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Editorial

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SOMMAIRE

1- Comment la ponctuation intervient-elle dans la construction du sens du discours romanesque ? du Dr THIEMELE Aimé (Abidjan-Côte d’Ivoire).....	07
2- Studying George Eliot and the struggle for women’s emancipation with a special reference to <i>The Mill on the Floss</i> de Dr. TONOUEWA Mèdessè Emile, Dr. SEGUEDEME Alexis et Dr. BOSSOUN Koumabé	31
3- Analysis of clause complex features in AMA A. AIDOO’S “comparisons or who said a bird cannot father a crab?” de Yémalo Célestin AMOUSSOU (Bénin), Ayodele Adebayo ALLAGBE (Niger) et Dorothée TCHADA (Bénin).....	67
4- Sémiotique des pagnes de la fête culturelle Wemexwe de 2010 à 2019 de Guy HOUNDAYI, Maxime Joseph Richard ADJANOHOUN et Julien Koffi GBAGUIDI (Bénin).....	101
5- Pédagogie, ergonomie et guidance en milieu éducatif : impacts de la responsabilité parentale sur les rendements scolaires de GANDAGBE Jules André et BOKO C. Gabriel (Bénin).....	135
6- Exploring lesson planning practices by EFL teachers in Beninese secondary schools de IWIKOTAN Katchédé Etienne (Bénin).....	159
7- Les atermoiements dans la mise en œuvre de l’éducation artistique dans l’enseignement secondaire en Côte d’Ivoire de FIAN Messou (Côte d’Ivoire).....	191
8- La crise de la fièvre hémorragique a virus lassa entre arguties idiomatiques dans la revue de presse en langue fon et la problématique socio-anthropologique de santé publique au Bénin de Gérard Wandji AGOONON et Mohamed ABDOU (Bénin)	211
9- Prosopopées-récits dans le roman négro-africain francophone des années 2000 de Dr. Roger KOUDOADINO U (Bénin)	245
10- La représentation du héros féminin dans <i>Eugénie Grandet</i> de Honoré de Balzac de KOUASSI YAO RAPHAEL (Côte d’Ivoire).....	275

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**STUDYING GEORGE ELIOT AND THE STRUG-
GLE FOR WOMEN'S EMANCIPATION WITH A
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO *The Mill on the Floss*.**

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**STUDYING GEORGE ELIOT AND THE STRUG-
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Abstract

One of the desires of any woman is to be free from some un-fair controls and obligations. As men are the main actors of these restrictions, it is probable they cannot be the real liberators. It is likely the belief George Eliot sustains when she has shown through Maggie’s struggle in *The Mill on the Floss* that women should control their destinies. So, she is indirectly telling them that their future is in their hands. Besides, taking into account the girl’s seriousness, it can be admitted that the author is warning us that the struggle which can either benefit women or engender obstacles, should not lead to anarchy in our societies.

Keywords: free, restrictions, destiny, struggle, emancipation.

Résumé

L'un des désirs de la femme est de se voir libérée de certains contrôles et obligations injustes. Puisque les hommes sont les principaux acteurs de telles restrictions, ils ne sauraient être les vrais libérateurs. C'est la conviction que soutient l'écrivaine anglaise George Eliot dans son roman *The Mill on the Floss*, à travers la détermination de son personnage, Maggie Tulliver a montré que cette lutte pour l'émancipation doit être avant tout l'œuvre des femmes elles-mêmes. Autrement dit, les femmes doivent prendre leurs destins en main. Comme on peut s'y attendre, elle a aussi montré que cette lutte pour se libérer de certaines restrictions peut occasionner pour les femmes des profits aussi bien que des obstacles.

Mots clés ; libérer, restrictions, destin, lutte, émancipation.

Introduction

Contrary to the popular belief, a mature girl Maggie Tulliver, instead of expecting getting married, has told Dr. Kenn in *The Mill on the Floss*; ‘The only thing I want is some occupation that will enable me to get my bread and be independent. I shall not want much. I can go on lodging where I am.’ (E, George 1860,P.451). This statement presupposes that Maggie thinks that only a job can help her get freedom and to impose herself. In other words, she is willing not to rely on anybody as far as solving her financial problems is concerned. Her psychology opposes her to some other girls who would prefer to submit themselves to their parents or a husband. In this context, it can be admitted that she is willing to become an emancipated girl, which means she has the modern view of the world. So, it is worth showing how she has been struggling to be free from some dominations, the benefits she has got and the obstacles to her struggle for freedom and emancipation.

