GEORGE ELIOT: COMMUNITY ENDS

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During his celebrated interview with the editors of the *New Left Review* the writer and critic Raymond Williams revealed the personal unease he felt regarding the concept of "community." Williams talked of his suspicions being suddenly aroused by the realisation that community was never used in a "hostile sense" (*Politics and Letters* 119). It was a term that was universally privileged and apparently indifferent to ideological antagonisms. Only in recognising the dubious cultural and political flexibility of the word did Williams sense the "danger" embedded in this "warmly persuasive" signifier. He became more aware of how easily the values of neighbourliness, co-operation, shared interests and a strong sense of place could be drawn upon and manipulated to promote an "ideology of service" with its attendant sense of "social control." Interpreting more profoundly the politics of community, Williams set out to investigate the ambiguous nature of its persuasive images of harmonic integration. Exploring the paradox that community's implied "inclusiveness" is founded upon the necessary identification of that which it "excludes," Williams's deconstruction of community set in motion a far-ranging and provocative debate on the wisdom of endorsing the myth of community.

Earnestly taking up Williams's lead, a number of postmodern critics have attempted to "rethink" community in the light of its questionable immanence and darker ideological undertones. Asking what it is that compels us so readily to endorse community's totalising imagery, they have sought to identify its attraction in its power to evoke an ideal that is restricted to the expression of its own "absence." As Christopher Fynsk has put it, "*What is said in our time* is the absence of community." (19) In this respect community serves to articulate the "lack" in modern society, not something empirically known or even materially achievable, but an anguished appeal and psychic protest against the disintegrating pressures of modernity. Community's lament has lead Jean-Luc Nancy to pronounce the myth of community's immanence and the narrative of its dissolution, dislocation and conflagration as among the "gravest and most painful testimony of the modern world" (1). For Nancy no *Gesellschaft* has evolved to aid "the state, industry and capital" in dismantling a previous *Gemeinschaft*.[1] He argues that "society was not built on the ruins of a community," rather, community is "what happens to us . . . in the wake of society" (11). It is the critical position we adopt in order to rationalise and then attempt to think beyond the dissociating and alienating forces that confront us. As he says, nothing has been lost: "We alone are lost, we upon whom the "social bond" . . . our own invention, now descends like the net of an

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[1] *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (Community and Society) is the title of Ferdinand Tönnies's seminal study of the shift from traditional "organic" community to a more mobile, urbanised and competitive society. Although he values the communities of the past over modern industrialised society, he also makes the relevant observation that "Community will reinforce and encapsulate a moral code, raising tensions and rendering heterodoxy a serious crime" (24).

economic, technical, political snare. Entangled in its meshes, we have wrung for ourselves the phantasms of the lost community" (11). While Nancy imbues the "absence" of community with tragic implications, Jean-François Lyotard goes somewhat further, implying that the actual "quest" for community is itself tragic. Recognising that the notion of community runs the danger of encouraging a "tyranny of imposed consensus" which legitimates subjects by rejecting, dispersing, and terrorising "otherness," Lyotard argues that community can operate as a sanitising operation which isolates that heterogeneous and "unmanageable thing" it seeks to objectify (qtd Van Den Abbeele xviii).

Such an interrogation of community's mythical oneness and its accompanying spectre of social control is particularly relevant to the work of George Eliot, whose novels consistently negotiate the tensions between an homogeneous ideal of community and her representation of the harder reality of a restrictive and prohibitive community. While an abstractly reasoned notion of community informs Eliot's literary objectives, her narratives encourage a sympathetic consciousness of those whose "desire" leads them to transgress the normative values of their community. Exacerbating this ambiguity is the manner in which the structural form of her novels reveals an authorial complicity in the pacifying or extinguishing of the "unmanageable things" of her own making. The crucial paradox of Eliot's fiction is that while a philosophically conceived notion of community lies at the heart of her appeal for wider human sympathy, her most sympathetic characters are repeatedly rejected and exiled by the fictive community of her novels.

