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GENDER IDENTITY, CULTURE AND IDEOLOGY

IN GEORGE ELIOT'S *THE MILL ON THE FLOSS*

In 'Ideology and Ideological Sate Apparatuses', Louis Althusser examines the relationship between State and subject in a capitalist society. He argues that a capitalist society generates its own 'ideology and ideological state apparatuses', and the institutions such as schools, religions, the family, etc. produce and reproduce state ideologies which we as individuals or groups then internalize and 'act' in line with them (1971: 143). That is, these institutions produce systems of ideas, 'values' and 'relationships', which individuals believe or do not believe (145-50). For Althusser, ideology also works 'unconsciously' (161). Like 'human subjectivity', which 'is constituted through language' in Lacanian sense (Sarup 1992: 53), ideology is a system which we inhabit, which speaks us, but it gives us 'an illusion' that we are in charge, that we freely choose to believe the things we believe, and that we can find lots of reasons why we believe those things in society (Althusser 1971: 162). Althusser sees both culture and 'ideology' as systems of representation with regard to real relations in which people live. But what is presented in ideology is 'not the system of real relations which govern the existence of individuals, but imaginary relations of those individuals to real relations in which they live' (165). In other words, ideology is both a real and an imaginary relation to the world – real in that it is the manner in which people really live their relationship to social relations which govern their conditions of existence, and imaginary in which it inhibits a complete understanding of these conditions of existence and the ways in which people are socially and culturally constructed within them. Thus, ideology is not regarded in a general sense as a system of ideas, nor as the expression of real material relationships but as the necessary condition of action within the social and cultural formation of a society (154). This cultural and ideological formation prepares individuals as both men and women to act in line with the values of society in certain ways by inculcating in them dominant versions of appropriate behaviours and ideologies in which they are rigidly positioned and categorized with regard to their places and roles in society. Hence ideological

state apparatuses such as family and education help represent and reproduce the myths and beliefs necessary to force both men and women to act in different ways within the existing social formation and culture. It is culture and ideology, which presuppose this categorisation, since, 'ideology', as Althusser argues, 'interpellates individuals as subjects' in their relationships within society (170-1).

This paper focuses upon George Eliot's response to cultural and ideological perspectives of the Victorian English society based on gender polarisation as well as upon her attempt to transcend this segregation in *The Mill on the Floss* (1860). The dominant Victorian culture and ideology obviously constituted men and women as subjects in their relations and activities. As the paper argues, culture and ideology had a great impact upon the construction of male and female gender identities in the nineteenth century, and Eliot as a woman and woman writer saw them as masculine and conservative, in which women had been always viewed as 'Other' in their relations with the male sex. Through the view of 'Other', not only were women victimised and controlled at home, but they were also excluded from the main activities of the public space by patriarchy for ages.

The paper examines both culture and ideology of the Victorian period in England, which are directly linked to the construction of gender identity in Eliot's *The Mill*. First, it looks at the issue of education, which was used by patriarchy as one of ideological state apparatuses to construct and categorise gender identity in the Victorian England. In the novel, Eliot portrays Mr. Tulliver as a representative of patriarchal culture and ideology with 'safe traditional opinions' at St. Ogg's (1975: 10). Like other fathers in the nineteenth century, he seeks the best school and teacher in England for the education of his son, Tom, because he believes that Tom as a man is the future not only of his family in particular but also of patriarchal English society in general. But Mr. Tulliver seems unconcerned with the education of his daughter, Maggie. Like other girls in the Victorian period, her life is culturally and ideologically predetermined, so that education is viewed as unnecessary for her, yet she is carefully prepared for marriage and domestic duties. In *The Mill*, education becomes a gendered-oriented issue when we see that Maggie is eliminated from attending school.