1- Maggie’s Ways of Getting Freedom

According to Chambers Universal Learners’ Dictionary, to emancipate means to set free from slavery or other strict or unfair control. George Eliot has shown Maggie’s struggle for her own emancipation from some domination by the latter’s being curious, clever, her rebellion, her sense of justice, and her determination to get freedom.

Maggie is Showing her Curiosity.

The following dialogue between Luke and Maggie discloses

the former's strong desire to know what the mill is like and what is going on at that place:

'Hegh, high, miss! You'll make yourself giddy, an' tumble down I' the dirt.

- Oh, no it doesn't make me giddy, Luke; may I go into the mill with you?' (E, George 1960,P.23).

Her great will to go to the mill lets suppose her eagerness to know whether it is a little world apart from her outside everyday life. It is also thinkable that she is very communicative with Luke, the head miller, wishing him to think well of her understanding. In fact when they are at the topmost story of the mill, she starts another dialogue with him:

'I think you never read any book but the Bible—did you Luke?'

'Nay, Miss—an' not much o' that,' said Luke, with great frankness. 'I'm no reader, I aren't.'

'But if I lent you one of my books, Luke? I've not got any very pretty books that would be easy for you to read; but there's Pug's Tour of Europe—that would tell you all about the different sorts of people in the world, and if you

didn't understand the reading, the pictures would help you — they show the looks and ways of the people, and what they do. There are the Dutchmen, very fat, and smoking, you know — and one sitting on a barrel.'

'Nay, Miss I'm no opinion o' Dutchmen. There ben't much good I' knowing about them.'

'But they're our fellow-creatures.' Luke-we ought to know about our fellow creatures' (E, George 1960,PP.23-24).

But also:

Maggie Tulliver believes that we should know about our fellow- creatures and consequently thinks it is worth lending Luke books where the latter can read about the different sorts of people in the world, particularly about the Dutchmen. Her behavior shows her generosity that may make other people become curious. Moreover, when she notices that Luke is not ready to accept her offer, she pro-

poses to lend the latter other looks in which he can get some information about some animals. « ‘Oh well,’ said Maggie, rather foiled by Luke’s unexpectedly decided views about Dutchmen, ‘perhaps you would like “Animated Nature”⁵ better—that’s not Dutchmen, you know, but elephants, and kangaroos, and the civet cat, and the sun-fish, and a bird sitting on its tail — I forget its name. There are countries full of those creatures, instead of horses and cows, you know about them, Luke?’ » (Eliot, George 1860,P.24).

Maggie is trying to make the man read some books. So, it can be admitted she has made an effort herself to read these books. Her thirst for knowledge is a proof of her curiosity which can help herself and other people as well. Her dialogue with her brother Tom also shows that she always has a burning desire to read books in order to get some information:

‘How I should like to have as many books as that!’

‘why, you couldn’t read one of ‘em,’ ’ said Tom, triumphantly. ‘They’re all Latin.’

‘No, they aren’t,’ said

Maggie. 'I can read the back of this.

History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.

'Well, what does that mean? You don't know,' said Tom, wagging his head.

'But I could soon find out,' said Maggie, scornfully.

'Why, how?'

'I should look inside, and see what it was about.' (E, George 1860,P.130).

Maggie is encouraging her brother to provide her with some books in which she can try to read Latin. Tom is doubtful about her ability to read those books but she is showing the former how she can manage to read them. This behaviour lets suggest that George Eliot wants to underline how intelligent Maggie is.

Maggie Shown as a Clever Girl.

Her cleverness is underlined through her abilities to help her brother Tom:

'Presently Tom called to her: 'Here, Maggie, come and hear if I can say this, stand at that end of the table, where Stelling sits when he hears me.'

Maggie obeyed and took the open book.

‘Where do you begin, Tom?’

‘Oh, I begin at “Appellativa arborum” because I say all over again what I’ve been learning this week.’ (E, George 1860, PP.132-133).

Tom who is learning Latin at Stelling’s school has asked for Maggie’s help to pronounce some words when the latter comes to stay with him. In fact, being with Tom for two weeks, Maggie has been interested in Latin Grammar lessons and is able to read some words Tom is incapable to pronounce. This shows Maggie’s superiority as far as learning is concerned. George Eliot is also showing that Maggie is more intelligent than Tom through the following dialogue:

‘Now, then, he said, ‘The next is what I’ve just learnt for tomorrow. Give me hold of the book a minute.’

