *On the Origin of the Species*, when the latter work was published, it was introduced to an already "damaged" environment. At its presentation, Darwin experienced a cool, unperturbed, indifferent reception, which was perhaps due in part to the bad "aftertaste" left by

Omphalos. Gosse's attempt at reconciliation, though short of the mark, used much more biblical language than *On the Origin of the Species*, which used almost none. Since biblical terminology was inoffensive to Victorians, *Omphalos* made little impact on the lay community, even if its language was used in popular novels. Since Darwin dared to challenge the Bible and, by extension, religious authority, the terminology that Darwin used that also made its way into popular novels, when used by agnostic authors; it caused quite a stir, and was able to inflict more damage than if said language were to stay confined within the universities and scientific meetings, away from most females. As it was, young women were exposed to the shocking ideas right in their own parlors, alone and without the benefit of an education to guide them in their encounters.

Of the major reasons the language was so inflammatory was because it was the types of wording that Darwin used that was found within the novels. For example, when Darwin talked about "variation under domestication," he was talking of animal species, and the breeding of specific varieties of animals, such as dogs. George Eliot used the same wording in the prelude to *Middlemarch*, but she was talking about women, and how women, though "bred" (trained) to look and act a particular way, thought to be seemly for housewives, were uniquely different. Though "domesticated," there were varieties of women, brought up by their mothers in almost the same way breeders were able to select the

more favorable qualities they sought in their animals, while breeding out less favorable traits. The connections between Darwin's meaning and Eliot's language and subsequent meaning were too controversial to ignore.

Hardy's connections to Darwin included not needing God in order to create the world and the things in it. In *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, Tess is on her way to seek a job as a dairymaid, and singing a hymn; upon finishing the song, she muses for a moment and then says to herself, "But perhaps I don't quite know the Lord as yet" (103). This doubt about knowing God was enough to cause upset in the Victorians, especially among readers who were regular churchgoers and had no doubts about knowing their Lord and His absolute authority.

It is not only the idea that God was not necessary in the creation of the world, but the language used to express such an outrageous idea that was the problem in spreading religious doubt to new unlikely audiences. Characters in novels, with whom readers could see as realistic and with whom they could identify, were expressing doubt about God and about creation, and using language that wasn't scientific; it was easy to understand, and it resonated with young female readers in a way that complicated scientific jargon never could have. Because the language was readily understandable, the characters were easily identified with, and the

situations were realistic, readers of popular novels were able to identify what was being implied from the plots.

To look at how language had been contributing to the growing religious crisis, I will examine the language used in specific humanist novels, where contemporary and modern critics have noted the use of very deliberate and specific wording in the form of the novel. I will use novels, literary criticism, religious tracts, and scientific publications to track the chronological use of language as it appeared in the scientific journals and the novels in order to show how one influenced the other.

Chapter One will focus on George Eliot, whose loss of religion was no secret. Her translations of Feuerbach and Strauss were instrumental in her decision to renounce her religion, which she didn't keep private. Her novels are full of her personal insights regarding religion, especially *Middlemarch*, where the once-devout Dorothea slowly turns from religious devotion to science, particularly after she meets Tertius Lydgate, a young doctor whose scientific approaches to medicine are revolutionary and they make her begin to think. Also, in *Adam Bede* Eliot uses religion throughout the book to examine human relationships.

Chapter Two will examine the works of Thomas Hardy, whose female characters are wandering young women who have "lost their way," both literally and figuratively. *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* features a

fallen woman who wonders about her relationship with God when things turn out unhappily for her, including rape and the death of her sickly, unbaptized¹² child, aptly named Sorrow: “. . . a name suggested by a phrase in the book of Genesis, [which] came into her head as she proceeded with the baptismal service” (93). In fact, the local priest’s refusal to allow a Christian burial for the baby is what makes Tess renounce her religion, since it was (and often still is) believed that children who are not baptized before they die will spend eternity in Hell, and Tess cannot conceive of a God who would be so unkind to an infant. By addressing language that doubts and scorns religion across several of Hardy’s novels, I will show how Hardy was also a factor in spreading the religious crisis.

In Chapter Three, I will explore Darwin’s *On the Origin of the Species*, as this was the seminal work that really created a disturbance when it came to religion, simply because what had once been thought was now in print, and much more concrete: someone had actually *dared* to say that perhaps God was not responsible for putting the world into motion in six days. Darwin’s language was problematic in several ways: first, there was the obvious problem of removing God from the world, which didn’t sit well with most people (but Darwin did have supporters, some of

¹² Tess had to baptize her dying child herself, since her drunken father refused to allow her to send for a clergyman out of hubris, owing to the family’s purportedly noble name and the social shame of the baby being born out of wedlock (92).

whom were adamant that he was correct, such as Thomas H. Huxley¹³, who was nicknamed “Darwin’s Bulldog”). Secondly, Darwin, a non-confrontational man, understood the implications of his theory, and what it would do to religion if he published his findings from his voyage on the Beagle. In fact, Darwin didn’t publish for twenty years after he returned, and had not intended to publish at all: another scientist was prepared to publish a similar theory, and out of professional courtesy, offered to co-present with Darwin. Darwin tried to use qualifiers and non-concrete language to “soften the blow,” but instead religious leaders seized on his language to show that Darwin himself didn’t believe what he had written regarding evolution. This opportunity to defame Darwin was pounced upon, and used to try to show people how Darwin was simply wrong. Third, because Darwin took the time to use a tremendous amount of detail and explanation in his theory, laypersons were often able to understand what Darwin was trying to demonstrate, and formulate their own opinions regarding religion and science.

Chapter Four will focus on Gosse’s *Omphalos*, which was a sincere attempt to reconcile religion and science. It failed miserably, and some Victorian critics were almost angry about Gosse’s approach. In

¹³ “It may have been Darwin who provided the scientific manifesto for the evolution of species, but it was Huxley who became the theory’s chief ideologue and paladin. Indeed, Huxley was willing to take the fight for evolution to the terrain where it belonged: the relationship between humans and apes” (Hasketh 47).

conjunction with *Omphalos*, since it incorporates more religious language and Scripture than any other aforementioned works, I will also look at several translations of specific biblical references, mostly in the book of Genesis, since it contains the story of Creation. Furthermore, other attempts at reconciliation will also be addressed, such as the *Bridgewater Treatises*. By addressing Gosse's reconciliatory work alongside the Bible, I will attempt to show how even works meant to ameliorate the religious discontent were damaging, simply by their language.

In Chapter Four, I will examine Marie Corelli's most popular work, *the Sorrows of Satan*. In it Corelli is seemingly trying to persuade her readers to choose God over the Devil and over science, which requires evidence in order to explain things while religion only requires inward feeling and faith. However, her protagonist only chooses to worship God after being given direct evidence that God and the Devil exist. If evidence were not offered to the novel's hero, I argue that he might not have chosen to worship God at all. Faith played no part in the choice; it was evidence.

By looking at the ideas used by prominent and influential Victorian writers, I will show that it is not only *what* was said but *how* it was said that did such religious damage¹⁴. The scientific findings of geology and

¹⁴ When authors such as Eliot and Hardy lost their respective faiths, they carried their anti-religious sentiments into their work. Eliot mentions evolution and sexual selection were inherent in the lot of the female, and Hardy speaks of religion as harsh and cruel, and sexual relations between men and women as not requiring the sacrament of

biology could not be ignored, but deeply held spiritual beliefs could not simply be abandoned without *something* to replace them. The time period to which I am limiting my study is important, since it was during the Victorian era that key geological findings were being discovered and important scientific works were being published. Christianity, the religion that science was challenging, existed for centuries beforehand, so it was a difficult decision for many people to make. Does irrefutable evidence mean a person must change his or her decisions regarding essential beliefs? I don't think such a question can be answered. Rather than offer an answer, I wish to show how such decisions were made. Words and language can indeed be very, very damaging – to a person, to a nation, to an entire culture.

marriage in order to be effected. Anti-religious sentiments, when met with a curious, uneducated mind can do serious damage to a mental state, if not physical harm.

Chapter One: George Eliot and the Victorian Women's Dilemma

George Eliot, nee Mary Ann (or Marian) Evans, was a remarkable woman. Born on 22 November 1819, she was an avid reader and, in keeping with the traditions of her time, received a conservative education (dominated by Christian teachings) along with her sister, which was completed when she was 16 years old: Her origin in the early nineteenth-century Midlands placed her in a traditional Christian culture, with a typical middle-class girl's education and orientation in life" (Fleishman 11). One of the most famous Victorian novelists, she was a staunch advocate of women's education. Eliot believed in education for girls for more than what was then considered "womanly duties,¹⁵" such as charitable activities, the rearing of children, housekeeping, and cooking; she was convinced that a good education was absolutely necessary¹⁶ for the continued domestic harmony for married couples. If men and women

¹⁵ Women were responsible for running the whole household, which included food preparation, cleaning, hiring and managing the servants (if she was fortunate enough to afford them), rearing the children, and participating in charitable events: "the only financial matter that concerned the housewife in 1875, according to the writers of domestic manuals, was learning how to keep a detailed account of how she spent the food allowance her husband gave her. . . it is not clear, however, whether if the housewife actually paid the bills at all" (Draznin 82).

¹⁶ "That [Eliot] believed in the solid education of women is apparent in her own efforts toward obtaining it for herself, and her conception of what is to be done with it was large and generous. Mere learning she did not hold to be an adornment in a woman. The culture must be transmuted into life-power, and be poured forth, not as oracular wisdom in silly novels, but as sympathy and enlarged comprehension of the daily duties of life" (Cooke 129-130).

were not evenly matched in education, they could not discuss any subject and share values and opinions¹⁷. Education was necessary for both sexes, and the lack of quality advanced education for females was a prominent topic in many of her writings; most notably *Middlemarch*, *Daniel Deronda*, and *the Mill on the Floss*. By further analyzing these works, I intend to show that Eliot's world view of the lot of Victorian women, particularly the lack of education for girls with the exception of preparation for teaching (and, for that matter, teaching girls, for the education that women received was quite insufficient for educating boys) was paramount in the abandonment of her religious beliefs. This loss of her religion was also prominent in her major novels, which were in turn read by the less-educated women of her time, since reading was considered an "acceptable¹⁸" pastime for young housewives and unmarried girls; which exposed the women without the faculties to weigh and judge new topics with the same fortitude as the more educated and well-read Victorian men: "Moreover, lifelong reading, a habit which began and continued

¹⁷ "The best way to understand sympathetic experience is by reflecting on acquired knowledge" (Allison 1281).

¹⁸ Reading, though popular among young Victorian women, was sometimes considered harmful: "Critics presented a range of arguments against women's reading that tapped into biology, medicine, and morality. From an antifiction vantage point, a book of romance, sensation fiction, or sentimental fiction could a rouse a female's sexual impulses, drain her vital energies, damage her mental and reproductive health, divorce her attention from her maternal and domestic duties, undermine her self-control, and rot her mind, leading to ruination" (Golden 21-22). Nevertheless, women often saw reading as a form of education, as Tess protests to her mother in Hardy's novel following the rape: "Why didn't you tell me there was danger in men-folk? Why didn't you warn me? Ladies know what to fend hands against, because they read novels that tell them of these tricks; but I never had the chance o' learning in that way, and you did not help me!" (80).

throughout their married lives, emerged as a positive byproduct of the independent and unstructured education typical for girls of the era . . . A gendered activity, reading became an essential part of a woman's education" (Golden 20). Women were introduced to many unfamiliar ideas through their reading material. Chief among these new topics was the idea that God was perhaps not as involved as He was purported to be in the strong Christian society that Britain was in Eliot's time¹⁹. After all, the long-standing belief of the time was that God the Almighty was the Creator and Sustainer of the world, and that He was deeply and personally involved in each and every individual's life. He knew the inner workings and deepest, darkest secrets of every heart, and would judge every soul upon its leaving the Earth. The preachers had always said so, it was written in the Holy Bible, and had been a part of the family's strongest tenets for as long as anyone could remember²⁰. Now that such beliefs were challenged, it was inevitable that the women, who were being

¹⁹ ". . . Eliot's mind transcends the limitations of her own era and conceptualizes scientific possibilities in the future that have been much discussed and debated in recent decades. Eliot accepts Darwin's view that there is no purpose or necessary progress in evolution: it is simply a matter of adapting best to the world in order to survive and reproduce. She also accepts that the process of natural selection could eliminate humanity as a species and human values from the world. The fittest are not the best, but only those best able to adapt. If natural selection could be applied by analogy to the social medium, and human beings began to think of society in such terms, might not the 'worst' prove more capable of adapting and surviving than the 'best'? . . . Though the theory may be valid in scientific terms, it could have damaging social applications and effects, and this is apparent in her critique of characters in several of her novels who try to live their lives in implicitly Darwinian terms" (Newton 10).

²⁰ "*The Mill on the Floss* is an indictment on the 'moral asphyxia' that generations of sameness prepared for Mary Ann Evans and from which she saved herself by moving to London" (Henry 31).

exposed to these unconventional ideas without the proper weapons of knowledge and reasoning to be able to handle this direct challenge to their innermost beliefs, would be ill-equipped to make informed decisions about what they chose to believe and what they chose to reject: not only as to what regarded their religion, but indeed in common, everyday situations as well. Men, who circulated in more educated, sophisticated, and worldly circles that barred women, would be much more able to handle any challenges they encountered, large or small, to anything they thought or believed. Thus, the already-established religious crisis in Victorian England, in which people dared to suggest that man had evolved from apes, and was not, as the Bible had clearly stated, put on Earth in his perfect and fully finished form, was being introduced to the fairer (if uneducated) sex. This blasphemy did not just apply to humankind, either: men, women, plants, animals, and even the Earth itself were all subject to evolution and change, and women, unaware of the advances in the hard sciences such as geology, biology, medicine, mathematics, and botany were at a loss as to what to do with this new information suddenly being introduced to them from their favorite “innocent” pastime. George Eliot was keenly aware of the imbalance of power that resulted from the lack of female education, and, having experienced the loss of her own religion, sought to expose the injustice of inequality in her novels. *Middlemarch* is one of the great humanist novels

in which the heroine is notably uneducated, and is paired with an older, much more highly educated male suitor. In fact, Dorothea's own father is one of the men in Eliot's novels who very directly states the perceived problem with educating women: "You have left Casaubon with his books, I suppose. Good. That's right. We must not have you getting too learned for a woman, you know (*Middlemarch* 230). Dorothea undertakes to assist her husband in his work, which is an impossible feat in every sense of the word. Dorothea is far too uneducated to really be of any value as an assistant, and her husband, the much older Casaubon, whom she admires deeply and genuinely wishes to assist, has no real desire to publish his work, *The Key to all Mysteries*, which is something that cannot be found, resulting in its failure before it is even begun. Had Dorothea been sufficiently educated, she might have been able to see the impossibility of his undertaking, even though her decidedly foolish husband may have been too enamored of his grand theory to see it for himself. Through Dorothea and Casaubon, Eliot notes one of the worst problems with the inequality of education: "... Eliot makes it clear that the education of women (or the lack of it) has an effect not only on the women themselves but also on their relationships with men and with their children. However, the idea that education could make a positive impact upon a woman's relationship with others was ignored or denied by those who objected to all attempts to improve educational standards and

opportunities for women” (Robertson 102). Women were impacted in almost all areas of their lives by being denied the opportunity to better themselves, and subsequently hindered from bettering the family unit.

Of course, it was widely believed (by men, of course) that women simply did not need an education beyond what was necessary for married life: “Girls learned early in life that they were less important than boys, and the welcome a girl could expect when she was born depended to some extent on social class” (Perkin 6). After all, a woman’s goal (as far as the Victorians were concerned) was to marry well²¹, and possess adequate knowledge to maintain her household and keep her spouse happy as a humble and meek companion. If a woman did not wish to marry (or was unable to find a suitable partner), her choices were very limited as to how she might support herself²². A position as a governess to young children in a wealthy household might present itself, and once her young charges matured, the process of finding a new household in need of a governess would begin anew, since that’s almost all a young Victorian woman of

²¹ “Although there are no hard statistics on this, the prevailing middle-class conventions prescribed that that marriage take place within one’s own class, a union of social equals. Although a family may have welcomed good fortune if their daughter married a man of the upper class, heavy scorn was reserved for daughters who married beneath their station” (Draznin 4).