Secondly, the paper deals with Maggie's attempt to find out her own voice and way of life beyond what is culturally and ideologically decided for her. In the novel, she thus affords to stand up against the predetermined view of life, in which she finds 'no room for new feelings' (277), but she constantly seeks 'a far-echoing voice' and obviously has 'the love of independence' as being 'too strong an inheritance and habit for her...' (274, 467). Maggie yearns for her own freedom in her life and thus establishes a new relationship with physically disabled Philip Wakem, who tries to take her away from the psychological bondage to her family and brother. But she is timid and is not so courageous to run away from the morally dominant domestic milieu; she is unable to look far and wide, since Maggie is psychologically constrained and crippled by patriarchal culture and morality in the Victorian England. Eventually she submits to the demands of her family and thus acts in accordance with the wishes of her parents and brother.

The nineteenth century English society was culturally conservative and patriarchal. It was based upon the strict gender segregation, allowing men to gain and practice some privileges in both public and private spaces while suppressing and controlling women in the domestic milieu. In this formation of gender identity, 'men viewed women as fundamentally different from themselves', and thus 'women were reduced to the status of the second sex' (de Beauvoirs 1953: xviii-xix). In De Beauvoir's words, woman 'is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the subject, he is the absolute – she is the Other' (xviii-xix). Simply, Hester Eisenstein illuminates that 'women's differences from men were the chief mechanism of their oppression' (1984: 3). These differences were cultural and ideological formations of patriarchy, 'designed to exclude women from full participation in the world outside of the home' (3).

Within this cultural positioning and exclusion of women, patriarchal Victorian society did not let girls have access to any kind of formal secondary schooling which would have enabled them to go straight into the same university courses as the young men. Girls were apparently the victims of the lack of educational opportunities in their lives, since educating girls was culturally and ideologically seen as unnecessary and even dangerous. Anne Jemima Clough, the first Principal of Newnham College, for example, wrote in *A Memoir of Anne J. Clough* (1897) about how intensely she felt the lack of education in her life: 'I always feel the defects of my education most painfully when I go out' (Woolf 1992: 368). Clough herself was never a student at a school, yet she was among the founders of Newnham College who let young women work at and achieve a level, which suited their attainments and abilities in social life. Some of them, with an extra year's preparation, did indeed go on to degree-level work. Moreover, Elizabeth Haldane, a Scottish social-welfare worker and author, came from an educated family, yet she was also educated in much the same way as most girls in the nineteenth century. When she grew up, she came to a conclusion about her education and wrote of it in *From One Country to Another* (1937):

> My first conviction was that I was not educated, and I thought of how this could be put right. I should have loved going to college, but college in those days was unusual for girls, and the idea was not encouraged. It was also expensive. For an only daughter to leave a widowed mother was indeed considered to be out of the question, and no one made the plan seem feasible. There was in those days a new movement for carrying on correspondence classes (368).

Furthermore, in a letter of 1868 to Emily Davies, Eliot complains of unequal educational opportunities between men and women, which are, as she views, obviously brought about by the cultural and political 'presupposition' of the Victorian age. In the same letter, therefore, she firmly states that women should have an opportunity to share the same basic knowledge as men:

> The answer to those alarms of men about education is, to admit fully that the mutual delight of the sexes in each other must enter into the perfection of life, but to point out that complete union and sympathy can only come by women having opened to them the same store of acquired truth or beliefs as men have, so that their grounds of judgment may be as far as possible the same. The domestic misery, the evil education of the children that come from the presupposition that women must be kept ignorant and superstitious are patent enough (Robertson 1997: 102).

Finally, on a cultural and social level, Duncan Crow also explains in *The Victorian Woman* how education was regarded as unnecessary in the nineteenth century:

> What was the point of proficiency in the use of globes or in Latin, Italian or even French when the girls would never have the need to use such knowledge? What a girl needed to know was how to care for the sick and how to sew and how to cook, and these things she did not learn at school. Furthermore, the competitive spirit, which prevailed at school, gave them the wrong ideas. When they were at home there would be no question of competing; it was their duty to submit to the will of their elders, especially their male elders (107).

The arguments and views above are vitally important to comprehend women's lives and education before the twentieth century. They suggest several views about women's education. First, it is undoubtedly true that women's education has been neglected for ages: simply, women, as Eliot maintains above, have been visibly excluded from taking formal education the same as men. As today in many parts of the world, women have been victimized by what Eliot terms 'the presupposition that women must be kept ignorant'. This approach towards women's education had an enormous effect not only upon women themselves but also upon their relationship with the other sex in particular and with society in general. Due to this 'presupposition', therefore, the idea that education could help women construct their gender identity, acquire knowledge and establish a positive relationship with others has been discounted or refused by those who have opposed for ages 'all the attempts to improve educational standards and opportunities for women' (102).