Because Eliot's writings make it clear that a concept of community underwrites her intellectual and literary program, a host of literary critics, acting out their own desire to recover vestiges of the lost community, have seized upon this aspect of her work. Principally these critics seek to uncover the traces of a tangible and affirmative community in her texts. Yet the critics on the whole turn out to be rather disappointed people. In their separate quests they struggle to locate in her work an affirmation of the communal values they seek. They find no unequivocal model of co-operative settlement or familial kinship and appear defeated in their search for an assuring community sustained by shared religious and moral ideals. Feminist critics lament the absence of a supportive community of women just as Marxists note the lack of a political community of working-class solidarity. Yet, despite their diversity of ideological prejudice and political agenda, the critics' mutual disappointment exposes the extent to which they themselves oversubscribe to an idealised model of an organic past. In this respect they appear to seek in Eliot's work only a verification of their own hopes for community, while the writer herself is immersed in the complexity of negotiating and contesting the received construction of community. Ironically Eliot turns out to be a writer who affirms community, but who produces a literature which consistently queries its status.

Belonging to an intellectual milieu which sought to recover what it saw as the disintegrating values of a community threatened by industrialisation, Eliot looked to art as the means of developing a refined community of "sympathy," a cultivated consensus arising from art's embodiment of a universal truth. It was art's ability to capture "truth" as felt experience that would promote agreement where intellectual and political argument failed. Hoping to foster among her readership such a "community of

sympathy" she sought to further the prospects of social regeneration and development. Among the intellectuals she knew and admired similarly transcendent notions of community were current. As Susan Graver has revealed, Eliot's community of sympathy bears an obvious affinity with Congreve's "community of purpose," Spencer's "fundamental community of opinion," Mill's "unity of thought" and Comte's "community of principles" (7). The difficulty with all of these applications of community, aside from their obviously select and class-bound character, is that they rely heavily on the organic values associated with an earlier and unreclaimable world. Such values could only be, at best, metaphorically useful in any consideration of transforming the present or directing the future. Eliot seemed to recognise the difficulty but struggled to reconcile her memory of the past with her hopes for the future. Even as she rebels against the idyllic masquerade of bucolic harmony, she retains a strong sentimental attachment for the life of past communities, so that even as she rejects the pastoral myth of a natural order, her own community of sympathy intrinsically draws on the homogeneous values of a traditional "organic" community.

As a novelist of common life Eliot was to bring community as a "value" into a direct relationship with community as a "fact." The narrative intervention of her pedagogic voice which privileges community as an abstract value is forced to confront her mimetic representation of a community which exposes the darker "actuality" of rural and provincial communities. The source of these apparent contradictions lies in that familiar tension between the philosophical "idealist" and the literary "realist," which, as Henry James has noted, sees the writer press "abstract" considerations upon the representation of the "concrete" (qtd Leavis 45).

This tension between the ideal and the material, the abstract and the concrete, and their relation to community is further exacerbated by Eliot's oscillation between comic and tragic narrative modes. Both the ideal of community and the comic form are primarily teleological. They both uphold the promise of overcoming division and reaching accommodation with the world, they share the same totalising metaphors of unification and the same images of social harmony and renewal. In a sense the fulfilment of community is comedy's resolution and point of closure. But Eliot's personal "protest against any absolute conclusion" reveals itself in her unwillingness to close in unqualified accordance with the conventions of any generic mode (*Middlemarch* 110). Even in her novels which most rely on comic and communal resolutions, the closing conventions of marriage, settlement, family reconciliation and social concord are delivered ambiguously and ironically. In the midst of a self-conscious authorial settlement there is a lingering air of tragedy, a sense of individuals resigned but never satisfactorily reconciled. This sense of passive conformity and quiescence is the tragic sacrifice of individual desire demanded by the restoration and maintenance of community's equilibrium.

Naomi Conn Liebler makes this relationship between tragedy and community explicit. She finds that tragic action is facilitated by an "abetting community" which, when threatened by the exceptional individual's transgression of the community's normative standards, sets about a process of isolating, purging and purifying in the name of restoration and order (49). The death of the hero at tragedy's end represents a ritualistic cleansing whereby the diseased element of the body-politic is cut away and

then eulogised as a necessary sacrifice for the community's survival: "When the ordered relations of a community are disrupted, the hero draws to herself/himself all of the ambiguity and crisis present in the community, just as an organism fighting a disease localises antibodies at the site of infection" (9). In this respect tragedy clears the way for the reaffirmed self-definition of community. In the same vein D.A. Miller argues that the community in George Eliot's fiction functions in such a way as to isolate severe transgressions of the accepted code of behaviour, and to direct these transgressions towards a state of "story-worthiness" (111). As he points out, this is the function of gossip, the promoting of perceived eccentricities into a narratable form which also reassuringly consolidates conventional behaviour. While Eliot's ideal of community is related to the notion of social development and moral improvement, the role it plays in her narratives is to isolate and target the difference represented by protagonists who threaten to become "unmanageable things." In a semiotic fashion community defines itself by what it is "not," directing its narrative possibilities away from itself and towards those whom it excludes. As such, community affirms itself by exclusion, defining itself by what it refuses to admit rather than by a conscious knowledge of what it includes.