²² “Overall, daughters of genteel families were not expected to earn, but it became increasingly evident that a growing number faced an impoverished future if they did not succeed in finding a husband. Certainly middle-class girls were disadvantaged in the labour market because they were given knowledge that would make them more attractive in the marriage market, rather than knowledge that would give them vocational skills” (Martin J. 16).

very basic education was equipped to do as far as supporting herself. She might become an apprentice to a seamstress or dressmaker and earn her daily bread by the work of her hands, or perhaps she might become a milliner or farmhand, since women were hard workers who could be paid a lot less than a male farmhand. More often than not, though, young women were groomed for marriage from their early childhoods, and whether she liked it or not, a young Victorian woman, lacking an adequate education sufficient to secure a position traditionally reserved for males and subject to her parents' desires, was destined for marriage: "I did not want to marry. I was forced into marrying your father – forced, I mean, by my father's wishes and commands; and besides, it was my best way of getting some freedom. I could rule my husband, but not my father. I had a right to be free. I had a right to seek my freedom from a bondage that I hated" (*Daniel Deronda* 630). Women were often forced into a marriage by their parents, and especially by their fathers. Victorian culture demanded that women be obedient to their parents' wishes when it came to social matters, and that included, among other things, marrying men that they did not love or with whom they did not share any sort of bond. Social acceptance was of the utmost importance, and while marriage was one social obligation, so was obedience – to one's parents, to one's spouse, and, of course, to the teachings of the Church, which were expected to be

accepted without question, and which were not to be challenged without grave consequences, both on Earth and in the Hereafter.

The Church of England (hereafter C of E) was teaching centuries-old dogma. "The roots of the Church of England go back to the time of the Roman Empire when a Christian church came into existence in what was then the Roman province of Britain. The early Christian writers Tertullian and Origen mention the existence of a British church in the third century AD and in the fourth century British bishops attended a number of the great councils of the Church such as the Council of Arles in 314 and the Council of Rimini in 359. The first member of the British church whom we know by name is St Alban, who, tradition tells us, was martyred for his faith on the spot where St Albans Abbey now stands" (Anon., n. pag. www.churchofengland.org). Because the religion is itself thousands of years old, and the C of E is traceable to the year 314 AD, the deeply rooted beliefs and teachings of the Christian faith are not to be taken lightly; nor are they to be questioned without serious repercussions. That the scientific writers of the Victorian period (Darwin, Huxley, Lyell et. al.) dared to question the church was considered outrageous. Nevertheless, their language and their theories regarding the origins of life and of the Earth itself went against the Church's teachings, and they also found an eager

audience in George Eliot. Her willingness to disregard the teachings of Christianity and give credence to the publications of the then-modern scientists gave her ample fodder for her novels, as well as an outlet of expression. She was both able to express her interest in science and find a way to educate (using the term loosely here) women by exposing them to new ideas they would not normally have access to. Women, for the most part (although there may have been exception) did not fraternize (no pun intended) with men of science, unless they were a part of their normal social circle, and even then the scientific conversation would have been restricted to the males, since the females were either disinterested or unable to comprehend the scientific jargon that accompanied the scientific disciplines. Eliot was able, through her literary characters, to spread new ideas to women through the medium of books²³. While her intentions may have been noble, she may also have caused irreparable damage to her female readers simply because she was exposing them to ideas, language, and theories that her feminine audience was unable to handle mentally. They did not possess the necessary education to process these unfamiliar and often radical new thoughts and deal with them rationally; the ideas were

²³ "it is always important to remember that Victorian novel readers were surrounded by, and immersed in, other forms of reading, including newspapers, periodicals, and magazines, that enriched their interpretive 'making' of novels. As novels became part of the everyday furniture of middle-class life, their imaginative fabrication was described in everyday, non-literary language, as though they were manufactured items" (Amigoni 38).

simply dumped in their laps, and the women had to try to find a way to deal with them on their own. This most likely caused some cognitive dissonance within the women, and the religious crisis of not having God on which to focus (or blame) aspects of creation was potentially devastating. There was probably a good deal of dissonance and dismay among males, both young and old, who had also been exposed to such challenging thought, but the difference there is that the British males who had had access to more thorough and superior education than women had had the opportunity to be better equipped than the women to process the new ideas and make calm, rational, well thought out decisions about them. The women were much unluckier in that aspect: they were given new, unfamiliar ideas for which they had almost no faculties with which to process them effectively. Religion was losing power in society largely because of the humanist novel.

George Eliot was herself a part of the Victorian religious crisis: she underwent upheaval in her own beliefs, and began to deny her Christian faith (and because of which she was denied burial in Westminster Abbey²⁴). She translated D. F. Strauss' *Das Leben Jesu*

²⁴ George Eliot is buried at Highgate cemetery in London. Eliot had expressed her wish to be buried in Westminster Abbey in her will, but the dean refused because she had not lived by the rules of the church. However, "on 21 June 1980 a memorial stone for George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans), novelist, was unveiled in Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey" www.westminster-abbey.org/our-history/people/George-eliot. Anon., n. pag. Access date 11/23/2014.

kritisch bearbeitet (*The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*, 1846) from German to English and translated Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity* (1854), which cast doubt on the literal veracity of biblical stories, which caused her to begin to question her own faith²⁵. This in turn made her father very angry, even to the point where he threatened to turn her out of the house; but he never actually carried through on that threat. However, after her father's death, she did move away both from her family home and from her religious faith.

Eliot began translating the works of philosophers before she began writing her own fiction, the work of Strauss first solidifying her rejection of Christianity, and the work of Feuerbach second providing a humanistic substitute: "Whoever has been reading George Eliot will recognize that with most of the underlying principles of Strauss, Comte and Feuerbach she was in agreement. The supersession of God by Humanity, of Faith by Love and Sympathy, the elimination of the supernatural, the elevation of the natural, the subordination of intellect to heart, thought to feeling – these may be found in all her novel as well as in her letters . . . But her studies, as well as her own inmost propensities, inclined her to rely upon truth of feeling, and this

²⁵ "When Eliot read biographies of authors she admired, or incorporated biographies into her criticism of literary works, she was particularly mindful of the moral judgments on personal actions that might cloud the appreciation of the literary texts" (Henry 6).

engendered a wide tolerance and reverence for all religious forms which have expressed, and still express, the primary needs of the human heart” (Willey p. 237). Because Eliot was one of the first English writers to translate Strauss’s *Life of Jesus* and Feuerbach’s *Essence of Christianity*, she began to examine and question the tenets of her faith, even though “Feuerbach considered his religious views ‘positive.’ He replaced faith in a revealed religion with his own developmental view of history, which regarded all religions as evolving processes originating in time and subordinated to the laws of change. Though the product of Man’s higher aspirations, religion depended on the same laws of causation that connected natural phenomena with each other . . . if human nature is the highest nature to man, then practically also the highest and first law must be the love of man to man . . . Only when Christianity dispenses with faith will love be able to flower fully as a guiding and healing force. In this way, love is the unifying force of humanity and the ‘essence’ of Christianity” (Knoepflmacher 46). Even with Feuerbach providing his own definition of his work, and denying that he is a casuist, Eliot took his work to mean that religion was man’s reasoning, that man was responsible for his own destiny, and that the accepted, traditional Christian concepts of faith are much too constricting to allow for what religion truly is. The Church, which strictly followed the teachings of the Bible and claimed to preach the

Word of God, was, in Eliot's mind (as well as Feuerbach's mind), severely limiting what religion was, and what it could be. Instead, a "Religion of Humanity" would be much better suited to spread the ideas of faith: "Although Eliot certainly endeavoured to move her readers and to engage their imaginations, she did so in a way that tried, at the same time, to disclose the proximate causes of given effects and the correct order of events. She hoped, in this way, to shift the object of the beliefs of her readers away from images of transcendent beings and superstitious forces and towards an understanding of our embodied relations with our fellow human beings" (Gatens 81). But what is it about the whole essence of religion that bothered Eliot so, and at such a young age? While it's true that she was intensely troubled by the lot of women in her time, and especially by the lack of education afforded to women, but that was *de rigueur* for males, was she *blaming* religion for the plight of the female sex? Eliot's novels are full of evidence of class struggle, but for such a religious upbringing, her works are full of religious references, and yet they do not focus on religion:

From 1828-1832, she [Eliot] attended boarding school in Nuneaton and became a favored pupil of her devoutly evangelical teacher, Maria Lewis. When she removed to the Misses Franklin's school in Coventry in 1832, she continued to correspond with Miss Lewis. The Franklin Sisters were Baptists so that by this time she had come

into contact with a variety of unorthodox religious views. In 1834, she underwent her own evangelical conversion and, for a while, all her intellectual energy was channeled into her reading of religious texts and her correspondence with Miss Lewis and a similarly religious friend, Martha Jackson . . . At this time the Evanses were steadfast members of the Church of England. She exceeded their conventional beliefs and practices, and they thought her melodramatic and odd. But her piety and renunciations – of theatre, music, and novels – were tolerated because they were Christian and reflected the evangelical revolution within the Church of England.

In June 1841, Isaac [Eliot's brother] married, and Robert Evans gave him Griff House where the family had lived since 1820. Mary Ann (who had dropped the "e" from her name) and her father took a new residence at Foleshill on the outskirts of Coventry. At least part of the intention of moving to a less isolated locale was to provide Mary Ann with opportunities for marriage, but the move had an effect quite unintended by her father, for here she struck up new friendships that were to transform her religious beliefs and open a new world of intellectual inquiry and fellowship (Henry 3).

Eliot, once devout and almost fanatical in her religious devotion, began to see various perspectives regarding religion through her friends and acquaintances. From there, she began to lose her religious feelings and experience doubt: "As a result, she experienced what might be called a reverse conversion as she began to question and eventually reject formal Christianity. Just as she had gone too far for her family in her religious fervor, so now she went too far in her scruples about practicing a religion in which she could no longer believe" (Henry 4). Eliot, well-read, intellectual, and highly educated,

abandoned religion for a more humanistic outlook on life: she decided that the heart and the emotions were more important in determining how people lived their lives, and that people should focus more on equality of education, compassion, and kindness rather than the strict (and often unrealistic) rules provided by the Church. Her beliefs were expressed throughout her novels: Eliot was essentially doing to her characters what the philosophers had done to her: Eliot had been brought up with a well-defined, sturdy religious background, and as she was exposed to the world, the religious aspect began to wane. It wasn't an all-at-once draining away. Bit by bit, gradually, Eliot began to question and doubt what she had known all her life, and to use her observations of the world around her to educate her mind and her heart.

As Lee Edwards states in his criticism of *Middlemarch*, " [It] is a novel about imaginative energy – the mental power to envision a self and a society as yet unformed in the given world – as this force is related to will and society. A record of the general inability of will to call up energy sufficient not just to envision but to create new social forms, it is particularly interesting in its examination of the nature and fate of energy in female characters. Contrary to her heroines, Mary Ann Evans in her own life found both energy and will sufficient to enable her to abandon her provincial home in favor of London, break with

family and religion, live openly for years with a man not her husband, and, most important [sic], transform herself into George Eliot in whose name she wrote her books, earned her living and survived world's real or imagined hostilities" (Edwards 223). Eliot was bucking the traditions of her time (as far as they concerned women and women's roles) and daring to be seen in more rebellious light: able to live in "sin" with a man²⁶, leave home and hearth (which was not expected for Victorian women), and earn a living that was not well received when it came to females: Eliot published her work under a masculine name in order to be taken more seriously. Women's expected roles, while a reality for Eliot, were also turned upside down in *Middlemarch*: "Indeed, it the force of this last character's [Dorothea Brooke's] imagination, her questing nature and desire to be *both wise and useful*, that illuminates the book. This illumination, arising from the rare portrayal of energy and intellectual force conjoined in an admirable female character causes *Middlemarch* to be a kind of talisman for many young women" (Edwards 223, my emphasis). Because women were brought up to be devout, dutiful, and obedient, concerning both wifely duties and religious obligations, Eliot was giving young women a glimpse of what women could also be and do, despite their lack of formal education and

²⁶ "The institution of marriage was never as sacred to [Eliot] as relationships of love between people. By 1848, she was no longer religious and was inclined to criticize the legal bond of marriage once the emotional connection had been severed" (Henry 95).

training in “female responsibilities.” When young women, both married and unmarried, were unwittingly exposed to such unconventional examples through reading, their minds were perhaps jarred into the knowledge that another whole world could exist for them; a world where the humility and obedience of women were not the norm, and where women could take on a modicum of independence from their male relatives (husbands, brothers, and fathers) and think and act for themselves. Such role models did not exist in meeker feminine characters such as those of Louisa May Alcott’s *Little Women*: not even the rebellious Jo March was independent enough and educated enough to escape the duties of family life and social expectations: Jo may not have married Laurie when everyone in her life was expecting her to, but she *did* marry. Her marriage to an older, wiser man was perhaps the only “shocking” thing about her marriage. Eliot’s Dorothea Brooke also married an older, highly educated man, but Dorothea also had other qualities that made her more of a feminist role model for young Victorian women: she dared to question her husband’s explicit desires. For example, when Casaubon tries to make his young wife promise that she will carry out his wishes should he die before he finished his life’s work and refrain from doing anything that he would find distasteful, Dorothea does not answer her husband right away, which he finds surprising: ““You

refuse?’ said Mr. Casaubon, with more edge in his tone. ‘No, I do not refuse,’ said Dorothea, in a clear voice, the need of freedom asserting itself within her; ‘but it is too solemn—I think it is not right—to make a promise when I am ignorant what it will bind me to. Whatever affection prompted I would do without promising.’ ‘But you would use your own judgment: I ask you to obey mine; you refuse’” (*Middlemarch* 296). Dorothea could have been humble and meek, and easily consented to her dying husband’s wishes without a second thought: after all, when Casaubon died, who would know about her promise, and who would (or could) have enforced it? Instead, Dorothea pleaded ignorance, and wished to know more about what such a promise would entail before she could commit to it. That she did not agree to her husband’s expressed wishes and say no more about it showed a strength of character practically unknown to women at that time: women were expected to fulfill their husbands’ every wish without question, for the Bible commands that wives should be subject to their husbands²⁷. A dutiful and devout young wife brought up in the Christian faith would certainly be familiar with such Scripture and follow it without questioning it. In Dorothea, they see an example of a faithful wife who still does not blindly follow her husband, and yet

²⁷ “Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord” (*NIV Bible* Ephesians 5:22).

remains affectionate and who truly desires to be of assistance to such a learned and great man. If a woman could do both, what were they to think? Furthermore, the victory that Dorothea experiences in refusing to answer immediately, and then never having to answer because her husband dies before she can provide him with an answer that will satisfy both of them, shows the readers that a woman can even have a certain amount of freedom within a marriage. Dorothea did not promise Casaubon *anything*, which allows Dorothea to retain peace of mind about not following Casaubon's wishes beyond his death. Certainly, she felt guilty about not giving him his answer, which she felt would have been a reluctant "yes": "... she simply felt that that she was going to say 'Yes' to her own doom: she was too weak, too full of dread at the thought of inflicting a keen-edged blow on her husband, to do anything but submit completely" (*Middlemarch* 298), but she will not have to struggle with the burden of deeper guilt for not fulfilling a marital promise to her late husband in her future life. In this way, Dorothea is simultaneously able to skirt the Scriptural issue and avoid a guilty conscience, and thus she acquires her coveted freedom.

In Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*, there are also religious issues that surface that challenge the accepted standards for the female sex. Gwendolen, the heroine, once gambling for pleasure, must gamble for gain once she learns that her family fortune is lost and she must rely on

the charity of a poor male relation, an uncle, who just happens to be a cleric. He too is destitute, but he does earn a living. "Submitting to a lower station in life means accepting the humiliation of dependence, and this Gwendolen is not willing to do. In order to restore the free play of her will, she is determined instead to parlay her 'nonliquid' resources (beauty, manners, and, she believes, theatrical talent) into financial security" (Mintz 152). The free will Gwendolen has is something she is unwilling to surrender. Normally, for such a woman the natural next step (as far as Victorian society was concerned) was marriage, but Gwendolen cannot abide that thought, either: she wonders "whether she could not achieve substantially for herself and know gratified ambition without bondage" (*Daniel Deronda* 209). For a young woman who no longer has any family fortune and must fall back on the charity of an uncle to *not* want to marry as high as she can must seem outrageous to her young female readers, since marriage was often a way out of impoverished circumstances, and feminine "free will" wasn't often an issue for young women: they accepted marriage and submission to a husband simply as part of life: they were groomed for it from a very young age²⁸. Gwendolen wants a career for herself,

²⁸ "The assumption that women were destined for the domestic sphere was similarly reflected in the education of middle-class girls during this [Victorian] period. Unlike their male counterparts, these girls were largely educated for the marriage market, with emphasis on social accomplishments before any sort of intellectual activity" (Martin J. 73).

but the vocation she wants (as a singer) means that her beauty and manners are useless: she will be judged solely on her capability as a singer. Gwendolen realizes that she will never make it as a singer, and does end up marrying the cruel Grandcourt. This marriage, in institution supposed to be joyful and sacred, is marked by mutual indifference, cruelty, and willfulness. Again, the marriage contract, which is in fact a holy sacrament, is remade into something distasteful and unholy and marked by evil. For something to which many a young woman aspired to be seen as undesirable and downright *evil* must have made many a girl give pause as to what she was getting herself into: marriage was supposed to hold the promise of love and progeny and a home of one's own. Here was the heroine of a novel making her lord and master (for such he was) miserable and refusing to submit to him as the Bible dictated. This marriage, however, was a little different than Eliot's other unwanted unions: "In Grandcourt's desire to possess his wife's soul, however, there is a willfulness of an entirely different order: a radical intentionality towards evil. This is the first such occurrence in George Eliot's writings. In her earlier treatment of unsympathetic characters (one thinks of Arthur Donnithorne, Mrs. Transome, Bulstrode) there is no principle which, aside from the unintentional consequences of selfish acts, by itself brings evil into the world. On the contrary, the characteristic moment in her fiction is the

convulsive realization *after the fact* that the alluvial deposits of evil that was not at first intended to have hardened into an enormous, unmovable fact . . . It tears a rent in the carefully achieved naturalism of the earlier novels, and through this new opening there rushes a procession of demonic images” (Mintz 153-154, original emphasis). Eliot was not unused to having selfish, indifferent characters in her novels, but *Daniel Deronda* shows characters with a new brand of evil; one which her readers had not seen before, and one which must have caused some serious cognitive dissonance within her female readers.