The reason behind women's lack of education is obviously cultural and ideological, since 'from early childhood, women were trained to accept a system which divided society into male and female spheres, with appropriate roles, and which allocated public power exclusively to the male sphere' (Millett 1970: 26 ff). Girls were responsible for domestic activities while their brothers were getting education and pleasure from a wide range of experiences available to them in the public space (Paludi 1998: 175-200). It is men who culturally and ideologically organize activities of life in society by

dominating over the 'Other', and women have no voice and role in them. In this respect, education is regarded as what Althusser calls 'one of ideological state apparatuses' which serves to boost up and maintain men's view of life in line with their cultural and ideological wishes. Hence the system of education is designed carefully by men to suit the roles for girls that they have to fulfil in a patriarchal society where the gender polarization and injustice are dominant issues. As Althusser also suggests, 'ideology [of education] is the system of the ideas and representations which dominate the minds of a man [and a woman]' at school, so that both a man and a woman may see their places and roles in society through these 'ideas and representations' given to them through education as a natural outcome (1971: 158). What Althuseer suggests is that patriarchal society prescribes and 'determines what is acceptable and unacceptable for the larger body. It defines the culture's taste and values – in short, its ideology' (Dobie 2002: 162). Thus, patriarchy uses education as a medium of propaganda to keep its continuity. Then the purpose of education is to support and promote visibly dominant patriarchal ideology and culture, and teachers at school are solely and noticeably the transmitters of this ideology and culture: they not only teach ingrained-patriarchal opinions and norms to their students but also inculcate a particular set of beliefs and knowledge into their minds to maintain the presence and continuation of patriarchy. Teachers are unable to refuse what they are ordered by state to do at schools, since it pays their salary.

Similarly, Eliot represents Maggie in *The Mill* as a victim of the patriarchal culture and ideology in terms of her education. Like other girls in the nineteenth century England, her parents view apparently Maggie's education as 'unnecessary', yet her father tries out every chance to educate Tom at the best schools under the supervision of the best teachers in England. In fact, what he desires was the general tendency of all the fathers in the Victorian society, and thus he obeys it.

As for education in *The Mill*, however, there are scattered arguments without detailed analysis. In one of earliest arguments in 1902, Leslie Stephen sees Maggie's education as 'narrow', yet he does not expand his view with reference to the novel (1977: 85). In addition, Rosemary Ashton dedicates a chapter to education in *The Mill on the Floss: A Natural History* (1947), yet she slightly and briefly touches the issue of education and points out how Maggie is frustrated when her education and knowledge are decried by men. She views Maggie's 'frustration' within the variety of Eliot's 'narrative tone' with 'irony' and 'sympathy' (96-7). Ashton does not say anything behind Maggie's 'frustration'. Moreover, Mary Jacobus sees the issue of education differently in *The Mill* and links it to 'women's writing' and 'the social conditions... under which women wrote and still write'. She argues that 'educational disadvantages...form[s] the crucial determinants of women's writing' (1991: 84-5). Finally, Linda K. Robertson compares and contrasts educational opportunities historically for both male and female in the nineteen century. In doing so, she also briefly examines the view of education in *The Mill* to support her arguments (1997: 11-33, 101-124)

These arguments about education in *The Mill* are correct, yet my argument is different from them in that I suggest that Maggie's 'frustration' obviously derives from cultural and ideology bias towards women's education in the nineteenth century. She is culturally and ideologically excluded from education while her brother as a boy avails himself of every opportunity to take a good education in society. I argue that it is obviously patriarchal culture and ideology that allow men to organize the world according to their view of life in *The Mill*. Within this perspective, Eliot represents men with more privileged, more valued and higher positions as usually dominating and controlling women's lives and education.