Clearly in both *Adam Bede* and *The Mill On The Floss* the narrative is centred on characters who threaten the prevailing ideology of social routine. In Hetty Sorrel and Maggie Tulliver Eliot creates figures who fatally entertain an expansion of the possibilities of life. As conformism renders the non-conformist suspect, Hetty and Maggie expose themselves to the dark side of community, its functional operation as a structure of control. Both women express a deep dissatisfaction with their place and prospects within their individual communities. When Hetty realises that she will be denied the naive prospect of entering the leisured world of Arthur Donnithorne she has the "sickening sense that her life would go on in this way" and that "she would carry about forever a hopeless thirst and longing" (*Adam Bede* 321). She must repress her sorrow, for she fears exposure as "the sick and weary prisoner might think of the possible pillory" (322). Maggie's sentiments are of the same kind. She lives under an "oppressive spell," a "resigned imprisonment," fearing the repetitive daily grind of "no consequence" and fated never to "know anything better." And then what is striking in both novels is the profound want of sympathy with which the community suffers the transgressions of the two women. Hetty experiences an "irresistible dread from every course that could tend towards a betrayal of her miserable secret" (348). Nothing could be done "that would shelter her from discovery and scorn among the relatives and neighbours who once more made all her world" (349). Her home and community can not offer her protection and "she must hide herself where no familiar eyes could detect her" (349). Journeying into despair and confronted by nothing but immediate beggary she fleetingly considers throwing herself on the mercy of "The Parish!" But as Eliot writes:

> You can perhaps hardly understand the effect of that word on a mind like Hetty's, brought up among people who were somewhat hard in their feelings even towards poverty, who lived among the fields, and had little pity for want and rags as a cruel inevitable fate such as they

> sometimes seem in the cities, but held them as a mark of idleness and vice—and it was idleness and vice that brought burdens on the parish. To Hetty the "parish" was next to the prison in obloquy. (361)

What Eliot is registering here in the description of Hetty's people as "hard in their feelings" is that want of sympathy which Hetty does not even have to experience personally to acknowledge. Those who cannot sustain themselves economically and become a burden on the community are seen as figures of "vice" from which the community is to be protected, just as those like Hetty who contravene the moral code of the community are driven into exile. Their "difference" becomes a threat to the commonality which binds the community. It is against the constriction of these bindings which Hetty seeks to escape. It is observation she wishes to evade, the gaze of moral authority "whose glance she dreaded like scorching fire" (363). The want of sympathy becomes a real point of tension within the narrative structure, for it is just the need for sympathy which is the moral lesson of the novel and the basis upon which, for Eliot, a genuine community of feeling is to be founded. Yet the lesson must be taught by negative association, for sympathy must be imported into the narrative in the form of Dinah, a Methodist preacher from outside the immediate community, who belongs herself to "a very strict order" whose "brethren and sisters watch out for each other's souls" (96). Dinah's vocation is to regain lost souls in the name of a metaphysical community. She is a model of sympathy, but there is a penetrating irony in the fact that the "strict order" of her earthly community eventually outlaws preaching by women and Dinah is compelled to conform and to set "th' example o' submitting" (506). The active, open-air teacher of sympathy is effectively silenced. But it is not the only sympathy which is silenced. Hetty is not only excluded from the sanctity of the community, she is also excluded from the narrative, literally "transported" out of it as the new authorial impetus becomes the burgeoning affection between Adam and Dinah. As Williams remarks in *The Country and the City*, the novelist abandons Hetty "in a moral action more decisive than Hetty's own confused and desperate leaving of her child" (173).