Like *Middlemarch*, Eliot’s *Adam Bede* also begins with a decidedly Christian theme, and the bucolic scenery of the English countryside in the town of Hayslope will host an outdoor prayer meeting. We meet the Bede brothers, Adam and Seth, as honest, hardworking, Christian men who strive to be honest and sincere (as their biblical names imply). However, we begin right away with male/female relations, as Seth has a crush on the pretty Methodist preacher, Dinah Morris, who’s going to preach to the townspeople in the evening after their days’ labor is ended. However, no one seems to see Dinah in the light of a “prize” or a wife in the making: she is a woman of God, devoted to the will of the Almighty, and she intends to go wherever she is needed. Seth proposes to her, but when she refuses, he is convinced that she’ll never marry any man (though, in fact, she does eventually marry: “Seth’s soul rushed to his eyes and lips: he

had never yet confessed his secret to Adam, but now he felt a delicious sense of disburthenment, as he answered – ‘Ay, Addy, I do love her – too much, I doubt. But she doesna love me, lad, only as one child o’ God loves another. She’ll never love any man as husband – that’s my belief’” (*Adam Bede* 134). Seth is not thinking of forcing or tricking Dinah into marrying him, despite her impoverished circumstances. On the other hand, Hetty Sorrel, a very pretty young dairy maid, is thinking of nothing but marriage, but to the wrong man. The poor yet honest Adam Bede is in love with Hetty, but Hetty has eyes only for the young, handsome, and conveniently rich Arthur Donnithorne. Arthur is attracted to Hetty’s feminine charms and says things to make her believe he is interested in marrying her, but it turns out to be a fling, a casual affair: why would a rich and handsome young man ever want a seventeen-year-old poor working girl for his bride? The class struggle and the inappropriateness of the match highlights the social castes of Eliot’s day, but in *Adam Bede*, critics have been overly aware of and unhappy with the romantic scenarios:

Critics favorable to George Eliot but critical of *Adam Bede* have frequently touched on two structural problems in the novel: the rescue of Hetty Sorrel by Arthur Donnithorne in Chapter 47 and the marriage of Adam to Dinah Morris eight chapters later. As early as 1885 Henry James complained of George Eliot’s lack of ‘clear vision’ in having Arthur rescue Hetty and of her concession to George Henry Lewes in having Adam marry Dinah, while he later maintained that

he would have 'infinitely preferred' to see the novel end with Hetty's execution or even reprieve if Adam had been 'left to his grief.' These criticisms have been echoed by numerous twentieth-century students of the novel, including Lionel Stevenson, who regrets the rescue as 'the only touch of melodrama' in an otherwise generally excellent novel (Martin B. 745-746).

Even Eliot's later critics were unhappy with the matches she produced in *Adam Bede*. Dinah, a woman of God, is seen as Adam's reward for his reform. Hetty is rescued, and "rescue" is used in the most literal sense, as Arthur Donnithorne races up on his "hot and distressed horse" bearing a stay of execution. Having Hetty Sorrel literally rescued as a helpless female by a young and handsome man (on *horseback*, no less) was truly distasteful to her readers. Women were capable of providing a living for themselves, and were not in need of any rescuing by handsome young eligible men. However, this is one of Eliot's earliest novels (1859), and many of Eliot's critics see this whole "happy ending" as a mark of her inexperience (it is, after all, her first full-length novel), or her concession to the "insipid conventions of the English novel" (Martin B. 746). Eliot was seen as having neglected her craft. However, the novel's protagonist is seen to go through several character changes, which is necessary to the plot: "Possessed of rather severe moral scruples, he [Adam Bede] has no patience with others who, despite good intentions, violate the moral code of the community. He consistently manifests an unwillingness to forgive

any deviation from the standards he himself is able to meet. By the end of the novel, though, he is radically changed” (Martin B. 747). One of the other problems with the happy ending is that her inexperienced and likely uneducated readers are going to see in this novel the connection between religious devotion (as seen in the title character and Dinah Morris) and the “reward” of marriage, to both of which Eliot does not subscribe. It is the rebellion, the resistance to wedlock, that Eliot feels, and in subsequent novels, shows to her readers. This rebellious spirit that is demonstrated throughout her novels may have been a channel for spreading the crisis of religion that was spreading throughout Great Britain during the Victorian Age, since humility and obedience to parents and spouses was taught by the Scriptures and was learned from a very young age. In Eliot’s novels, young women were being shown that they could resist and refuse biblical doctrine.

Chapter Two: Thomas Hardy and Religion in Victorian Fiction

Thomas Hardy is another of the popular humanist novelists who was partially, but I would argue directly, responsible for the spread of the religious crisis outside the scientific community. Hardy himself was brought up in the Christian religion, but through his academic studies and his work, he began to abandon his religious feelings in favor of science and the evidence that science was capable of providing, just as Eliot (among others) did. Hardy was fascinated by science, particularly astronomy; and his works reflect this fascination, albeit to varying degrees. Hardy was also fascinated with the natural world, but it would seem that science afforded practical, satisfying explanations for natural phenomena, whereas religion did not. In fact, some of Hardy's works explore the complete lack of explanation for social customs and taboos that science ignored completely. *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, for example, notes that while the laws of man may be broken through the breaching of custom and propriety, the laws that govern nature and science are not affected by such surficial and artificial (read: human) customs. The rape of Tess is one such consideration: the only "real" problem is social taboo, since biology and nature are not affected through sexual contact by

unmarried persons, whether the sexual contact is through force or consent, and the participants are unwilling or not. Hardy noted that man's laws (as dictated by religion²⁹) and Nature's laws didn't always coincide, and that natural law made more sense in many ways. Societal customs and laws didn't have reason or logic to back them, whereas natural law did. The same thing applied to religious rites and ceremonies: they didn't make as much sense to Hardy as scientific theories. Hardy abandoned the Christian religion in favor of science, and his feelings toward religion appeared in his popular novels. Hardy's characters reflected his attitude regarding social customs, which he disseminated to his young, often impressionable audience, making Hardy another novelist who contributed to the Victorian religious crisis.

Thomas Hardy was born on June 2, 1840 at Upper Bockhampton near Dorchester in Dorset³⁰. His father was a builder and stonemason. . Though required to work long days, he kept up his reading in the mornings before he was required to report for duty (Millgate 32). Hardy was fond of reading, and scientific literature was a part of his reading material, which helped to shape his beliefs and his future writing.

²⁹ Many laws are prescribed through religious belief, such as the Judeo-Christian Ten Commandments of the Bible.

³⁰ Dorset is a small town on the southern coast of England.

Hardy's architectural apprenticeship lasted just over four years. Though his apprenticeship was short lived, it provided him with plenty of experiences which would influence his writing³¹. In fact, it was during his apprenticeship and time spent in church that Hardy met his best friend, a vicar's son, who encouraged Hardy to read Greek tragedies and contemporary English literature (Millgate 32). While Hardy loved the literature being produced by his contemporaries such as George Eliot, Wilkie Collins, Alfred Lord Tennyson, and George Meredith, it was Charles Darwin who exerted one of the most powerful influences on him. The idea of evolution was intriguing, and the publication of *On the Origin of Species* had a major influence on Hardy's literature, and also on his abandonment of the Christian faith, which was already waning owing to his exposure to the sciences while in London during his apprenticeship.

In 1862, Hardy left his small town for the grand city of London; a decision some of his biographers say may have been caused by an unsuccessful love affair or two with local Dorset girls: "with sweet Lizbie Browne, who scorned him as too young, [and] with Louisa Harding" (Halliday 14). Nevertheless, his apprenticeship with the Dorset church architect served him in good stead when he arrived in London: he worked

³¹ Hardy's apprenticeship took him to big cities such as London, where Hardy was able to experience things that would influence his attitude towards religion, and which were unavailable to him in small towns: he attended meetings of the Royal Society, he visited museums, he attended plays and the opera, and he was able to attend lectures given by famous contemporaries, such as Charles Dickens (Halliday 26).

for five years as an assistant architect. Blomfield was so impressed with the young Hardy that he even proposed to have him join the Architectural Association. While in London, Hardy enjoyed the local culture: he attended a public lecture given by Charles Dickens; he read more literature in the scientific vein by Jonathan Stuart Mill and Thomas Henry Huxley, John Ruskin, and especially the works of Charles Darwin. In fact, the work he was now reading was so influential that Hardy, whose original plan as a young teenager having finished his formal education was to become ordained as an Anglican minister, began to question and dismiss his traditional Christian upbringing, with which he was growing more and more disillusioned. Hardy began to read even more, reading the works of his contemporaries (such as George Eliot's *the Mill on the Floss*), Darwin's now-famous *On the Origin of the Species*, and the poetry of such authors as Algernon Charles Swinburne and Robert Browning. Because of their influence, Hardy now began to write his own poetry, but it was repeatedly rejected for publication. Because of his dissatisfaction with religion and his unpleasant experiences with romance and authorship, his more popular prose work began to include themes of misery, loneliness, chance, and fate, which were topics decidedly anti-Christian (Halliday 15). Christianity teaches its followers that God is in control, that everything happens for a reason, and that God watches over His people. Hardy's own

experiences taught him that wasn't always so, and his writing demonstrated his feelings of abandonment and loneliness.

Hardy began to grow weary of life in the big city, and he left London to return to his hometown of Dorset, where he once again returned to work for his master, with whom he had apprenticed once he left school. This time, upon returning to his birthplace, he found love with a young cousin of his from a nearby town. His cousin, by the name of Tryphena Sparks, appears (in disguise) in many of Hardy's published works. Though deeply involved, Hardy and Sparks did not marry, although Sparks apparently had a profound influence on Hardy the person, and Hardy's literary works.

It was during the restoration of a church that Hardy met the woman he would eventually marry. Her name was Emma Lavinia Gifford, who was a relation of the local rector. It was Hardy's literary tastes that captivated her (among other qualities he possessed), and she encouraged him to write more poetry as well as fiction. As his romance with Gifford blossomed, his architectural apprenticeship ended due to the death of his master, and Hardy tried to seek employment as an assistant architect in the nearby town of Weymouth. Before his master's death and his subsequent removal to a neighboring town, Hardy submitted his first written work to be published; a novel titled *The Poor Man and the Lady*. The

publisher, Macmillan, decided against publishing it, but encouraged Hardy to make another attempt and continue to write. The publisher enjoyed Hardy's first opus, but they apparently wanted works with stronger plots, which was the advice given to Hardy. Upon Hardy's arrival in Weymouth, he began to try his hand at another novel; this one titled *Desperate Remedies*, which was once again rejected by Macmillan, but was later published anonymously in three volumes by the publisher William Tinsley in 1871. That was the catalyst for Hardy to give up the architectural business completely, and devote himself to writing full-time, although he wasn't by any means "successful" in his writing; that is, he wasn't making a decent living from his publications just yet. Although his first novel was rejected outright and his second novel had to be published anonymously, he kept writing, and his fourth novel, *Far from the Madding Crowd*, published in 1874, brought him public acclaim and financial success. It was in that same year that he published his first "successful" novel that he married his sweetheart Emma Lavinia Gifford. The marriage was happy for several years, but the couple began to grow apart more and more, as Emma disapproved of the fiction her husband persisted in writing and publishing, considering his disdain for organized religion, and her family's close involvement with the Church. Emma's uncle had performed the wedding ceremony, and her uncle went on to become the Archdeacon of London. While both Hardy and his wife had traditional

Christian backgrounds and upbringings, Hardy's experiences with Darwin's written work and introduction to the theory of evolution were coloring his fiction³². Emma Lavinia's family moved within the church, and her disapproval of writing that contradicted the Bible and its teachings of the origin of man were met with disapproval: she may not have discussed her unhappiness directly with her husband, but she kept a secret diary in which she faithfully recorded her dissatisfaction and complaints against her husband.

Hardy's first successful novel, *Far from the Madding Crowd*, published in 1874, was an account of a hardworking young man and an immature young woman who acts on impulse, often hurting the ones she involves herself with. The young man, Gabriel Oak, though honest, sincere, and willing to work hard for his daily bread is reflective of Hardy himself. Hardy grew up in an atmosphere that had the church at its very center, but as Hardy himself became disillusioned with religion, his characters bore that disillusionment in their natures. Gabriel Oak, though a regular attendee at church every Sunday, pays little attention to the preacher and the sermon and often finds himself thinking about his next meal instead. The heroine of the novel, a young girl named Bathsheba

³² Hardy wrote of his fiction "My pages show harmony of view with Charles Darwin, T. H. Huxley, Herbert Spencer, David Hume, John Stuart Mill and others' . . . His view of life was that since there is no God to give meaning to life, Man is alone in the universe, no better and no worse than other creatures who live or have lived for a brief moment on this speck called Earth" (British Humanist Association, n. pag.)

Everdene, is involved in a confrontation with Gabriel in the beginning of the story, but is forced to work alongside him in the farming industry. She is a proud, independent woman, which was very much against the grain of the feminine standard of the age: women were supposed to be dainty, demure, refined, elegant, and the chief occupations of their sex were to rear children (their own, or as a governess to another family) and to find useful employment in some sort of worthy charity. If the women were wealthy enough (or their families were wealthy enough) to allow them to be ladies of leisure, they had to spend their time in ways deemed “acceptable” by Victorian society. Reading novels was considered harmless and appropriate for young women, regardless of their marital status, and young women were sometimes introduced to characters, both male and female, that challenged what they knew of their worlds. They sometimes saw women, such as Bathsheba Everdene, who were not demure, shy, and submissive; they were proud, independent, and employed in physical labor; work that was dubbed “masculine” in its nature: in this case, shepherding and farming. Women were learning, through humanist novels, that they could earn their own way in the world, and employment as a governess wasn’t the only way to become independent of men³³. The humanist novels, such as those penned by

³³ Thomas Hardy’s *Tess (Tess of the D’Urbervilles)* was a dairymaid and a turnip farmer, his character of Bathsheba Everdene (*Far from the Madding Crowd*) owned a farm, even

Thomas Hardy, were challenging the views that Victorian society saw as appropriate for young women, and women saw that they could break traditional molds, and quite successfully.

Victorian women, who very often were not deemed worthy of the superior and advanced educations afforded to young men at that time³⁴, would often become distressed when they saw the heroines of novels who didn't fit the molds of what they knew and expected of women and of female employments. Since women were not worldly enough to know what to make of situations unfamiliar to them, they subsequently lacked the necessary wherewithal to process the new and strange information they were receiving. Therefore, when they saw young women who were defying the expected and traditional roles assigned to young women, they couldn't understand that there might be other methods of survival that women could use to negotiate the world. This confusion began to extend to the rest of their worlds, including religion and their understanding of God and creation. Women, also brought up in the church where they learned Biblical stories and were made to understand a woman's role as

though she was wealthy owing to an inheritance, Eliot's Hetty Sorrel (*Adam Bede*) is a farm hand, Dinah Morris (*Adam Bede*) is a Methodist preacher and a cotton-mill worker, and Dorothea Brooke (*Middlemarch*) occupied herself with drawing up plans for cottages and improving the lives of the poor in general.

³⁴ "Those who opposed higher education for women believed it would endanger the social and economic of the country . . . A major contention of the opponents to higher education for women was that the sexes had different goals in life and should, therefore, be educated differently. According to this view, education was functional. Women's work was in the home, men's in the world; each sex needed to be educated to perform its role effectively" (Burstyn 48).

far as marriage was concerned, were being shown situations that didn't follow religious dogma: women were not being submissive to their husbands, as directed by the Bible³⁵ and (male) religious leaders. This confusion that flew in the face of their very existence, where women were groomed for marriage to be dutiful and obedient wives from very early ages, was challenged in a very direct manner. Women, who were very often unable to process what they didn't know, began to challenge their own thinking: not only as far as marriage and domesticity were concerned, but also something that comprised their very beings: they began to contest religion, or at least their own understandings of religion. This was dangerous to their persons and their minds, because while they were able to question what they knew, they were unable to posit things that they didn't know or understand. They were unfamiliar with things that their male counterparts were introduced to in their schooling and with which they were familiar; namely, science and the natural world. While reading and charitable work was considered acceptable and innocuous pastimes for women, young gentlemen were not bound by such attitudes, and were able to leave home and explore the world around them: they took interest in things like entomology, geology, biology, chemistry, and medicine. As educated men, when they encountered

³⁵ "Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives" (*NIV Bible*, Peter 1:3).