In *The Mill*, Eliot represents the negligence of the education for girls through Maggie's life. When the novel opens, Mr. Tulliver appears much worried about his son's education. He explains his desire to his wife: '"what I want is to give Tom a good eddication [education]: an edification as'll be a bread to him'...I should like Tom to be a bit of a scholard, so as he might be up to the tricks o' these fellows as talk fine and write with a flourish. It 'ud be a help to me wi' these lawsuits, and arbitrations, and things'' (Eliot 1975: 4). Mrs. Tulliver as a woman and mother has no say about her son's education, yet she submissively obeys her husband's views and just says, 'You know best; I have no objections' (4). She supports and validates her husband's views and decision, yet she loses her identity. As a victim, she submits herself to what her husband thinks of their son's education. It is not Mrs. Tulliver but Mr. Tulliver who solely takes on all the responsibilities for his son's education, so that he seeks the advice of his close friend, Mr. Riley.

Mr. Riley is an educated man and involved in business. Mr. Tulliver further makes clear his purpose of educating his son when he talks to Mr. Riley: 'I shall give Tom an eddication an' put him to a business, as he may make a nest for himself' (11). Mr. Riley's view of the education of a boy is not different from that of Mr Tulliver in that they both desire Tom to be 'a first-rate fellow' in society, and thus he recommends Mr. Stelling as the best teacher for Tom. As an Oxford man as well as a clergyman, Mr. Stelling, in Mr. Riley's view, will avail Tom of 'superior instruction and training, where he would be the champion of his master', leading him to be 'the first-rate fellow' in life (15). In his view, 'the schoolmasters, who are not clergymen, are a very low set of men generally' (17). Like Mr. Tulliver, Mr. Riley is traditional and moralist in his views towards the issue of the education of girls and boys. He thus tries to encourage Mr. Tulliver to send his son to Mr. Stelling and spend extra money on his son's education.

According to the views of both Mr. Tulliver and Mr. Riley, Tom's education is of vital importance in several ways, and it is exclusively cultural and ideological. As a boy, patriarchy immediately decides roles for him, and he has no chance to escape from but has to fulfil them as a man. First, society demands and expects him, like other men, to be a 'scholar' through education and training, since he is naturally shown that it is his right to be so. Secondly, education will enable Tom to be 'breadwinner', because man is solely responsible for taking care of his family. Thus, Mr. Tulliver wants to 'put him to a business, as he may make a nest for himself' in life (11). Finally,

education, as Mr. Riley says, makes man superior to women as 'the first-rate fellow' in life. These are significant roles and characteristics which society allocates to men through education. As a result, man's education needs a great deal of attention and spending. As a man, Tom is taught to perform these roles in the public space. The views of Mr. Tulliver and Mr. Riley suggest culturally and socially constructed attributes and behaviours that give rise to the categorisation of human being by patriarchy into which the child is born. In order to carry out these public roles, therefore, Mr. Tulliver wants Tom to be knowledgeable, 'to know figures, and write like print, and see into things quick, and know what folks mean, and how to wrap things in words...' (17). The abilities he utters will enable his son to broaden his view and understanding of life, and thus it will be easy for him to take the expected place as a strong, knowledgeable and 'the first-rate fellow' in social life.

However, neither Mr. Tulliver nor his wife talks about their daughter's education. In their view, women must not be too much learned. Although her father constantly praises Maggie as 'my little wench' throughout the novel, for example, Mr. Tulliver states in her presence when she is just a child: '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 before-hand. And allays at her book! But it is...a woman's no business wi' being so cleaver; it'll turn to trouble, I doubt' (12). Maggie is noticeably intelligent and clever, yet it makes her father angry, because he thinks that a woman should not be knowledgeable. At once Maggie's cleverness and intelligence not only threatens but also undermines the stereotype image of woman as illiterate and ignorant. He has earlier said to his wife that Maggie is 'twice as cute as Tom. Too cute for a woman. I'm afraid...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' (7). In my view, 'the bigger price' may be explained in two ways. First, if Maggie, with her cleverness, attempts to overthrow the basis of culturally constructed roles of women or attempts to threaten the masculine intellectual dominance, she may be punished for that or she will be an outcast in society. Secondly, she may have difficulty in finding a husband, and without marriage, it is difficult for a woman to achieve a place in a patriarchal society.

