

Session 1

Comparisons between Elizabeth Gaskell and George Eliot using 'The Moorland Cottage' and The Mill on the Floss.

Many critics have considered the similarities between these two texts, thus suggesting one having influenced the other. Eliot's reputation has been such that there is often an assumption that Gaskell would be influenced by Eliot, however, this could not be the case as 'The Moorland Cottage' was published ten years before *The Mill on the Floss*. The question we should ask is: Did Gaskell in anyway influence Eliot?

Influence could be taken loosely here - was Eliot writing back to Gaskell, reimagining Gaskell's text or responding to concerns of the era, maybe even issues within her own family? Many see *The Mill on the Floss* as Eliot's autobiographical fiction, exploring her relationship with her brother Isaac and her feelings that she - like other women of the time - received an inadequate education.

When looking at parallels between these texts or considering complexity and character development, we must also bear in mind that Gaskell's work is a mere 100 pages, whereas Eliot's is five times that length. In the 500+ pages that comprise *The Mill on the Floss*, it is much easier to introduce more characters and develop them, as well as having the space to introduce a more complex plot. In that respect we must keep in mind that some aspects of these comparisons will inevitably be uneven.

Section 1

These extracts focus on education and behaviour, looking at both girls/women and boys/men.

The passages below look at gender and education. Both writers are considering what effects inflicting certain patterns of expected social behaviour has on the development and personalities of both boys and girls who will, of course, become women and men. They are also questioning the methods of educating sons and daughters and the effects these methods will ultimately have on the individual and on society. Like Gaskell and many other women writers, Eliot is working from the personal to the national

The Moorland Cottage

Once a week they emerged and crossed the common, catching on its summit the first sounds of the sweet-toned bells, calling them to church. Mrs. Browne walked first, holding Edward's hand. Old Nancy followed with Maggie; but they were all one party, and all talked together in a subdued and quiet tone, as beseemed the day...

"Maggie--sometimes I don't think I'm sorry that papa is dead--when I'm naughty, you know; he would have been so angry with me if he had been here; and I think--only sometimes, you know, I'm rather glad he is not."

"Oh, Edward! you don't mean to say so, I know. Don't let us talk about him. We can't talk rightly, we're such little children. Don't, Edward, please."

Poor little Maggie's eyes filled with tears; and she never spoke again to Edward, or indeed to any one, about her dead father. As she grew older, her life became more actively busy. The cottage and small outbuildings, and the garden and field, were their own; and on the produce they depended for much of their support. The cow, the pig, and the poultry took up much of Nancy's time. Mrs. Browne and Maggie had to do a great deal of the house-work; and when the beds were made, and the rooms swept and dusted, and the preparations for dinner ready, then, if there was any time, Maggie sat down to her lessons. Ned, who prided himself considerably on his sex, had been sitting all the morning, in his father's arm-chair, in the little book-room, "studying," as he chose to call it. Sometimes Maggie would pop her head in, with a request that he would help her to carry the great pitcher of water up-stairs, or do some other little household service; with which request he occasionally complied, but with so many complaints about the interruption, that at last she told him she would never ask him again. Gently as this was said, he yet felt it as a reproach, and tried to excuse himself.

"You see, Maggie, a man must be educated to be a gentleman. Now, if a woman knows how to keep a house,

that's all that is wanted from her. So my time is of more consequence than yours. Mamma says I'm to go to college, and be a clergyman; so I must get on with my Latin."

Maggie submitted in silence; and almost felt it as an act of gracious condescension when, a morning or two afterwards, he came to meet her as she was toiling in from the well, carrying the great brown jug full of spring-water ready for dinner. "Here," said he, "let us put it in the shade behind the horse-mount. Oh, Maggie! look what you've done! Spilt it all, with not turning quickly enough when I told you. Now you may fetch it again for yourself, for I'll have nothing to do with it..."

"I did not understand you in time," said she, softly. But he had turned away, and gone back in offended dignity to the house. Maggie had nothing to do but return to the well, and fill it again. The spring was some distance off, in a little rocky dell. It was so cool after her hot walk, that she sat down in the shadow of the gray limestone rock, and looked at the ferns, wet with the dripping water. She felt sad, she knew not why. "I think Ned is sometimes very cross," thought she. "I did not understand he was carrying it there. Perhaps I am clumsy. Mamma says I am; and Ned says I am. Nancy never says so and papa never said so. I wish I could help being clumsy and stupid. Ned says all women are so. I wish I was not a woman. It must be a fine thing to be a man. Oh dear! I must go up the field again with this heavy pitcher, and my arms do so ache!" She rose and climbed the steep brae. As she went she heard her mother's voice.

"Maggie! Maggie! there's no water for dinner, and the potatoes are quite boiled. Where is that child?"

They had begun dinner, before she came down from brushing her hair and washing her hands. She was hurried and tired.

"Mother," said Ned, "mayn't I have some butter to these potatoes, as there is cold meat? They are so dry."

"Certainly, my dear. Maggie, go and fetch a pat of butter out of the dairy."

Maggie went from her untouched dinner without speaking.

"Here, stop, you child!" said Nancy, turning her back in the passage. "You go to your dinner, I'll fetch the butter. You've been running about enough to-day."

Maggie durst not go back without it, but she stood in the passage till Nancy returned; and then she put up her mouth to be kissed by the kind rough old servant.

"Thou'rt a sweet one," said Nancy to herself, as she turned into the kitchen; and Maggie went back to her dinner with a soothed and lightened heart....

"I wonder how men make their boats steady; I have taken mine to the pond, and she has toppled over every time I sent her in."

"Has it?--that's very tiresome! Would it do to put a little weight in it, to keep it down?"

"How often must I tell you to call a ship 'her,' and there you will go on saying--it--it!"

After this correction of his sister, Master Edward did not like the condescension of acknowledging her suggestion to be a good one; so he went silently to the house in search of the requisite ballast; but not being able to find anything suitable, he came back to his turfy hillock, littered round with chips of wood, and tried to insert some pebbles into his vessel; but they stuck fast, and he was obliged to ask again.