“shocking” new ideas, such as Darwin’s theory of evolution, they had the book smarts, the worldly experience, and the empirical knowledge of the Earth to be able to process those ideas and accept or reject them according to their own beliefs, experiences, and knowledge. Women, with very rare exception, possessed no such worldly knowledge, so when their deeply held beliefs and ideas were thus challenged, there was a sort of cognitive dissonance and an emptiness of the spirit that followed: women had nothing to replace the challenged ideals with, and their beliefs in themselves, their places within society, and even their most cherished beliefs in their God were upended, with no other belief systems with which they might repair their worlds torn asunder. Thus, novelists like Thomas Hardy were partially, but directly, responsible for the religious crisis.

As Hardy continued to write, he found more acclaim and success in his second tragic novel, *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (subtitled *The Life and Death of a Man of Character*), published in 1886. This novel too has a tragic hero and heroine as well, in Michael and Susan Henchard. Michael’s wife, Susan, and their infant child, Elizabeth-Jane, following a heated argument between the young couple, are sold at a country fair for drinking money for the young drunkard of a husband (11). This flies directly in the face of the marriage vow “‘til death do us part,” and was probably deeply

disturbing to a Victorian audience. Even more shocking is the realization that the lonely Michael Henchard, now without his wife and child, had a sexual relationship with a young unmarried woman by the name of Lucette Le Sueur. The Victorians were probably well aware that such things happened and were simply not discussed in polite society, but to have it suggested in a published novel read by young women may well have been scandalous. All might seem happy when Susan Henchard (now Susan Newson by way of her subsequent marriage to the young sailor by that name who paid for her and her child at the county fair, though that marriage was illegal, since the selling of the wife and child never constituted a legal³⁶ divorce) seeks out her tee-totaling (ex) husband, now a great man, sober, and the esteemed mayor of a small town called Casterbridge. Michael is truly repentant of his actions, and seeks to court and remarry Susan (though by most accounts they are still legally married), but his ex-paramour Lucette has come to Casterbridge seeking Michael as well. Lucette has come into a fortune, having received a large inheritance, making her independent, single, and wealthy, which was once again not in keeping with the traditional Victorian woman's place. A scorned old rival by the name of Jopp finds out about the illicit affair, makes it publicly known, and shames Michael and Lucette. Lucette soon

³⁶ It is documented, however, that selling one's wife was at that time acceptable, and did in fact constitute a divorce, albeit almost casually and, because it was undocumented, not entirely legal, but at that time "women were seen as lesser beings, that they should be subject to men, and that men had the right to control them" (Doggett 145).

dies from an epileptic seizure, leaving Michael to deal with the fallout of that affair with what he believes to be his now-grown daughter, who, it turns out, is no relation of his, which he discovers soon after Susan dies³⁷: the daughter is the offspring of Susan and the sailor³⁸. The affairs, infants born out of wedlock, sexual experiences between unmarried people, and casual handling of sacred institutions such as marriage, baptism, and burial were issues to be dealt with by people ill-equipped to handle such indelicate matters; namely, young uneducated women. Even the inevitable, death, which was normally handled delicately, was mentioned with no regard to the spiritual, with which women were intimately familiar. Death was a directly spiritual matter; it was the human soul reuniting with God. There were mourners, flowers, blessings, and all the trappings to acknowledge the sacredness and solemnity of the occasion. In Michael Henchard's case, he left explicit instructions that nothing should be done to remember him, and that he didn't even want to be buried in consecrated ground³⁹. No bell would toll for him, he would not be laid

³⁷ Susan's confession is written in a letter she charges Michael not to read until his daughter's wedding day (81)

³⁸ The child Susan bore with Michael died soon after Michael sold them. When the new child Susan conceived with the sailor was born, they decided to name her after the first child, so she had the same name as Michael's daughter. Susan never confessed that fact to Michael, and so he naturally thought she must be his daughter, now grown up. Michael discovers the deception in a letter which was not to be read until after Susan's death (85).

³⁹ This refusal to be buried in sacred ground was a direct reflection of Hardy's own wishes. However, following Hardy's death in 1928, his body was cremated and interred in Poet's Corner in Westminster Abbey, which was against his express desire to be buried

out, and no one would come to pay any respects to him. That would have unnerved people who were comfortable knowing the specific and familiar rites and expectations of a religious ceremony; even an unpleasant one. Religious rituals were being ignored and discarded, and that may have caused a great deal of distress to young women who were brought up to understand religious ceremonies, rites, and passages, further causing distress to the female sex that had little or no understanding beyond what tradition brought them up to believe, and furthering the religious crisis plaguing Victorian England.

In 1891, Hardy published a very popular (and once again tragic) novel that was so distressing it originally had to be published in a censored and serialized manner. Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, subtitled *a Pure Woman Faithfully Presented*, while very popular, received mixed reviews because of its challenges to Victorian sexual mores. Originally titled *Daughter of the D'Urbervilles* (as seen on the original manuscript), it speaks of a "fallen woman," who has a sexual relationship without benefit of marriage (in this case, rape) with a young man named Alec, her supposed cousin, but who in truth bears no relation to Tess whatsoever⁴⁰.

beside his wife; only Hardy's heart was buried in Dorchester, next to her remains (Millgate 81).

⁴⁰ The name was chosen randomly by a man of fortune who wished for a new name "that would not too readily identify him with the smart tradesman of the past . . . and d'Urberville accordingly was annexed to his own name for himself and his heirs eternally" (33).

The rape results in the birth of a sickly infant son, whom Tess must baptize herself, since the local priest is refused entry to the house by Tess's drunken father. Tess baptizes the child, names him "Sorrow," and buries the child in unconsecrated ground, marking his simple grave with a homemade wooden cross. Baptism is a sacrament, is performed by priests, and is given the blessing of the church. An unmarried young woman who has given birth out of wedlock must perform the rite herself so that her child might avoid the punishment of Hell, in accordance with the popular religious feeling of that era. For a religious rite to be performed by a woman was simply not done; for that rite to be bestowed on a bastard child was even more outrageous, and burial in unconsecrated ground was scandalous. Impressionable young women were being exposed to these ideas through reading material that was popular and acclaimed, but to read such scandal and not be able to integrate it into their respective belief systems was part of the problem of the loss of religion: sacred rites could apparently be performed by anyone, and the clergy could effectively become rendered moot.

Now that Tess had a reputation in her small town of being "loose" (despite the fact that her loss of virginity was not consensual and was in truth a crime of violence), she seeks employment outside her village. Employment opportunities for uneducated young women were already

limited, with the most acceptable and popular options of schoolteacher and governess being available only to women with at least some education. Tess happens upon a dairy farm and becomes a dairymaid. The apprentice farmer, Angel Clare, unaware of her past, soon falls in love with Tess. He is unaware of her past, and seems to be a nice young man with a bright future. However, the young man represents Hardy's negative views of the Church.

Hardy openly demonstrates his disillusionment with religion in the character Angel Clare: Angel's two brothers, who are ordained ministers, are considered by Angel to be staid and narrow-minded. Angel's opinion of his elder brothers is how Hardy began to view the Church upon being introduced to new and controversial ideas, such as Darwin's publications, which impacted Hardy and his novel writing quite heavily. Angel visits his family with the idea of marrying Tess, and Angel's father, a reverend (also a religious figure), discusses the local populace with his son, and his opinion isn't very positive.

Despite his father's views, Angel proposes to Tess upon his return to the dairy farm. Angel believes Tess to be pure and virginal. Tess does not wish to deceive him, but she does not confess her prior misfortunes to him either. Tess's mother warns Tess not to mention word one of the rape

to Angel.⁴¹ However, on their wedding night, Angel admits to an affair he once had⁴². Hearing this news, Tess feels sure Angel will forgive her, and confesses her dark past. Instead of understanding and forgiveness,⁴³ Angel is appalled and promptly leaves her, prompting Tess to return to her parents. Once again, the sacrament of marriage (for which young Victorian women were incessantly prepared) is torn apart, and what was supposed to be a joyous occasion is the source of anxiety and strife. Angel abandons his new bride and leaves on a ship bound for Brazil, leaving Tess to find employment on a turnip farm owned by a man who scorned her in the past for her reputation of being “easy.” Her new life is one of bleak prospects and demanding physical labor. Seeking help from her new husband’s family (all of whom are deeply involved with the church), she overhears them discussing Angel’s “unwise marriage⁴⁴,” which influences her decision to leave without contacting her in-laws for assistance. On her way back to the turnip farm, she encounters the man who started all her misfortunes in motion: the very man who raped her: Alec D’Urberville, who is now completely converted to Christianity and has become a preacher⁴⁵ through the influence of her father-in-law, the

⁴¹ The Bible does not expressly forbid lying in the Ten Commandments

⁴² Affairs are not exactly forbidden by the Ten Commandments, but covetousness *is*.

⁴³ Which IS commanded by the Bible, and is included in some form in most Christian wedding vows

⁴⁴ The Bible warns not to judge others, which Angel’s brothers and father –all clerics– are doing.

⁴⁵ Hardy very deliberately has the rapist turn preacher as a way of scorning the Church.

reverend. This twisted view of Christianity is a representation of Hardy's shared view of the narrow-mindedness and hypocrisy of the Christian faith, with a dash of redemption thrown in for good measure. Hardy was reintroducing (as he had in his two previous popular novels) to impressionable, innocent Victorian women the facets of marriage, love, social propriety, and religious views with which they were not accustomed and for which they were ill prepared, which may well have spread religious disillusionment throughout the feminine segment of society.

Further strengthening this feminine disillusionment are Tess's desperate attempts to survive: her family is evicted from the cottage she has always called home, and has no place to live: her family cannot find lodgings, and her absent husband, who now very much repents of his treatment of his wife, had made no provision for her: his Brazilian farming venture failed, leaving him with no money to send to her. The rapist-turned-preacher, the reformed Alec D'Urberville, decides to court Tess. She soon succumbs to Alec's wooing, and becomes his mistress: she takes his name under the pretense of marriage, but she was never legally divorced from Angel⁴⁶; thus, she is still legally married. Angel eventually returns to England and manages, after a long search, to locate Tess, who is

⁴⁶ Angel's abandonment of Tess is akin to Michael's abandoning of Susan in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*: it is not a full, legal, documented divorce, but there is no mention of Angel taking another wife, and Tess is Alec's mistress; she does not marry him.

now beholden to Alec. In a cynical plot twist, instead of simply leaving Alec (to whom Tess has no legal obligation) to return to Angel, who is still legally her husband, Tess murders Alec in a rage⁴⁷. That a woman should commit murder must have been overwhelming to young Victorian women! As Angel and Tess flee from the law, they stop to rest during the night at Stonehenge, where Tess falls asleep on the ancient altar, again distorting religious views: altars are sacred places of worship, and where the heroine of the novel falls asleep. Tess is overtaken and captured while sleeping at Stonehenge and soon after executed, allowing Angel to marry Tess's younger sister, Liza-Lu: marriage vows were valid until the death of one of the partners, and as Tess was now dead, Angel's relationship was untainted, whereas Tess's was not. Despite the rape, Tess had knowingly and willingly become a mistress to Alec: she had a sexual relationship that was consensual but was not blessed by the Church. Angel and Liza-Lu were legally married, and therefore untainted. Hardy was showing women that sexual relationships were possible without benefit of marriage, and that such relationships violated only social custom, and not natural law. Demonstrating ideas like that to impressionable young women was furthering the Victorian religious crisis: in fact, when Hardy submitted the story for publication, it was so

⁴⁷ The Ten Commandments very specifically forbids murder, and the plot twist is another manifestation of the disenchantment with religion that Hardy fosters.

disturbing to the publishers in its original form that Hardy was forced to omit parts of the story, to censor other parts, and to publish the story in volumes: it was not published as a single novel.

Thomas Hardy openly expressed his views on religion in his tragic novels: although he was brought up with religion, and much of his youth centered on the church, when he began to explore the world outside his humble upbringing, he began to question and challenge what he was taught⁴⁸. That a young man should do that is unremarkable, but when that same young man published his views in a manner that was widely read by people without such worldly experience and education, he posed a threat to the spiritual wellbeing of those uneducated, inexperienced people who do not possess the mental faculties needed for processing those unfamiliar ideas. That in itself was a catalyst for furthering the already-established religious crisis in Victorian England, where the spiritual beliefs of both men and women were being upended, confused, and frustrated by the scientific findings and writings of credible men such as Charles Darwin, Thomas Huxley, Adam Sedgwick, Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, et. al. Because the Christian Bible no longer held the only key to man's existence, and the church was the center of Victorian life and its

⁴⁸ "For many critics who consider humanism and agency in Hardy's novels, the more radical side dominates because Hardy's readings in the fields of both evolution and cosmology led him to cast doubt on human autonomy" (Cohn 496).

solidity was undermined, the already-in-progress breakdown of spirituality was steadily growing.

Hardy's last novel, also originally published in serial form (but ultimately in book form in 1895), was *Jude the Obscure*. Jude Fawley, a stonemason, yearns to be a scholar. He reads extensively, and marries a girl (Arabella Donn) who deserts him in just a few years, which prompts Jude to abandon his reading of the classics. Jude continues life as a mason until he meets and falls in love with his cousin (which echoes Hardy's real life). Unfortunately, his cousin, Sue Bridehead, upon being introduced to Jude's old schoolmaster, falls in love with the schoolmaster, and also deserts Jude. She returns to Jude, whom she truly loves (and is not her husband). Victorian sexual mores are also challenged here, for Sue and Jude live together without the blessing of the church: one early reviewer even call this novel "*Jude the Obscene*.⁴⁹" This union results in two children, both born out of wedlock. Another older child appears to the couple from Jude's first marriage to Arabella. These children are the source of trouble for the couple without meaning to be: because the couple are not married and have children from their union, they are evicted whenever landlords discover their situation, and Jude is dismissed from his job when his

⁴⁹ Attributed to an anonymous literary critic: "Its frank treatment of Jude's sexual relationships with Arabella and Sue, its scathing criticisms of late-Victorian hypocrisy, its depiction of the 'New Woman', and its attacks on 'holy wedlock' and religious bigotry outraged numerous reviewers; one called the book "*Jude the Obscene*" (Watts 91).

employers find out about the situation. Since the younger children are the source of the trouble, though innocent themselves, the older child murders the two younger children and then commits suicide by hanging himself⁵⁰. The grief over the loss of the children results in Sue's having a miscarriage⁵¹. Sue turns to the church and begins to believe that the children's deaths and the miscarriage were divine retribution for her unmarried living situation: she believed she was being punished. Out of fright she considered returning to her husband, to whom she was still legally married, and her fundamental religious beliefs lead her in that direction. Arabella then tricks Jude into remarrying her, using alcohol to further her plans⁵². Jude, still in love with Sue, tries to see her one last time, but he dies in the freezing weather. As was with other characters in Hardy's tragic novels, Jude goes unmourned by his wife, Arabella, who is already looking for her next suitor. Christian decency falls by the wayside, ignoring rites and sacraments, which is Hardy's disdain of the Church.

⁵⁰ The eldest child opposes the teaching of the church not only by murdering the innocent children, but also by killing himself, since "Thou Shalt not Kill" also applies to one's own self as well as to the killing of another person.

⁵¹ The miscarriage is also of a child conceived out of wedlock.

⁵² The Bible expressly forbids remarrying a woman whom one has previously divorced: it considered adultery, and is another knock against the Church and its biblical teachings: If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, and if after she leaves his house she becomes the wife of another man, and her second husband dislikes her and writes her a certificate of divorce gives it to her and sends her from his house, or if he dies, then her first husband, who divorced her, is not allowed to marry her again after she has been defiled. That would be detestable in the eyes of the Lord" (*NIV Bible*, Deuteronomy 24:1-4).

The preoccupation with Victorian values like marriage, Christianity, class boundaries, sexual repression, and divine retribution are all criticized by Hardy in *Jude the Obscure*. Hardy's own wife, Emma, grew more and more religious as she got older, which irritated Hardy: it led to a lot of marital tension between the two. The irony here is that Emma didn't like this particular novel because it openly criticized Christianity, to which she adhered, and which Hardy himself didn't; and because she was afraid that the reading public would assume that the relationship between Jude and Sue was a parallel of the relationship between Hardy and herself. Unfortunately for Emma, it was. Although the reading public was critical of the novel and particularly its anti-Christian sentiments, there does not seem to be any criticism that is openly directed at the couple's relationship or marital discord. As Hardy progressed in his writing, he grew more and more critical of religion, and he gave more thought and attention to the scientific publications that were being produced at that time, such as Darwin's *On the Origin of the Species*, Alfred Lord Tennyson's solemn poem "In Memoriam A.H.H.," the Bridgewater Treatises, Lyell's *Principles of Geology*, etc. As a result of the public's criticism of his novels, Hardy decided to forego any more prose fiction, and decided instead to return to writing poetry, which he considered a "purer" form of art. Furthermore, now that he had earned his fortune through the very same novels that the public decried as

scandalous, Hardy published his earlier poems (the ones originally rejected for publication by major publishing houses) in a collected work.