In addition, it is not only her father but also her brother who looks down on Maggie in a different way when she attempts to prove her intelligence over Tom during her visit to his school, King's Lorton. He feels unhappy and threatened by his sister's intellectual ability, and thus he continuously displays aggressive attitudes towards her to establish himself as superior in intellect. In order to get backing of his tutor, Mr. Stelling, therefore, he says, 'girls couldn't learn Latin' (140). In his view, not only are girls 'too silly', but Latin is also difficult for them (135). These words wound Maggie deeply. But he still continues to demonstrate himself as intellectually superior to his sister in the presence of his tutor by uttering that 'girls can't do Euclid: can they, sir?' (141). Mr. Stelling as a man backs Tom and expresses his view: 'they can pick up a little of everything, I daresay...They've a great deal of superficial cleverness; but they couldn't go far into anything. They're quick and shallow' (141).

Why both Tom and Mr. Stelling constantly underscore 'Latin' and 'Euclid' is that Latin is 'part of the education of a gentleman' and thus 'all gentlemen learn [culturally and ideologically] the same things' (153). As Mary Jacobus argues, Latin 'stands in for cultural imperialism and for the outlines of a peculiarly masculine and elitist classical education from which women have traditionally been excluded' (1991: 91). Through the views of these three men, Eliot shows us that education is institutionalised and that it emphasises 'sexual difference as cultural exclusion' (91). When they say, 'girls can't do Euclid', both Mr. Stelling and Tom categorize and judge Maggie in particular according to their knowledge of Latin. Through their views, Eliot shows us how the male form of knowledge not only functions to construct a view of 'Otherness' in which they culturally and ideologically see women as inferior, 'superficial' and 'shallow' in their intellect, but it also encourages egoistical and self-satisfying feelings in those like Mr. Stelling and Tom. Before visiting King's Lorton, Maggie had thought that her journey would have enabled her to 'see the world' (135), but now she is shocked and discouraged by the male prejudice in her quest for knowledge: 'she was so oppressed by this destiny that she had no spirit for a retort' (141). As a girl, she is excluded from the study of Latin, which always fascinates her 'like strange horns of beast and leaves of unknown plants, brought from some far-off region' (138). Eventually Maggie feels curtailed in her freedom of the study of Latin, and thus 'she must confess her incompetence, for she was not fond of humiliation' any more in her life (137).

These views suggest that Maggie as a girl is not praised but insulted. Patriarchal English society does not give her the equal chance to get a proper education the same as Tom. Later on, Maggie also attends a boarding school, but the subjects she learns there are less important than the subjects boys learn. She is taught to think of becoming mother and of needlework, yet she, like Eliot herself, has to leave this school due to her father's illness, because it is not Tom's but Maggie's responsibility for taking care of Mr. Tulliver. Her identity and education are denied by her prescribed role of care, while her brother actively continues to complete his education. As Carol Dyhouse argues, this view of role is 'invariably prescribed for women in conjunction with the passive virtues of patience, resignation and silen[t] suffering' (1978: 175). If she had been given the same opportunity as Tom, it is obvious that Maggie would have been more successful than him, yet she as a girl is culturally and ideologically thwarted by patriarchy to accomplish her ability at school. Through her representation of Maggie, Eliot illuminates the failure of female search for knowledge in a patriarchal society. This prejudice towards her culturally derives from the common attitude in St. Ogg's that the boys must be properly educated, since they, as in Mr. Tulliver's view, must make a living; they are 'breadwinners' and protectors of the families (220). Moreover, the education will enable boys to take their place in social and professional life, which is exclusively allocated to men. Nevertheless, girls are merely prepared for marriage, which requires no education but demands submission and loyalty. In *The Mill*, George Eliot shows Maggie's life is surrounded and restricted by cultural and ideological prejudices of patriarchy during the first

half of the nineteenth century. Maggie is defeated when she has attempted to challenge and question slightly the masculine form of knowledge and culture through her intellect. Victimized by the nets of patriarchy, eventually she submits to its cultural norms not only by confessing deceptively to 'her incompetence' in her intellect but also by perceiving home as her natural place: simply, she comes to realize that there is no chance for her to get a proper education as her brother. Eliot suggests in *The Mill* that men and their view of life are taken as ultimate natural standards to constitute gender expectations in the Victorian society, and thus Maggie's life and gender are defined and constructed according to these masculine standards. It is through these standards that patriarchal society perpetuates sexual difference as its basis, in which not only do men design education, material organisations of society and gender roles in accordance with their worldview, but they also silence women profoundly.