"Supposing it was a good thing to weight her, what could I put in?"

Maggie thought a moment. "Would shot do?" asked she.

"It would be the very thing; but where can I get any?"

"There is some that was left of papa's. It is in the right-hand corner of the second drawer of the bureau, wrapped up in a newspaper."

"What a plague! I can't remember your 'seconds,' and 'right-hands,' and fiddle-faddles." He worked on at his pebbles. They would not do.

"I think if you were good-natured, Maggie, you might go for me."

"Oh, Ned! I've all this long seam to do. Mamma said I must finish it before tea; and that I might play a little if I had done it first," said Maggie, rather plaintively; for it was a real pain to her to refuse a request.

"It would not take you five minutes."

Maggie thought a little. The time would only be taken out of her playing, which, after all, did not signify; while Edward was really busy about his ship. She rose, and clambered up the steep grassy slope, slippery with the heat.

The Mill on the Floss

"No, no," said Mr Tulliver, "I've no thoughts of his going to Mudport: I mean him to set up his office at St Ogg's,

close by us, an' live at home. But," continued Mr Tulliver after a pause, "what I'm a bit afraid on is, as Tom hasn't got the right sort o' brains for a smart fellow. I doubt he's a bit slowish. He takes after your family, Bessy."

"Yes, that he does," said Mrs Tulliver, accepting the last proposition entirely on its own merits; "he's wonderful for liking a deal o' salt in his broth. That was my brother's way, and my father's before him."

"It seems a bit a pity, though," said Mr Tulliver, "as the lad should take after the mother's side instead o' the little wench. That's the worst on't wi' crossing o' breeds: you can never justly calkilate what'll come on't. The little un takes after my side, now: she's twice as 'cute as Tom. Too 'cute for a woman, I'm afraid," continued Mr Tulliver, turning his head dubiously first on one side and then on the other. "It's no mischief much while she's a little un; but an over-'cute woman's no better nor a long-tailed sheep,—she'll fetch none the bigger price for that."

"Yes, it is a mischief while she's a little un, Mr Tulliver, for it runs to naughtiness. How to keep her in a clean pinafore two hours together passes my cunning. An' now you put me i' mind," continued Mrs Tulliver, rising and going to the window, "I don't know where she is now, an' it's pretty nigh tea-time. Ah, I thought so,—wanderin' up an' down by the water, like a wild thing: She'll tumble in some day."

Mrs Tulliver rapped the window sharply, beckoned, and shook her head,—a process which she repeated more than once before she returned to her chair.

"You talk o' 'cuteness, Mr Tulliver," she observed as she sat down, "but I'm sure the child's half an idiot i' some things; for if I send her upstairs to fetch anything, she forgets what she's gone for, an' perhaps 'ull sit down on the floor i' the sunshine an' plait her hair an' sing to herself like a Bedlam creatur', all the while I'm waiting for her downstairs. That niver run i' my family, thank God! no more nor a brown skin as makes her look like a mulatter. I don't like to fly i' the face o' Providence, but it seems hard as I should have but one gell, an' her so comical."

"Pooh, nonsense!" said Mr Tulliver; "she's a straight, black-eyed wench as anybody need wish to see. I don't know i' what she's behind other folks's children; and she can read almost as well as the parson."

"But her hair won't curl all I can do with it, and she's so franzy about having it put i' paper, and I've such work as never was to make her stand and have it pinched with th' irons."

"Cut it off—cut it off short," said the father, rashly.

"How can you talk so, Mr Tulliver? She's too big a gell—gone nine, and tall of her age—to have her hair cut short; an' there's her cousin Lucy's got a row o' curls round her head, an' not a hair out o' place. It seems hard as my sister Deane should have that pretty child; I'm sure Lucy takes more after me nor my own child does. Maggie, Maggie," continued the mother, in a tone of half-coaxing fretfulness, as this small mistake of nature entered the room, "where's the use o' my telling you to keep away from the water? You'll tumble in and be drowned some day, an' then you'll be sorry you didn't do as mother told you."

Maggie's hair, as she threw off her bonnet, painfully confirmed her mother's accusation. Mrs Tulliver, desiring her daughter to have a curled crop, "like other folks's children," had had it cut too short in front to be pushed behind the ears; and as it was usually straight an hour after it had been taken out of paper, Maggie was incessantly tossing her head to keep the dark, heavy locks out of her gleaming black eyes,—an action which gave her very much the air of a small Shetland pony.

"Oh, dear, oh, dear, Maggie, what are you thinkin' of, to throw your bonnet down there? Take it upstairs, there's a good gell, an' let your hair be brushed, an' put your other pinafore on, an' change your shoes, do, for shame; an' come an' go on with your patchwork, like a little lady."

"Oh, mother," said Maggie, in a vehemently cross tone, "I don't want to do my patchwork."

"What! not your pretty patchwork, to make a counterpane for your aunt Glegg?"

"It's foolish work," said Maggie, with a toss of her mane,— "tearing things to pieces to sew 'em together again. And I don't want to do anything for my aunt Glegg. I don't like her."

Exit Maggie, dragging her bonnet by the string, while Mr Tulliver laughs audibly.

"I wonder at you, as you'll laugh at her, Mr Tulliver," said the mother, with feeble fretfulness in her tone. "You encourage her i' naughtiness. An' her aunts will have it as it's me spoils her."

Mrs Tulliver was what is called a good-tempered person,—never cried, when she was a baby, on any slighter ground than hunger and pins; and from the cradle upward had been healthy, fair, plump, and dull-witted; in short, the flower of her family for beauty and amiability. But milk and mildness are not the best things for keeping, and when they turn only a little sour, they may disagree with young stomachs seriously. I have often wondered whether those early Madonnas of Raphael, with the blond faces and somewhat stupid expression, kept their placidity undisturbed when their strong-limbed, strong-willed boys got a little too old to do without clothing. I think they must have been given to feeble remonstrance, getting more and more peevish as it became more and more ineffectual.