Although Hardy was thoroughly disillusioned with the Church, in his advanced years, he asked his wife to read him a verse from the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*:

Oh, Thou, who Man of baser Earth didst make,
And ev'n with Paradise devise the snake:
For all the Sin wherewith the Face of Man
Is blackened — Man's forgiveness give — and take!
(LXXXI)

That Hardy would ask for this particular passage may demonstrate that, while he abandoned his religion, he may have reconsidered it (to a small degree) as he neared the end of his life. Perhaps his impending death had him reconsidering religion; however, for the entirety of his adult life, Thomas Hardy was a religious dissenter⁵³: his trials and tribulations, particularly in his romantic interests in his youth, caused him to become morose and gloomy. These unhappy emotions carried over into his works; both his early unpublished poems and his popular published novels. The result was open and often hostile criticism towards Hardy's defiance of religious traditions and social mores, particularly where young women appeared in his novels. These depictions of women such as Tess

⁵³ In the modern sense of the word: "one who disagrees in matters of opinion or belief."

Durbeyfield, Susan Henchard, Sue Bridehead et. al. showed young women that they were not doomed should they not marry: women could, if need arose, provide for themselves, and they need not adhere to traditional “feminine” occupations; women could engage in sexual activity and bear children out of wedlock, and while there might be social repercussions, there were not necessarily biological repercussions or instant divine retribution. There would be talk, certainly; they might be turned out of their homes; they might well be shunned by their communities, but if they were prepared to face the consequences of their actions (both in the physical world and, according to their belief systems, the afterlife as well), women could take control of their destinies and lead independent lives. This was a pretty radical notion at the time, but the novels of authors like Thomas Hardy were responsible in part for the advancement of both the religious crisis and the role of young women in society in Victorian England.

Chapter Three: The Reconciliation Attempts between Religion and Science

“Science without religion is lame; religion without science is blind” –Albert Einstein⁵⁴

When Philip Gosse wrote *Omphalos: an Attempt to Unite the Geological Knot* (1857), he was eager to reconcile religion and science, especially where the two disciplines were at extremes. Gosse readily acknowledged that people naturally felt very strongly about each subject, but he asserted that there need not be such animosity and division: religion and science were not mutually exclusive, and that each could support the other, rather than disprove each other. The Word of God, while written in man’s language in the Bible, was in fact also “written” in the Earth, and that we need only decipher these stony testaments to God’s voice to see that religion, geology, and other hard sciences were all inextricably linked. The attempt was in good faith, but the manner in

⁵⁴ This quote comes from a letter written by Einstein to his philosopher friend Eric Gutkind in response to having received a book titled *Choose Life: a Biblical call to Revolt*. Einstein was not religious; in fact, he regarded religion as childish superstition, even though he himself was Jewish, and, owing to his parents’ lack of religion as well, attended a Catholic school as a child. Although Einstein did not believe in God, he felt that faith was a must: he studied quantum theory, but did not believe such theory was by any means random. Einstein, in explaining his ideas that quantum theory was not random, was quoted as saying ‘God does not throw dice’” (Gache n. pag).

which it was attempted was doomed to fail in a manner that was to drive a wedge further between the two.

Gosse acknowledged that there was already a deep rift between science and religion, that it was steadily growing, that he was merely an instrument of reconciliation, and he was merely continuing an argument already begun. That in itself was detrimental to his efforts, since his very first task was to “be quite sure that we have got the very Word of God” when analyzing the Bible (Gosse 8). Despite the depth of his (or of anyone’s) beliefs, there is no possible way to determine definitively whether or not the Bible is truly God’s Word, no matter who actually set it down in print. It simply *cannot* be proven, which was (and still is) a major sticking point with the scientific community. Science depends on proof, empirical evidence, verifiable results, and detailed documentation that allows for the successful reproduction of those results. If there is no verifiable evidence for any given thing, science rejects it. In order for science to accept something, there must be irrefutable evidence to support it. Religion is, in this manner, the exact opposite of science. Religion operates on blind faith; “blind” being the operative word. Religion relies on feeling, belief, and faith. Common sense and the lack of any verifiable proof do not figure into religious feelings: things simply “are” and are thus accepted, and the lack of any sort of proof can be explained as

“miracles” which cannot be explained through human understanding. Furthermore, faith does not require such proof. If science demands proof and religion does not, the task to reconcile the two discrete disciplines (which are automatically at odds) and try to blend them into a unified whole is practically impossible. Furthermore, as Gosse seemed satisfied that the Bible was undoubtedly God’s Word, how were any of his declarations to be believed? He had absolutely nothing on which to base his observations of the natural world, which gave him no solid foundation on which to posit any “evidence” which he might find that would convince naysayers that science and religion were supportive of each other, and that the natural world gave ample empirical evidence of a God Who designed the world and everything in it, placed them here (whether in their finished and perfect forms or not), and gave special importance to humankind. Without any solid evidence to determine, without any doubt, that the Bible was given to man by God Himself, Gosse was poised to do more damage to the argument that science and religion were linked, which he did: *Omphalos: an attempt to Untie the Geologic Knot* was successful only in tying the “Geological Knot” even tighter.

There is a unique dilemma for anyone who would wish to reconcile religion and science. There were (and still are) some who could easily envision a link between God, nature, and evolution, Darwin himself

included. However, as Simpson and Coons (2003) explain in their essay, “Omphalos: an Attempt to Unite the Geological Knot” (which is in fact the title of Gosse’s original volume),

If one adopts the open theistic position of an indeterministic universe with a God who lacks Middle Knowledge (“Middle Knowledge” is God’s supposed knowledge of the truth values of conditional statements expressing what *would* happen or what *would have* happened in all possible cases of the exercise of libertarian free will or of undetermined chance events) and one adopts a necessitarian version of Darwinism, like that of Richard Dawkins or Simon Conway Morris, according to which it was virtually certain that complex animals very much like us would result from the operation of evolution, then one can suppose that (1) God intended that something very much like the human species would eventually exist, (2) God set in motion a Darwinian process that he (sic) knew was very likely to eventuate in human beings, and (3) God adopted a back-up intention to create human beings miraculously if, unexpectedly, Darwinian evolution failed to produce them. In such a scenario, it is highly likely that the Darwinian explanation of the origin of FC is correct, even though God intended that FC⁵⁵ should exist. On such a view, God probably used Darwinian evolution, and evolution alone, to create human beings, although there is a slight chance that a miracle was instead required. This is almost certainly the only possible synthesis of Darwinism and Christian theism, but it comes at a pretty high theoretical cost on both ends: evolutionary predestination, with the real possibility of miracles, on the one hand, and open theism, with a very limited degree of foreknowledge or predestination, on the other (Simpson and Coons 166, original emphasis).

It would seem, in order to allow for the sciences and religion to coexist peacefully, they must both allow for the other to exist, but this in

⁵⁵ FC, in this article, stands for “functional complexity.”

itself creates a problem. Science does not need to acknowledge the existence of a Deity, but religion would need to acknowledge science. This is an uneven distribution of power, and creates a lopsided view from either perspective. Scientists would not have to allow for God, but the religious believers *must* allow for science, even if science is ultimately guided by God. This would mean that theists (of any branch religion) must still try to reconcile science and religion, since science would still exist with God, and the scientists need not reconcile anything, for their discipline remains unchanged whether religion is involved or not. Gosse's well-intentioned work does not, therefore, reconcile anything, and in the light of Gosse's being satisfied (without benefit of proof) that the Bible is in fact God's word, scientists would not be satisfied with God having been involved with Creation in any way, since no one can definitively verify His hand in anything. There is simply no empirical evidence on which to base *Omphalos*.

Furthermore, Gosse's work makes some question God's truthfulness: he asserts that God is "lying" to humankind. Gosse offers "evidence" of the Creation when he writes that "This [circle of life], then, is the order of all organic nature. When once we are in any portion of the course, we find ourselves running in a circular groove, as endless as the course of a blind horse in a mill. It is evident that there is no one point in

the history of any single creature, which is a legitimate beginning of existence . . . Creation, however solves the dilemma" (Gosse 122-123).

Gosse is telling his readers that since we cannot trace our ancestry back to one single person, since that person must have had an ancestor as well, that a fully grown adult must have been the first human, and we can find that person in Adam. The inherent problem is that the trees in the Garden of Eden must have had growth rings from years it never existed, the fossils that we find today were never the remains of once-living things, and that Adam, although he had no mother and was never an infant, must have had a navel, which is indicative of mammalian birth; of the once-present placenta. However, he asserts that the presence of Adam's navel was not meant to deceive him into thinking he had parents, but he simply states that "The Man would not have been a Man without a navel" (349).

He goes on to anticipate what some might argue: "Could not God have created plants and animals without these retrospective marks [tree rings, navels, etc.]? I distinctly reply, No! not so as to preserve their specific identity with those with which we are familiar" (349). Gosse asserts that upon the completion of the Creation as stated in the Bible in Genesis, all the florae and faunae on Earth had had their evidences of prior existence already in place, and what we see in the present plants and animals had been that way since the beginning of Creation. To say such a thing, though, was effectively calling God a liar, and accusing Him of giving

false histories to all living things, since these histories were present from their first appearance on Earth, and had never really happened. Gosse's readers took note of that: one reader, the Reverend Charles Kingsley (who also happened to be Gosse's friend), was asked to review Gosse's book. He vehemently refused, and in a letter to Gosse, explained why: "I have found time to read *Omphalos* carefully, and will now write you my whole heart about it. For twenty-five years I have read no book which has so staggered and puzzled me . . . Shall I tell you the truth? It is best. Your book is the first that ever made me doubt [the Creation], and I fear it will make hundreds do so. Your book tends to prove this – that if we accept the fact of absolute creation, God becomes a *Deus quidam deceptor*⁵⁶. I do not mean merely in the case of fossils which *pretend* to be the bones of dead animals, but in the one single case of your newly created scars on the pandanus trunk, and your newly created Adam's navel, you make God tell a lie. It is not my reason, but my *conscience* which revolts here" (Gosse E., 280, original emphasis). Kingsley need not have worried, since "the book was rejected with scorn everywhere. Its solution to geological time as opposed to the Bible was too childish to be accepted after the geological progress of a quarter of a century. It demolished the very foundations of scientific inquiry . . . In its adequacy the book, contrary to Gosse's

⁵⁶ "God who lies"

intention, pointed to the need of society for a new theory of the creation” (Klaver 181).

Nevertheless, Philip Gosse was not the only one attempting to quell the argument between the two camps: there was a series of printed works (each one dedicated to a specific branch of science) that was a more detailed and authoritative attempt to bring Christians and scientists into harmonized existence. *The Bridgewater Treatises* were written with the same goal: to reconcile the hard sciences and religion. Although these works were penned and compiled by experts in their respective sciences and with much more detail of the natural world than Gosse’s publication, eschewing Biblical references altogether to explain God’s involvement in Creation, they too were doomed to fail, but for entirely different reasons.

The Bridgewater Treatises on the Power, Wisdom, and Goodness of God as Manifested in the Creation, as they were so titled, were thoughtfully written with a sincere desire to reconcile the rift between religion and science. The different volumes were authored by esteemed experts in their respective fields, which gave ostensibly gave them far more credibility than Gosse’s inelegant attempt, which based its argument for the coexistence of religion and science on the Bible’s veracity as having been issued from God, which cannot in any way be proved. *The Bridgewater Treatises* each contain expert testimony from respected scientists who were also men of the church.

While the ability to prove what the scientists asserted in these works certainly existed and were believable and verifiable, their testimonies themselves proved to be something of a problem in that laypeople in the Victorian age were not often well-versed in science and necessarily scientific jargon: if the more credible works could not readily be understood by the general public, who oftentimes did not have the disposable income to buy reading materials, they were available to the public, but the public would not purchase them. Furthermore, *the Bridgewater Treatises* were not published in one complete work, as *Omphalos* was: they were published in eight separate issues; some with several volumes⁵⁷. It is highly likely that the treatises were not purchased in complete sets by private citizens; it is more likely that, if any of the volumes were purchased at all, only one or two were purchased, which may or may not have been read cover to cover. If the evidence of God's role in Creation and the Natural sciences was discovered and made available to people, it was of no serviceable good if no one cared to purchase, read, and/or decipher the formulas and equations which the scientists commissioned to write the treatises had so carefully formulated, copied, and published. They were practically unreadable for the average Victorian household.

⁵⁷ According to the OCLC, no one volume enjoyed more reprintings than any other: reprintings were minimal.

These works were funded by a bequeathal from Reverend Francis Henry Egerton, The Earl of Bridgewater⁵⁸ (1756-1829), who, upon his death, left 8,000 pounds sterling for a series of publications (eight in total, and each volume was to have a thousand copies printed) to be written and published to show that God's work was fully evident among the various sciences. The profits from the volumes sold were to be paid to the respective authors of the works. The treatises were also not just limited to scientific findings; there was to be a variety of evidence, "illustrating such work by all reasonable arguments, as, for instance, the variety and formation of God's creatures in the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms; the effect of digestion, and thereby of conversion; the construction of the hand of man, and an infinite variety of other arguments: as also by discoveries, ancient and modern, in arts, sciences, and the whole extent of literature" (Combe 17). In other words, anything and everything that could be used to demonstrate the existence of God and His intention in the Creation and in the natural world was to be used, including art, music, literature, and of course, science. The problem with this lofty commission was that although there was plenty of verifiable

⁵⁸ Francis Henry Egerton was the 8th Earl of Bridgewater and a Prince of the Holy Roman Empire. He was the youngest son of the Bishop of Durham, and was schooled in religious institutions all through his life. Although he was heavily involved in the Church, he also compiled one of the finest collections of manuscripts in Europe. He was made a Fellow of the Royal Society and a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries. Since he died unmarried, he left his manuscripts to the British Museum, along with his fortune to curate them. He also allocated some of his fortune to pay for the creation and publication of *the Bridgewater Treatises* (Allen, Bruce n. pag.).

evidence (as far as science was concerned) of the processes that governed science, these proofs were still not applicable in proving the existence, much less the intentions, of an all-powerful, all-knowing God Who supposedly spoke the world into existence in six days.

The treatises were written as follows:

Treatise I, by Thomas Chalmers⁵⁹. The Adaptation of External Nature to the Moral and Intellectual Constitution of Man. 2 vols.

Treatise II, by John Kidd⁶⁰, On the Adaptation of External Nature to the Physical Condition of Man.

Treatise III, by William Whewell⁶¹. On Astronomy and General Physics.

Treatise IV, by Charles Bell⁶². The Hand: Its Mechanism and Vital Endowments as Evincing Design.

Treatise V, by Peter Mark Roget⁶³. Animal and Vegetable Physiology Considered with Reference to Natural Theology. 2 vols.

Treatise VI, by William Buckland⁶⁴. Geology and Mineralogy Considered with Reference to Natural Theology. 2 vols.

Treatise VII, by William Kirby⁶⁵. On the History Habits and Instincts of Animals. 2 vols.

⁵⁹ Thomas Chalmers (1780-1847) was a professor of theology, a Scottish minister, and a political economist.

⁶⁰ John Kidd (1775-1851) was a British chemist, physician, and geologist.

⁶¹ William Whewell (1794-1866) was a priest, a philosopher, a historian, and a theologian. He was also Master of Trinity College.

⁶² Charles Bell (1774-1842) was a Scottish surgeon, neurologist, anatomist, and philosophical theologian.

⁶³ Peter Mark Roget (1779-1869) was a British physician, lexicographer, and natural theologian.

⁶⁴ William Buckland (1784-1856) was a geologist, paleontologist, and theologian. He was also the Dean of Westminster.

⁶⁵ William Kirby (1779-1850) was a British entomologist and priest.

Treatise VIII, by William Prout⁶⁶. Chemistry, Meteorology, and the Function of Digestion.

The authors of the respective works were well-known and highly respected men of science who also happened to be deeply involved with the Church, so it follows (in theory, at least) that these men were hand-selected by the then-President⁶⁷ of the Royal Society of London⁶⁸ (with assistance from the Archbishop of Canterbury) to write the treatises that corresponded with their respective fields of expertise. Each treatise, written with meticulous care, was to demonstrate the goodness and power of the Almighty, all the while showing how science and nature were easily and flawlessly reconciled with the Bible. Once again, however, there was simply no way to prove definitively the existence of God, even by learned and respected men of science. These particular works were also impeded by the sheer number of works in the set and the complicated scientific jargon with which they were constructed: the common folk of the period were not often familiar with such disciplines. Only men of money and leisure had the luxury of pursuing extended educations and indulging in hobbies which familiarized them with vocabularies and formulae that enabled them to comprehend and process the contents of

⁶⁶ William Prout (1785-1850) was a British chemist, theologian, and physician.

