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同理心的轉變：

喬治艾略特以及亨利詹姆斯小說中的女性人物

Sympathy in Transition: Female Characters
in the Novels of George Eliot and Henry James



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摘要

本篇論文探討維多莉亞時期的兩部小說，喬治·艾略特《弗洛斯河上的磨坊》以及亨利·詹姆斯《一位女士的畫像》裡面的女主人翁受十八世紀思想家對於同理心的影響。藉由追尋十八世紀的感傷主義以及浪漫主義，筆者採取亞當·史密斯學派對於同理心的詮釋，認為同理心是一有目的、道德性的認知行為且想像力是不可或缺的。筆者以個案分析的形式探討這兩部小說，試著論證同理心的思考模式對兩位女主人翁的發展有決定性的影響。筆者認為異於艾略特小說中的女主角自我放棄式的浸淫，詹姆斯小說中開放式的敘事方式更貼近史密斯學派的同理心。

關鍵字：喬治·艾略特、亨利·詹姆斯、亞當·史密斯、同理心、感傷主義、浪漫主義、想像力



Abstract

This thesis will discuss how Maggie Tulliver in George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* and Isabel Archer in Henry James's *The Portrait of a Lady* are closely influenced by a sympathetic understanding of the eighteenth century philosophers. Adapting a Smithian sympathetic perspective in reading those two Victorian novels, I will identify sympathy as an intentional and ethical cognitive exercise, where imagination is necessary and is associated with aesthetic experiences. By tracing back to the eighteenth century sentimentalism and Romanticism, I will argue that moving from Maggie's self-renouncing absorption, Isabel achieves a Smithian sympathy as James's narrator allows her future to be unknown in ambivalence. Inheriting the values of morality in sentimentalism, Romantic literature shows a more pessimistic attitude that is manifested in the Romantic spirit's sense of loss. I will indicate how this sense of loss is presented in the romantic tendencies in Maggie and Isabel, who are both depicted as sentimental and imaginative women, though their destinies work out differently. Interpreting the lives of those protagonists as two case studies, I will point out how a sympathetic-thinking determines Maggie's failures and Isabel's successes in reconciling with herself and in relations to others through rethinking her past and imagining her future. Whereas Eliot's narration in *The Mill* is closer to the conventional sympathetic type, James further breaks through the convention with a Smithian abstraction.

Keywords: James, Eliot, sympathy, Adam Smith, sentimentalism, Romanticism, imagination

Table of Contents

Chapter One	
Introduction	5
Chapter Two	
Maggie's Unfulfilled Past	18
Chapter Three	
Isabel's Sympathetic Reconciliation	34
Chapter Four	
A Comparison between Eliot and James's Narrations	50
Conclusion	64
Works Cited	69



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Chapter I

Introduction

In this thesis, through an investigation on the trajectory of eighteenth century Sentimentalism and Romanticism, I want to show their traces and the legacies on Victorian fictions in Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* and James's *The Portrait of a Lady*. I want to reread the works of George Eliot and Henry James in relation to changes characterizing the eighteenth century to the Victorian period. I will use the theme of sympathy, considered the "tool" to show the protagonists' characters and worth as people, to analyze Maggie Tulliver and Isabel Archer, who are transitional characters under the historical transformation. By looking into the characters' situations, motives and definitive modes of expression, I want to analyze the causes and effects of their sympathy that leads to defining oneself in relation to others. My thesis will deal with four main issues: first, how sympathy functions in a romantic relationship or in a marriage in fictions; second, how sympathy is developed in a character and later compels the heroines to take certain actions; third, how various levels of power relationships are produced by the interrelationships between individual and society as seen in a novel's characters, plot, and form of narrative; fourth, I want to examine the nature and degree of pathos in these novels, and its effect on its fictive readers.

Following Rae Greiner's reading on Adam Smith, I identify sympathy as an intentional and ethical cognitive exercise, where imagination is necessary and is associated with aesthetic experiences. In this thesis, my goal is to explore how aesthetic feeling, including the protagonists' imaginations, and how interrelationships with others affect those heroines in cultivating their sympathy. Through exploring the lives of those protagonists, I want to make it clear that sympathy plays a major role in the development of those transitional women in the nineteenth century. I observe that Eliot and James have different models of narrative sympathy.

Compared with James' *Portrait*, Eliot's formation of the protagonist and plot in *The Mill* is closer to the typical nineteenth century understanding of the conventional sympathetic narration in relation to pity and compassion. While Eliot's narration tires to arouse the readers' sympathy through an Humean identifying type, James' is more of a Smithian abstraction—an abstraction for Isabel to rethink her past in imagination and to allow her future to be unknown—unknown even to herself. Both Maggie and Isabel have romantic tendencies, but they turn out differently. By comparing and contrasting Isabel Archer with Maggie Tulliver, I want to ask how sympathy constructs or influences the story-line by focusing on how sympathy works in their romantic relationships.

I select works of James and Eliot because they are in the mid-Victorian period, a transitional stage with the rise of the “problem” novels, between Jane Austen, the Bronte sisters and the early twentieth century. After his first meeting with Eliot, whom he had revered for long, the young James noted the description in a letter to his father:

I was immensely impressed, interested and pleased. To begin with she is magnificently ugly—deliciously hideous...Now in this vast ugliness resides a most powerful beauty which, in a very few minutes steals forth and charms the mind, so that you end as I ended, in falling in love with her.

(35)

Regardless of her looks, young James was deeply impressed by the beauty in her mind. Since James reads Eliot and appreciates her works, I expect to probe into the influences and differences regarding sympathy in the works of James and Eliot.

James scholars, such as Richard Poirier, F. R. Leavis, and Leon Edel emphasize the significance that Eliot had on James. Leon Edel boldly indicates that the greatest homage that James paid to Eliot's genius was in his writing *The Portrait of a Lady*,

which can be viewed as a “George Eliot novel,” “written by James in the way he believed she *should* have written” (*Conquest* 371). Similarly, F. R. Leavis claims that James so admired Eliot, “testifying to his admiration with *The Portrait of a Lady...*” (xxii) in his introduction to *Daniel Deronda*. Both James and Eliot are concerned about the decision-makings of their characters who are common people, made great in their characters. Compared with the early Victorian novels, the mid-Victorian novels, transcending from the romantic to a more realistic form, are more matured in the characters’ psychological analysis, where human relations and characters are concerned. Characters are struggling to make choices while their decisions are complicated by the people they are related to. I want to focus on the circumstances that are tumultuous for those heroines in making choices of their own. To look into their transitional status and characters, I want to use qualities of sympathy as coordinates to trace the psychological development of their characters.

In the Introduction, I will examine the historical transition of sympathy as I provide my own definition and outline the selected novels basically with theoretical themes. To begin with, I want to explain why I choose sympathy rather than empathy or other affects to analyze the texts. There are two main reasons. One, as Greiner points out in her essay, “1909: The Introduction of the Word ‘Empathy’ into English”, she suggests that although there are “similarities between eighteenth- and nineteenth-century conceptions of sympathy and a *fin de siècle* empathy bearing the undeniable stamp of its post-Darwinian making,” “after 1909 (if not before it), sympathy seemed to belong to the Victorians, empathy to us,” for “empathy necessarily involved a cognitive component, though how strong, and how dominant, varied” (n.pag). Since empathy is often easily confused with sympathy, I want to make a distinction by pointing out their differences with Suzanne Keen’s “A Theory of Narrative Empathy.” Marked as a shift and transformation of the long

development of sympathy, empathy emerged as a new concept in the more recent years. Sympathy and empathy are two types of concepts that generate different responses of people. Since empathy suggests a more complete immersing of oneself in the others' feelings and experiences, empathy closes more completely the distance between oneself and the other. Keen suggests that rather than judging objectively from the outside, with empathy, people feel what they believe to be the emotions of others. With empathy, the distance between one and the other dissipates; instead, there is a more chaotic fusion which disturbs the characters from one and the other. That is, the characters gradually lose themselves as they become more and more immersed in the others' thought. On the other hand, Greiner poses that sympathy allows a greater possibility of understanding the thinking of another with whom one does not agree (159). The other reason is that the moral implication of sympathy, applied by the eighteenth century English philosophers when aestheticism and moralities are mingled together, continues to influence the Victorian writers like Eliot and James along with their works. In this light, it is imperative to further explain the relation between the Victorian society and the eighteenth century's moral sentiment. Thus, I turn now to examine the concatenation of eighteenth century sentimentalism, Romanticism and the Victorian characters, Maggie and Isabel, in Eliot's and James's fictions.

I want to pin the definition of sympathy down in novelistic critical forms. My definition of sympathy is based on the foundation of Greiner, Pond and Ablow's works and expands an intentional and ethical cognitive exercise, which requires imagination in forming connections with others, with aesthetic experiences. Through its complicated and dynamic dimension, sympathy is more of a medium or platform to make bridges for other affects or emotions to communicate between one and the other, than considered as a feeling or emotion in this thesis. That is, rather

than blending in, sympathy constitutes other emotions or affects, such as anger, disgust, love. More, not only keeping a proper distance with others is indispensable for sympathy, as Pond argued, but sympathy requiring a distance of space, a period of time to digest aesthetic experiences and to re-create in tranquility. Seeing sympathy plays a major role in the development of those transitional women, I will evaluate their actions with close reading. From their thoughts, actions, relationship with others, I will explore how their lives fulfill the desire to form a belief, an image, or a judgment through their sympathetic imagination.

Based on “similarity rather than difference” (Narayan 33), a Humean sympathizer like Maggie in Eliot’s narration, I want to point out, ultimately leads to a pathological disaster. On the other hand, I perceive Isabel as more of a disengaged Smithian spectator, who coolly analyzes her situation in James’s narration. Along with critics like Thomas Laquer, Kristen Pond points out that the “common understanding” of sympathy in nineteenth century Victorian England—“the ability to show compassion for the other by understanding the experiences of the other”—is a continuation of the eighteenth century’s understanding of sympathy, which is closely connected with “notions of virtue and even national identity” (21). In *The Marriage of Minds: Reading Sympathy in the Victorian Marriage Plot*, Rachel Ablow observes that eighteenth century moral philosophers, such as Lord Shaftesbury, David Hume, Adam Smith¹, considered sympathy a way to “entering into another’s feeling” (2) and to “counter selfishness and consolidate community” (2). Similarly, Steintrager indicates that those philosophers “emphasize pity, compassion, fellow feeling, and sympathy, broadly construed, as the steering mechanism of individual interaction”

¹Adam Smith, widely known as the father of modern economics, is the author of *The Theory of Moral Sentiment*, a book that indicates the sense of morality and justice were made by imagining ourselves in the others’ place (Stafford 23). *The Theory of Moral Sentiment* significantly proffered the ethical, philosophical, psychological, and methodological underpinnings that influenced the nineteenth-century English fictions.

(xiii). The origin and definition of sympathy have been widely debated by scholars for long. In the Introduction of *Rethinking Empathy Through Literature*, the author points out that “[a]lthough many accounts of the conceptual history of fellow-feeling begin in eighteenth-century Britain, the idea of sympathy stretches back to the Ancient Greeks, who gave us the names of “suffering together” (2). This definition of “suffering together” enriches sympathy with the meaning of interrelationships, mutual dependencies to connect with each other. Offering a distinct comparison between Hume and Smith, Narayan shows that compared with Smith’s intact spectator, for Hume, the sympathizer’s identification to the object he/she sympathizes with is crucial—“the operation of sympathy is closely allied with a strong and undivided self-identity” (33). In Narayan’s words, Humean “sympathy is strongest when resemblance is greatest” (33), as Hume suggests that

the nature has preserv’d a greater resemblance that preserves itself amidst all their variety; and this resemblance must very much contribute to make us enter into the sentiments of others, and embrace them with facility and pleasure. (33)

However, grounded on physiology, Humean sympathy, as Greiner indicates, is “contagious,” yet impossible and undesirable, for “feeling can transfer directly from one person to another” without bypassing cognition (17).

Following Greiner’s direction, I perceive that in the narrative of James, for Isabel, she breaks through a pathological narcissistic identification and develops a sympathetic thinking in rethinking her past and reforming relationships while Maggie is stuck in an emotive identification with her familial past in Eliot’s narration of a eighteenth century moral depiction. Greiner explains that sympathy “could be analyzed irrespective of whatever emotions were (or were not) produced or shared” (1). In *Sympathetic Realism in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction*, taking Smith’s

philosophy of sympathy as her coordinates, Rae Greiner draws a distinct line between sympathy and self-identification. Greiner regards sympathy as an imaginative undertaking that does not necessarily engage feeling. Greiner sees that sympathy is a way of thinking along with others, rather than identifying with them:

[S]ympathy is a way of thinking about others, not an embodiment of their emotions, and not reserved for sorrow. [...] The conditions of sympathy are overwhelmingly imaginative: one “bring[s] the case home” by imagining the other’s feelings, reconstructed in “the thought of his situation.” And though Smith refers to a “sufferer,” sympathy pertains to the full range of theory of human sentiments, experienced in “analogous” ways. (3-4)

Greiner argues that Smith’s emphasis on imaginative reflections rather than spontaneous emotions allows for the cultivation of “fellow-feeling,” which Greiner calls “an affective, social mode of understanding” (4). That is, Smith’s insight that sympathy deals with representations—imagined constructions of others’ situations—leads to imagined feelings. Greiner claims that “sympathy produces realism” (9) in its imaginative process through exploring nineteenth-century realistic novelists, who render sympathy as a large part in their novel, share the same thought with Smith that “sympathetic processes of thought were central to the narrative they crafted” in imaginative relationships with others (4). Resonating with Greiner, Rachel Ablow asserts that sympathy is less a feeling than as “the encounter between minds,” an intentional willingness to relate by “entering imaginatively into another’s thoughts or feelings” (8). Rather than conforming to others with self-annihilation, sympathy creates a platform for two different mindsets together.