The Mill on the Floss

There's a thing I've got i' my head," said Mr Tulliver at last, in rather a lower tone than usual, as he turned his head and looked steadfastly at his companion.

"Ah!" said Mr Riley, in a tone of mild interest. He was a man with heavy waxen eyelids and high-arched eyebrows, looking exactly the same under all circumstances. This immovability of face, and the habit of taking a pinch of snuff before he gave an answer, made him trebly oracular to Mr Tulliver.

"It's a very particular thing," he went on; "it's about my boy Tom."

At the sound of this name, Maggie, who was seated on a low stool close by the fire, with a large book open on her lap, shook her heavy hair back and looked up eagerly. There were few sounds that roused Maggie when she was dreaming over her book, but Tom's name served as well as the shrillest whistle; in an instant she was on the watch, with gleaming eyes, like a Skye terrier suspecting mischief, or at all events determined to fly at any one who threatened it toward Tom.

"You see, I want to put him to a new school at Midsummer," said Mr Tulliver; "he's comin' away from the 'cademy at Lady-day, an' I shall let him run loose for a quarter; but after that I want to send him to a downright good school, where they'll make a scholar of him."

"Well," said Mr Riley, "there's no greater advantage you can give him than a good education. Not," he added, with polite significance,— "not that a man can't be an excellent miller and farmer, and a shrewd, sensible fellow into the bargain, without much help from the schoolmaster."

"I believe you," said Mr Tulliver, winking, and turning his head on one side; "but that's where it is. I don't mean Tom to be a miller and farmer. I see no fun i' that. Why, if I made him a miller an' farmer, he'd be expectin' to take to the mill an' the land, an' a-hinting at me as it was time for me to lay by an' think o' my latter end. Nay, nay, I've seen enough o' that wi' sons. I'll never pull my coat off before I go to bed. I shall give Tom an eddication an' put him to a business, as he may make a nest for himself, an' not want to push me out o' mine. Pretty well if he gets it when I'm dead an' gone. I sha'n't be put off wi' spoon-meat afore I've lost my teeth."

This was evidently a point on which Mr Tulliver felt strongly; and the impetus which had given unusual rapidity and emphasis to his speech showed itself still unexhausted for some minutes afterward in a defiant motion of the head from side to side, and an occasional "Nay, nay," like a subsiding growl.

These angry symptoms were keenly observed by Maggie, and cut her to the quick. Tom, it appeared, was supposed capable of turning his father out of doors, and of making the future in some way tragic by his wickedness. This was not to be borne; and Maggie jumped up from her stool, forgetting all about her heavy book, which fell with a bang within the fender, and going up between her father's knees, said, in a half-crying, half-indignant voice,—

"Father, Tom wouldn't be naughty to you ever; I know he wouldn't."

Mrs Tulliver was out of the room superintending a choice supper-dish, and Mr Tulliver's heart was touched; so Maggie was not scolded about the book. Mr Riley quietly picked it up and looked at it, while the father laughed, with a certain tenderness in his hard-lined face, and patted his little girl on the back, and then held her hands and kept her between his knees.

"What! they mustn't say any harm o' Tom, eh?" said Mr Tulliver, looking at Maggie with a twinkling eye. Then, in a lower voice, turning to Mr Riley, as though Maggie couldn't hear, "She understands what one's talking about so as never was. And you should hear her read,—straight off, as if she knowed it all beforehand. And allays at her book! But it's bad—it's bad," Mr Tulliver added sadly, checking this blamable exultation. "A woman's no business wi' being so clever; it'll turn to trouble, I doubt. But bless you!"—here the exultation was clearly recovering the mastery,— "she'll read the books and understand 'em better nor half the folks as are growed up."

Maggie's cheeks began to flush with triumphant excitement. She thought Mr Riley would have a respect for her now; it had been evident that he thought nothing of her before.

Mr Riley was turning over the leaves of the book, and she could make nothing of his face, with its high-arched eyebrows; but he presently looked at her, and said,—

"Come, come and tell me something about this book; here are some pictures,—I want to know what they mean."

Maggie, with deepening colour, went without hesitation to Mr Riley's elbow and looked over the book, eagerly seizing one corner, and tossing back her mane, while she said,—

"Oh, I'll tell you what that means. It's a dreadful picture, isn't it? But I can't help looking at it. That old woman

in the water's a witch,—they've put her in to find out whether she's a witch or no; and if she swims she's a witch, and if she's drowned—and killed, you know—she's innocent, and not a witch, but only a poor silly old woman. But what good would it do her then, you know, when she was drowned? Only, I suppose, she'd go to heaven, and God would make it up to her. And this dreadful blacksmith with his arms akimbo, laughing,—oh, isn't he ugly?—I'll tell you what he is. He's the Devil really” (here Maggie's voice became louder and more emphatic), “and not a right blacksmith; for the Devil takes the shape of wicked men, and walks about and sets people doing wicked things, and he's oftener in the shape of a bad man than any other, because, you know, if people saw he was the Devil, and he roared at 'em, they'd run away, and he couldn't make 'em do what he pleased.”

Mr Tulliver had listened to this exposition of Maggie's with petrifying wonder.

“Why, what book is it the wench has got hold on?” he burst out at last.

“‘The History of the Devil,’ by Daniel Defoe,—not quite the right book for a little girl,” said Mr Riley. “How came it among your books, Mr Tulliver?”

Maggie looked hurt and discouraged, while her father said,—

“Why, it's one o' the books I bought at Partridge's sale. They was all bound alike,—it's a good binding, you see,—and I thought they'd be all good books. There's Jeremy Taylor's ‘Holy Living and Dying’ among 'em. I read in it often of a Sunday” (Mr Tulliver felt somehow a familiarity with that great writer, because his name was Jeremy); “and there's a lot more of 'em,—sermons mostly, I think,—but they've all got the same covers, and I thought they were all o' one sample, as you may say. But it seems one mustn't judge by th' outside. This is a puzzlin' world.”

“Well,” said Mr Riley, in an admonitory, patronizing tone as he patted Maggie on the head, “I advise you to put by the ‘History of the Devil,’ and read some prettier book. Have you no prettier books?”