⁶⁷ Davies Gilbert, born Davies Giddy (1767-1839), was the President of the Royal Society from 1827-1830.

⁶⁸ The Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge was founded in 1660, and is a learned society for science. It is still in existence.

the volumes, which may have made them attractive only to the people who were already involved in the sciences, and who needed no further convincing of God's power and His supposed intent when designing the universe, or to the people who needed convincing not of the workings of science and nature, but of the existence of a Deity, which could not be proved in a set of printed works (or in any other way, for that matter). Whichever side the people chose, secular/atheist or Christian, the works were not disseminated widely because their intimidating contents, coupled with the number of volumes needed to complete the set making for a price that was exclusive to the working class, made them, in their very essence, a *de facto* failure. No one who might have been inclined to purchase the volumes needed convincing of their argument, while the people who might have needed solid evidence either could not afford to buy them, or, once having purchased them, could not understand them in their entirety. The public just didn't have the wherewithal to obtain and/or understand the material within the well-intentioned volumes, making the entire purpose of the Earl of Bridgewater's generous and altruistic gift nigh unto meaningless in the long run.

Philip Gosse and the Earl of Bridgewater had the same intention at heart when trying to create, publish, and widely disseminate works that could ultimately convince the public wholeheartedly of Intelligent

Design⁶⁹ and the undoubted existence of a beneficent and altruistic God Who created man in His own image and as the pinnacle of His creation. However well-intentioned, it stands to reason that such an effort is doomed to failure simply because there is no method of proving, beyond any reasonable doubt, that God exists. It simply cannot be done, regardless of the method used. God only exists through faith, and faith is a matter of one's personal choice, beliefs, and upbringing; things which a mere publication, however elaborate and eloquent or simple and straightforward, cannot instill. As George Eliot and Thomas Hardy demonstrated quite effectively, the laws that govern science⁷⁰ are fixed and unchanging (although science itself can change) while religion is mutable⁷¹: faith can be acquired, but it is not necessarily permanent. Faith can also be lost.

⁶⁹ Intelligent design refers to a scientific research program as well as a community of scientists, philosophers and other scholars who seek evidence of design in nature. The theory of intelligent design holds that certain features of the universe and of living things are best explained by an intelligent cause, not an undirected process such as natural selection. Through the study and analysis of a system's components, a design theorist is able to determine whether various natural structures are the product of chance, natural law, intelligent design, or some combination thereof. Such research is conducted by observing the types of information produced when intelligent agents act. Scientists then seek to find objects which have those same types of informational properties which we commonly know come from intelligence. Intelligent design has applied these scientific methods to detect design in irreducibly complex biological structures, the complex and specified information content in DNA, the life-sustaining physical architecture of the universe, and the geologically rapid origin of biological diversity in the fossil record during the Cambrian explosion approximately 530 million years ago (Center for Science & Culture).

⁷⁰ The laws of gravity, the speed of light, the laws of physics, etc.

⁷¹ "Mutability, to be bearable, must not include the idea of irreversible mutation" (Beer 118).

Despite the call by some Victorian authors to embrace science over religion, some authors recognized the crisis of eschewing religion and faith for science: it is far easier to believe (and thus accept) what can be seen and proven versus that which is unseen and has no evidence whatsoever on which to base it. For some, though, the faith of the heart was far more important and vital than anything science had to offer, the tangible evidence of scientific fact notwithstanding. Marie Corelli (1855-1924) was one such Victorian author. Her work titled *the Sorrows of Satan* was one such novel that began by accepting science and disdaining the beliefs in any sort of Deity or an existence after death, but ended with the wholehearted acceptance and of religion.

Geoffrey Tempest, the hero of the story, truly wanted to believe in a loving and eternal God, and he tried to believe, but he was also repulsed by the thought: Tempest was the heir to a very large fortune, and his money was able (in his mind) to supply his wants and his needs quite admirably. Tempest's millions were able to secure a luxurious mode of living, plenty of sycophantic admirers, and a very desirable match in marriage, according the standards of wealthy Victorian society. Tempest's closest friend, the mysterious Lucio Rimanez, also fabulously wealthy,

sees to the bodily and mental comforts of Tempest, bringing to bear all of life's luxuries for him. Tempest marries the very beautiful young daughter of an Earl, also by way of Rimanez's introduction. To the casual observer, Tempest should be deliriously happy: he can want for nothing by way of material goods, and his social position, already exalted, is elevated by his marriage. He is oddly unhappy and morose: he soon realizes that his money brings him only false friends and admirers who indulge themselves in food and entertainment at his expense, and he soon realizes that his lovely bride is only superficially beautiful: she was never actually in love with him, but through an advantageous match, she wished to secure financial solvency for her penniless father. Furthermore, his wife, Sybil, was all the while secretly longing to have Tempest's closest friend, Rimanez, as her lover, which complicates her situation. Rimanez declares that not only will he not have her as a mistress, he will also inform her husband of her infidelity. Overhearing the conversation between his best friend and his new wife, Tempest regards Rimanez all the more since he has scorned the advances of his faithless young bride. It does not occur to Tempest that Rimanez was not acting in his interest as a true and faithful friend, but garnering more trust in an as-yet unsuspecting victim. Rimanez was seeking to win Tempest's very soul: Rimanez was literally the Devil in disguise. This sort of captivating story lures the reader in, since the acquisition of money, luxury, and material wealth also summons

evil, according to the religious sect of Victorian society, exemplified by authors who retained their religion.

Corelli gives innumerable hints to Rimanez's true identity throughout the novel, which gives the reader subtle moral instruction throughout the story: true wealth is not monetary, beauty is much more than simply one's outward appearance, selfishness only leads to moral and societal decay, and so on. These sentiments are admirable, but when the novel's climax is reached, it is through what she seems to disdain: *evidence*. Rimanez hints over and over at what he really is, but Tempest, too blinded by greed and luxury to understand his seemingly close companion, is finally made to understand that he has been keeping company with the Devil only when Lucio strips away his handsome human façade and reveals himself to be Lucifer, Son of the Morning, the Fallen Angel of the Bible.

Corelli allows her character to choose his life's path, and, in urging her readers to choose God and serve only Him, has Tempest declare that he will serve God from now on:

I realised with shame my miserable vices, my puny scorn of God, my effronteries and blasphemies; and in the sudden strong repulsion and repudiation of my own worthless existence, being and character, I found both voice and speech.

“GOD only!” I cried fervently – “Annihilation at His hands, rather than life without Him! GOD only! I have chosen!”

My words vibrated passionately on my own ears, . . . and . . . even as they were spoken, the air grew misty with a snowy opalescent radiance, . . . the sable and crimson wings uplifted in such multitudinous array around me, palpitated with a thousand changeful hues, . . . and over the face of my dark foe [Satan] a light celestial fell like the smile of dawn! Awed and afraid I gazed upward, . . . and there I saw a new and yet more wondrous glory, . . . a shining Figure outlined against the sky in such surpassing beauty and vivid brilliancy as made me think the sun itself had risen in vast Angel-shape on rainbow pinions! And from the brightening heaven there rang a silver voice, clear as a clarion call – *“Arise, Lucifer, Son of the Morning! One soul rejects thee,--one hour of joy is granted thee! Hence and arise!”*

Earth, air and sea blazed suddenly into fiery gold,--blinded and stunned, I was seized by compelling hands and held firmly down by a force invisible, . . . the yacht was slowly sinking under me! Overwhelmed with unearthly terrors, my lips yet murmured,

“GOD! God only!” The heavens changed from gold to crimson – anon to shining blue, . . . and against this mass of wavering colour that seemed to make a jewelled archway of the sky, I saw the Form of him whom I had known as man, swiftly ascend god-like, with flaming pinions and upturned glorious visage, like a vision of light in darkness! Around him clustered a million winged shapes,--but He, supreme, majestic, wonderful, towered high above them all, a very king of splendour, the glory round his brows resembling meteor-fires in an Arctic midnight,--his eyes, twin stars, ablaze with such great rapture as seemed half agony! Breathless and giddy, I strained to follow him as he fled; . . . and heard the musical calling of strange sweet voices everywhere, from east to west, north to south.

“Lucifer, beloved and unforgotten! Lucifer, Son of the Morning! Arise! . . . arise! . . .” (268-269, original emphasis)

Corelli's tale of morality, redemption, and forgiveness is relatable to her readers, but the Divine compassion is made further accessible because it is extended even unto Satan, the Enemy of mankind. If so foul and evil a creature (although made fair by God's kindness) is allowed a measure of redemption, then humans must surely be included in the plan of salvation by Christ's sacrifice. However, even though the tale ends in beauty and morality, which is palatable to a Christian nation, Corelli may have unwittingly reinforced the argument which she was trying to counter.

The idea of anyone – *anyone* – meriting forgiveness, no matter what he or she may have done in his or her lifetime, is appealing; especially given the notion that there may indeed be an afterlife. Such thoughts are predicated on one's particular faith: the next life may be spent in Heaven, Hell, or it may be spent back on Earth in a reincarnated form, be it human or otherwise. However, although our hero is given the choice by his own free will, I argue that even though the choice was a purely religious choice, that of choosing to serve God or Lucifer, the choice was *not* in fact a faith-based decision. Faith by its very nature is based on what cannot be definitively proved, and what cannot be seen, felt, or heard. Geoffrey Tempest was asked to make his choice with Lucifer, in his full supernatural regalia of outstretched crimson wings and unearthly glowing light about his face, right before him, in full view. If such an

opportunity (however frightening and terrible) were afforded to every person who doubted or denied God and the hereafter (as Tempest did), and had an abundance of riches (as Tempest did) to test his mettle and his desire to perform good deeds for others with those riches (as Tempest did not), one has to wonder why each person would not make the choice to serve God when Lucifer is right there in a terrifying spectacle asking one to choose. If God, the Devil, and a host of angels are present, and one can both see and hear them, the choice is based on *evidence*, and not merely on *faith*. Faith requires no proof, and Geoffrey Tempest made his ultimate decision only when evidence of a God Whom he had previously doubted, then outright denied, was visible to him in all His glorious splendor.

People whose faiths are wavering or even disappearing altogether would certainly have an incentive to revivify their respective religions if God and Lucifer themselves are forcing them, in Person, in a visible display of terrifying supernatural power, to choose right then and there. The choice would be incredibly easy, and faith by its very nature is not easy.

Corelli, a female contemporary of famous authors like Eliot and Hardy, was not swayed by the discourse emanating from the scientific and academic halls of institutions like the Royal Society. While her peers were abandoning their religion in favor of science, Corelli was seeking to restore some of society's lost faith by penning a story about a common man to whom much was given as far as money and earthly possessions.

She herself was a wildly famous author, even outselling some of her contemporaries⁷². Many people, though being urged to embrace science, evidence, and fact, were not entirely ready to abandon their beliefs; here, in the form of the beloved and familiar novel, was a way to hang on to and even strengthen faith: a story urging a return to God, and a belief in redemption so strong that even Lucifer, the Enemy of Mankind, also urged people to choose God and salvation over worldly possessions and materialism, and who was in turn rewarded with the hope of being able to return to Heaven one day for good. Lucifer, in this particular story, was painfully aware of what he had lost when he was banished from Paradise, and was saddled with additional burdens (i.e., more time away from Heaven and the company of angels whom “once he knew and loved (426) each time a person willingly chose wealth, luxury, and greed over the opportunity to return to God and have a chance to spend eternity with Him.

Furthermore, Geoffrey Tempest comes to realize the true happiness of this world, even though he was destitute owing to the eventual discovery of embezzlement of most of his money by his dishonest lawyers:

⁷² “Corelli broke all publishing records: on average, a Corelli novel sold 100,000 copies a year. At the turn of the century sales averaged 175,000 copies” (Federico 2).

I read in my loss of world's cash the working of such a merciful providence and pity as ever gave me a grander hope than any I had ever known. Clear before me rose the vision of that most divine and beautiful necessity of happiness,--Work! -- the grand and too often misprized Angel of Labour, which moulds the mind of man, steadies his hands, controls his brain, purifies his passions, and strengthens his whole mental and physical being. A rush of energy and health filled my veins,--and I thanked God devoutly for the golden opportunities held out afresh for me to accept and use. Gratitude there should be in every human soul for every gift of heaven,--but nothing merits more thankfulness and praise to the Creator than the call to work, and the ability to respond to it (278).

Corelli was extolling the virtues of honest living, and of honestly earning one's daily bread instead of having it handed to us. She exemplifies hard work, gratitude of the spirit, and the recognition of the "misfortune" of having material wealth and comfort by virtue of someone else's labor (provided it is used for only selfish indulgence versus being employed for the good of others who are less fortunate), and of not having earned one's own freedom by one's own hands:

A man who has too much money *creates* forgers and thieves about him,--he cannot expect to meet with honesty. Let the bank prosecute if it likes,--I shall not. I am free! -- free to work for my living. What I earn I shall enjoy, --what I have inherited, I have learnt to loathe! (280, original emphasis.)

The truth of Corelli's lesson in finances might be taken with a grain of salt, for if one has very little or nothing left after paying the bills when working diligently at an honest job one may be very grateful indeed for

the gift of a large inheritance: wealth does not necessarily corrupt a person, and much good may be done for others if one has money enough to spare after one has seen to his or her own needs and the needs of his or her family. One may also be unable to work through infirmity of the mind or of the body, and require help in order to survive: a considerable sum of money would likely be met with gratitude and thanksgiving. There are ways in which thanks to God may be given which do not require self-denial and sacrifice, as Corelli seems to imply here.

However well-intentioned, Corelli seems (however unwittingly) to bolster the argument which she seems to want to rebut: the argument for evidence. While Corelli (among others) pushes for a return to faith, the faith in her characters only seems to come when tangible, solid *evidence* is placed before them: Sybil, when she consumes poison and, in her death throes, realizes that she is not in fact passing into oblivion (as she believed would happen). She writes in her final letter to Tempest that

Oh God! . . . Let me write – write – while I can! Let me yet hold fast the thread which fastens me to earth, --give me time – time before I drift out, lost in yonder blackness and flame! Let me write for others the awful Truth, as I see it,-- there is No death! None – none! – *I cannot die*. I am passing out of my body,--I am being carried away from it inch by inch in inexplicable mystic torture,--but I am not dying,--I am being carried forward into a new life, vague and vast! . . . I see a new world full of dark forms, half shaped yet shapeless! – they float towards me, beckoning me on. I am actively conscious – I hear, I think, I know! Death is a mere

human dream,--a comforting fancy; it has no real existence,--there is nothing in the Universe but life! O hideous misery! -- *I cannot die!* In my mortal body I can scarcely breathe,--the pen I try to hold writes of itself rather than through my shaking hand,--but these pangs are the throes of birth -- not death! . . . I hold back,-- with all the force of my soul I strive not to plunge into that black abyss I see before me -- but -- *my mother drags me with her,*--I cannot shake her off! I hear her voice now;--she speaks distinctly, and laughs as though she wept; 'Come Sybil! Soul of the child I bore, come and meet your lover! Come and see upon WHOM you fixed your faith! Soul of the woman I trained, return to that from whence you came!' Still I hold back,--nude and trembling I stare into a dark void -- and now there are wings about me,--wings of fiery scarlet;--they fill the space,--they enfold me, stinging me as with flying arrows and showers of hail!

Let me write on,--write on, with this dead fleshly hand, . . . one moment more time, dread God! . . . one moment more to write the truth,--the terrible truth of Death whose darkest secret, Life, is unknown to men! I live! -- a new, strong, impetuous vitality possesses me, though my mortal body is nearly dead, Faint gasps and weak shudderings affect it still,--and I, outside it and no longer of it, propel its perishing hand to write these final words -- *I live!* To my despair and terror,--to my remorse and agony, I live! -- oh the unspeakable misery of this new life! And worst of all,-- God whom I doubted, God whom I was taught to deny, this wronged, blasphemed, and outraged God EXISTS! And I could have found Him had I chosen,--this knowledge is forced upon me as I am torn from hence,--it is shouted at me by a thousand wailing voices! . . . too late! -- too late! The scarlet wings beat me downward,--these strange half-shapeless forms close round and drive me onward . . . to a further darkness, . . . amid wind and fire!