Having felt herself 'humiliated' by the male prejudice, Maggie gradually becomes aware that her life is 'narrow, ugly grovelling existence' in St. Ogg's (255). This 'existence' is sordid and full of 'habits' and 'morality', which develop and impose 'the feelings of submission and dependence' as 'religion' in her life (271). Then Eliot endows Maggie with an ability to get rid of the 'resigned imprisonment' of her lonely life through love and friendship (307), which will both give her 'illimitable wants' and eliminate 'family obstacles to her freedom' in life (307, 312).

During her second visit to King's Lorton, Maggie meets Philip Wakem, the son of Lawyer Wakem, who has helped to ruin Mr. Tulliver's Dorlcote Mill. Philip and Tom attend the same school. Although he is the son of their enemy, Philip is surprisingly good to both Tom and Maggie and cares for Tom when he bruises his foot. The friendship between Maggie and Philip slowly improves and turns into love; they secretly meet in the Red Deeps and talk about both their lives and the future; Philip gives Maggie books, which he thinks will help her broaden her vision of life. In fact, friendship and love bring them back to the centre of life, since both of them feel themselves lonely and outcast in their lives: Maggie receives no respect from her family while nobody is interested in Philip due to his physical 'deformity' (151). Besides, they become able to express their views, tendencies and expectations without limitation and 'humiliation' by others.

Philip, though physically deformed, is romantic and liberal in his view as well as sympathetic and 'half feminine in sensitiveness' (313). Not only is he ready to give up everything – his father and home – for the sake of his friendship with Maggie, but he also offers her a 'new idea', a new life, a new 'pleasure' and 'picture' above 'the vulgar level' of life she is now condemned to live (284, 312, 289). But Maggie is reluctant, weak and timid in adjusting herself to this new view and life; even she is unable to fall in love, because she is very suppressed and crippled in her life. Moreover, Maggie is afraid of being 'discovered' by her parents, which she thinks will bring about 'misery' (308). For example, Philip insists constantly on gaining her love, yet she continuously refuses him, saying 'you know we couldn't even be friends, if our friendship

were discovered...it will lead to evil...I get weary of home – and it cuts me to the heart afterwards, that I should ever have felt weary of my father and mother. I think what you call being benumbed was better – better for me – for then my selfish desires were benumbed' (316). Philip becomes very impatient and irritated: 'no, Maggie, you have wrong ideas of self-conquest, as I've often told you. What you call self-conquest – binding and deafening yourself to all but one train of impression – is only the culture of monomania in a nature like yours' (317). Upon Philip's further insistence on her love, Maggie says, 'I love you...I have always been happy when I have been with you. There is only one thing; I will not do for your sake: I will never do anything to wound my father. You must never ask that from me' (317).

Due to these words, Philip accuses Maggie of shutting herself 'in a narrow self-delusive fanaticism, which is only a way of escaping pain by starving into dullness' (309), but she explains clearly the reason behind her inability to establish stable and satisfactory relationship with him beyond the wishes of her father and mother: 'I couldn't have my own will. Our life is determined for us – and it makes the mind very free when we give up wishing, and only thinking of bearing what is laid upon us, and doing what is given us to do' (285). That Maggie's life is 'determined' by the wishes of her parents is also seen in Tom's words after learning the relationship between her and Philip. Tom asks her 'to put her hand on the Bible' for not meeting or speaking a word in private with Philip again. 'The Bible', as Peter New argues, 'stands as the outward representation of the reduction' of Maggie (1985: 181). Besides, the 'respectability', 'a good and honest name' of their family are also vitally important for Tom (324-6). Maggie's affair with Philip, Tom thinks, will 'disgrace' morally the name of his family. Hence the promise binds Maggie deeply in her life; she is afraid of doing anything without the knowledge of her brother.