“Oh, yes,” said Maggie, reviving a little in the desire to vindicate the variety of her reading. “I know the reading in this book isn't pretty; but I like the pictures, and I make stories to the pictures out of my own head, you know. But I've got ‘Æsop's Fables,’ and a book about Kangaroos and things, and the ‘Pilgrim's Progress...’”

“Ah, a beautiful book,” said Mr Riley; “you can't read a better.”

“Well, but there's a great deal about the Devil in that,” said Maggie, triumphantly, “and I'll show you the picture of him in his true shape, as he fought with Christian.” ...

...“Did you ever hear the like on't?” said Mr Tulliver, as Maggie retired. “It's a pity but what she'd been the lad,—she'd ha' been a match for the lawyers, she would. It's the wonderful'st thing”—here he lowered his voice—“as I picked the mother because she wasn't o'er 'cute—bein' a good-looking woman too, an' come of a rare family for managing; but I picked her from her sisters o' purpose, 'cause she was a bit weak like; for I wasn't agoin' to be told the rights o' things by my own fireside. But you see when a man's got brains himself, there's no knowing where they'll run to; an' a pleasant sort o' soft woman may go on breeding you stupid lads and 'cute wenches, till it's like as if the world was turned topsy-turvy. It's an uncommon puzzlin' thing.”

Mr Riley's gravity gave way, and he shook a little under the application of his pinch of snuff before he said,—

“But your lad's not stupid, is he? I saw him, when I was here last, busy making fishing-tackle; he seemed quite up to it.”

“Well, he isn't not to say stupid,—he's got a notion o' things out o' door, an' a sort o' common sense, as he'd lay hold o' things by the right handle. But he's slow with his tongue, you see, and he reads but poorly, and can't abide the books, and spells all wrong, they tell me, an' as shy as can be wi' strangers, an' you never hear him say 'cute things like the little wench.

Extract Two

Looks at brother/sister relationships as children

The Moorland Cottage

Well, Ned! and how are the classics going on? Fine fellow, that Virgil! Let me see, how does it begin?

‘Arma, virumque cano, Trojæ qui primus ab oris.’

That's pretty well, I think, considering I've never opened him since I left school thirty years ago. To be sure, I spent six hours a day at it when I was there. Come now, I'll puzzle you. Can you construe this?

“Infir dealis, inoak noneis; in mud eelis, in clay noneis.”

“To be sure I can,” said Edward, with a little contempt in his tone. “Can you do this, sir?”

“Apud in is almi des ire,
Mimis tres i neve require,
Alo veri findit a gestis,
His miseri ne ver at restis.”

But though Edward had made much progress, and gained three prizes, his moral training had been little attended to. He was more tyrannical than ever, both to his mother and Maggie. It was a drawn battle between him and Nancy, and they kept aloof from each other as much as possible. Maggie fell

into her old humble way of submitting to his will, as long as it did not go against her conscience; but that, being daily enlightened by her habits of pious aspiring thought, would not allow her to be so utterly obedient as formerly. In addition to his imperiousness, he had learned to affix the idea of cleverness to various artifices and subterfuges which utterly revolted her by their meanness.

“You are so set up, by being intimate with Erminia, that you won’t do a thing I tell you; you are as selfish and self-willed as”--he made a pause. Maggie was ready to cry.

“I will do anything, Ned, that is right.”

“Well! and I tell you this is right.”

“How can it be?” said she, sadly, almost wishing to be convinced.

“How--why it is, and that’s enough for you. You must always have a reason for everything now. You are not half so nice as you were. Unless one chops logic with you, and convinces you by a long argument, you’ll do nothing. Be obedient, I tell you. That is what a woman has to be.”

“I could be obedient to some people, without knowing their reasons, even though they told me to do silly things,” said Maggie, half to herself.

“I should like to know to whom,” said Edward, scornfully.

“To Don Quixote,” answered she, seriously; for, indeed, he was present in her mind just then, and his noble, tender, melancholy character had made a strong impression there.

Edward stared at her for a moment, and then burst into a loud fit of laughter. It had the good effect of restoring him to a better frame of mind. He had such an excellent joke against his sister, that he could not be angry with her. He called her Sancho Panza all the rest of the holidays, though she protested against it, saying she could not bear the Squire, and disliked being called by his name.

Frank and Edward seemed to have a mutual antipathy to each other, and the coldness between them was rather increased than diminished by all Mr. Buxton’s efforts to bring them together. “Come, Frank, my lad!” said he, “don’t be so stiff with Ned. His father was a dear friend of mine, and I’ve set my heart on seeing you friends. You’ll have it in your power to help him on in the world.”

But Frank answered, “He is not quite honorable, sir. I can’t bear a boy who is not quite honorable. Boys brought up at those private schools are so full of tricks!”

“Nay, my lad, there thou’rt wrong. I was brought up at a private school, and no one can say I ever dirtied my hands with a trick in my life. Good old Mr. Thompson would have flogged the life out of a boy who did anything mean or underhand.”

The Mill on the Floss

Tom and Maggie as children

Nevertheless he submitted to be kissed willingly enough, though Maggie hung on his neck in rather a strangling fashion, while his blue-gray eyes wandered toward the croft and the lambs and the river, where he promised himself that he would begin to fish the first thing to-morrow morning. He was one of those lads that grow everywhere in England, and at twelve or thirteen years of age look as much alike as goslings,—a lad with light-brown hair, cheeks of cream and roses, full lips, indeterminate nose and eyebrows,—a physiognomy in which it seems impossible to discern anything but the generic character to boyhood; as different as possible from poor Maggie’s phiz, which Nature seemed to have moulded and coloured with the most decided intention. But that same Nature has the deep cunning which hides itself under the appearance of openness, so that simple people think they can see through her quite well, and all the while she is secretly preparing a refutation of their confident prophecies. Under these average boyish physiognomies that she seems to turn off by the gross, she conceals some of her most rigid, inflexible purposes, some of her most unmodifiable characters; and the dark-eyed, demonstrative, rebellious girl may after all turn out to be a passive being compared with this pink-and-white bit of masculinity with the indeterminate features.