Serve me, dead hand, once more ere I depart, . . . my tortured spirit must seize and compel you to write down this thing unnameable, that earthly eyes may read, and earthly souls take timely warning! . . . I know at last WHOM I have loved! -- whom I have chosen, whom I have worshipped! . . . Oh God, have mercy! . . . I know WHO claims my worship

now, and drags me into yonder rolling world of flame! . . .
his name is “ (205-206, original emphasis)

Once again, Corelli is presenting the protagonist with otherworldly evidence: evidence of an afterlife, as seen by the dying form of his faithless wife. Sybil is able to write down an account of what she is experiencing as her mortal body dies, and into what her immortal soul progresses. It would seem consistent with Victorian values that a married woman who courts another man and swears she never loved her husband, despite her wedding vows, would envision Hell as her just desserts upon her death (although it is in fact inconsistent with Christian values, which insist upon a kind, loving, and, above all, *forgiving* God, especially as she begs God for mercy in her final breaths (or pen strokes, as it were), which would amount to repentance). Sybil’s lengthy account of what she witnesses before she can name whoever is now claiming her soul is either the ravings of a self-poisoned, suicidal, desperate woman, or the fortunate, truthful, timely warning of a soul passing from this world and into another. In either case, the letter is enough to unnerve her husband – but only temporarily. After Sybil’s funeral, Tempest realizes that nobody (including himself) was really affected or even bothered by her passing, and he seems to forget all about the chilling accounts of Hell as described in Sybil’s final communiqué. The hastily-written letter may also in itself be a form of repentance; why else would she write such a lengthy,

descriptive letter? She had already declared her disdain for her husband, but she also summoned a superhuman effort to warn him of what was to come in the afterlife. She could have died with a self-satisfied knowledge that she could have warned him, and chose not to, but she presented him with evidence upon her death. More evidence is used in a novel which is trying to stress faith, chastity, self-denial, and all those other lovely values of Christianity.

Marie Corelli's intentions were noble when she wrote *the Sorrows of Satan*, but her story of faith and redemption is heavily rooted in empirical evidence, and evidence is the realm of science: faith relies only in the belief of the heart. Corelli's attempt to get her readers to return to God may have backfired.

Conclusion: The Humanist Novel as Vehicle for Loss and Hope

In recent years many people understandably, though mistakenly, believe that the start of the Victorian religious crisis conveniently coincided with Darwin's publications on evolution and the adaptability of living things; however, this is not so: religious upheaval throughout England was already rampant and widespread by the time Darwin published *the Origin of the Species*. People had already begun to question Judeo-Christian religion much earlier than many had originally thought: the moneyed gentleman's avocation of meticulously and laboriously exploring the sciences, specifically geology, had already provided ample, solid, empirical scientific evidence for the absence of a Deity, or at the very least, the absence of a need for a Deity, for quite some time. Geologists, both expert and amateur, had unearthed tangible evidence of ancient, unfamiliar, and extinct forms of life buried in sand, soil, and clay for many years. The scattered remnants of creatures the like of which no one had ever encountered--or even remembered--in the relatively short span of human existence (according to the scientists who did not subscribe to biblical accounts of Creation) were being discovered all over the world. The innumerable remains of dinosaurs, the layers of volcanic ash, the geologic strata, and the laws of simple physics spoke inaudibly of an Earth that was many, many, *many* years older than was originally suspected, or

even the sacred and heretofore unquestioned Bible had declared. Bishop Ussher⁷³ gave a date of the world and (subsequently the beginning of time) of around 6,000 years; an amount of time that was wholly unsatisfactory from a chemistry and physics perspective, at the very least; but the clergy and the faithful laity seemed to accept Ussher's chronology without any argument⁷⁴. The eminent scientists of the time were far more skeptical, and set out to challenge the Bible's, or, more to the point, Bishop Ussher's account of time.

Advances in scientific understanding allowed for practical, reproducible experiments that offered solid evidence that the Earth was much older than the approximate 6,000 or so years with which the Church

⁷³ As a Protestant bishop in a Catholic land, [Bishop] Ussher's obsession with providing an accurate Biblical history stemmed from a desire to establish the superiority of the scholarship practiced by the clergy of his reformed faith over that of the Jesuits, the resolutely intellectual Roman Catholic order. (Ussher had absolutely nothing good to say about "papists" and their "superstitious" faith and "erroneous" doctrine.) Ussher committed himself to establishing a date for Creation that could withstand any challenge . . . As paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould points out in an essay on Ussher, the bishop's calculation of the date of Creation [October 23rd 4004BC] fueled much ridicule from scientists who pointed to him as "a symbol of ancient and benighted authoritarianism." Few geology textbook writers resisted taking a satirical swing at Ussher in their introductions. How foolish, the authors suggested, to believe that the earth's geologic and fossil history could be crammed into 6,000 years. Gould, while not defending the bishop's chronology, notes that judged by the research traditions and assumptions of his time, Ussher deserves not criticism, but praise for his meticulousness. The questionable premise underlying Ussher's work, of course, is that the Bible is inerrant . . . In 1701, the Church of England adopted Ussher's dates for use in its official Bible. For the next two centuries, Ussher's dates so commonly appeared in Bibles that his dates "practically acquired the authority of the word of God" (Linder 2004).

⁷⁴ Even the printers of Bibles included Ussher's date in the margins of bibles for many years (Linder).

seemed satisfied. Lord Kelvin⁷⁵ posited that the date of the Creation provided by Ussher was inaccurate, and through his experiments involving the heating and slow cooling of small molten iron spheres⁷⁶ (which were then extrapolated to the actual and known size of the Earth), he calculated (erroneously) that the Earth was much older than 6,000 years: Lord Kelvin approximated the age of the Earth to be tens of millions of years old. (It was unknown at the time that the Earth generates some of its own heat in its molten iron interior through radioactive decay, and thus did not completely cool from a molten mass to a solid mass, as the iron sphere did in Lord Kelvin's experiment.) Though Lord Kelvin's date was still much older than Bishop Ussher's, Lord Kelvin's age of the Earth still fell far short of what modern scientists now know: through such chemical dating means as Uranium-Thorium dating and Uranium-Lead dating (among other methods), we now know the Earth to be approximately 4.6 billion years old. These modern chemical dating methods were unavailable to scientists in the 19th century, so more

⁷⁵ Lord William Thompson Kelvin (1824-1907) was a Scottish mathematician and physicist who believed that the age of the Earth as stated by Bishop Ussher was much too short to allow for geologist Charles Lyell's theory of gradualism (gradual geological change) or with Darwin's theory of evolution through natural selection, so he began his own experiments to find a more satisfactory age in keeping with the laws of physics and thermodynamics.

⁷⁶ In 1897, Lord Kelvin assumed that the Earth was originally molten and calculated a date based on cooling through conduction and radiation. The age of Earth was calculated to be about 24-40 million years based on the laws of thermodynamics (Schombert).

primitive methods like cooling iron spheres were all those scientists had to explain their reasoning – and their religious doubt.

Apart from radioactive dating methods used on rocks and minerals, modern scientists are now also able to use earthquake data⁷⁷ to “look” inside the Earth to determine what lies within. Even so, we are in essence still guessing what’s underneath the Earth’s surface. Without a first-hand account, we can still make only educated guesses as to what comprises the Earth; but using volcanic ejecta, the behavioral properties of rocks and minerals, fluid dynamics, and advanced mathematics, modern geologists are still able to make viable arguments as to what comprises the Earth.

The age of the Earth is not the only sticking point that contributed to the Victorian religious dilemma: there was also the notable absence of fossils from every step in an organism’s evolutionary development. Fossil evidence of previous forms of current creatures are found in varying stages of development, but are not found in complete, gradual forms which show every step of the evolutionary process. Such an argument is a specious: evolution is biologically expensive to organisms, so nature does

⁷⁷ Mankind has thus far been incapable of penetrating the Earth’s crust beyond seven miles: the heat encountered at such depths is capable of melting any metal tools used to drill into the crust. Earthquake waves such as Primary waves (P waves), Secondary waves (S waves) and Love waves (L waves) have limits as to what sorts of materials they can travel through, allowing geologists to determine what lies beneath the impenetrable crust of the Earth.

not impose evolution on a species unless it is necessary to its survival.

Paleontologist Steven Jay Gould⁷⁸ coined the phrase punctuated equilibrium⁷⁹ to explain the lack of fossil evidence that exhibits gradual forms of change (also called “gradualism⁸⁰”).

Because these evolutionary theories were now openly spoken and published in print, they were being discussed openly. However, such scientific and specialized lectures were being conducted in arenas that were traditionally frequented by males: colleges, universities, and lecture hall, such as those of the Royal Society. Victorian women were often not to be found in those locales. Rather, women were closely bound to their homes⁸¹, and did not attend learned gatherings. It was unusual that a woman would possess an education that would allow her to understand

⁷⁸ Steven Jay Gould (1941-2002) was the Alexander Agassiz Professor of Zoology and a professor of geology at Harvard University. A paleontologist by trade, Dr. Gould (along with paleontologist Dr. Niles Eldridge) developed the theory of punctuated equilibrium when they were unable to find gradual change in fossil remains when conducting research in their respective graduate school careers (Yoon n. pag.).

⁷⁹ Punctuated equilibrium is a theory (attributed to paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould) that describes an evolutionary change happening rapidly and in brief geological events in between the long periods of stasis (or equilibrium). The theory is based on the stasis in fossil records, and when phenotypic evolution occurs, it is localized in rare, rapid events of branching speciation.

⁸⁰ Gradualism: A theory stating that evolutionary change happens slowly, steadily and gradually in an attempt of the species to continue to adapt to new challenges over the course of their history until they became (gradually) new species different from their ancestors.

⁸¹ Women often did not attend certain social gatherings such as funerals, even with a male escort. “Elite women typically did not attend funerals during the early and mid-Victorian period out of concern that open expressions of sorrow might disrupt the services. Some women, however, ignored these social restrictions” (Murdoch 67).

the discussion that would take place in those places. Occasionally, though, such a woman did exist, not only was she genuinely interested in the discussions, but she also, quite intentionally, disseminated the information she gleaned at the proceedings through her writing. George Eliot was a popular author⁸², and her novels proved to be the vehicle of some very anti-religious sentiments; her ideas of independence, equal education, and employment for women were echoed in her books and essays. Moreover, her ideas were buoyed by the things she heard and saw in the learned circles: her ideas, incongruent with feminine tradition, were backed by evidence, both scientific and empirical. Eliot herself, despite having to assume a masculine moniker in order for her work to be taken seriously by publishers, was an example of a woman who was educated (although for reasons entirely different than those she advocated), independent, and gainfully employed. There was also the matter of her living with a man without benefit of marriage. A living arrangement like that was considered scandalous at the time, but Eliot proved that it could be done. Her experiences, not common among women in the Victorian period, added to her ethos, and her female audience, whatever their private opinions of her, could not discount her ideas: she was living proof that feminine roles, grounded in religion, could in fact change. Not only

⁸² Though Eliot and Hardy were both popular authors, Marie Corelli far outsold them, but she never gained the distinction they did.

were feminine roles being challenged, but the Bible itself was being challenged. Because religion was authoritative and had definition as to the place of women (as subservient and therefore inferior to men), women could find familiarity and even safety in functions assigned to them in a patriarchal society. George Eliot provided a contemporary example of a woman not bound by tradition or religion, and who enjoyed a measure of freedom in her existence. If religion could be challenged and tradition bucked successfully by a woman, then her peers could begin to view their notions of religion, however long-held, in a new and different light. While the abandonment of religion held the promise of independence and freedom from suffocating and subservient roles, it also promulgated the problem of unfamiliar and often frightening circumstances. If women didn't have the security of religious doctrine in which to find their identities, they either had to find new identities by which to define themselves, or lose their identities altogether, and have nothing readily available with which to replace them. If women were unable to define themselves in society owing to the abandonment of religion, the results could be dire: poverty, madness, and even death could result if a woman could not manage her newfound freedom.

Having a woman advocate for the right to education and employment for other women seemed almost natural, but the push for

women's rights and equality and not having one's identity rooted in religion is made stronger – and more problematic – when a man is advocating those issues. Thomas Hardy was aware of the plight of women and featured them in his novels as well: Hardy had his female characters living together and even bearing children out of wedlock, being separated from the husbands through monetary transactions, and even featured horrendous actions forbidden by religious dogma, such as murder, prominently displayed in his works. Hardy had a religious upbringing, but through his experiences as a young apprentice to an architect (who restored churches, ironically), he began to feel much less strongly about religion, eventually losing his religious fervor altogether. Hardy was also a popular novelist, and his works depicted his anti-religious feelings. He wrote about shocking topics; so shocking, in fact, that his publishers forced him to censor and even exclude passages from his work. What did make it into his novels was received (in many cases) with horror, disgust, and repulsion: Hardy had his female characters demonstrating behavior which was unacceptable for women to exhibit. When young Tess Durbeyfield is raped, she is not seen as a victim of a despicable crime: she is seen as a loose woman, and where she should be shown sympathy and understanding, she is shunned and labeled. What Hardy notes, quite truthfully, is that the rape, despite being a crime, is only breaking the laws of man and man's religion: nature does not take marriage (a religious

sacrament) into account regarding reproduction, and no natural laws were broken. Hardy's characters also become mistresses, commit murder, and live together and bear children out of wedlock, which, once again, is only viewed as shocking because it does not follow religious doctrine. Hardy's novels depict Darwin's theories in his works: survival of the fittest, natural selection, sexual selection, and adaptation; these theories are in direct contrast to Scripture, with which the Victorians, young and old, men and women alike, were intimately familiar. To introduce impressionable young people to these new and unfamiliar concepts was to upset their worlds, and to challenge the ideas and teachings that were strict, yet somehow comforting. Their old ways of thinking might be unequal regarding the sexes, and have created class structure, but familiar can be comfortable, even if it creates hardship. Newfound freedom and sudden release from the old constricting teaching that allows for equality and justice can be overwhelming without guidance, and since the ideas of evolution and survival were newly available to Victorian society, there was very little guidance to be had. Without the old familiar structure and foundation of religion as a guide, many people were practically thrown into chaos, and the already-widespread crisis of religious doubt found a new sector of society in which to take hold: the uneducated young women who were reading popular humanist novels, like those of George Eliot and Thomas Hardy. There was no need to go to the meetings of the Royal

Society to encounter the ideas of Darwin, Lyell, and Huxley: they were also to found within the pages of popular fiction.

The sciences were making advances in the Victorian era, but they still weren't wholly accurate regarding the processes that determine the structure of the Earth. Plate tectonics⁸³ was still unknown at the time, and radioactive dating methods were not yet used for geology. The age of the Earth and theories of long-term processes like evolution, orogeny,⁸⁴ and stratigraphy⁸⁵ were theories that seemed plausible, but without known mechanisms to drive them, people outside the scientific community were not easily convinced that they could be realities. If complicated ideas could not be easily and satisfactorily explained, the general public could easily be confused and even angered: people might try to put their faith in science rather than in religion, but if science could not explain its workings, those same people might not be able to accept science, but find it difficult to accept God as the explanation, since God was also beyond explanation. Hovering between faith and science, yet unable to fully embrace either, caused an already large rift to widen further, and the religious crisis, instead of being "healed" by the good intentions of scientists who could accept that science and God were fully compatible,

⁸³ Plate tectonics is the theory of continental plates moving over the surface of the Earth owing to the slow, constant movement of convection cells in the asthenosphere, or upper mantle and lower crust of the Earth. Plate tectonics became a theory in the early 1970s.

⁸⁴ Orogeny is the geologic term for mountain-building events.

⁸⁵ Stratigraphy refers to the layering of rocks and the study thereof.

was expanded to affect new audiences that might not normally be affected by scientific jargon, and might have remained unscathed by the loss of religious devotion owing to scientific discovery. Young women were exposed to theories that they could not fully understand and ideas with which they were not brought up to accept. George Eliot and Thomas Hardy (among others) were demonstrating in their works that women could be equal to men in earning their keep, running a household, maintaining a job, and even starting families all without the binding union of marriage, or even needing to stay with a man at all. Young women were groomed for finding suitable husbands and obeying biblical commands from childhood. Encountering radical ideas that the humanist authors espoused, such as equal education for women so that they could communicate effectively with their husbands, living with men and even rearing children without having to commit to men through a church-sanctioned contract, and divorcing women through unconventional means such as a simple financial transaction rather than having to endure the disgrace and hardship of a legal divorce, were things with which women were entirely unfamiliar. Seeing them as they were innocently indulging in a favorite pastime and challenging the things that they held dear, especially regarding religion and religious ideals could prove shocking. Even the literary reviewers of the time (which were men) called the novels these authors were producing “obscene,” “shocking,” and

“unsuitable.” The authors were forced to alter their stories before publishers would accept them for printing, and even the censored passages were disturbing to readers. Scientific evidence that tampered with faith was slowly leaking from the traditional venues of learned societies, and was being disseminated through nontraditional means, such as novels.