Eliot organises a transfer of the reader's sympathy away from Hetty and towards those who are "shamed" by their intimate connection with the "criminal." Both the Poysers and the Bedes contemplate fleeing their life-long community. The scorn of the community becomes a powerful inducement for exile. Even the ageing Lizbeth can immediately make up her mind "to being buried in another parish," though such a prospect had been constantly expressed as her deepest fear (438). It is agreed that they "shall all be better in a new country" (439). Adam Bede's reasons for contemplating exodus are obvious enough as his relationship with Arthur is now clearly untenable, but Martin Poyser's incentive is to escape the stigma of disgrace that his family will carry in the eyes of the community: "But I doubt we shall ne'er go far enough for folks not to find out as we've got them belonging to us as are transported o'er the seas, and were liked to be hanged. We shall have that flyin' up in our faces, and our children's after us" (439). Just as the moral bearings of the author are severe on Hetty, so it is that both author and implied community are apt to forgive the redeemable Arthur. His belated intervention on behalf of Hetty in which he is able to have her sentence mitigated from death to transportation is rather inappropriately depicted in a melodramatic and romantic

vein (an eleventh hour rescue by the hero on horseback). By the conclusion a repentant Arthur, "much changed," is allowed to reclaim both his previous position and his friendship with Adam. In a contrived unravelling of the narrative towards a resolution of the crisis along comic principles of harmonious reconcilement, he is in effect welcomed back into the restored community of the novel which is now embodied by the harmony of Adam's and Dinah's connubial life. Alternatively Hetty remains in narrative exile, reintroduced only in a single line as "the poor wanderer" who has died "when she was coming back to us" (505).

A similar contraction of sympathy towards the exposed but threatening "unmanageable thing" is evident in *The Mill on the Floss*. Maggie grows up amidst the "guarded, unattractive rituals of survival" in which the ideal of an organic life is rudely confronted by a rapacious and litigious commercial sector. The co-operative structure of community is revealed as a hardened, indifferent coterie in which a man has "neighbours that *will* go to law with him" and a family network whose ethos is to correct its members "severely" if they were "other than a credit" (86). With her own family's prospects ruined in the courts, Maggie falls into a life of relative penury and becomes dependent on the Dodson "kin":

> A conspicuous quality in the Dodson character was its genuineness; its vices and virtues alike were phases of a proud, honest egoism which had a hearty dislike to whatever made against its own credit and interest, and would be hard of speech to inconvenient "kin," but would never forsake or ignore them, would not let them want bread, but only require them to eat it with bitter herbs. (289)

The emphasis on the materialism of the terms "credit and interest" is symptomatic of the intrusion of acquisitive values upon the communal ideal of the solidarity of the family. Organic notions are put under stress by what Terry Eagleton describes as the "penetration of urban capital" (115). Economic deprivation is commensurate with Maggie's social deprivation. She is denied her long-standing friendship with Philip Wakem, the sympathetically rendered and ironically "deformed" son of the aggressive lawyer and capitalist who has bankrupted Tulliver. From within this oppressiveness Maggie despairs of ever finding "the intense and varied life she yearned for," and fears that her future is "likely to be worse than her past, for after years of renunciation she had slipped back into desire and longing" (390). Her "hungry nature" seeks a "brighter aerial world," the "half-remote presence of a world of love and beauty and delight" (402). Just as Hetty is under the "narcotic effect" of being admired by Arthur Donnithorne, Maggie is seduced by the "agreeable" experience of "receiving the tribute of a very deep blush and a very deep bow from a person towards whom she herself was conscious of timidity" (392). She is effectively seduced by the trappings and finery of an acquisitive bourgeois society embodied by the "well-bred" Stephen Guest, with his "diamond ring, attar of roses, and air of nonchalant leisure" (378). As if in a dream Maggie is erratically borne along by the tide beyond the point of return, compromising herself in the midst of a self-destructive reverie. And although she is innocent of all but desire, she is guilty in

the world of appearances. Her family and community pass judgement and she is effectively exiled, to be redeemed only by death.

In the chapter "St. Ogg's Passes Judgment" Eliot satirises the hypocritical grounds upon which the community condemns Maggie. Stephen Guest's infatuation is put down to the excesses of a romantic youth against the clear "culpability" of Maggie's error. Morally Maggie's ennobling choice in disengaging herself from Guest is an act in the name of community, in the name of "fellow-feeling" and against self-interest, but her actions are given greater tragic significance because in the end they are not ratified by the community. This community judges in strict consistency with results, and the "post-marital trousseau" of Mrs Stephen Guest with all its attendant advantages would have been a result to judge by, for after all "society couldn't be carried on if we inquired into private conduct in that way, and Christianity tells us to think no evil" (513). But as she was in fact *not* Mrs Stephen Guest, "It was to be hoped that she would go out of the neighbourhood—to America, or anywhere—so as to purify the air of St. Ogg's from the taint of her presence" (537).