“Maggie,” said Tom, confidentially, taking her into a corner, as soon as his mother was gone out to examine his box and the warm parlour had taken off the chill he had felt from the long drive, “you don’t know what I’ve got in my pockets,” nodding his head up and down as a means of rousing her sense of mystery.

“No,” said Maggie. “How stodgy they look, Tom! Is it marls (marbles) or cobnuts?” Maggie’s heart sank a little, because Tom always said it was “no good” playing with her at those games, she played so badly.

“Marls! no; I’ve swopped all my marls with the little fellows, and cobnuts are no fun, you silly, only when the nuts are green. But see here!” He drew something half out of his right-hand pocket.

“What is it?” said Maggie, in a whisper. “I can see nothing but a bit of yellow.”

“Why, it’s—a—new—guess, Maggie!”

“Oh, I can’t guess, Tom,” said Maggie, impatiently.

“Don’t be a spitfire, else I won’t tell you,” said Tom, thrusting his hand back into his pocket and looking determined.

“No, Tom,” said Maggie, imploringly, laying hold of the arm that was held stiffly in the pocket. “I’m not cross, Tom; it was only because I can’t bear guessing. Please be good to me.”

Tom’s arm slowly relaxed, and he said, “Well, then, it’s a new fish-line—two new uns,—one for you, Maggie, all to yourself. I wouldn’t go halves in the toffee and gingerbread on purpose to save the money; and Gibson and Spouncer fought with me because I wouldn’t. And here’s hooks; see here—I say, won’t we go and fish to-morrow down by the Round Pool? And you shall catch your own fish, Maggie and put the worms on, and everything; won’t it be fun?”

Maggie’s answer was to throw her arms round Tom’s neck and hug him, and hold her cheek against his without speaking, while he slowly unwound some of the line, saying, after a pause,—

“Wasn’t I a good brother, now, to buy you a line all to yourself? You know, I needn’t have bought it, if I hadn’t liked.”

“Yes, very, very good—I do love you, Tom.”

Tom had put the line back in his pocket, and was looking at the hooks one by one, before he spoke again.

“And the fellows fought me, because I wouldn’t give in about the toffee.”

“Oh, dear! I wish they wouldn’t fight at your school, Tom. Didn’t it hurt you?”

“Hurt me? no,” said Tom, putting up the hooks again, taking out a large pocket-knife, and slowly opening the largest blade, which he looked at meditatively as he rubbed his finger along it. Then he added,—

“I gave Spouncer a black eye, I know; that’s what he got by wanting to leather me; I wasn’t going to go halves because anybody leathered me.”...

“Oh, don’t bother, Maggie! you’re such a silly. I shall go and see my rabbits.”

Maggie’s heart began to flutter with fear. She dared not tell the sad truth at once, but she walked after Tom in trembling silence as he went out, thinking how she could tell him the news so as to soften at once his sorrow and his anger; for Maggie dreaded Tom’s anger of all things; it was quite a different anger from her own.

“Tom,” she said, timidly, when they were out of doors, “how much money did you give for your rabbits?”

“Two half-crowns and a sixpence,” said Tom, promptly.

“I think I’ve got a great deal more than that in my steel purse upstairs. I’ll ask mother to give it you.”

“What for?” said Tom. “I don’t want your money, you silly thing. I’ve got a great deal more money than you, because I’m a boy. I always have half-sovereigns and sovereigns for my Christmas boxes because I shall be a man, and you only have five-shilling pieces, because you’re only a girl.”

“Well, but, Tom—if mother would let me give you two half-crowns and a sixpence out of my purse to put into your pocket and spend, you know, and buy some more rabbits with it?”

“More rabbits? I don’t want any more.”

“Oh, but, Tom, they’re all dead.”

Tom stopped immediately in his walk and turned round toward Maggie. “You forgot to feed ’em, then, and Harry forgot?” he said, his colour heightening for a moment, but soon subsiding. “I’ll pitch into Harry. I’ll have him turned away. And I don’t love you, Maggie. You sha’n’t go fishing with me to-morrow. I told you to go and see the rabbits every day.” He walked on again.

“Yes, but I forgot—and I couldn’t help it, indeed, Tom. I’m so very sorry,” said Maggie, while the tears rushed fast.

“You’re a naughty girl,” said Tom, severely, “and I’m sorry I bought you the fish-line. I don’t love you.”

“Oh, Tom, it’s very cruel,” sobbed Maggie. “I’d forgive you, if you forgot anything—I wouldn’t mind what you did—I’d forgive you and love you.”

“Yes, you’re silly; but I never do forget things, I don’t.”

“Oh, please forgive me, Tom; my heart will break,” said Maggie, shaking with sobs, clinging to Tom’s arm, and laying her wet cheek on his shoulder.

Tom shook her off, and stopped again, saying in a peremptory tone, “Now, Maggie, you just listen. Aren’t I a good brother to you?”

“Ye-ye-es,” sobbed Maggie, her chin rising and falling convulsedly....

“Ye-ye-es—and I—lo-lo-love you so, Tom.”

“But you’re a naughty girl. Last holidays you licked the paint off my lozenge-box, and the holidays before that you let the boat drag my fish-line down when I’d set you to watch it, and you pushed your head through my kite, all for nothing.”

“But I didn’t mean,” said Maggie; “I couldn’t help it.”

“Yes, you could,” said Tom, “if you’d minded what you were doing. And you’re a naughty girl, and you sha’n’t go fishing with me to-morrow.”

With this terrible conclusion, Tom ran away from Maggie toward the mill, meaning to greet Luke there, and complain to him of Harry.

Maggie stood motionless, except from her sobs, for a minute or two; then she turned round and ran into the house, and up to her attic, where she sat on the floor and laid her head against the worm-eaten shelf, with a crushing sense of misery. Tom was come home, and she had thought how happy she should be; and now he was cruel to her. What use was anything if Tom didn’t love her? Oh, he was very cruel! Hadn’t she wanted to give him the money, and said how very sorry she was? She knew she was naughty to her mother, but she had never been naughty to Tom—had never meant to be naughty to him.