The works produced by George Eliot and Thomas Hardy were fiction, and were written as stories meant to entertain audiences. However, the language that the authors chose added a measure of truth to the fiction, further complicating the issue of encountering ideas that were not normally included in books read for pleasure. George Eliot’s use of the word “dynamic” in *Daniel Deronda* caused uproar among men of faith, who disapproved of the use of language that was contrary to faith-based ideas⁸⁶. Modern audiences do not place as much meaning on individual words as Victorian audiences did: a word such as “dynamic,” indicating movement, was taken to mean movement in an evolutionary means. To indicate that a woman was capable of changing does not seem so scandalous today, but when *Middlemarch* was published in 1874, not long

⁸⁶ “George Eliot was often taken to task by contemporary reviewers for the persistent scientific allusions in her works. Henry James [an author and Eliot’s contemporary], indeed, complained that ‘*Middlemarch* is too often an echo of Messrs. Darwin and Huxley. And R. H. Hutton objected to her use of the word ‘dynamic’ in the opening sentences of *Daniel Deronda* as being pedantically overscientific . . . The surprise that any modern reader is likely to feel at Hutton’s particular objection should alert us to the degree to which language that has now lost its scientific bearing still bore a freight of controversy and assertion for George Eliot and her first readers” (Beer 139).

after Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of the Species* was published in 1859, hinting at a woman's ability to change and effectively evolve in order to adapt to her environment seemed to support Darwin's theory of evolution, and society took notice of such subtleties. The use of "dynamism," used abundantly in Darwin's work, clearly indicated evolutionary development, which was not embraced by many in the upper classes. To indicate that a simple woman was capable of changing herself to compete with other women for suitable available men was also indicative of sexual selection, also abundant in Darwin's work. That Darwin suggested that it was the males of given species that competed for the most suitable females was not taken into account: it was merely that such behavior occurred in the species heretofore unaffected by such animal behaviors (for humans were believed to be afforded a special place in the Creation by God, enjoying His protection and guidance). People began to notice that what was normal and natural in the so-called "lower" forms of life like animals and insects was observable in humans as well: this gave credence to Darwin's (and by association, science's) theories, which directly opposed biblical teaching and scriptural accounts of Man's place in the world. Furthermore, it made sense. People could readily see that what was being described in their popular reading material was actually observable, and that it was not so outrageous that it could be dismissed offhandedly, Women were well aware that they could change

their clothing, their hairstyles, their manner of speaking, and their body language in order to appear desirable to men – all for the purpose of reproduction, and the rearing of families. Children were desirable for many reasons, such as help in family businesses, helping to care for younger children, and caring for their aging parents when the parents were no longer able to provide for themselves. Children were often deemed necessary for a family's ability to survive, but until Darwin suggested that sexual selection, that is, demonstrating actively that one is a suitable mate, was essential in the choosing of the most suitable spouse (e.g., health and thus the ability to produce healthy offspring) for the continuation of a given species, people might not have noticed that the very same behavior regularly demonstrated in the animal and insect kingdoms was also to be found in humans, implying that humans were exhibiting animal-like behaviors, and thus may in fact have evolved from animals themselves. This further implied that Adam and Eve, the first humans according to the Bible, may not have been the progenitors of the human race, and, if so, people were effectively devoid of the protection of God, and evicted from their unique place in creation. These ideas, while not directly specified in *Middlemarch*, *the Mill on the floss*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, *Jude the Obscure*, *the Mayor of Casterbridge*, or any of the popular novels issuing from the pens of humanist authors, were in fact

strongly implied through their use of specific words, which carried much more weight than they do currently.

The quest for knowledge has always been essential in the sciences. Man's curiosity has led to important discoveries, some of which were essential to human survival: from the discovery of fire and the wheel to electricity and the orbits of the planets. These discoveries, while useful, convenient, and oftentimes indispensable, sometimes were not easily assimilated into civilization and human belief systems. Every culture embraces its own customs and rituals, and if those patterns are challenged and disrupted, the consequences can affect whole societies. People who understood how their culture operated and could find a place to ascertain their identities could be left without a solid foundation on which to construct their own lives, and those of their families. The result can be depression, melancholy, madness, and even death: the loss of identity and the loss of one's established beliefs can sometimes equal the loss of the will to live, or even suicide. Such was the problem of young Victorian women: their beloved novels were giving rise to religious doubt and self-doubt. Their beliefs were being stripped from them, knowingly or unknowingly, and along with the loss of their religious belief often came the loss of identity. Something would need to replace both, but they were not left without a modicum of hope: women could also see that females

were competent, and were quite capable of taking care of themselves if need arose: they had their examples in both the characters in the novels, and in the authors themselves: George Eliot did not marry, although she lived with a man under the same roof until her death. She managed to earn an income and support herself through her education and her work. It could be done, if women took the initiative to get an education. Marriage was still an option, and could be made stronger and more satisfying if a young bride were able to communicate on the same educated level as her husband, which was easily understandable. Women could earn their own livings: Tess Durbeyfield became a dairymaid when she set out on her own in Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*; in Eliot's *Adam Bede*, Dinah Morris goes about preaching and doing good works in God's name, and Hetty Sorrel, though conceited and vain, earns her keep by working for Mr. and Mrs. Poyser, who took her in and raised her when she was orphaned. The examples of young women who endure hardship but ultimately earn their own ways in the world demonstrate to young Victorian women that there are options when it comes to adulthood, and if one is willing to work hard and live a thrifty life, there need not be dependence on a man⁸⁷, and marriage need not be the only path a respectable young woman can take in her life.

⁸⁷ "Although Hetty Sorrel actively dislikes children and the business of child rearing, those around her assume that her best future would be as a mother, or at least a wife . . .

The possibilities of more opportunities for young women to choose their own destinies was being shown to them, albeit via a nontraditional method: the humanist novel, which did not focus on religious piety and Scriptural fulfillment, incorporated scientific language and biological truths within their pages. Younger, uneducated people were exposed to these difficult concepts without being adequately prepared to process them and assimilate them into their lives. Educated men who operated in scientific circles, whether by profession or avocation, were properly equipped to handle scientific theory without being overly affected by the juxtaposition of science and religion. Since those educated men rarely indulged in reading novels, they may have been entirely unaware that such things were being printed and shown to impressionable and curious young ladies. Therefore, the dissonance being created among the younger people of Victorian England was practically unchecked, and the already underway religious crisis was furthered by the popularity of the humanist novel, which was both showing new ideas to those who were unaware of scientific discovery, and removing the sense of security that many found in religious teaching. The popular works of authors who had abandoned their religion owing to their own experiences was, however unintentionally, the vehicle by which others were persuaded to abandon

George Eliot deliberately presents childbearing and child rearing as a negative experience throughout her text . . . in direct contrast to [the] mid-Victorian ideal of child-focused mothering" (Phillips 199).

their religion as well. Humanist novels were, in this way, directly responsible for the contributing to the Victorian religious crisis by spreading religious doubt to a whole new sector of society: young women, most of whom were ill-equipped to handle the ideas, theories, and methods by which the world operated, and who may have benefited from the novel by learning about science when they otherwise may not have had any exposure whatsoever had the humanist novel not been such popular reading material.

Works Cited

- Alcott, Louisa May. *Little Women*. New York: Random House Publishing, 1869.
- Allen, Brooke. "Complexity and Contradiction: Virginia Woolf & George Eliot." *New Criterion*, vol. 16, no. 3, p.25, 1997.
- Allen, Bruce Ware. "Francis Henry Egerton, 8th Earl of Bridgewater, 1756-1829: Privilege Done Right." Published 10/11/2012. Available: http://www.ahistoryblog.com/2012/10/11/francis-henry-egerton-8th-earl-of-bridgewater-1756-1829-privilege-done-right.
- Allison, Sarah. "Discerning Syntax: George Eliot's Relative Clauses." *ELH*, vol. 81 no.4, 1981. pp 1275-1297.
- Amigoni, David. *Victorian Literature*. Edinburgh, GBR: Edinburgh University Press, 2011.
- Beer, Gillian. *Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Fiction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
- . "George Eliot." *Key Women Writers*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986.
- Bell, Charles Alfred, Sir. *The Bridgewater Treatises on the Power Wisdom, and Goodness of God as Manifested in the Creation. v.4.: The Hand: its Mechanism and Vital Endowments as Evincing Design*. London: Pickering, 1833.
- Bowler, David. *Reconciling Science and religion: the Debate in Early Twentieth-Century Religion*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014.
- British Humanist Association. n. pag. Available: <https://humanism.org.uk/humanism/the-humanist-tradition/19th-century-freethinkers/thomas-hardy/>.

- Buckland, William. *The Bridgewater Treatises on the Power Wisdom, and Goodness of God as Manifested in the Creation. v.6.: Geology and Mineralogy considered with Reference to Natural Theology*. London: Pickering, 1833.
- Burstyn, Joan N. *Victorian Education and the Ideal of Womanhood*. New Jersey: Barnes & Noble Books, 1980.
- Chalmers, Rev. T. *The Bridgewater Treatises on the Power Wisdom, and Goodness of God as Manifested in the Creation in the Adaptation of External Nature to the Moral and Intellectual Constitution of Man. v.1*. London: Pickering, 1834.
- Cohn, Elisha. "'No Insignificant Creature': Thomas Hardy's Ethical Turn." *Nineteenth Century Literature, Vol. 64, No. 4*. University of California Press: 2010.
- Combe, George. *The Constitution of Man Considered in Relation to External Objects*. London: Longman & Co., 1860.
- Cooke, George Willis. *George Eliot: A Critical Study of her Life, Writings and Philosophy*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1883.
- Corelli, Marie. *The Sorrows of Satan: or the Strange Experience of one Geoffrey Tempest, Millionaire*. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1895.
- Darwin, Charles. *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection of the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*. London: McMillan, 1859.
- Doggett, Maeve E. *Marriage, Wife-beating and the Law in Victorian England*. London: Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1992.
- Draznin, Yaffa Claire. *Victorian London's Middle-Class Housewife: What She Did all Day*. Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2000.
- Edwards, Lee. "Women, Energy, and Middlemarch." *The Massachusetts Review, vol. 13, no. 1*, 1972. pp. 223-238.
- Eliot, George. *Adam Bede*. New York: A.L. Burt, 1859.
- . *Daniel Deronda*. New York: A.L. Burt, 1876.

- . *Middlemarch: a Study of Provincial Life*. New York: A.L. Burt, 1872.
- . *The Mill on the Floss*. New York: A.L. Burt, 1860.
- Federico, Annette R. *Idol of Suburbia: Marie Corelli and the Late-Victorian Literary Culture*. Virginia: The University Press of Virginia, 2000.
- Fleishman, Avrom. *George Eliot's Intellectual Life*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Gache, Gabriel. "Science without Religion is Lame; Religion without Science is Blind." Published May 14th 2008. Available: [www/softpedia.com/news/science-without-religion-is-lame-religion-without-science-is-blind-85550.shtml](http://www.softpedia.com/news/science-without-religion-is-lame-religion-without-science-is-blind-85550.shtml).
- Gatens, Moira. "Compelling Fictions: Spinoza and George Eliot on Imagination and Belief." *European Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 20 no. 1. 2012.
- Golden, Catherine J. *Images of the Woman Reader in Victorian British and American Fiction*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003.
- Gosse, Edmund. *The Life of Philip Henry Gosse*. London: Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., Ltd., 1890.
- Gosse, Philip H. *Omphalos: an Attempt to Untie the Geological Knot*. London: J. van Voorst, 1857.
- Halliday, F. E. *Thomas Hardy: His Life and Work*. London: House of Stratus, 2001.
- Hardy, Thomas. *Far From the Madding Crowd*. New York: Harper & Bros, 1874.
- . *Jude the Obscure*. New York: Harper & Bros, 1895.
- . *Tess of the D'Urbervilles: A Pure Woman Faithfully Presented*. London: James R. Osgood, McIlvaine, 1891.
- . *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. New York: Harper & Bros, 1886.
- Hasketh, Ian. *Of Apes and Ancestors: Evolution, Christianity, and the Oxford Debate*. Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2009.

- Henry, Nancy. *Blackwell Critical Biographies: Life of George Eliot*. Hoboken, NJ, USA: John Wiley & Sons, 2012.
- _____. *George Eliot and the British Empire*. Port Chester, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Hugh Miller and the Controversies of Victorian Science. Michael Shortland, ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Karl, Frederick Robert. *George Eliot: a Biography*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1995.
- Kidd, John. *The Bridgewater Treatises on the Power Wisdom, and Goodness of God as Manifested in the Creation of External Nature to the Physical Condition of Man*. [v.2.] London: Pickering, 1833.
- Kirby, William. *The Bridgewater Treatises on the Power Wisdom, and Goodness of God as Manifested in the Creation of Animals and in their History, Habits, and Instincts*. [v.7.] London: Pickering, 1835.
- Klaver, J. M. I. *Geology and Religious Sentiment: the Effect of Geological Discoveries on English Society and Literature between 1829 and 1859*. The Netherlands: Brill, 1997.
- Knoepfmacher, U. C. *Religious Humanism and the Victorian Novel: George Eliot, Walter Pater, and Samuel Butler*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1970.
- Levy, William Turner. *William Barnes: the Man and his Poems*. Dorchester: Longmans, 1960.
- Linder, Douglas. "Bishop James Ussher sets the Date for Creation." n. pag. University of Missouri-Kansas City: 2004. Available: <http://law2umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/scopes/usshe.html>.
- Martin, Bruce K. "Rescue and Marriage in *Adam Bede*." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*. v. 12 No. 4. Texas: Rice University Press, 1972. pp. 745-763.

- Martin, Jane. *Women and the Politics of Schooling in Victorian and Edwardian England*. London, GBR: Continuum International Publishing, 2010.
- Millgate, Michael. *Thomas Hardy: a Biography*. New York: Random House, 1982.
- Mintz, Alan L. *George Eliot & the Novel of Vocation*. Boston: Harvard University Press, 1978.
- Murdoch, Lydia. *Daily Life of Victorian Women*. California: Greenwood Publishing, 1970.
- Neff, Wanda F. *Victorian Working Women: An Historical and Literary Study of Women in British Industries and Professions 1832-1850*. New York: AMS Press, 1966.
- Newton, K.M. *Modernizing George Eliot*. Gordonsville, VA, USA: Bloomsbury Academic, 2011.
- The New International Version (NIV) Bible*. Available:
<http://www.biblica.com/en-us/the-niv-bible>
- Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. "Charles Christian Hennell."
 Available: http://www.oxforddnb.com/public/index.html/Charles_Christian_Hennell
- Paxton, Mark. *Media Perspectives on Intelligent Design and Evolution*. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO LLC., 2013.
- Perkin, Joan. *Victorian Women*. Cambridge: University Press, 1993.
- Phegley, Jennifer. *Educating the Proper Woman Reader: Victorian Family Literary Magazines and the Cultural Health of the Nation*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2004.
- Phillips, Emily. "Eliot's Adam Bede." *Explicator*, Summer 2004, Vol. 62 Issue 4. Pp 199-201.

- Prout, William. *The Bridgewater Treatises on the Power Wisdom, and Goodness of God as Manifested in the Creation. Chemistry, Meteorology and the Function of Digestions considered with Reference to Natural Theology.* v.8. 1834.
- Robertson, Linda Kathryn. *The Power of Knowledge: George Eliot and Education.* New York: Peter Lang International Academic Publishers, 1997. p. 102.
- Roget, Peter Mark. *The Bridgewater Treatises on the Power Wisdom, and Goodness of God as Manifested in the Creation. Animal and Vegetable Physiology considered with Reference to Natural Theology.* v.5. 1834.
- Schombert, James. "Age of the Earth." Available: http://abyss.uoregon.edu/~js/lectures/age_of_the_earth.html.
- Scott Jr., Nathan A. "The Literary Imagination and the Victorian Crisis of Faith: the Example of Thomas Hardy." *The Journal of Religion*, vol. 40 no. 4. 1960. pp 267-281.
- Simpson, Matthew and Robert C. Koons. "Omphalos: an Attempt to Untie the Geological Knot." *Ethics*. v. 115 p. 166. October 2004.
- Starker, Steven. "Fear of Fiction: the Novel." *Evil Influences: Crusades against the Mass Media.* New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 1989.
- . "Science and Popular Education in the 1830s: The Role of the Bridgewater Treatises." *British Journal for the History of Science* v.25. 1992: p. 397-430.
- Tennyson, Lord Alfred. *In Memoriam A. H. H.* London: The Bankside Press, 1849.
- Watts, Cedric T. *Thomas Hardy: Jude the Obscure.* Penguin Books, 1992.
- Whewell, William. *The Bridgewater Treatises on the Power Wisdom, and Goodness of God as Manifested in the Creation. Astronomy and General Physics considered with reference to Natural Theology.* [v.3.] London: Pickering, 1833.
- Willey, Basil. *Nineteenth Century Studies: Coleridge to Matthew Arnold.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1949.

Yoon, Carol Kaesuk. "Stephen Jay Gould, 60, is Dead; Enlivened Evolutionary Theory." *The New York Times*. Published May 21st, 2002. Available: <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/05/21/us/stephen-jay-gould-is-dead-enlivened-evolutionary-theory.html?pagewanted=1>.