Eliot's cynicism is aimed at the self-interest of a materialist society. An alternative moral and spiritual community is imagined by Dr Kenn who alone seems sympathetic to Maggie. He invokes the idea of a Christian fraternity in which the Church "ought to represent the feeling of the community" and as "a family knit together" open their arms to the "penitent" (518). However, he is forced to concede that such ideals seem to belong to the past and are "entirely relaxed" in the present. Such a notion of community "can hardly be said to exist in the public mind" and now survives only in "the partial, contradictory form they have taken in the narrow communities of schismatics" (518). Yet for all Kenn's sentiments the pressure of an unsympathetic community reveals his own frailty. Under the weight of "gossip and slander" and opinion both "odious and contemptible," he finds that he also "must advise Maggie to go away from St. Ogg's" (537).

In this respect Eliot's work dramatises what Iris Marion Young describes as "the exclusionary consequences of valuing community" (235). A significant implication of a desire for community is that it tends to ratify an ideal that values and enforces homogeneity and in so doing "oppresses those experienced as different" (235). By contravening community strictures both Hetty and Maggie acutely expose the very social distinctions and prejudices that the "myth of community" actively obscures. They bring difference as a social, economic and political fact into sharp focus, exposing its unresolved nature as a social reality, and subject it to a point of crisis that the belated organicism of the novel's conclusions cannot adequately answer for. In both novels the traditional closure of resolution undergoes a type of suspension, so that the real crises of the stories are subordinated by the imposition of a diverting narrative strategy. As in the case of Hetty, Maggie's death offers the narrative a fortuitous relief from the tensions between the conventionally idealised and experientially negative representations of community. Even the relationship between Maggie and her brother Tom is highly ambivalent in this respect. Belatedly attempting to construct a transcendent and redemptive closure Eliot mediates the tragic death of the siblings with a retrospective gloss: "The boat reappeared, but brother and sister had gone down in an embrace never to be parted, living through again in one supreme moment the days when they had

clasped their little hands in love and roamed the daisied fields together" (546). There is a certain amount of bad faith here, for throughout the course of the novel the relationship between the siblings is seen through Maggie in terms of a "desire" for a loving mutuality and reciprocity that is actually a response to the registered pain, division and betrayal surrounding their relationship. The closure of the novel is a wish-fulfilment outside the real terms of the dramatic action, just as the ideal of community finds no significant grounding as a model for a redeeming life principle.

Eliot's progression from the workaday world of a rural community to the provincial middle class and gentry of a more urbane Middlemarch produces a far more aesthetically sophisticated conception of community. Relinquishing her earlier concern with common village life and its association with traditional forms of organic culture, Eliot now chooses to engage with a more diffuse, pluralised and acquisitive community, one that reflects the accelerating mobility and emergent bourgeois vales of the period. Any sense of a transparently knowable community has all but diminished in the face of the complex social organisation Eliot's subject now presents her with. In this respect she is effectively released from any explicit engagement with the myth of the organic ideal. As a consequence, Eliot is less ideologically bound to privilege communal harmony as a form of narrative resolution. Yet, despite this, *Middlemarch* remains aesthetically committed to a philosophically derived communal ideal, it is just that its presence is now felt less as matter of mimetic representation or narratorial moralising and more as a structural principle and formal motif.

What distinguishes *Middlemarch* is its ability to sustain the paradox of community, to provide a unified and "organically" constructed narrative of the evidently haphazard and arbitrary actions of her subject community. It is this disparity between the novel's organic form and its fractured subject that provides the dialectical tension of the novel. The text reveals an ongoing conflict between the counter-claims of "unity" and "difference." As Eliot recognises in her pier glass analogy, the random scratches of the polished surface appear only as an organic pattern of concentric circles when they are illuminated by a selective light. In the same manner the arbitrary flux of social discontinuities is given organic and ordered realisation only through selective authorial management. It is the telling of the life, rather than the life itself, that has organic unity. In this respect there is a correspondence between Eliot's imposition of unity at the structural level and the way in which the fictive community of the novel actually functions. The Middlemarch community seeks to impose unity upon its members through its own mode of structural control, by promoting conformity and identifying and isolating those whose difference threatens its stability.