“Oh, he is cruel!” Maggie sobbed aloud, finding a wretched pleasure in the hollow resonance that came through the long empty space of the attic. She never thought of beating or grinding her Fetish; she was too miserable to be angry.

These bitter sorrows of childhood! when sorrow is all new and strange, when hope has not yet got wings to fly beyond the days and weeks, and the space from summer to summer seems measureless.

The Mill on the Floss Hair Cutting

“Oh, Maggie, you’ll have to go down to dinner directly,” said Tom. “Oh, my!”

“Don’t laugh at me, Tom,” said Maggie, in a passionate tone, with an outburst of angry tears, stamping, and giving him a push.

“Now, then, spitfire!” said Tom. “What did you cut it off for, then? I shall go down: I can smell the dinner going in.”

He hurried downstairs and left poor Maggie to that bitter sense of the irrevocable which was almost an everyday experience of her small soul. She could see clearly enough, now the thing was done, that it was very foolish, and that she should have to hear and think more about her hair than ever; for Maggie rushed to her deeds with passionate impulse, and then saw not only their consequences, but what would have happened if they had not been done, with all the detail and exaggerated circumstance of an active imagination. Tom never did the same sort of foolish things as Maggie, having a wonderful instinctive discernment of what would turn to his advantage or disadvantage; and so it happened, that though he was much more wilful and inflexible than Maggie, his mother hardly ever called him naughty. But if Tom did make a mistake of that sort, he espoused it, and stood by it: he “didn’t mind.” If he broke the lash of his father’s gigwhip by lashing the gate, he couldn’t help it,—the whip shouldn’t have got caught in the hinge. If Tom Tulliver whipped a gate, he was convinced, not that the whipping of gates by all boys was a justifiable act, but that he, Tom Tulliver, was justifiable in whipping that particular gate, and he wasn’t going to be sorry. But Maggie, as she stood crying before the glass, felt it impossible that she should go down to dinner and endure the severe eyes and severe words of her aunts, while Tom and Lucy, and Martha, who waited at table, and perhaps her father and her uncles, would laugh at her; for if Tom had laughed at her, of course every one else would; and if she had only let her hair alone, she could have sat with Tom and Lucy, and had the apricot pudding and the custard! What could she do but sob? She sat as helpless and despairing among her black locks as Ajax among the slaughtered sheep. Very trivial, perhaps, this anguish seems to weather-worn mortals who have to think of Christmas bills, dead loves, and broken friendships; but it was not less bitter to Maggie—perhaps it was even more bitter—than what we are fond of calling antithetically the real troubles of mature life. “Ah, my child, you will have real troubles to fret about by and by,” is the consolation we have almost all of us had administered to us in our childhood, and have repeated to other children since we have been grown up. We have all of us sobbed so piteously, standing with tiny bare legs above our little socks, when we lost sight of our mother or nurse in some strange place; but we can no longer recall the poignancy of that moment and weep over it, as we do over the remembered sufferings of five or ten years ago. 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; and so it comes that we can look on at the troubles of our children with a smiling disbelief in the reality of their pain. Is there any one who can recover the experience of his childhood, not merely

with a memory of what he did and what happened to him, of what he liked and disliked when he was in frock and trousers, but with an intimate penetration, a revived consciousness of what he felt then, when it was so long from one Midsummer to another; what he felt when his school fellows shut him out of their game because he would pitch the ball wrong out of mere wilfulness; or on a rainy day in the holidays, when he didn't know how to amuse himself, and fell from idleness into mischief, from mischief into defiance, and from defiance into sulkiness; or when his mother absolutely refused to let him have a tailed coat that "half," although every other boy of his age had gone into tails already? Surely if we could recall that early bitterness, and the dim guesses, the strangely perspectiveless conception of life, that gave the bitterness its intensity, we should not pooh-pooh the griefs of our children.

"Miss Maggie, you're to come down this minute," said Kezia, entering the room hurriedly. "Lawks! what have you been a-doing? I never see such a fright!"

"Don't, Kezia," said Maggie, angrily. "Go away!"

"But I tell you you're to come down, Miss, this minute; your mother says so," said Kezia, going up to Maggie and taking her by the hand to raise her from the floor.

"Get away, Kezia; I don't want any dinner," said Maggie, resisting Kezia's arm. "I sha'n't come."

"Oh, well, I can't stay. I've got to wait at dinner," said Kezia, going out again.

"Maggie, you little silly," said Tom, peeping into the room ten minutes after, "why don't you come and have your dinner? There's lots o' goodies, and mother says you're to come. What are you crying for, you little spooney?"

Oh, it was dreadful! Tom was so hard and unconcerned; if he had been crying on the floor, Maggie would have cried too. And there was the dinner, so nice; and she was so hungry. It was very bitter.

But Tom was not altogether hard. He was not inclined to cry, and did not feel that Maggie's grief spoiled his prospect of the sweets; but he went and put his head near her, and said in a lower, comforting tone,—

"Won't you come, then, Magsie? Shall I bring you a bit o' pudding when I've had mine, and a custard and things?"

"Ye-e-es," said Maggie, beginning to feel life a little more tolerable.

"Very well," said Tom, going away. But he turned again at the door and said, "But you'd better come, you know. There's the dessert,—nuts, you know, and cowslip wine."

Maggie's tears had ceased, and she looked reflective as Tom left her. His good nature had taken off the keenest edge of her suffering, and nuts with cowslip wine began to assert their legitimate influence.

Slowly she rose from amongst her scattered locks, and slowly she made her way downstairs. Then she stood leaning with one shoulder against the frame of the dining-parlour door, peeping in when it was ajar. She saw Tom and Lucy with an empty chair between them, and there were the custards on a side-table; it was too much. She slipped in and went toward the empty chair. But she had no sooner sat down than she repented and wished herself back again.