I want to argue that the Romantic spirit and its sense of loss in the Romantic period influence Victorian writers like Eliot and James as they depicted it in the

romantic tendencies in Maggie and Isabel. While Maggie's sense of loss comes from her lack of family love, Isabel's resulted from the disillusion of an ideal self that she projected on Osmond. However, compared with Maggie, Isabel develops a sympathetic thinking and overcomes her idealistic fantasies with a more mellow character after her disillusion in marriage.

Whereas sentimentalism focuses on the characters' superior ability to sympathize with others that resulted from their moral power, driven more by the feelings of overwhelming power and awe that is sometimes supernatural, Romanticism was a closely related trend along with sentimentalism. With the advance of industrialization, some of the conservatives find escape in nostalgia, "at the upper end of society, for an idealized medievalism" (402-403). In the chapter of "The Romantic Artist" in his influential work, *Culture and Society*, Raymond Williams states that "the Poet, the Artist, is by nature indifferent to the crude worldliness and materialism of politics and social affairs; he is devoted, rather, to the more substantial spheres of natural beauty and personal feeling" (30). Although James appreciates the sense of freedom of the Romantics, Daugherty writes, James suggests that "Romantic conception of genius was ultimately too passive and undisciplined to satisfy the analytical critic" (62). I contend that James's narration corresponds to his opposition towards this idealism for a comprehension of this incompatibility that he satirized in the narration of Isabel's inflated romantic fantasies.

Closely related to the social inequality in the late eighteenth century to the early nineteenth century, when Industrial Revolution and commercial prosperity were brought into focus, this unsatisfied spirit reflected the fact that only the few groups of people benefits from the status quo. Thus, the call for liberation of all kinds of restraints in the Romantic period was high as it rebels against the decorum and orthodox of the neoclassical period. Spirit and passion overflowed in the works of

the Romantic poets as S. G. Checkland portrays in *The Rise of Industrial Society in England* that the Romantics “[lauded] the principle of free expression of the personality” (393). The Romantic poets urged for rebellion against social injustice of the inequality of society that neglected individual’s rights. However, Romantic poets like Wordsworth and Coleridge renounce radical ideals after they lost heart in the French Revolution for the violence it jeopardized the society (401). Christopher Nagle contends that rather than simply preceding sentimentalism, Romanticism, as its reformulation, prioritizes its ideology, such as individual solitude over community, and outlives it— “Sensibility provides...the discursive infrastructure of Romanticism itself” (4). R. F. Brissenden suggests that the French Revolution resulted in “reaction against sentimentalism” for “a general dissatisfaction with those optimistic elements in man’s vision of himself and the world which had prevailed during the eighteenth century” (65). Although the literature of Romanticism succeeded in the value of morality in the novel of sensibility, it did not share sentimentalism’s optimism.

Along with moral philosophers in the eighteenth century, the Romantic poets recognize sympathy as pity and compassion and as a source of identification to the others. Sarah Zimmerman deems that the value system created by the eighteenth century moral philosophers is beneficial for assisting the Romantic poets to focus less on the poet himself/herself, than on the people (28-29). For example, Smith suggests that the most virtuous man is “defined almost entirely through his sympathy with and his desire for sympathy from other members of his community” (Ablow 3). Raymond Williams designates this sympathetic identification is illuminated in Wordsworth’s wish for a poet “to bring his feelings near to those of the persons whose feelings he describes, nay, for short spaces of time, perhaps, to let himself slip into an entire delusion, and even confound and identify his own feelings with theirs” (60).

“Like the faculty of memory,” Zimmerman argues, “the capacity for sympathetic identification has long been associated with the Romantic poet's introspectiveness” (28) in *Romanticism, Lyricism, and History*. Pointing out that both the Romantic poets, Samuel Coleridge and William Hazlitt highly appraised the genius of Shakespeare because of his “ability to identify with his characters” (29), Zimmerman takes this as an example to illuminate the ideal imagination that appropriates sympathy— “sympathy is relevant to Romantic lyricism because it becomes an ideal for the imagination” (60). Similarly, in the chapter of “The Pleasures of Poetry,” Fiona Stafford contends that for the Romantic poet, Percy Shelley, followed the moral philosophers’ arguments in deeming that by cultivating the people’s sympathy through imaginative literature can strongly influence the progress of society (24). For instance, Shelley argued that “poetry ‘awakens and enlarges the mind itself,’ so that poetry is “central to moral action because of its association with the imagination” (23). In his work, *A Defence of Poetry*, Shelley points out that

A man to be greatly good, must imagine intensely and comprehensively; he must put himself in the place of another and of many others; the pains and pleasure of his species must become his own. The great instrument of moral good is the imagination—and poetry administers to the effect by acting upon the cause. (24)

From Shelley’s essay, it is clear that he, along with the other Romantic poets, perceives that “goodness depends on sympathy and the related ability to identify with the feelings of others” (23). Conflicts, however, show up when the seemingly altruistic Romantics try to assimilate the others with their sympathy that is based on identification.

I perceive the sense of loss that is pervasive in Romanticism results from a Humean sympathizer—the violence of unethical assimilation. In “The Impulse to

Tell and to Know: The Rhetoric and Ethics of Sympathy in the Nineteenth-Century British Novel,” Kristen Pond examines how some nineteenth-century British novels performed sympathy in a way that a distance between self and the other is still retained:

A more ethical practice of sympathy abandons the premise that sympathy must bridge difference and instead preserves the distance between self and other in order to maintain, rather than erase, difference. Sympathy must be re-imagined as a mode of engagement and a way of approaching the other, not as a moment of understanding (usually predicated on sameness).

(8)

Pond suggests that a more ethical encounter will be preserving the distance to retain the difference between self and the other with the exchange of sympathy, for “a willingness to have one’s assumptions challenged by difference rather than simply covering that difference” (8-9). In the nineteenth century, as Pond points out, England tried to expand her territory by governing many colonies, in literature, sympathy was treated as a tool to assimilate “the others” (7), those who are different from oneself by writers to “ameliorate social differences with assurances of mutual feeling and universal humanity” (6). Pond argues that tension emerges when “identification is posited as a solution for the division between self and other” through “erasing the other’s subject position in order to create identification” (9). Pond takes the Romantic poet, William Wordsworth’s “The Cumberland Beggar” to illustrate how “sympathy extended toward the poor, then, was based on a distorted understanding of this group of ‘others’ (7): “[Wordsworth] represents confidence in the ability to know the other by subsuming him or her under a common ideal, erasing the possible differences of the other and thereby encouraging sympathy for an ideal rather than for an individual” (8). The failure to assimilate those who are different

from oneself leads to disillusion and self-isolation. It is actually an egoistic reaction that results in the sense of loss in the Romantic period.

Till now, I have presented an overview from sentimentalism to Romanticism, and tried to explain how those periods are influenced by the sympathetic understanding of the eighteenth century philosophers, including Adam Smith, which is imperative before I apply a sympathetic reading to those female characters, Maggie and Isabel in the Victorian fictions in later chapters. I turn now to chapter layout with a brief outline of the novels with their theoretical themes. In chapter two, I will show a failing example of Smithian sympathy with Maggie's Tulliver's life. I suggest that due to the lack of sympathetic recognition from her family, Maggie cannot separate from her familial past, which result in her repetitive suffering. This lack of recognition, standing as an obstacle every time there appears a chance for her to form a new relationship, overpowers her natural passion. It is not until her final death that paradoxically reunifies her with her familial memory does her suffering come to an end. Compared with Maggie's unsuccessful case, in chapter three, I will argue that it is through Isabel's sympathetic development, a concatenation of admitting her faults, rethinking her past and imagining her future, does she reconcile with the others, and then herself. With her romantic and unrealistic imagination, Isabel Archer is entrapped in her idealism as she struggles to prove her liberty in the choice of her romantic relationship. After the failed attempt, Isabel retreats into self-alienation. At last, Isabel achieves self-reconciliation through developing a sympathetic thinking when she rethinks her past relationships and imagines the possible future.

Chapter four will be a comparison between those two works and their narrative styles. I will begin with a discussion of the endings of the two works and question Eliot and James' narrative methodologies in ending their novels. By presenting an

overview of the historical trajectory from the eighteenth century sentimental novels to the Romanticism, I will try to show how Victorian novelists, Eliot and James are influenced by the previous literary genres. With their distinctive models of sympathy, Eliot and James treat their protagonists differently—while Maggie is closer to the typical sentimental prototype of the conventional sympathetic narration in relation to pity and compassion, Isabel further breaks through with James's abstracted narration. As for the final chapter, I will try to conclude the outcomes in my reading of *The Mill on the Floss* and *The Portrait of a Lady* with the perspective of a Smithian sympathy, and suggest future prospects.



Chapter II

Maggie's Unfulfilled Past

In the second chapter, although Maggie distinguishes herself from the social norms of nineteenth century women with her unconventionalities, I want to argue that under a sympathetic evaluation, Maggie is entrapped in the lack of her familial recognition. I will show that this unfulfilled self also resulted in the failures of her romantic relationships. Maggie falsely projects her unfulfilled self on her lovers as she acts out the pattern in her familial relations. In order to attain her family recognition, Maggie first tries to renounce all her desires that contradict to the family expectation, including her romantic relationships. Later, she escapes into a state of languidness, giving up her autonomy by absorbing in an absent-mindedness that takes her back to her familial memory. Nevertheless, after all her attempts come to a dead end, Maggie ultimately proceeds to her final death.

As unconventional women in the Victorian society, Maggie and Isabel are struggling in a dilemma between conforming to the conventional angel of the house and fulfilling their individuality. “[D]epressed by a dull, wearisome life” (373), Maggie indulges herself in a rigid ascetic system that she builds up to benumb her natural passion that makes her restless to “think a great deal about the world” (335). Compared with “the conventional women around her” (429), unfortunately, Maggie is constantly harassed by social convention due to Maggie’s unconventional traits. Maggie’s uniqueness is manifested in her unconformity; for instance, in her childhood, when her mother demands her to do the “patchwork, like a little lady,” little Maggie replies it is “a foolish work” for “tearing things to pieces to sew’em together again” (14). Maggie’s another unconventional trait is her boldness. Criticized by her aunts for her fluffy dark hair, out of a strong impulse, little Maggie seeks her revenge by cutting off her hair in the attic (63). In her teens, with “eyes flashing like the eyes

of a young lioness” (215), Maggie reproaches her aunts and uncles to their face for not helping her father to pay off his debts. Besides her cleverness and boldness, Maggie’s most potent characteristic is having a wild imagination; the narrator describes that Maggie often “make[s] stories to the pictures out of [her] own head” (19). Even in her renunciation, Maggie “threw some exaggeration and willfulness, some pride and impetuosity” as the narrator depicts that

[Maggie’s] own life was still a drama for her, in which she demanded of herself that her part should be played with intensity. And so it came to pass that she often lost the spirit of humility by being excessive in the outward act; she often strove after too high a flight, and came down with her poor little half-fledged wings dabbled in the mud. (292)

This unrestrained and vigorous style that brims with talent sometimes leads her into chaotic exaggerations. Throughout her life, unfortunately, Maggie does not have many chances to make choices of her own since half of her life has to weather the storm with her family.

The inner conflict, as a matter of fact, keeps Maggie in a dilemma—pursuing and renouncing pleasure—as she struggles to conform to familial responsibilities for familial love and acceptance. Williams points out that in the nineteenth century, interestingly, intellectual women novelists, such as George Eliot and Charlotte Bronte, held a more conservative stance on women’s role, compared with the more active feminists who called for women’s political rights at that time. Williams shows that the struggle to prove a woman’s own worth and the worth to the more important side, for Charlotte and Eliot, is their familial responsibilities:

Perhaps it is significant that the four really great women novelists of the nineteenth century—Jane Austen, the two Bronte and George Eliot—were all childless and married late or not at all. But all of them felt

responsible as daughters for helping in the family home... As in their novels, so in their personal lives we find the conviction that a woman cannot think first of herself. (15-16)

Since women at that time are closely connected to their family, women work to support their family, not for their own value: “that an ‘honest woman’ was ‘never separated from her family,’” because “she owed a duty to her family, particularly the men in it, which meant that she deserved no respect if she put her own wishes before theirs” (24). To lessen the family burden, therefore, this kind of emphasis on familial responsibility turns to the marriage issue, for middle class women cannot support themselves and is therefore a burden to the family men. Williams concisely describes as “the basis for one of the great central themes in the nineteenth century novel, that of marriage for money versus marriage for love” (3). For the social opinion took women’s working as “a misfortune and a disgrace,” (9) Tom claims that he will manage the family debts in his own way, as he reproves Maggie for taking the work of plain sewing to help the family debts—“I don’t like *my* sister to do such things” (293). Tom wishes Maggie to be a lady and a proper lady shall not “lower” herself in taking works (392). When Maggie protests that, compared with her limitedness, as a man, Tom has the “power” to “do something in the world” (347), Tom succinctly told Maggie to “submit to those [men] that can” (347). Along with the other nineteenth century men, Tom asks for his family women’s absolute obedience as way of showing their contribution and devotion.