After some whispered gabbling, assisted by the beating of his fist on the table, Tom returned the book.

‘Mascula nomina in a,’ he began.

‘No, Tom,’ said Maggie,

‘that doesn’t come next. It’s No-
men non, creskens genittivo’ (E,
George 1860, P.133).

Maggie is able to teach her elder brother Tom the order of the words so as to make meaningful sentences. This lets say that she is an uncommon child. She has even told her brother: ‘I can say that as well as you can. And you don’t mind your stops. For you ought to stop twice as long at a semicolon as you do at a comma, and you make the longest stops where there to be no stop at all.’ (E, George 1860, P.134). One can say that Maggie has become someone who can teach Tom how to pronounce the Latin words. So, it seems that George Eliot is trying to show that girls can be as intelligent as boys and even cleverer than boys. Her extraordinary way of thinking is probably the reason why she is not ready to accept any unpleasant orders.

1.3. Maggie’s Rebellious Behaviours

Owing to her superior spirit, Maggie certainly believes it is not profitable to obey orders. The dialogue below shows that she often disobeys her mother:

‘Oh, dear, oh, dear,
Maggie, what are you think in’ of,
to throw your bonnet down there?
Take it up-stairs, 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.' (E, George 1860, P.9).

Maggie disagrees with her mother as far as the fact that she ought to make herself beautiful in order to please her aunt Glegg is concerned. She thinks that it is useless to make herself agreeable for her aunt. She probably dislikes her aunt for some reasons. She even hurled her defiance at her aunts and uncles when the latter come to her father's house to discuss the way they can help Tulliver get out of his critical financial situation:

'why do you come then,?' she burst out, 'talking and interfering with us and scolding us, if you don't mean to do anything to help

my poor mother— your own sister—if you've no feeling for her when she's in trouble, and won't part with anything, though you would never miss it, to save her from pain? Keep away from us then, and don't come to find fault with my father — he was better than any of you— he was kind—he would have helped you if you had been in trouble. Tom and I don't ever want to have any of your money, if you won't help my mother. We'd rather not have it! We'll do without you.' (E, George 1860, P.193).

Maggie Tulliver disagrees with her uncles and aunts as far as the way they have been criticizing her father is concerned. She surely believes that they are humiliating her father who according to her is a man of dignity. Consequently she says she will not accept any aid which will come from such criticism. This behavior underlines both her boldness and her impoliteness but it can help avoid some contemptible deeds. Her rebellious behavior to them also shows her capacity to reject what is harmful.

1.4. Maggie's Sense of Justice through the Novel.

She is showing her sense of justice through the following dia-

logue:

‘I’ve often wondered Maggie,’ Philip said, with some effort, ‘whether you wouldn’t really be more likely to love a man that other women were not likely to love.’

‘That would depend on what they didn’t like him for,’ said Maggie, laughing. ‘He might be very disagreeable. He might look at me through an eye-glass stuck in his eye, making a hideous face, as young Torry does. I should think they carry their comfort about with them.’ (E, George 1860, P.302).

Maggie is telling Philip she will not hate a man because other women dislike him. She will do so if only the man is unpleasant for her. This means she will not follow her fellows in what they are saying or doing. In this context, one can say that she is reasonable while taking decisions. George Eliot is equally pointing out her reasonable behavior when she writes about her:

‘I shall be difficult to please,’ said Maggie, smiling, and holding up one of Lucy’s long curls, that the sunlight might shine through it. A gentleman who thinks he is good

enough for Lucy must expect to be sharply criticized. (E, George 1860, P.336).

The author is showing that what is good for Maggie's Cousin Lucy may be bad for Maggie. This character lets suppose that it will not be possible to force Maggie to do anything. She equally makes her cousin know:

'No, Lucy,' said Maggie, shaking her head slowly, 'I don't enjoy their happiness as you do-else I should be more contented. I do feel for them when they are in trouble; I don't think I could ever bear to make any one unhappy; and yet I often hate myself, because I get angry sometimes at the sight of happy people. I think I get worse as I get older-more selfish. That seems very dreadful.' (E, George 1860, P.338).