Mrs Tulliver gave a little scream as she saw her, and felt such a "turn" that she dropped the large gravy-spoon into the dish, with the most serious results to the table-cloth. For Kezia had not betrayed the reason of Maggie's refusal to come down, not liking to give her mistress a shock in the moment of carving, and Mrs Tulliver thought there was nothing worse in question than a fit of perverseness, which was inflicting its own punishment by depriving Maggie of half her dinner.

Mrs Tulliver's scream made all eyes turn towards the same point as her own, and Maggie's cheeks and ears began to burn, while uncle Glegg, a kind-looking, white-haired old gentleman, said,—

"Heyday! what little gell's this? Why, I don't know her. Is it some little gell you've picked up in the road, Kezia?"

"Why, she's gone and cut her hair herself," said Mr Tulliver in an undertone to Mr Deane, laughing with much enjoyment. "Did you ever know such a little hussy as it is?"

"Why, little miss, you've made yourself look very funny," said Uncle Pullet, and perhaps he never in his life made an observation which was felt to be so lacerating.

"Fie, for shame!" said aunt Glegg, in her loudest, severest tone of reproof. "Little gells as cut their own hair should be whipped and fed on bread and water,—not come and sit down with their aunts and uncles."

"Ay, ay," said uncle Glegg, meaning to give a playful turn to this denunciation, "she must be sent to jail, I think, and they'll cut the rest of her hair off there, and make it all even."

"She's more like a gypsy nor ever," said aunt Pullet, in a pitying tone; "it's very bad luck, sister, as the gell should be so brown; the boy's fair enough. I doubt it'll stand in her way i' life to be so brown."

"She's a naughty child, as'll break her mother's heart," said Mrs Tulliver, with the tears in her eyes.

Maggie seemed to be listening to a chorus of reproach and derision. Her first flush came from anger, which gave her a transient power of defiance, and Tom thought she was braving it out, supported by the recent appearance of the pudding and custard. Under this impression, he whispered, "Oh, my! Maggie, I told you you'd catch it." He meant to be friendly, but Maggie felt convinced that Tom was rejoicing in her ignominy. Her feeble power of defiance left her in an instant, her heart swelled, and getting up from her chair, she ran to her father, hid her face on his shoulder, and burst out into loud sobbing.

“Come, come, my wench,” said her father, soothingly, putting his arm round her, “never mind; you was i’ the right to cut it off if it plagued you; give over crying; father’ll take your part.”

Delicious words of tenderness! Maggie never forgot any of these moments when her father “took her part”; she kept them in her heart, and thought of them long years after, when every one else said that her father had done very ill by his children.

“How your husband does spoil that child, Bessy!” said Mrs Glegg, in a loud “aside,” to Mrs Tulliver. “It’ll be the ruin of her, if you don’t take care. My father never brought his children up so, else we should ha’ been a different sort o’ family to what we are.”

Mrs Tulliver’s domestic sorrows seemed at this moment to have reached the point at which insensibility begins. She took no notice of her sister’s remark, but threw back her capstrings and dispensed the pudding, in mute resignation.

Third Selection of Extracts – Tom and Philip, Edward and Frank.

The Moorland Cottage

“Let us go to the swing in the shrubbery,” said Frank, after a little consideration; and off they ran. Frank proposed that he and Edward should swing the two little girls; and for a time all went on very well. But by-and-by Edward thought, that Maggie had had enough, and that he should like a turn; and Maggie, at his first word, got out.

“Don’t you like swinging?” asked Erminia.

“Yes! but Edward would like it now.” And Edward accordingly took her place. Frank turned away, and would not swing him. Maggie strove hard to do it, but he was heavy, and the swing bent unevenly. He scolded her for what she could not help, and at last jumped out so roughly, that the seat hit Maggie’s face, and knocked her down. When she got up, her lips quivered with pain, but she did not cry; she only looked anxiously at her frock. There was a great rent across the front breadth. Then she did shed tears--tears of fright. What would her mother say?

Erminia saw her crying.

“Are you hurt?” said she, kindly. “Oh, how your cheek is swelled! What a rude, cross boy your brother is!”

“I did not know he was going to jump out. I am not crying because I am hurt, but because of this great rent in my nice new frock. Mamma will be so displeased.”

“Is it a new frock?” asked Erminia.

“It is a new one for me. Nancy has sat up several nights to make it. Oh! what shall I do?”

Erminia’s little heart was softened by such excessive poverty. A best frock made of shabby old silk! She put her arms round Maggie’s neck, and said:

“Come with me; we will go to my aunt’s dressing-room, and Dawson will give me some silk, and I’ll help you to mend it.”

“That’s a kind little Minnie,” said Frank. Ned had turned sulkily away. I do not think the boys were ever cordial again that day; for, as Frank said to his mother, “Ned might have said he was sorry; but he is a regular tyrant to that little brown mouse of a sister of his.”

... The gay, volatile, willful, warm-hearted Erminia was less earnest in all things. Her childhood had been passed amid the distractions of wealth; and passionately bent upon the attainment of some object at one moment, the next found her angry at being reminded of the vanished anxiety she had shown but a moment before. Her life was a shattered mirror; every part dazzling and brilliant, but wanting the coherency and perfection of a whole. Mrs. Buxton strove to bring her to a sense of the beauty of completeness, and the relation which qualities and objects bear to each other; but in all her striving she retained hold of the golden clue of sympathy. She would enter into Erminia’s eagerness, if the object of it varied twenty times a day; but by-and-by, in her own mild, sweet, suggestive way, she would place all these objects in their right and fitting places, as they were worthy of desire. I do not know how it was, but all discords, and disordered fragments, seemed to fall into harmony and order before her presence.

She had no wish to make the two little girls into the same kind of pattern character. They were diverse as the lily and the rose. But she tried to give stability and earnestness to Erminia; while she aimed to direct Maggie’s imagination, so as to make it a great minister to high ends, instead of simply contributing to the vividness and duration of a reverie.