Maggie’s guilt of leaving her family to pursue her own pleasure while they are in troubles keeps Maggie in an on-going suffering since her youth. The burden of guilt prolongs and aggravates after Mr. Tulliver’s death, for Tom inherits his father’s feud with Lawyer Wakem, whose son, Phillip develops a romantic relationship with Maggie. During the time of the family’s bankruptcy, Maggie makes a way out to

benumb her own passion that she regards as selfish (335) by insisting on a martyr-like philosophy of self-renunciation after reading *The Imitation of Christ*, written by Thomas A. Kempis. The narrator explains how Maggie's past and memory carved deep in Maggie's life: "Every one of those keen moments has left its trace, and lives in us still, but such traces have blent themselves irrecoverably with the firmer texture of our youth and manhood" (66). Astonished and ashamed of herself for becoming "weary of [her] father and mother," Maggie determines it is better for her to stick to the belief of an ascetic life by renouncing all her desires. Although this self-effacing renunciation, indeed, provides Maggie a temporary escape and a sense of tranquility by numbing her desires, this renunciation is, in fact, the result of Maggie's unfulfilled longing for family approval as Elizabeth Ermarth describes,

by internalizing crippling norms, by learning to rely on approval, to fear ridicule and to avoid conflict, Maggie grows up fatally weak. In place of a habit of self-actualization she has learned a habit of self-denial which Philip rightly calls a "long suicide." (587)

Without hope, there will be no disappointment. Szrotny suggests that Eliot tries to discover "the relative importance to her [Maggie's] self-fulfillment and of the acceptance that comes only by self-denial, rather than the relative good that fulfillment and denial do to others" (194). Maggie's habitual evasion, for instance, is presented in her experience of reading. Maggie's reluctance to continue her reading of a novel because she could not make out a happy ending (306) further illuminates her habitual self-denial. Whenever Maggie encounters any incident that goes against her family's approval, she automatically shuts herself down in a stupefied absorption. However, rather setting her free from all temptations, Maggie's ascetic life style makes her susceptibility even more sensitive to anything that shall arouse her passionate nature, as if a withering flower longing for drops of

rain during a drought. Surely enough, with the temptation coming in the form of Stephen's singing, it is plain that Maggie has little power to resist. While Maggie makes great effort to benumb herself through stupefaction, unconsciously, her lack of love makes her weak when encountering possible temptations.

A deeper layer beneath this self-renunciation is the rejection of Maggie's familial recognition. With the continual disapproval expressed by her mother and aunts, Maggie's passionate nature and active imagination have not been appreciated since her childhood. Maggie "had been so often told she was like a gipsy," who is "half wild" (104). Although Maggie's beloved father, Jeremy Tulliver favors her more than anybody else in the house, he holds a superstitious belief of a gloomy prediction for a girl who is "too clever" as he meditated on Maggie: "a woman's no business wi' being so clever" (17) and "un over-'cute women's no better nor a long-tailed sheep—she'll fetch none the bigger price for that" (12). Like his father, Tom does not encourage Maggie's cleverness. In their childhood, while Maggie expresses her wish to live happily ever after with him, Tom thinks to dominate Maggie—he "meant to make her his housekeeper, and punish her when she did wrong" (40). With Greiner's reading of Smith's sympathy, I want to show that Maggie's unfulfilled desire of her familial recognition results from their rejections to sympathize with her. Greiner constructs a model of sympathy that makes more room for rational thought and imagination. For Smith, she argues, sympathy leads to an imagined feeling which Smith termed as "fellow-feeling," and what Greiner calls "an affective, social mode of understanding" (4). Greiner points out that Smith's "insistence that sympathy in which thinking of others thinking of us, and the reverse, is the psychological mechanism enabling the sense of self" (22). Since there is no one to approbate and credit Maggie's "sense of self" in her family, there remains a lack in her familial recognition that urges her to keep returning to her past memory to

fill in the lack as Smith argues that “[o]ne’s passion matter...only insofar as others credit them; others confirm us to ourselves by returning (some version of) our sentiments to us” (22). I agree with Szirotny’s opinion that “what chains Maggie to her family is not worshipful love, but the rejection that kept her...from separating from her family” (193). Along with the social convention, the family’s expectation often contradicts with Maggie’s passionate nature. Szirotny contends that Maggie sacrifice is confusing but not confused due to “her main concern is not the good of self-realization through love and culture, versus the good of renunciation, but the importance of doing good versus that of securing acceptance” (179). To “do good” is to be obedient to her family, regardless of her own wants. Placing the “joy of love” as the antithesis of “calmer affection” (477), Maggie considers her passionate nature inferior to the tranquil memory of past. Contending that too much of her natural self deserves no love, Maggie is resolved to self-renunciation.

Asserting that “[faithfulness and constancy] mean renouncing whatever is opposed to the reliance others have in us,” “besides doing what is easiest and pleasantest to ourselves” (475), Maggie holds onto the value that self-renunciation is inevitable for family love and devotion, for her family’s miseries create a strong tie that remains unbreakable and exclusive between Maggie and her family. In *How Novels Think*, Nancy Armstrong suggests that the renunciation for a better social good establishes a Victorian woman’s individuality: “[t]he protagonist of Victorian fiction does not become an individual on the basis of what and how intensely he or she desires; individuality depends on how he or she chooses to displace what is a fundamentally asocial desire onto a socially appropriate object” (8). Armstrong defines modern subjectivity as a tissue of contradictions, sustainable only if unfolded through a particular narrative of desire in which an unhappy subject makes a better place for itself by becoming both more self-contained and more socially worthy.

Resonating with Armstrong, Merryn Williams indicates that the prototype of an ideal nineteenth century woman involves qualities of being “[y]oung and lovely, religious, submissive and dependent, confiding and sensitive and chaste, accepting without question the destiny of marriage” (34), and is illustrated by novelists as their heroines in novels and periodicals in *Women in the English Novel 1800-1900*. Tom’s school teacher, Mr. Stelling shows a general opinion of a woman’s cleverness in the nineteenth century. When Maggie asks Mr. Stelling of her capability for taking Tom’s lessons, condescendingly, Mr. Stelling replies that girls “are quick and shallow” for, “they can pick up a little of everything,” and “a great deal of superficial cleverness: but they couldn’t go far into anything” (Eliot 150). Mr. Tulliver marries his wife for Mrs. Tulliver is “a good-looking woman,” who “come[s] of a rare family for managing” and “was a bit weak” (19). That is, a woman’s look, the family that she belongs to, and her weakness to assure her husband’s authority are the standards of an admirable Victorian wife. Except Maggie, who is portrayed as a clever and passionate, yet emotional vulnerable woman, female characters are either depicted as angles of the house, such as Maggie’s cousin, Lucy Deane, or as dull-witted and shallow, like Maggie’s mother and most of the women in the novel. In Maggie’s life, compared with the family women, Maggie’s family men play a greater role in her life.

Although Maggie’s family men have a significant influence on her, they do not render Maggie sympathy. Szirotny suggests that “miserable and bereft of sympathetic support,” Maggie “would all the more cling to her habitual association of self-abnegation with others’ acceptance of her, however destructive of herself and others” (191). After losing the lawsuit with Lawyer Wakem, Mr. Tulliver, who “always defended and excused her” (205), when Maggie was a little girl, no longer shows his tenderness and is gradually consumed in his bitterness. Tom, whom Maggie is emotionally dependent on, profoundly affects her marital decisions and

later her death. Regardless of others' disapproval, it is Tom's opinion that Maggie cares about most. While Tom's persistence in "[holding] him bound to his father's memory, and by every manly feeling, never to consent to any relation with Wakems" (456-457) made it impossible for Maggie to marry Philip Wakem, at the fatal ending, it is because of saving Tom, Maggie roars her boat back into the flood, where they are drowned together. Insisting on his own judgment, Tom is unwilling to think along with Maggie. Following Greiner's argument, imagination has the most direct way to sympathy, for fellow thinking is the ability to think along with others through imagining others' situation. However, rather than leading to sympathy, an imposed judgment forbids sympathetic-thinking and only generates egoism. Tom's self-righteousness makes him incapable of thinking along with Maggie's "mental needs which were often the source of the wrong-doing or absurdity that made her life a planless riddle to him" (393). In a similar vein, Ablow is concerned that "the ability to imagine" may not help one to be more compassionate or sympathetic, for "to imagine others' suffering all too easily leads not to compassion or a sense of responsibility, but instead to a form of selfishness (81). When Maggie desperately protests how her passion and imagination overwhelm her—"You don't know how differently things affect me from what they do you" (393)—all Tom understands is her uncontrollable behavior as being "disobeying and deceiving," the "ridiculous flights first into one extreme and then into another" (347). Because of Tom's "unimaginative, unsympathetic minds," Maggie finds "[i]t was no use to make Tom feel that she was near to him" (393). Thus, Maggie keeps pain as the substitute of her family's unreturning compassion, for the other side of affection is not hatred, but total indifference that isolates one and the other.

Suffering becomes the theme of Maggie's life; it repetitively appears and has the decisive power to influence Maggie's decisions. Although Tom often hurts

Maggie with his rigid standard of fairness and stubborn self-righteousness, their common past binds them tightly together, as Maggie declares to Stephen that she “desire[s] no future that will break the ties of the past,” for the “tie to my brother is one of the strongest” and she “can do nothing willingly that divide me always with him [Tom]” (444). The relationship with Tom has “its root deeper than all change” in Maggie’s life, as her wish to “have no cloud between herself and Tom was still a perpetual yearning in her” (454). Elizabeth Ermarth indicates that due to Maggie’s need for love that “overthrows her integrity,” she is pitifully dependent upon her family men’s acceptance (594). Both Isabel and Maggie are depicted as passionate and impetuous, but Maggie is especially delineated as emotionally vulnerable.

Through the narrator’s words, the readers are told that since her childhood Maggie is dominated by “the need of being loved, the strongest need in poor Maggie’s nature” (37). Surely enough, this strong need that will “always subdue her” comes uppermost at the appeal for “the bother’s goodness” (392). Maggie’s longing is a natural one—the need to love and to be loved—that every human being longs for, but not everyone is fortunate enough to obtain.

This unfulfilled desire, therefore, propels Maggie to cling to pain since pain is a shared experience that connects with her family. “The most sacred ties,” Maggie suggests, is the past that binds one and the other together as she questions: “If the past is not to bind us, where can duty lie” (475)? Shuttleworth indicates Maggie’s question directs to the “central moral issue of the novel”

To ignore the past, to act only according to the promptings of egoism, would be to disrupt both organic social harmony and historical continuity. The question assumes, however, a unified history and a unified self: that the past is a linear continuum and the self a united and coherent whole. Both these premises are questioned in *The Mill*. The novel portrays not

only a society divided by conflict, but also an individual similarly torn.
(52)

Along with Shuttleworth, Raymond Williams points out that Eliot considers that social relationships are inextricably interwoven as a “network”: “a ‘tangled skein’; a ‘tangled web’...For it tends to represent social –and indeed directly personal— relationships as passive; acted upon rather than acting” (108). While for Maggie, the past, memory, and duty are interwoven together, pain is the common memory that relates Maggie with her family. At Mr. Tulliver’s death bed, “[Tom and Maggie] forgot everything else in the sense that they had one father and one sorrow” (205). Maggie and Tom’s joint suffering blends them into a “tangled skein” with one collective memory that makes them inseparable.