Eliot's awareness of the darker and more oppressive aspects of being bound to a community is accompanied by an increasingly satirical treatment of the myth of organic community. In the first of a number of sardonic references to Utopian conceptions of community, Dorothea's desire for a useful life leads her to take an interest in the design of tenant's cottages which, when widely adopted by the parish, would "make the life of poverty beautiful" (54). Her image of an ideal village life sustained by traditional crafts is her own version of the mythical "Pythagorean community" Lydgate gently mocks later in the novel (203). But significantly Dorothea has the moral sensitivity to be uncomfortable at the apparent disparity between the poverty and neglect suffered by her

uncle's tenants and the "simpering" pictures of rustic harmony hanging in his drawing room. Brooke himself is less aware of any disparity. He is more susceptible to the "softening influence of the fine arts which makes other people's hardship picturesque" (429). Here Eliot indicts not only Brooke but also art's invention of an idyllic rural community.

Countering this aesthetically propagated myth is Eliot's sobering portrayal of the repressive yoke of community. While Eliot's famous web-like construction of the social organisation creates the effect of an integrated community, the "web" also sustains the more sinister image of "entrapment." It is Mrs Cadwallader's clinical observation on the function of the neighbourhood that sets the tone: "Sane people did what their neighbours did, so that if any lunatics were at large, one might know and avoid them" (581). This, as Miller points out, is an instance of "the mechanism of social control that allows the community in *Middlemarch* to maintain itself" (110). It warns of the dangers to those who do not conform to their community's normative standards of behaviour and who do not "hold the true principle of subordination" (596).

Like Hetty and Maggie, Dorothea is hemmed in by a social life which offers only a "walled in maze" of petty hindrances. Her life choices are "girlish subjection" or "voluntary submission" and despite her "soul hunger" her desire for an epic life is inevitably frustrated (51). Dorothea's unwillingness to submit passively to community's expectations marks her as "aberrant" and as a threat to its "middling" social routine. Lydgate and Ladislaw pose a similar threat. They are not only "outsiders" but "reformers" as well. As such, they are not only subject to the native's endemic distrust of the alien but they both enter the community as radicals and conscious promoters of change. Both are guilty of the crime of heterodoxy. Lydgate's innovative medical practices and Ladislaw's political convictions and dubious ancestry are treated with equal suspicion. The idiosyncrasy of community is that, while it is bound to preserve its equilibrium against the intrusion of "otherness," it also depends on the identification of difference to substantiate and confirm itself. As Hawley remarks to Farebrother "some sorts of dirt serve to clarify" (773). The Middlemarch community is not passive, it is a highly resistant organism that actively seeks out the germ of difference before it can fatally infect.

As "unmanageable things" Dorothea, Ladislaw and Lydgate are effectively expelled from the Middlemarch community. When Eliot allows the narrative to take this turn she literally conforms to the community's demands. The irony is that for the sake of preserving its status quo, the community has forsaken the three individuals who offered the greatest possibility of ushering in the type of social reform that the narrative insists is necessary. The very type of "sympathy" that is central to Eliot's conception of an affirmative community of moral and intellectual interests is rejected by the provincial community. Eliot does not present this rejection as explicitly tragic, but she is far from willing to assign it to the generic category of comic resolution. While the novel's conclusion is constructed in the comic mode, the narrative settlement reads, at best, as a most ambiguous accommodation of the claims of the world and, at worst, as a hollow and tragic negation of those claims. Eliot's attempts to instill comic closure appear as a self-conscious subversion of the demands of the generic convention. Almost perversely she deflects attention away from the central characters of the narrative and provides a

lengthy and satirical account of the Vincy settlement, complete with marital bliss, loving children, good prospects, social concord and pastoral metaphors. The Vincys have been rewarded for fulfilling the credentials of orthodox social settlement, while the characters who threatened the stasis of community, and who most demanded the reader's sympathy, are consigned to an indifferent mediocrity, victims of their own "difference" and a prohibitive community which could not accommodate their "unmanageable" threat to the dictates of social conformity.

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