... The girls were sitting over the drawing-room fire, with unlighted candles on the table, talking, he felt,

about his mother; but when he came in they rose, and changed their tone. Erminia went to the piano, and sang her newest and choicest French airs. Frank was gloomy and silent; but when she changed into more solemn music his mood was softened, Maggie's simple and hearty admiration, untinged by the slightest shade of envy for Erminia's accomplishments, charmed him. The one appeared to him the perfection of elegant art, the other of graceful nature. When he looked at Maggie, and thought of the moorland home from which she had never wandered, the mysteriously beautiful lines of Wordsworth seemed to become sun-clear to him.

The Mill on the Floss

The alterations of feeling in that first dialogue between Tom and Philip continued to mark their intercourse even after many weeks of schoolboy intimacy. Tom never quite lost the feeling that Philip, being the son of a "rascal," was his natural enemy; never thoroughly overcame his repulsion to Philip's deformity. He was a boy who adhered tenaciously to impressions once received; as with all minds in which mere perception predominates over thought and emotion, the external remained to him rigidly what it was in the first instance. But then it was impossible not to like Philip's company when he was in a good humour; he could help one so well in one's Latin exercises, which Tom regarded as a kind of puzzle that could only be found out by a lucky chance; and he could tell such wonderful fighting stories about Hal of the Wynd, for example, and other heroes who were especial favourites with Tom, because they laid about them with heavy strokes. He had small opinion of Saladin, whose cimeter could cut a cushion in two in an instant; who wanted to cut cushions?

...

Tom ran in to Philip, who was enjoying his afternoon's holiday at the piano, in the drawing-room, picking out tunes for himself and singing them. He was supremely happy, perched like an amorphous bundle on the high stool, with his head thrown back, his eyes fixed on the opposite cornice, and his lips wide open, sending forth, with all his might, impromptu syllables to a tune of Arne's which had hit his fancy.

"Come, Philip," said Tom, bursting in; "don't stay roaring 'la la' there; come and see old Poulter do his sword-exercise in the carriage-house!"

The jar of this interruption, the discord of Tom's tones coming across the notes to which Philip was vibrating in soul and body, would have been enough to unhinge his temper, even if there had been no question of Poulter the drilling-master; and Tom, in the hurry of seizing something to say to prevent Mr Poulter from thinking he was afraid of the sword when he sprang away from it, had alighted on this proposition to fetch Philip, though he knew well enough that Philip hated to hear him mention his drilling-lessons. Tom would never have done so inconsiderate a thing except under the severe stress of his personal pride.

Philip shuddered visibly as he paused from his music. Then turning red, he said, with violent passion,—

"Get away, you lumbering idiot! Don't come bellowing at me; you're not fit to speak to anything but a cart-horse!"

It was not the first time Philip had been made angry by him, but Tom had never before been assailed with verbal missiles that he understood so well.

"I'm fit to speak to something better than you, you poor-spirited imp!" said Tom, lighting up immediately at Philip's fire. "You know I won't hit you, because you're no better than a girl. But I'm an honest man's son, and your father's a rogue; everybody says so!" ...

One day, soon after Philip had told this story, he and Maggie were in the study alone together while Tom's foot was being dressed. Philip was at his books, and Maggie, after sauntering idly round the room, not caring to do anything in particular, because she would soon go to Tom again, went and leaned on the table near Philip to see what he was doing, for they were quite old friends now, and perfectly at home with each other.

"What are you reading about in Greek?" she said. "It's poetry, I can see that, because the lines are so short."

"It's about Philoctetes, the lame man I was telling you of yesterday," he answered, resting his head on his hand, and looking at her as if he were not at all sorry to be interrupted. Maggie, in her absent way, continued to lean forward, resting on her arms and moving her feet about, while her dark eyes got more and more fixed and vacant, as if she had quite forgotten Philip and his book.

"Maggie," said Philip, after a minute or two, still leaning on his elbow and looking at her, "if you had had a brother like me, do you think you should have loved him as well as Tom?"

Maggie started a little on being roused from her reverie, and said, "What?" Philip repeated his question.

"Oh, yes, better," she answered immediately. "No, not better; because I don't think I could love you better

than Tom. But I should be so sorry,—so sorry for you.”

Philip coloured; he had meant to imply, would she love him as well in spite of his deformity, and yet when she alluded to it so plainly, he winced under her pity. Maggie, young as she was, felt her mistake. Hitherto she had instinctively behaved as if she were quite unconscious of Philip’s deformity; her own keen sensitiveness and experience under family criticism sufficed to teach her this as well as if she had been directed by the most finished breeding.

“But you are so very clever, Philip, and you can play and sing,” she added quickly. “I wish you were my brother. I’m very fond of you. And you would stay at home with me when Tom went out, and you would teach me everything; wouldn’t you,—Greek and everything?”

Points to Ponder

- In the first extract, what are the social expectations being imposed on Maggie? How are they different for Edward? In what ways are these similar to those portrayed by Eliot through Maggie and Tom and in what ways are they different?
- What is the importance of the father figure in TM on the F and the lack of a father figure for Maggie in ‘TMC’?
- In what ways are the two Maggies in these stories similar /different?
- What impressions do you get of Tom and Edward from these extracts? How are the two boys presented by the writers? Why does ECG say ‘Frank and Edward seemed to have a mutual antipathy to each other, and the coldness between them was rather increased than diminished by all Mr. Buxton’s efforts to bring them together’?
- How do the respective writers portray the relationship between Maggie (in both cases) and her brother Tom (Mill) and Edward (MC)?
- What similarities and differences can you notice between the portrayal of Mrs Tulliver and Mrs Browne?
- What comparisons can you draw between Eliot and Gaskell’s attitude to education?
- In section 3, what are the similarities and differences between Philip and Frank?
- What is your view on this quotation from *The Mill on the Floss*?

Tom, like every one of us, was imprisoned within the limits of his own nature, and his education had simply glided over him, leaving a slight deposit of polish....If you are inclined to be severe on his severity, remember that the responsibility of tolerance lies with those who have the wider vision.

- What can we learn of GE’s ideology from this? Do you think that it is similar to or different from Gaskell’s?