Since the recognition that enables the sense of self is denied in her family, Maggie imposes her unfulfilled self on her romantic relationships with Philip and Stephen. Maggie’s sacrificial affection for Philip is a projection of her brother, Tom’s unreturning recognition. If not the enmity between their fathers, it is likely that Maggie should marry Philip Wakem, a lame and sensitive young man, who adores her since their childhood, for Maggie “care[s] the most about the unhappy people” and “always take[s] the side of the rejected loved in the stories” (333):

[Maggie] had rather a tenderness for deformed things; she preferred the wry-necked lambs, because it seemed to her that the lambs which were quite strong and well-made wouldn’t mind so much about being petted; and she was especially fond of petting objects that would think it very delightful to be petted by her. (177)

For the unfulfilled desire to be loved and appreciated in her family, Maggie has the tendency to take side and pity those, like Philip, who are comparatively inferior in relationships like her. During their secret meetings in the woods, Maggie “had a

moment of real happiness then—a moment of belief that, if there were sacrifices in this love, it was all the richer and more satisfying” when Philip pleaded for her love with his “pale face that was full of pleading, timid love—like a women’s” (337). In their relationship, as if the figure of Tom, Philip plays the roles of a “brother and teacher” (329), who chides Maggie as she returns with “childish contrition” (413). Philip admits to his father that “the thought of his being her [Maggie’s] lover had never entered her mind” (331), Maggie agrees to meet him due to his relation with Tom in the past:

She liked me at King’s Lorton, when she was a little girl, because I used to sit with her bother a great deal when he had hurt his foot. She had kept that in her memory, and thought of me as a friend of a long while ago. She didn’t think me as a lover, when she met me. (427)

Maggie is absorbed in the fantasy in the drama of a sacrificial love. When their self-satisfying relationship comes to an end in the interference of Tom’s discovery, Maggie’s feeling of “a certain dim background of relief in the forced separation from Philip” (348) insinuates the truth that her love for Philip is less as romantic passion than as self-projection fused with condescending pity. In contrast to Maggie’s relationship with Philip, a substitute for Tom’s brotherly figure, Maggie is strongly attracted by Stephen by an unexplainable force with the charm of his singing.

Taking Maggie back to the childhood memory, Stephen’s music serves as an emotional access for Maggie to return to her childhood. Because a child is not responsible for his own behavior, the child is thus free to express his own ego. Stephen’s music, thus, provides Maggie a temporary escape from her superego as she relapses into an absent-minded languidness. The narrator explains Maggie’s natural passionate self is presented in her fondness of music:

her sensibility to the supreme excitement of music was only one form of

that passionate sensibility which belonged to her whole nature, and made her faults and virtues all merge in each other—made her affections sometimes an impatient demand. (401)

Stephen's singing, to some extent, releases Maggie's affectionate self that is long suppressed by her ascetic self-control. Upon the thought that "Stephen knew how much she cared for his singing" (416), Maggie tries her very effort to resist, but overwhelmingly the absorbing music has its hold on Maggie, she loses all her self-control "by the inexorable power of sound" (416): "all her intentions were lost in the vague state of emotion produced by the inspiring duet—emotion that seemed to make her at once strong and weak: strong for all enjoyment, weak for all resistance" (416). Under the charm of music, Maggie "cease[s] to think, with her eager prefiguring imagination, of her future lot" (402). Ablow points out that "Maggie's love for Stephen is utterly ungovernable and irrational" since however hard she struggles, again and again Maggie loses the battle of controlling herself to "remain aloof and unaffected in Stephen's presence" (76). Having its "predominance" on her, "[Stephen's singing] was a way speaking to Maggie," that "deepen[s] the hold on her" (459). Other than music, they often mutely exchange long gaze, "a long look" (450). The attraction between Maggie and Stephen is unexplainable, perhaps all love is, but little did they achieve mutual understanding of each other, as Ablow writes, "Eliot makes no suggestions that Maggie understands Stephen or has any particular access to his thoughts or feelings" (76). Like a child, Maggie allows herself to dwell in an absent thinking of "absorb[ing] in the direct, immediate experience, without any energy left for taking account of it and reasoning about it" (403). As she plunges into absentmindedness, Maggie indulges herself by renouncing her autonomy.

The charm of Stephen's music is that it brings Maggie back to her familial past in childhood, when she is free from taking responsibilities. Throughout her life,

however, tragedies recurrently occur while Maggie is absorbed in unconscious absorption. In Maggie's childhood, she easily falls into a state of dreaming and wondering that cause her in troubles. For instance, once she goes fishing with Tom, "she had forgotten all about the fish, and was looking dreamily at the glassy water" (40). Another time she is "lost to almost everything but a vague sense of jam and idleness" (46), without noticing Tom's dissatisfaction for her eating the larger half of the puff. Years later, in the fatal boating with Stephen, the narrator observes that Maggie's "yielding is attended with a less vivid consciousness than resistance; it is the partial sleep of thought; it is the submergence of our personality by another" (467). The moments of absorption in Maggie's absent-mindedness, as Ablow demonstrates, "involves a kind of absorption or self-loss that compromises Maggie's ability to function as the responsible, self-conscious agent of her own actions" (84). Stephen comes as a catalogue to reactivate Maggie's childhood passions that she has long struggle to suppress.

Despite Stephen's strong attraction, Maggie's incapability of responding to her lovers, both Stephen and Philip, threatens her to separate herself from the familial past because romantic love forms a new relation with an outsider of the family.

Reasoning with Stephen in her rejection of his proposal, Maggie expresses that

such [romantic] feelings continually come across the ties that all our former life has made for us—the ties that have made others dependent on us...if life did not make duties for us before love comes, love would be a sign that two people ought to belong to each other. (449)

Szirotny identifies that the passage conveys "the primacy of ties that all our former life has made for us' as the primacy of first romance" (186-187). For Maggie, love cannot be complete if it is separated from memory, pity and faithfulness (450).

Since romantic relationship often leads to marriage in the Victorian century, to love is

to marry. To marry, in the Biblical sense that serves as a moral standard at that time, is to leave one's original family, a former relation, and enter another one that ties one and the other together, for one becomes a union with one's husband or wife: "a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh" (Eph. 5.31). Incapable of leaving her familial memory, Maggie denies the possible merits in a romantic relationship as she tells Philip that "there can never come much happiness to me from [romantic] loving: I have always had so much pain mingled with it" (413). Maggie is unable to begin a new relationship with her unfulfilled self, for the familial lack forces her to stick to her past. What makes her situation even more complicated is Maggie's perplexing tendency to insist on taking responsibilities for the pains of Stephen and Philip due to her false self-identification.

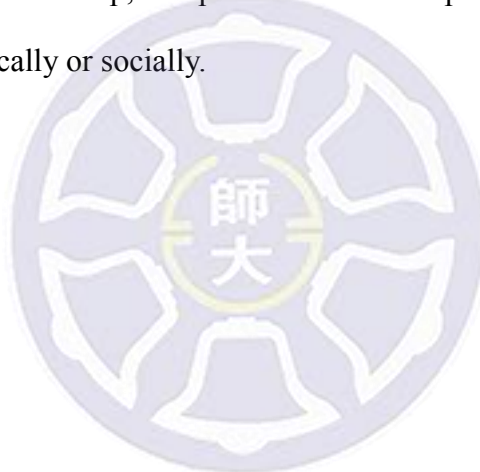
Maggie's imposed self-identifications on her lovers resulted from the situations that correspond to the unreturning love and misjudgments of her beloved brother, Tom. Whereas Maggie identifies herself with Philip's suffering, for they both share the pain of an unreturning love, for Stephen, he reminds Maggie of her pain when he charges her of her misjudgment (446,466). Maggie's relationship with Stephen corresponds to her relationship with Tom as Stephen pleads for her pity and consideration while charging her of the cause of his suffering (514). Ablow points out that it is confusing of Maggie's eagerness to share Stephen's "guilt in relation to Philip and Lucy" by "put[ting] herself in the wrong in relation to Stephen" (85) as Maggie returns alone to St Ogg and unmarried after their elopement. Szirotny ironically points out that "Maggie's masochistic conscience will not let her profit from others' suffering...she has never been averse to letting her lovers suffer, seeing them as extensions of herself, rather than as those others whose claims she insists on"(186). It is narrated that Stephen is "like the added self [of Maggie]" (464) when he assists Maggie to sit on the boat that takes them toward their fatal elopement. Seeing her

lovers as extensions of her unfulfilled self, unconsciously, Maggie projects her painful self on Philip and Stephen.

This projection, however, carries Maggie to a contradiction—allowing her lovers to have claims on her, yet declining it at the same time. This contradiction reaches its climax when Maggie refuses to marry Stephen half-way on their elopement, which has been widely debated by critics. Drawing on this “unreadability,” while Joan Bennett criticizes Eliot “is hampered by current moral assumptions that all self-sacrifice is good” (129), Jonathan Loesberg poses that “Eliot constructs a sympathy for Maggie that grows out of our awareness that her elopement and return cannot be read in any narratively satisfactory manner” (139). Along with Loesberg and Bennett, Sally Shuttleworth contends that “a central contradiction” in the novel is the “ambivalence towards unconscious absorption— whether it indicates uncontrollable, and thus socially disruptive, passion, or the ultimate possibility of organic union” (70). As the two sides of the same coin, on the one hand, Maggie’s unconscious submersion results in her mysterious elopement; on the other, Shuttleworth suggests that it indicates to her death, the “final reunification with Tom” (69) as a “sole way of obtaining the desired unity” (77). Insisting that she “can’t set out on a fresh life, and forget [her past],” Maggie tells Stephen that she has to “go back to it, and cling to it” or she would “feel as if there were nothing firm beneath [her] feet” (478). Maggie’s resolution to suffer (474) solidifies her to confront the difficult task of parting with Stephen, for suffering relates herself once again to her past memories, in which “no passion could long quench” (515). Maggie’s death, thus, is inevitable, for to unite with her memorable past only comes through the unity of her death. The last and defining sentence of the novel is the epitaph, written on their tomb: “In their death they [Maggie and Tom] were not divided” (522). When Maggie and Tom are drowned in each other’s embrace that will “never be parted,” the

earliest memory since Maggie could remember reappears in the narration of her final death—“living through again in one supreme moment the days when they [Maggie and Tom] had clasped their little hands in love, and roamed the daisied fields together” (521). Through death, Maggie finally reunifies and will never be parted with her familial past, for death freezes memory in an eternal stagnation.

In this chapter, I have suggested that due to the lack of sympathetic recognition from her family, Maggie cannot separate from her familial past, for she is tied up in an unending suffering that binds her with her childhood memory. Maggie’s lack of recognition from her family, standing as an obstacle every time there appears a chance for her to form a new relationship, overpowers her natural passion and results in her final death, either physically or socially.



Chapter III

Isabel's Sympathetic Reconciliation

With her romantic and unrealistic imagination, Isabel Archer is entrapped in her idealism as she struggles to prove her liberty in the choice of her romantic relationship. However, after the failed attempt, Isabel retreats into self-alienation. In this chapter I will argue that it is only through Isabel's sympathetic development, a concatenation of admitting her faults, rethinking her past and imagining her future, does she reconcile with others, and then herself.

Isabel entraps herself in an imaginary world as she romanticizes things around her and consolidates it with her idealistic theories. The readers are told that Isabel's "mind was a good deal of vagabond" that she had to make effort to train it since her imagination "was by habit ridiculously active; when the door was not open it jumped out the window" (41). Caramello points out that "James might have intended first to compare Isabel Archer... as a romancer and then as a novelist" (7). As if a Romantic reader, experiencing her life like reading a novel, Isabel is "devoted to the romantic effects" (87); she exclaims with enthusiasm when Ralph introduces Lord Warburton to her: "I hoped there would be a lord; it's just like a novel" (31). Surely enough, in *The Portrait*, Isabel is first introduced as a reader, reading in the house of Albany. In Daugherty's words, Isabel is "'floated' by her own romantic spirit and by the 'current of ...rapid curiosity'" (67). Perceiving Isabel as though a novel that cannot be simply understood, Isabel's cousin-in-law observes that "she's written in a foreign tongue" (47). Isabel's imaginative character that directs to her idealistic projection can be traced back to her childhood, when she is both "spoiled and neglected" by her remarkably handsome, yet somewhat irresponsible father, who wishes his daughters... to see as much the world as possible" (50). Without parental supervision and formal education, after their mother dies, Isabel and her sisters are left to a nursemaid while

her father travels around the world alone. As the daughter of a literary father, Isabel is surrounded by “the London *Spectator*, the latest publications, the music of Gounod the poetry of Browning, the prose of George Eliot” (51) since her youth.

Significantly influenced by her unconventional childhood, Isabel, claiming herself to be a person who “like[s] [her] liberty too much,” (182) takes great value in her independence. Robert Weisbuch describes Isabel in “Henry James and the Idea of Evil” as “an Emerson on the road, a young woman who reads German Idealist philosophy in the locked office at Albany that occludes a view of the street; an overly theoretic, though wonderfully fresh and earnest self-realizer” (112). With her vivid imagination, Isabel “has an immense curiosity about life and was constantly staring and wondering” (51). Although she came to Europe for the wish to learn from experience in true society rather than the literary world, Isabel carries a great amount of imagination into her life experiment. In “The Prison of Womanhood,” Elizabeth Sabiston clearly illustrates Isabel’s self-contradiction:

[Isabel] is the victim not only of the conflict between herself and the external world, but also of a tension between opposites in her own character: an idealism uninformed by knowledge of reality...a thirst for experience coupled with fastidiousness and a tendency to surrender to outside forces.