The fear and view of 'disgrace' continually suppresses and controls Maggie, yet she is so disturbed and torn between her promise and 'the need of being loved [which] would always subdue' her (370). This 'need' constantly pushes her ahead to see Philip, who she thinks gives her what she wants. When her cousin Lucy and her lover Stephen Guest organize a music party, they invite Maggie. She wants to join the party where she thinks she may see Philip, who is also invited, but she is not powerful and courageous enough to accept the invitation immediately without asking her brother. Thus, she goes to Bob Jakin's house to see and ask the permission of her brother. Bob is a trader and is on a business venture with Tom as a childhood friend. Having met Tom, he becomes disturbed by Maggie's insistence on seeing Philip and her statement of unhappiness in her life:

> Now listen to me, Maggie. I will tell you what I mean. You're always in extremes...I wish my sister to be a lady, and I would have always taken care of you, as my father desired, until you were well married. But your ideas and mine never accord, and you will not give way. Yet you might have seen sense enough to see that a brother, who goes out into the world and mixes with men, necessarily knows better what is right and

> respectable for his sister than she can know herself. You think I am not kind; but my kindness can only be directed by what I believe to be good for you (370-1)

Maggie's every attempt to make 'a new starting point in life' (377) is always curtailed by her brother and his moral views. He acts in a way that he has a good command of knowledge and thus knows life, particularly Maggie's life, better than she does. He in particular and society in general do not give her any chance to express herself and decide her life, yet Tom imagines for her a 'well-married' life without asking her view, since in his view a 'well-married' life will rescue the name, moral grace and honour of his family. What about Maggie's life?

Maggie is obviously defeated, disciplined and 'interpellate[d]...as subject' in her life. After all these struggles, she comes to realize that there is 'no room for new feelings' in her life and that her life will be more miserable than now if she does not conform to the wishes of her brother and his moral views. Thus, Maggie gradually starts living not in the way she desires but in the way her bother demands of her. When she gives up her own claim and wish as well as the search for her own meaning of life as she believes, Maggie begins to act in line with what is decided for her. Like other girls, she begins to take pleasure in trivial things; she wears nice clothes to draw male attention (379). Maggie succumbs to the view of 'grace' and 'honour' by losing her ideals and identity. She, though energetic and wishful to seek 'independence' in life, is hesitant and timid in her views, and thus her life is very much encircled by her parents and brother, from whom she cannot divide herself, as well as by moral and cultural attitudes in society: 'the tie to my brother is one of the strongest. I can do nothing willingly what will divide me always from him' (420). Her adherence to her brother and his view of life makes Maggie unable to 'throw everything else to the winds' and 'break all these mistaken ties that were made in blindness' (425).

Finally, the two issues discussed above illuminate that Eliot uses Maggie's defeat to represent how women's lives were culturally and morally shaped and controlled by patriarchy in the nineteenth century Victorian society. As in the case of Maggie, the patriarchal society left no place for women to prove themselves and express freely their feeling without restriction. There was always a limit set for women, and they were unable to beyond it. Eventually this kind of heterogeneously coded life defeated and crippled women in their lives and relationships.

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SUMMARY

GENDER IDENTITY, CULTURE AND IDEOLOGY IN GEORGE ELIOT'S *THE MILL ON THE FLOSS*

This paper closely examines George Eliot's response to cultural and ideological perspectives of the Victorian English society based on gender polarisation and her attempt to transcend this segregation in *The Mill on the Floss*. In terms of culture and ideology, the paper first focuses upon the issue of education, which was used by patriarchy as one of ideological state apparatuses to construct and categorise gender identity in the Victorian England. Secondly, the paper deals with a girl's attempt to find out her own voice and way of life beyond what is culturally and ideologically decided for her, yet the paper illustrates how women are crippled, silenced and forced to obey the norms of patriarchal society.

KEYWORDS: patriarchy, culture, education, gender, identity, domesticity, marriage.