(336)

As a voracious reader, having a “great desire for knowledge,” Isabel, however, “preferred almost any source of information to the printed page” (51). Isabel’s imaginative arbitrariness can be perceived back in the early years of her grandmother’s house at Albany, where there is a door that was bolted; Isabel “had no wish to look out, for this interfered with her theory that there was a strange, unseen place on the other side” (41). Building her knowledge on literature, “a source of interest and even of instruction,” Isabel sticks to a belief that “the unpleasant had been

even too absent from her knowledge” (49)— a danger manifested in her later actions. Isabel turns a blind eye to whatever collides with her over-optimistic and imaginative theories, originated from her metaphysical learning of literature, fused with her fantasies. Without real life experiences but a wild imagination directed by her own theoretic idealisms, Isabel’s naivety generates egoism and leads to chaotic exaggerations. The one, yet fatal decision that Isabel turns her theory into practice is to marry herself to Gilbert Osmond.

Although Isabel seems to fall in a social framework through entering a conventional marriage like the other Victorian women, her different undertakings, however a false one, of her marital decision reveals her unconventionality. Unlike the ordinary Victorian women, along with Maggie, Isabel is struggling to constrain her unconventional traits that go against the social norms. Isabel is in a dilemma in pursuing her own individuality and to make sacrifices to obey social conventions. In *The Portrait*, “Isabel’s originality was that she gave one an impression of having intentions of her own,” while “[m]ost women did nothing with themselves at all; they waited in attitudes more or less gracefully passive, for a man to come their way and furnish them with a destiny” (87). Through the reflections of the narrator, the readers are told that in early years, when suitors came to see Isabel’s sister, they “were afraid of her[Isabel]” since “they had a belief that some special preparation was required for talking with her” (51). Self-consciously, Isabel distinguishes herself distinctly from the conventional Victorian women, whom she thinks to be “horribly ignorant” (62). With her unconventional traits, Isabel’s mistake of choosing Osmond as her husband has been severely criticized. Along with Sarah Daugherty, who complains Isabel’s “banality of her thoughts on marriage” (68), Sandra Fischer contends that Isabel is “a repressed and rather mundane person” (48), who chooses enclosure rather than liberty in her life. With a similar perspective, in “Isabel Archer

and Victorian Manners,” Mary Schriber concludes that “the rebellious Isabel who protests she will perhaps never marry represents a pose drawn from novels, and that the conventional Isabel is the real one,” since Isabel clings to the belief that “marriage is the framework of her destiny” (449). However, Schriber indicates a more dynamic character of Isabel in which “at least a full half of her soul, Isabel wants to be a Victorian ‘lady,’ to fill in a conventional role. Schriber describes a Victorian lady holds

the power of the social proprieties *versus* the rebelliousness of the heroines... Isabel toys with the norm of “lady,” dramatizing herself by now conforming to it, now departing from it heightening her own and others’ sense of her mystery and individuality—much as James draws attention throughout *The Portrait* to the conventional woman in order to dramatize Isabel’s situation. (442)

Schriber goes on that Isabel is “responsible for her fate because...Isabel accepts with a certain pleasure the forces surrounding her, makes them her own, and lives by them” (444). In this light, departing from Schriber and the above critics’ point of view, I contend that marriage is a compromise that Isabel undertakes to “play a part” in the conventional framework of Victorian society, where her potentials and self-fulfillments are constricted. That is, Isabel actually takes marriage as an expediency to work out her limited power.

Lord Warburton’s and Caspar Goodwood’s expressive powers, thus, impede Isabel’s in actualizing her self-fulfillment and result in the failures of their proposals. Commenting that she likes Lord Warburton “well enough,” (133) Isabel refuses his proposal for the reason that he is “too perfect” and that “irritates” her (169). Under this statement is Isabel’s rejection, as Millicent Bell explains, to sacrifice “her personal ideal of a selfhood unbounded by cultural categories” by entering Lord

Warburton's "conventional" system of his personage (771). Lord Warburton's personage, "a territorial, [a] political, [and] social magnet" threatens to "[draw] her into the system in which he rather invidiously lived and moved" (122). Isabel proudly remarks her refusal to Lord Warburton's proposal that "many girls would have accepted," (179) as a sign to make evidence of her own independence by turning away from his "big bribe" (135). Compared with Lord Warburton's personage, Caspar Goodwood's unyielding persistence, a "disagreeably strong push, a kind of hardness of presence" (134) also intimidates Isabel's liberty, for Goodwood's expressive energy has its power on her and the fact "deprive[s] her of the sense of freedom" (135). Isabel shows her discontent by declaring to Goodwood that she can find a way to live by herself without being taught by a clever man (179). On the other hand, Gilbert Osmond's expressive weakness, being "poor and lonely" (459), thus, has its charm on her and lures Isabel to "invest" not only her money, but herself on him: "[s]he would launch his boat for him; she would be his providence; it would be a good thing to love him" (458). Having the power of becoming a contributor who "[comes] with charged hands," to assist a noble, yet "helpless and ineffectual" (458) widower, thus, Isabel is driven by the strong desire that excited her to exercise her independence.

By projecting her idealisms on Osmond, "[t]he finest...manly organism she had ever know had become her property" (459), Isabel contents herself to fulfill her self-actualization through participating in Osmond's idiosyncrasy: "besides herself enjoying it, she should publish it to the world without his having any of the trouble" (331). Isabel's "ideal of intimacy," Southward points out, is "that of the thinker and metaphysician," an unrealistic idealism that contributed to her disastrous marital decision:

Isabel hold herself aloof from a reality more happily by her own

imagination, cherishing her freedom to think what she likes even as she considers herself morally responsible for thinking what is true. It is an attitude willing to create the interest it does not find' (101)

When Ralph questions Isabel's marital decision, as though defending for herself, Isabel retorts that what pleases lies in the fact that Osmond's virtue is a list of nothings—"No property, no title, no honours, no houses, nor lands, nor position, nor reputation, nor brilliant belongings of any sort. It's the total absence of these things that pleases me" (375). Placing her expectation on Osmond, as Bell perceives, in fact, Isabel projects herself on Osmond as an instrument to fulfill her ideal self (768). Resonating with Cordelia's answer, "nothing," to King Lear's demand of presenting the amount of her love for him in the love contest, "nothing" will be enough to define Cordelia's love for Lear and, so is Isabel's precious self. Osmond's mysterious character, in which Isabel's "mind contains no class offering a natural place" (285), and philosophy of "willful renunciation" of all kinds of actions has its charm on her. Bell observes that Osmond's "pretended indifference to all commitments to convention makes him seem to her what she herself aspires to be" (772). Considering Osmond as her idealistic alter ego, Isabel is blinded in a way that she only sees her desired qualities that she projected on Osmond as she claims that Osmond's independence and individuality, "is what *I* most see in him" (370). Along with the others, Ralph's disapproval only adds to Isabel's pride for the thought that she "married to please herself" (377) confirms her liberty and independence.

Isabel's imagined feeling that misguides her fellow-thinking results in her insistence in marrying Osmond, for she imposes her idealization on Osmond. Since it is impossible to contact directly with the thoughts and feelings of another person, as Greiner argues, by seeking a general conception of how others would think or feel in a given set of circumstances or situations, "sympathy [becomes] productive, not just

mimetic” (21). Rather than to reproduce a person’s feelings in oneself, a Smithian sympathizer imagines what a person in his situation is likely to feel:

It is ‘the impressions of our own senses only, not those of [the other], which our imaginations copy’. No original feeling need even be present.

When we “put our selves in his case,” we can conjure feelings “from the imagination” that do not derive from the sufferer’s “reality”. The burden of proof falls away. I need not worry whether I feel what the other feels.

(17)

Less of a spontaneous emotion, this is what Smith termed as “fellow-feeling,” cultivated by imaginative reflection. However, in this way, sympathy does not promise to provide a foundation for ethical social life for a person’s thought and imagination can be misdirected. For it is depersonalized, both the distancing and the abstraction are important to achieve this kind of imagining. With her wild imagination, during the months with her acquaintance with Osmond, Isabel “had imagined a world of things that had no substance” (458). It is only after her marriage did Isabel find out that she had “invented a fine theory about Gilbert Osmond, she loved him not for what he really possessed, but for his very poverties dressed out as honors” (375). A fancy that is “fed through charmed senses” and leads to misreading— “She has not read him right” (458). Imposed her subjective self on Osmond’s situation, Isabel falls short of the depersonalization. Although little understanding of Osmond provides Isabel a larger space to fill in the blank with her imagination, yet with an egoistic self-projection, fellow thinking can be misguided and leads to projected fantasies.

Transforming from a romancer to a realistic narrator, still, Isabel is stuck to her self-alienation that forbids her to achieve sympathy with herself. As a turning point, Chapter 42 is famous for the soliloquy of Isabel’s overnight meditation over the first

three years of her marriage with Osmond. During those three years of Isabel's life, which remains a gap due to the absence of narration, the readers are only indirectly and partially informed about Isabel's marriage and the death of her first child by the conversations between other characters before Isabel reappears as a leading character in the story-line. Departing from her past romantic illusion, at this crucial self-reflecting night, Caramello writes, Isabel "critically examine her past and realistically assess her present situation" (7). Not long after their marriage, Isabel and Osmond, whom she thought to be her idealistic self, are depicted as "two disillusioned lovers," who are "perfectly apart in feeling," "but they had never yet separated in act" (572). If Maggie's feeling for Philip is out of pity, Isabel and Osmond's mutual attractions are based on a sense of mutual possession. It turns out that, ironically, while Isabel projects her idealism on Osmond, similarly, Osmond tries to make Isabel an extension of his self. That Isabel, having too many ideas of her own, offends Osmond. Osmond's desire to draw Isabel in his own system is what Isabel dreads most and makes her in refusing the other suitors proposals. Along with critics like Freedman and Poirier, Southward points out that: "What has often been called Isabel's and Osmond's aestheticism is their determination to think what they like, to perceive the world as it pleases them" (102). What Osmond's want is "her character, the way she felt, the way she judged" (460); "[h]er mind was to be his" (463). However, at first Isabel is reluctant to recognize her suffering; passionately, Isabel feels that she needs to know "her unhappiness should not have come to her through her own fault" (519). For admitting the pain leads to an acknowledgment of her misjudgment that contradicts to her theory that keeps her "spiritual affair in order" (519). The most important theory that directs her throughout her life is the belief of her own righteousness and judgment of her conduct—"a consideration which had often held her in check" (575). Even at Ralph's death bed, Isabel replies to Ralph

that she will stay in England “as long as seems right” while Ralph answers “Yes, you think a great deal about that” (613). Disillusioned after her marriage, Isabel self-alienated herself in her pretended happy marriage, for she is not willing to confront her misjudgments that she deems as self-disgrace.

For an idealist like Isabel, pain and suffering mean failure. To remove them from her idealistic theory, Isabel, trying to escape from the despair of her disillusion, alienates herself by making effort to “play the part of a good wife” (445). Isabel considers that “if she could really amuse herself she perhaps might be saved” (446)—to be saved from the “house of suffocation” (461), where Osmond forces his rigid system on her. It is not until close to the end of the novel when Isabel is “weary of [her] secret” (521) that she finally acknowledges her unhappy marriage to Henrietta, which she has been long keeping to herself. Isabel reluctantly admits to Henrietta that she is “wretched,” who is to be pitied and sympathized although “she hated to hear herself say it,” (521) yet Isabel refuses to take the advice of departing from Osmond, for it suggests a publication to her fault as she asserts that it is “not of him that I’m considerate—it’s of myself!” (522). Having “an unquenchable desire to think well of herself,” Isabel “[has] an infinite hope that she should never do anything wrong” (68). This hope, however, carries self-abnegation that results in the failure of fellow-thinking, for at the same time, Isabel alienates herself from what also remains as parts of the self.

Rather than imposing her own idealism on the others, through an abstracted thinking in imagining others’ situation, Isabel develops a sense of sympathy with others that unconsciously contributes to her own self, for it is her relation to others that defines who she is. Contending that no one can be exclusive and isolated from the living network of human beings, Southward poses that *The Portrait* is “not so much of the lady, but of the relations that make the lady who she is” (82). As the

novel progresses to the end, the narration of Isabel's inner reflection has become less; instead, Isabel's thought is more interpreted through the interactions with other characters. Greiner perceived that in Smith's sympathetic procedure, feelings must be abstracted first and "turned into the stuff of story—to be imaginatively passed on and shared":

sympathy with others arises not from direct contact with their feelings but from the imagination, and in particular from thoughtful consideration of the expressive situations in which those feelings arise, Smith shifted the focus away from what persons should be doing to what they might *do*, where they *are*. (53)

Discovering the scandal between her husband and Madame Merle adds to a deeper pain of Isabel's already gloomy marriage; however, this discovery makes Isabel resolved to travel to England despite Osmond's opposition, which evokes an involuntary communion with her aunt, Mrs. Touchett, whose husband is dead and only son, Ralph dying. Upon thinking her aunt, Isabel's pain turns into an imaginative narration as she

wondered if she were not even missing those enrichments of consciousness and privately trying—reaching out for some aftertaste of life, dregs of the banquet; the testimony of pain or the cold recreation of remorse. On the other hand, perhaps she was afraid; if she should begin to know remorse at all it might take it too far. (606)

Rather than directly referring to Isabel or Mrs. Touchett, the narrator technically uses a personal pronoun, "she," creating a fusion of feeling, abstracted in narration and shared between Isabel and Mrs. Touchett. In this light, by entering a communal thought through fellow-thinking, Isabel leaves her self-alienation, and individual isolation.

I contend that a period of time is required to re-create one's thoughts in memory. Isabel's sympathetic thinking is intensified in memories since thinking about others is forming a relation of thinking between self and others. The theme of thinking as relating recurrently shows up in *The Portrait*. Noting that Isabel's past contains relations with others, Southward writes

Isabel's past, like her fate, seeks her out in the *Portrait* because it is embodied in the men who desire her. It is not possible for her to separate their appeal for her as individuals from their participation in "the years and hours of her life," which she labors to keep in mind and cherishes than any suitor's hand. (94)

Lord Warburton asks Isabel to "[t]hink of me sometimes" when he bids farewell to Pansy and Isabel in Rome. Isabel replies to Goodwood that he may "[g]ive a thought to it every now and then" (546) when he asks her whether he should give the thought of pitying her after the discovery of her unhappy marriage. Isabel's step daughter, Pansy, succinctly expresses how mutual thinking bonds one and the other together. When Isabel tells Pansy not to disobey Osmond's wish to think about her unsuccessful lover, Mr. Rosier, Pansy replies that "[y]ou think of those think of you" (502). Goodwood requests Isabel to think of him—"I want you to think of *me*" (625) in their final meeting. The time in the past and relationship with others are mingled together in the trajectory of Isabel's life; repetitively, the past overwhelms her. In the beginning, by "leav[ing] the past behind her" (48), Isabel lives a life to start afresh again every time she tries to neglect her wrongdoings. Isabel does not want to experience, but only to imagine in the first place; similarly, in the relationship with others, she doesn't want to think along, but to judge by herself as Ralph points out that Isabel wants "to see...not to feel" (775). Nonetheless, the harder she tries to neglect, the severer her past back fires. In her childhood house in Albany, before

interrupted by Mrs. Touchett's unexpected visit, Isabel ponders on "[t]he years and hours of her life came back to her, and for a long time, in a stillness broken only by the tickling of the big bronze clock, she passes them in review" (49). Later in her trip to Rome, Isabel was "moved...all inwardly" by [t]he sense of the terrible human past" the moment she enters St. Peter's Cathedral (312). For Isabel, it is not until undergoing her bruising experience does she develop a sympathetic character.

It is through acknowledging a common past does Isabel reconcile with others, as well as herself. As Greiner points out that sympathy prepares a person in a situation of thinking along with the others, "including the other is myself as others see me" (1). That is, thinking along with others as a way to think with oneself is the cultivation of one's sense of self (22). It is only by sympathizing with others can a person sympathize with oneself, for one's very self can be perceived as another. Sympathy breeds sympathy. In a similar way, it is not until a person is reconciled with others can that person be reconciled with him/herself. Greiner poses that "[t]hinking over the past' means thinking about feelings felt and imagined, those real and those merely possible" (73). To be reconciled with oneself, thus, is through harmonizing with one's past, a past that is interwoven by one and the other as Greiner points out that

Far from corrupting fellow-feeling, then, sympathy with oneself proves to be constitutive of it, begetting a migrant conception of self at once continuous with the past and not utterly determined by it...the self-fragmentation that makes it possible to sympathize with others also generates the conditions through which one harmonizes self with self—one's former lives with the life one is living, one's past with one's present, the possible lives one isn't living but might have, might yet. (78)

Isabel, in fact, carries a heavy weight on her for all the bitter-sweet incidents, including her mistakes that she tries to neglect, have merged into her past. Her past

keeps reminding her in her memories and become a part of her that she cannot discard. Greiner demonstrates how Smith's "narrative sympathetic thinking creates, facilitates an increase in the value of fiction for a wide range of imaginative purposes" (12) by taking the protagonist, Anne Elliot, in Austen's *Persuasion* as an example to illuminate the "sympathetic case-thinking becomes a way to reopen and rewrite the closed case of the past" (12): "Anne Elliot's repeated efforts to revitalize her own case...to describe the reconciliation of the past, foreclosed possibilities, and other apparently dead forms of life"(12). In a similar line, returning to Gardencourt, the opening scene where Isabel is first presented, Isabel reviews her life in deep meditation, imagining the possibilities of the roads that were not taken: "It suddenly struck her that if her Aunt Lydia had not come that day in just that way and found her alone, everything might have been different. She might have had another life and she might have been a woman more blest" (604). For Isabel, "she was wondering whether if her aunt had not come that day in Albany she would have married Caspar Goodwood," (604) whom "she believed that he had invested all in her happiness, while the others had invested only a part," (519) through the abstracted feeling of reimagining her own past. Through rethinking her past and the people in relation to her, Isabel finds herself back gradually. It is through the reconciliation with others that she is reconciled with herself.

I propose that Goodwood is the most important person that affects Isabel in reconciling with her past, for Isabel once renounces him for her idealistic persuasion, yet this decision remains as a regret to her. What is in Isabel's mind that compels her to return to Rome is never revealed at the very end of the novel, but one incident that is closely related to it is Isabel's last unexpected meeting with Goodwood. Before their meeting, Isabel is undecided to her future. It is depicted that after Goodwood's impulsive kiss, all of a sudden, Isabel has an epiphany, knowing "where

to turn,” as she metaphysically sees “a very straight path” (628), that later turns out to be the way back to Rome. I want to underline that rather than passively or forcibly kissed by Goodwood, it is a kiss that Isabel “took” from Goodwood and significantly, the kiss justifies his “intense identity” that once makes “each thing in his hard manhood that had least pleased her” (627). In this statement, it shows some light in Isabel’s unexplainable care for Goodwood, which she has always kept him in her mind. Goodwood, “the only person with an unsatisfied claim on her” (518), continually to haunt Isabel in her thoughts. Goodwood even makes a larger preoccupation in Isabel’s mind after her marriage when she notices she makes a wrong choice: “on finding herself in trouble he had become a member of that circle of things with which she wished to set herself right” (519). Therefore, rejecting Goodwood is to reject her true desire—a rejection of her very self. In the sensation of the kiss, Isabel is released from her own suppression. I consider the reason Isabel returns to Rome is that she finally faces the reality as becoming true to herself. On the contrary, if Isabel is still stuck in her ivory tower of idealism, she would believe eloping with Goodwood could be a possible redemption for her, which, I believe, will turn out to be another disaster by moving her idealization from Osmond to Goodwood. The only reasonable way for Isabel is to return to her gloomy marriage in Rome, yet she returns with a different character.

During her development, pain and suffering are indispensable in activating her imagined fellow-feeling in thinking along with others. Although pain and suffering are important themes in both Maggie and Isabel’s life, they take it differently—while Maggie absorbs herself in pain, Isabel takes further actions. I consider that sympathy serves less as a solution to Isabel’s suffering than as a platform to relate her and others together. Her suffering, nevertheless, in her marriage makes a turning point for Isabel to leave her imaginary world and face reality with a mellow character.

Although pain and suffering do not always generate fellow thinking, suffering, a comparatively more prolonged feeling as it is possible to become more intense with time, compared with other affects, stimulates a greater imagination in abstract thinking. For Isabel, suffering has become “an active condition; it was not a chill, a stupor, a despair; it was a passion of thought, of speculation, of response to every pressure” (456). If not encountering difficulties that bring pain and sorrow in lives, Isabel would still indulge in her theoretic idealisms as she once believed: “It’s not absolutely necessary to suffer; we were not made for that” and declares that she has come to Europe “to be as happy as possible” (775). Before her miserable marriage, Isabel is absorbed in her idealistic theory of proving her liberty. After the disillusion in her marriage, Isabel at first tries to cover it up by pretending to live a happy marriage, but later she becomes more matured in reconciling with others and later herself by admitting her misjudgment. Isabel’s transformation is drastic as she silently reflects on her journey back to England to visit the dying Ralph: “she wondered if it were vain and stupid to think so well of herself” (597) to believe “she was too valuable” for “to live only to suffer” (596). Indeed, Isabel achieves self-reconciliation through developing a sympathetic thinking when she rethinks her past relationships and imagines the possible future.

Throughout this chapter I have pointed out that Isabel reconciles with herself through a sympathetic fellow thinking that is shared in imagination. Isabel’s maturity can be perceived by her transformation of encountering her mistakes: from a romantic illusion to live only to please herself to accept her own misjudgment and take it as part of her life. In the beginning, assimilating herself by identifying with Osmond to ameliorate her sense of otherness, Isabel tries to assist Osmond within her limited power to fulfill her individuality. Isabel’s projected idealism leads her to a false self-identification on Osmond due to her romantic theories and inexperienced

naivety. It is, nevertheless, after the disillusion, her fellow-thinking relates Isabel with her past and later leads to the reconciliation with others.



Chapter IV

A Comparison between Eliot's and James's Narrations

Both *The Mill on the Floss* and *The Portrait of a Lady* are ended in a rather pessimistic way—while Maggie is dead, Isabel's future is left with uncertainty as she returns to her gloomy marriage in Rome. Why do James and Eliot end their novel this way? Taking a departure from Eliot's moral conclusion to James's unnarrated plot that keeps his readers in suspense is a transition of the treatment of sympathy in novel. I argue that moving from Maggie's self-renouncing absorption with others in *The Mill on the Floss*, Isabel achieves this imaginative sympathy as James's narrator draws a distance in ambivalence for Isabel to imagine and to choose, her own future, be it a bad one, and allowing the future to be unknown. James's narration, if not technically, abstracts the relations between important incidents—along with the first three years of her marriage, Isabel's transition to finally decide to marry Osmond after his first unsuccessful proposal, and the decision to return to her unhappy marriage in Rome are either narrated indirectly or unnarrated. Whereas the two former incidents are narrated only after what happened and indirectly revealed through the conversations or reflections by the other characters, the latter is never known by the readers. Mysterious as it is, it is a distance in ambivalence that allows the readers to participate in a sympathetic imaging of the future that Isabel might have.

As a starting point, in the fourth chapter, I will try to answer this question by first looking into the literary influence that Eliot had on James. Next, I will observe the distinct writing styles of James and Eliot by drawing on James's, along with other critics' criticisms, if not dissatisfying ones, of the tragic ending of *The Mill on the Floss*. Through an observation of the historical trajectory from the eighteenth century sentimental novels to Romanticism, I want to show that Victorian novelists,

Eliot and James are significantly influenced by Sentimentalism and Romanticism. Drawing on the transition from Eliot's melodramatic ending of Maggie's death to James' ambivalent distancing abstraction in *Isabel*, I suggest that under a Smithian abstract narration, *Isabel* breaks through the prototype of a sentimental figure, while Maggie, unconventional in a way, is closer to the sentimental convention of Humean sympathizer. Lastly, I maintain that the two heroines' sense of loss resulted from social alienation parallels the unfulfilled spiritual idealisms that the Romantic characters strive to pursue.

It is the desire, nevertheless, to anticipate the possible futures of the characters makes the readers interact with the story-line. Peter Brooks argues that "[d]esire, not only as the motor force of plot but as the very motive of narrative" (48). Plot is both the organization and intention of the narrative: the succession of events is the story. While the writer constructs the plot, the reader's job is to unravel it through the narrative: "We can, then, conceive of the reading of plot as a form of desire that carries us forward, onward, through the text. Narratives both tell of desire—typically present some story of desire—and arouse and make use of desire as dynamic of signification" (48). Similarly, David H. Richter argues that "[t]he moral qualities of the protagonist[s] inspires us with more or less definite *desires*; depending our degree of sympathy, we will wish the protagonist good or bad fortune, with greater or less ardor" (96). In other words, reading a novel is not simply a one-way experience, absorbing what is given by the novel, but rather a mutual communication: readers are involved in the plot by anticipating the story-line. Although the readers' absorption is terminated when the endings do not turn out to be the expected happy endings, James's narration, differently, shows a more positive attitude for allowing *Isabel*'s future to be unknown while Eliot shows a pessimistic one by claiming Maggie's death.

The seemingly gloomy endings of the two novels open a further discussion of the distinct narrative styles of Eliot and James. James openly acknowledges his great debts to Eliot in the creation of Isabel in the preface of *The Portrait of a Lady* (10-11). Many scholars have compared the similarities between the novels of Eliot and James. The Eliot novel most often compared to James's *Portrait* is *Daniel Deronda*. As critic Leon Edel observes the heroines' cruel and manipulative husbands, Grandcourt in *Daniel Deronda* and Osmond in the *Portrait*, resemble each other (*Conquest* 432). Other critics, like George Levine, Q. D. Leavis and James S. Berkman notice the connections between *The Portrait* and Eliot's *Middlemarch*. Berkman argues that dissatisfied with Dorothea, being "too superb a heroine to be wasted," after reviewing Eliot's *Middlemarch*, James wants to "accomplish his vision of its 'full capacity,' its 'poetic justice'" by reshaping Eliot's heroine, rewriting the plot and altering the ending into his *The Portrait of a Lady*. If Isabel's marriage turns out to be a disaster half way in the novel, the difference of Dorothea's marriage is that her misfortune took place earlier in the novel. Emphasizing the obvious resemblance between the two novels, Berkman shows that both Isabel and Dorothea marry a man whom they thought as a great thinker with a "great soul." Differently, whereas Isabel's character shows her dynamics and her future, as Berkman believes, became more uncertain, Dorothea remains a static character, who is "consistency of an idealistic and altruistic":

He achieves the "dignity of tragedy" and the requisite "*chiaroscuro*" by forcing Isabel to grow within her marriage. His "too superb a heroine" would not be "wasted." As Isabel herself admits near the end of the novel, after leaving Rome for England against her husband's express wishes, "Coming away was a complication, but what will going back be? It won't be the scene of a moment; it will be a scene of the rest of my life. (n. pag.)

James admits that in the Preface that he makes Isabel's life an experiment as Richard Freadman writes, "James's experiment of form is also in this sense an experiment in life" and to see what Isabel will make of it (103). Freadman points out that

George Eliot's attempt to center the sentiment heroine is a 'deep difficulty braved which elicits in the addicted artist James a pang for a greater perfection [...] He wishes to have the creative danger intensified so that George Eliot's thing may be done so much better. (93)

In the Preface, James confesses that by placing "the center of the subject in the young woman's own consciousness...and you get as interesting and as beautiful a difficulty as you could wish" (12). Rather than providing Isabel an easy escape as Eliot makes for Dorothea with the death of her husband and Maggie's accidental death, James leaves full liberty for Isabel to "affront her destiny" (103).

Deeply inspired by Eliot in his own literary career, James, nevertheless, criticizes Eliot's "moral endings". The tragic ending of *The Mill on the Floss* has long been debated by critics. In an 1860 review of the novel, Victorian critic E.S. Dallas wrote that "[t]he riddle of life as it is here expounded is more like a Greek tragedy than a modern novel" (135). By the twentieth century, along with Barbara Hardy's *The Novels of George Eliot* and Felicia Bonaparte's *Will and Destiny*, in his "The Novels of George Eliot," James criticizes that Eliot makes the end of her novels a melodrama by putting Maggie to death which he called Eliot's "inclination to compromise with the old tradition": "I know few things more irritating in a literary way than each of her final chapters, — for even in *The Mill on the Floss* there is a fatal 'Conclusion.'" "Although James admired Eliot's humanity," Daugherty points out that, James "complained that her [Eliot's] lengthy novels failed to gratify readers 'with a sense of design and construction'" (64-65). In James's view, he contends that "Eliot's 'absence of spontaneity', observable in her tendencies to philosophize and to

tie up the loose ends of her plots” (65). Offering a comparative reading of James and Eliot’s fictions and theories in *Eliot, James and the Fictional Self*, Freadman points out that although “he [James] esteems her [Eliot] sympathetic psychological realism,”

He [James] avers that she seldom achieves ‘free aesthetic life, irresponsible plasticity’; that she is prone to philosophical typification; and most significantly, that she fails to reconcile the claims of character with those of form. Her plots and conclusions are weak and she lacks in instinct for design. (38)

Analyzing the differences of narration between James and Eliot, Freadman points out that compared with Eliot’s intrusion of an omnipotent narrator, by leaving Isabel’s future unknown, “James derived from his extended reading of Eliot a conviction that it was better unfussily and opaquely to exhibit character than to expatiate upon them” (25). Thus, James’s *The Portrait* “leaves crucial aspects of its own story unnarrated” (114). Drawing on this point, I consider that James’s unwillingness to narrate the unnarrated story of Isabel’s experimental life allows a distance for forming readers’ sympathy, for sympathy, as Ablow argues, is a relationship that brings two minds together.

Leaving Isabel’s future unknown, James provides his heroine a future to her own decision while Eliot declares a death penalty for Maggie. Compared with Maggie’s death, Isabel’s “tragic” ending, nevertheless, is made more complicated with the uncertainty that James leaves the readers in suspense. Responding to the criticisms of Isabel’s uncertain destiny, James defends himself on this experimental ending:

The obvious criticism of course will be that it is not finished[...]This is both true and false. The whole of anything is never told; you can only

take what groups together. What I have done has that unity—it groups together. It is complete in itself—and the rest may be taken up or not, later.

(18)

According to James' statement, Sarah Daugherty concisely pins it down as a “dual defense”— “On the one hand, it creates the illusion that Isabel's life extends beyond the text; and on the other, it contributes to the novel's formal unity” (61). The “unfinished” ending creates a distance and brings forward a sense of uncertainty for the readers to connect with Isabel by continuing imagining her future. James parallels characters and the incidents that formulate their characters by asking “[w]hat is incident but the illustration of character” in “The Art of Fiction”. For James, characters and incidents are interrelated. In *The Mill*, on the contrary, there is more of a sense of fatalism insofar as Eliot's narrator alludes to Maggie's fate: “not her [Maggie] characteristics, but her history, which is a thing hardly to be predicted even from the completest knowledge of characteristics. For the tragedy of our lives is not created entirely from within” (401). From the passage, it is implied that Maggie's destiny is not entirely determined by the result of her own deeds. What is more perplexing is that drawing upon Maggie's tragic ending, Eliot foresees her readers' negative responses, but rather than avoiding those unpleasant feedbacks, “Eliot embraced her responsibility for Maggie's [unfortunate] fate with a consistency that suggests the blame she incurred might actually have been part of her project” (Ablow 93). Quoted from twentieth century critic, Barbara Hardy, well known for her research on Eliot, Fionnuala Dillane explains that although Eliot is a realistic writer, who “abhorred sentimentalism and melodrama,” “the ways that the writer [Eliot] manipulates the real for dramatic effect, her formulation of observed and experienced life into sometimes very sentimental fictions, into constructed, emotive stories, is addressed less frequently and with more caution” (129). Stating Eliot's “peripheral

melodrama,” serving as central scenes and “parts of the plot” in her fictions, Hardy, struggling between “the realistic and the ‘artificial’ in Eliot’s work” suggests that rather than avoiding melodrama, Eliot may be using those melodramatic plots as an “indirect compensation—probably not a deliberate one—for the flats which make the norm of action and conduct” (129). I discern that Eliot tries to arouse the sympathy from her readers by putting Maggie to death. Hardy suggests that perhaps another reason for this melodramatic effect is “to entertain and maintain the interest of her periodical serial readers” (130). Well-recognized for the notion of the ethical and aesthetic value on sympathy, Eliot maintains that

[t]he greatest benefit we owe to the artist is the expansion of our sympathies. Appeals founded on generalizations and statistics require a sympathy ready-made, a moral sentiment already in activity; but a picture of human life such as a great artist can give, surprises even the trivial and the selfish into that attention to what is apart from themselves, which may be called the raw material of moral sentiment. (178)

For sympathy is not “ready-made,” it becomes an obligation for the artists or writers to make effort to arouse the readers’ sympathy in narration. Aligned with the eighteenth century philosophers, Hume, and the Romantic poets, as Wendy Williams writes, “[Eliot] emphasizes understanding others and entering into their feelings to create a better and moral community” (46). That is, through identifying with the suffering characters, the readers become more sympathetic and further contribute to the improvement of the society. In this spirit, it is more understandable that how moral implications pervasively appear, either in the form of the monk’s monotonous warning or the “sudden light,” to remind Maggie to turn away from temptations at crucial moments, in *The Mill*. And more importantly, Eliot tries to arouse a strong emotive, if not sympathetic response, from her readers through the manipulation of

Maggie's melodramatic death.

Drawing on this point, I perceive that the eighteenth century sentimental novel has its legacies more on Victorian novelists, George Eliot and her novel, *The Mill*, while other writers like Henry James further breaks through the sentimental legacies in *Portrait* in his narration (n.pag). Taking Eliot's philosophy, to equip her readers with a better capability to "imagine and to feel the pains and joys of those who differ from themselves" with the cultivation of sympathy, for an example, Keen points out that "Victorian fiction and its heritage included didactic narratives and sentimental novels" (n.pag). Keen further illuminates that "Romanticism and eighteenth-century moral sentimentalism" are the roots of the Victorians' conflation of "authors' imaginative empathy, readers' emotional responses to literary texts, and ethical consequences in the real world felt by those outside the literary transaction" and directs to "literary reading could cultivate readers' sympathetic imagination" (n.pag). Paralleling novels and their readers as "a good wife in relation to her husband," Ablow poses that in the mid-nineteenth century "novelists and critics claimed, novels could 'influence' readers and so help them resist the depraved values of the marketplace" (1). Similarly, Janice Carlisle claims that Victorian novelists utilized sympathy as "a process in which the subject is invited to identify through sympathy with the object of his perception" (20) and to enlarge their readers' "imaginative capacity" (6). In so doing, Victorian fiction is deep rooted in the eighteenth-century moral sentimentalism by blending "an author's imaginative practices, her readers' cultivation, and their improved relations with unfamiliar others" together (n.pag). In *The Discourse of Sensibility: The Knowing Body in the Enlightenment*, Henry Martyn Lloyd poses that in eighteenth century, "literature takes a central place in Smith's *Theory*" (9), since "literature was considered a means by which sympathy and the moral scene were trained, such that writing and reading became performances of

affect” (10). In the period of the Enlightenment, Lloyd suggests that “the novel was establishing as a genre,” and “sentimental novel was the dominant literary form” (9). Whereas sentimental was used to express “refined and elevated feelings” in old English, Lloyd noted that “[t]he term came to be associated with the passions:” and more importantly, sentimental texts also becomes “moral precepts” (10) for the appeal to educate

the benevolent instincts of a virtuous reader, who might be expected to suffer with those of whom he or she read. Literary representations were held to have the same effect as real experiences. In this sense, the sentimental novel, constitute[d] a training-ground for the sympathies from which readers would emerge newly equipped to put them benignly into practice. The close proximity to notions around moral sense theory is evident. (10-11)

To evoke the emotional response from readers, Eliot corresponds to the sentimental tradition. Maggie, an emotionally vulnerable woman with strong passion, is depicted with the qualities of sensibility, such as “sensuous delight, superiority of class, fragility to weakness of constitution, tenderness of feeling” (10).

Both Isabel and Maggie’s endings point to a sense of otherness—alienated from the society, Isabel looms into uncertainty while Maggie escapes through death. With Khalip

’s work, I want to illuminate how the Romantic women writers, such as Jane Austen, Mary Shelley, and Mary Wollstonecraft, challenge the convention of sentimental novels through their melancholic female characters:

melancholic skepticism looks...more like an ethics of reluctant affirmation that is cultivated or “performed” by a female character who experiences loss as a condition of her being—a social anonymity that contests the

Enlightenment pressure to resolutely *be* and *act*. (139)

Khalip presents that in those Romantic women writers' works, the female characters' sense of loss is the result of their social marginalization in the patriarchal society (138). Departing from the typical Victorian women, who remain as passive and static characters, Maggie and Isabel move forward to a transitional stage, where they strive to maintain their own individuality and deal with their passions and desires without falling into certain categories. However, they are still restricted by social conventions that are hostile towards Victorian women. In *The Culture of Sensibility*, Barker Benfield draws attention on how sympathy becomes a gendered issue due to the influence of "cult of sensibility" in the eighteenth century: "[o]ut of the final 1790's fusion of evangelism with a sensibility made unequivocally respectable would emerge the flood of reform organizations rooted in a middle-class, female constituency" (394). Along with Benfield, in *Real and Imagined Women in British Romanticism*, Gaura Shankar Narayan presents that in the Romantic period, "cultural femininity finds its pop-cultural voice in the novel of sentiment," yet sympathy was "confined to the exclusive category of women"(36). This "general prevalence of the gendered culture of sensibility and its particular manifestation in the novels of sentiment" intensifies, if not deteriorates, the "gendered boundaries of culture" (36) and it further takes Wollstonecraft, in her *Vindication of the Rights of Women*, to consider

the cultural ambiance that tilts the balance against women. She mentions the [n]ovels, music, poetry, and gallantry [which], all tend to make women the creatures of sensation, and their character is thus formed in the mould of folly during the time they are acquiring accomplishments, the only improvements they are excited, by their station in society, to acquire.

(36-37)

Wollstonecraft, following Smith's model of sympathy, promotes this abstraction of self for women. She considers, in Khalip's words, to abstract the self is "an extension of female consciousness outside of its set boundaries and toward an imaginative communion with others" (145). With melancholic women in the early nineteenth century, where they are in "a loss of state of being that lends itself to an ethics of dispossession" (135), melancholia corresponds to sympathy for both require the abstraction of self; that is, they serves as an extension of self. Paradoxically, through the abstraction of self loss in melancholic anonymity, those women characters actually preserve their identities.

This sense of otherness has its traces in the Romantic characters, who are continually seeking a sense of individuality, be it in the nature or aesthetic persuasion, but still remained lost in the end. The first generation of Romantic poets, Wordsworth and Coleridge, sought the value of individuality in nature, yet with different perspectives: while Wordsworth encountered nature with a sense of sublime that purified his heart and satisfied him, Coleridge viewed nature with supernatural quality in it. Stafford states "[i]n Wordsworth's poems, Nature generally offers a means to recovery and reintegration, but many works of the later eighteenth century depicted a poet in despair, often culminating in a lonely death in lovely surroundings" (36). I perceive that this sense of loss is even stronger in the works of the second generation poets, Byron, Shelley and Keats. With the sense of despair and self-pity, their aesthetic art works, the symbols that constitute their ideologies, became "self-pleading ideology" (47). Stafford points out that "[w]hen Victorian artists turned their hands to posthumous portraits of Shelley or Keats, they would place their young subjects alone amidst the ruins of Ancient Rome or beneath the moonlit trees of a very unspoiled Hampstead Heath" (34). In Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, the solitary young nobleman, Harold, "driven and impeded by a brooding melancholy"

(38) leaves his homeland and abandoned all his inheritance. Similarly, Shelley's "Adonais," an elegy written for Keats, portrays a dark and lonely character. Guy Smith asserts that "Romanticism in literature...is a tendency to seek an ideal aesthetic world in fancy and imagination and to express it in an individualized and sentimental form" (20) in *English Literature*. Likewise, in the chapter of "Solitude and Sociability," Fiona J Stafford provides a general picture of the solitary image of a Romantic poet in Romanticism: "the very idea of a 'Romantic poet' conjures up images of a solitary young man, afflicted by unmanageable emotions, communing with an empty landscape or even collapsing upon a forlorn deathbed" (34). I perceive that Isabel's idealistic theories and Maggie wild imaginations, echo and reflect the Romantic spirit's idealistic persuasion. This ineffectual persuasion, however, results in the melancholic self loss.

This sense of otherness can also be observed in the Romantic poets' female characters. Aside from the solitary male characters, Judith Page argues that female characters are often either represented as the male's projected idealistic self or the sexual object of the quest of men: "the poet considers this often-exotic female as the Other and, primarily, in terms of his own male ego, women appear as idealizations, not individuals" (n. pag). Along with Philip's solitary and artistic characteristic, assimilated by William Veeder, Osmond is more of a Byronic hero, who is "bored, indolent, aloof, misanthropic [...] he shares these traits with Grandcourt, Max, St. Elmo, and other conventional misanthropes since Satan and Byron" (772). Maggie and Isabel are both perceived as the object of male ideal by their romantic lovers, Philip Wakem and Gilbert Osmond, who both featured Romantic qualities, to fulfill their idealistic self.

Although Maggie and Isabel are portrayed with the quality of this sense of loss, Eliot and James approach the issue quite differently. For Eliot, sympathy occurs

when identification resides; thus, Maggie's ultimate death is inevitable since she is stuck in a dilemma of social alienation, where identification ceases. On the other hand, James's ambivalent narration in the end of *The Portrait* corresponds to what Jacques Khalip describes as Romantic sympathy—"an ethically complex relation to otherness" (98)—it is through sense of loss that the self becomes more productive in this abstraction. Khalip interprets this sense of loss as a rather "productive power," enabling the cultivation of imaginative self; he takes the more radical second generation Romantic poets for an example

[f]or the second generation romantic writers... the difficult connection between the problem of other minds and the question of active selfhood marks a post-Cartesian, historical shift in thought regarding the ethical implications of considering personhood as imaginary. (16-17)

In this light, Khalip shows how Shelley imagines sympathy as an attendance to otherness made productively (im)possible by non-identity (split subjectivity) (126): "sympathy is the experience of an otherness that (mis)represents itself to the subject—it is an obligation to otherness that cannot be properly defined, but to which the subject remains critically open" (132). The self remains critically open because it cannot be defined. By surveying the concept of moral philosophers and concluding that "sympathy supports ethical models of intersubjectivity that solicit alterity through mutual recognition or likeness, while keeping the self intact" (99), Khalip designates the Romantic subject's very own withdrawal from categorization or specification. I deem that the sense of loss derived from the fact that the Romantic characters, when encountering differences between one and the other, rather than respond as an intact spectator, react by escaping into their aesthetic worlds of imaginations, rendered by idealisms and fancies. While at times, Maggie and Isabel are depicted as self-alienated, if not melancholic, Isabel overcomes due to her

abstraction—a refusal of self-disclosure through James’s sympathetic narrative in rethinking her past and imagining her future.

In this chapter, presenting an overview of the historical trajectory from the eighteenth century sentimental novels to Romanticism, I tried to show that Victorian novelists, Eliot and James inherited the traits from its previous literary genres. However, with their distinctive models of sympathy, Eliot and James treat their protagonists differently—while Maggie is closer to the typical sentimental prototype of the conventional sympathetic narration in relation to pity and compassion, Isabel further breaks through with James’s abstracted narration.



Conclusion

In this thesis, taking Maggie Tulliver in Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* and Isabel Archer in James's *The Portrait of a Lady* as two case studies, I interpreted the lives of those protagonists from a sympathetic perspective. Adapting Greiner's reading of a Smithian sympathy, I identify sympathy as an intentional and ethical cognitive exercise, where imagination is necessary and is associated with aesthetic experiences. I have showed the traces of the eighteenth century sentimentalism and Romanticism in those two Victorian novels. In the light of a Smithian sympathetic point of view, I have considered how a sympathetic-thinking influences Maggie's and Isabel's distinct destinies.

An important reason that I trace sentimentalism and Romanticism is that they are closely influenced by sympathetic understanding of the eighteenth century philosophers, including Adam Smith. Therefore, before adapting a sympathetic reading of those female characters, I explained the relation among sentimentalism, Romanticism and Victorian fictions. Inheriting the value of morality in sentimentalism, Romantic literature shows a more pessimistic attitude that is manifested in the Romantic spirit's sense of loss. I pointed out this sense of loss is presented in the romantic tendencies in Maggie and Isabel, who are both depicted as sentimental and imaginative women, though their destinies work out differently. While Isabel acquires a sympathetic narrative in rethinking her past and imagining her future, Maggie is stuck in her absorption as she is drowned in her past.

I turn now to evaluate how my reading of a Smithian sympathy accomplishes a further understanding of *The Mill* and *Portrait* in the case of Maggie and Isabel. I have compared and contrasted Isabel Archer with Maggie Tulliver to show how sympathy constructs and influences the story-line, especially in their romantic relationships. Through this thesis, I have worked from Maggie's unfulfilled self to

Isabel's development of a sympathetic thinking as Isabel overcomes her idealistic fantasies after her disillusion in marriage. For Maggie, she is unable to sympathize as a Smithian sympathizer for her lack of familial recognition keeps her in the past. With the imposed self-identification on her lovers, Maggie fails to achieve an imaginative sympathetic-feeling. Whereas Eliot's narration in *The Mill* is closer to the conventional sympathetic type in relation to self-identification and tries to arouse the readers' sympathy, James further breaks through the convention in a Smithian abstraction—an abstraction for Isabel to rethink her past in imagination and to allow her future to be unknown—unknown even to herself.

I showed the trajectory from Maggie to Isabel, both as transitional women, with the reading of sympathy. Isabel and Maggie are two types of women figures in the Victorian fictions. I argue that moving from Maggie's self-renouncing absorption, Isabel achieves this imaginative sympathy as James's narrator draws a distance in ambivalence for Isabel to imagine and to choose, be it a bad one, her own future, and allowing the future to be unknown. Rather than creating an escape, such as Maggie's accidental death, for his heroine, James leaves full liberty for Isabel to “affront” her destiny. Both heroines' past helps to define them since it is their relations to others that defines who they are. Sympathetic-thinking makes a way for Isabel to imagine, and to think along with others, as well as the other to be her own self.

Taking account of Maggie and Isabel's cases, I want to take a step further to suggest that the capability of a sympathetic-thinking is a matter of life and death. For Isabel, she starts afresh again since her future will keep developing along the way with her new knowledge and capability of fellow-thinking. Whereas Maggie is stuck in her past, Isabel reconstructs her past. Therefore, at the end, those like Maggie who cannot reconcile with her past inevitably plunge to death, either physically or a metaphysical social-alienation. What distinguishes Isabel's past from

Maggie's is that she does not absorb in the past and lost herself, but affronts her own destiny.

To make a comment on the significance and limitations on adapting Greiner's Smithian sympathetic reading on the two texts, I admit that Greiner's reading deserves more profound thinking for Smith's theory is abundant in itself. Here I will only make one point in terms of the cultivation of sympathetic thinking. My concern is that what if the sympathizer's imagination leads to a wrong direction that ended in misreading, or worse, manipulated by others? Greiner points out that to sympathize with others, a presupposition is that "[s]hared understanding and analogous perspectives must be cultivated first," since "sympathy requires neither certain knowledge nor that a single feeling pass identically from one person to the next" (21). It is not so much about what we actually see or feel, but a willingness to share and imagine one's thought that cultivates sympathy and forms powerful bonds between one and the other. As long as a person is willing to contemplate on certain situations that shape the others' expressions, sympathy is founded on mutual connection and "fellow-thinking forges imaginative, but no less powerfully affective, bonds" (21). Greiner suggests that in this case, "Our job in sympathy is to turn nothing into something, often into something else...Smith presents this mismatch as an opportunity rather than a problem" (21). I regard that before overcoming the difficulty of "thinking in particular ways about them" (4), it requires more awareness to "not" to judge the others in a certain way. With an egoistic construction in believing what she chooses to believe in order to obtain an aesthetic experience based on her romantic imagination, Isabel falls into exaggeration, but indeed, successfully turns her into something else. Thinking is not enough; I regard that to be involved in forming a relation with others requires an awareness to remove one's imposed judgment. Southward's conclusion resonates with my understanding:

Isabel becomes a better thinker by the novel's end because she has gained an appreciation of the time it takes to free others from the grip of her own mind's first impressions, made in the desperate haste of a prideful desire to *think* about the world, but to *know* it. (102)

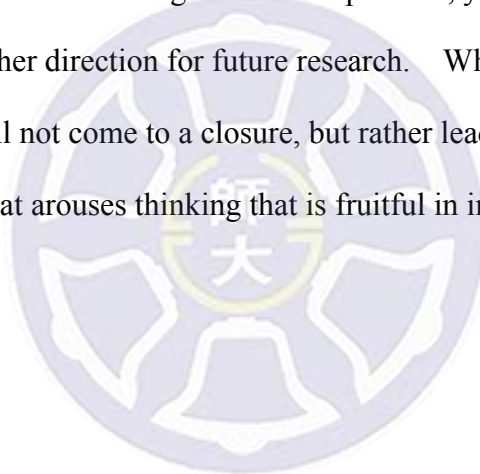
Sympathy requires not only abstraction, but a period of time to re-create one's thought that later reflects in memory since an engagement is equally important.

For possible further readings for future research, thus, I would like to probe into the power struggle between the sympathizer and the subjects whom he sympathized with by exploring the dimension between the narrator and the narratee. I want to ask how powerful an intentional performance in narration produce, arouse or even manipulate the feelings of others? For instance, in *The Mill*, like an eloquent professor speaking to his alumnus, Stephen makes his effort to attract Maggie's attention in his story-telling, and he is

rewarded by seeing Maggie let her work fall, and gradually get so absorbed in his wonderful geological story that she sat looking at him, leaning forward with crossed arms, and with an entire absence of self-consciousness, as if he had been the snuffiest of old professors, and she a downy-lipped alumnus. (380-381)

As if a manipulative story-teller, in their first meeting, Stephen successfully attracts Maggie's attention with his narration in story-telling. Resonating with their first meeting, at the very end of the novel, commanding Maggie to "call me back to life and goodness" (514), in his letter that is full of pathos, Stephen attempts to direct Maggie's feeling by casting doubts on Maggie's resolve by indicating she has the power to affect his wellbeing. The narrator informs the readers that for Maggie, the "dire force of temptation" "was Stephen's tone of misery, it was the doubt in the justice of her own resolve, that made the balance tremble" (514). Although it seems

that Stephen has passed the right to decide to Maggie, in fact, it is Stephen who tries to manipulate Maggie to think in his own way. On the other hand, in *Portrait*, I have argued that Isabel attempts to express her individuality through the power struggle in their romantic relationships. In the beginning, effacing herself for the sake of a better good for Osmond, in fact, Isabel tries to develop her self-worth in assisting him. Nevertheless, however altruistic it seems, her self-sacrifice is to feed on her idealisms of becoming Osmond's savior. Under the guise of being altruistic, the real desire is for self-actualizations. Nonetheless, how Osmond encourages Isabel's idealistic imagination in marrying him is worth for further analysis. This power struggle between narrator and narratee creating a more complicated, yet dimensional interrelationship is another direction for future research. What I want to point out in this final conclusion will not come to a closure, but rather leads to future possibilities, just as Isabel's future that arouses thinking that is fruitful in imagination.



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