Through the above passage Maggie is showing in her speech that she may not be happy when other people are happy. Taking into account her speech, it can be thought that she is concerned with the miserable people. Her reaction may be due to the fact that she is always depressed by a dull, wearisome life. Under such a situation, her desire will not be anything than defending her neighbors whom she thinks are humiliated. She shows her cousin her disapproval about the oppression too:

‘I say anything disrespectful of Dr Kenn? Heaven forbid! But I am not bound to respect a libelous bust of him. I think Kenn is one of the finest fellows in the world. I don’t care much about the tall candlesticks he has put on the communion-table, and I shouldn’t like to spoil my temper by getting up to early prayers every morning. But he’s the only man I ever knew personally who seems to me to have anything of the real apostle in him—a man who has eight hundred a-year, and is contented with deal furniture and boiled beef because he gives away two-thirds of his income.’ (E, George 1860, P. 343).

Maggie is telling her cousin Lucy that she only hates Dr. Kenn for his oppressive behaviours. Then, she makes her know that she loves the man for his generosity towards his neighbours. All this shows she is ready to fight some social unfair restrictions.

1.5. Maggie is Determined to Get Freedom.

Through the following passage, George Eliot is showing that Maggie has been against humiliating situation since her girlhood.

‘Maggie’s intentions as usual, were on a larger scale than Tom had imagined. The resolution that gathered in her mind, after Tom and Lucy had walked away, was not as simple as that of going home. No! she would run away and go to the gypsies, and Tom should never see her any more. That was by no means a new idea to Maggie; she had been so often told she was like a gypsy and ‘half wild,’ that when she was miserable it seemed to her the only way of escaping opprobrium, and being entirely in harmony with circumstances, would be to live in a little brown tent on the commons; the gypsies, she considered, would gladly receive her and pay her much respect on account of her superior knowledge.’ (E, George 1860,P.91).

And:

As Maggie has always been told at home she is like a gypsy, she thinks that she will only get her freedom with the gypsies. Consequently when she is miser-

able she runs to these people to whom she says: 'I'm come from home because I'm unhappy, and I mean to be a gypsy. I'll live with you, if you like, and I can teach you a great many things.' (E, George 1860,P.95).

Humiliated mainly by his brother Tom, Maggie thinks that the gypsies are the only people who can make her happy. She equally begs them not to let her father know where she is and is even proposing to become their queen so that she could be good to everybody. Perhaps, she believes that the queen is not good enough to lead fairly the area. This it can be admitted she has had some political view about the world. Her struggle to be chosen as a political leader is getting more and more remarkable among the women nowadays in our countries where we can notice an increasing number of candidatures for political elections. In order to avoid probably her rights been violated by her aunt Glegg she refuses to live with the latter:

'Oh mother,' said poor Maggie, shrinking from the thought of all the contact her bruised mind would have to bear, 'tell her I'm very grateful-I'll go to see her as soon as I can; but I can't see any one just yet, except Dr Kenn. I've been to him-he will advise me, and help me to get some

occupation. I can't live with any one, or be dependent on them, tell aunt Glegg; I must get my own bread.' (E, George 1868, PP. 454-455).

Maggie's aunt Glegg wishes Maggie to come and stay with her. But Maggie refuses and tells her mother to make her aunt know that she wants to be independent. She informs her mother she is expecting to get a job. Obviously, her determination may allow her to get some opportunities.

2- The Benefits Maggie has Got

Thanks to Maggie's Curiosity, cleverness, rebellion, sense of justice and determination to get free, she has been considered by her neighbors and vice versa. She also got some freedom which has contributed to her happiness.

2.1. Mutual Considerations in the Novel

Riley has paid some attention to Maggie as far as the latter's imagination is concerned: 'Come, come and tell me something about this book; here are some pictures-I want to know what they mean.' (E, George 1860,P.12). Riley wants Maggie to give him the meanings of some pictures in the book entitle *The history of the Devil* by Daniel Dafoe. This lets suppose that he has some consideration for her. It can also be said that Maggie has interested herself in Riley as she agrees to interpret the picture of the old woman. Her interpretation has probably delighted the Rileys who have got interested in her.

As George Eliot has written:

‘Stelling’s wife, in her pressing invitation, did not mention a longer time than a week for Maggie’s stay; but Stelling, who took her between his knees, and asked her where she stole her dark eyes from, insisted that she must stay a fortnight. Tulliver was quite proud to leave his little wench where she would have an opportunity of showing her cleverness to appreciating strangers. So it was agreed that she should not be fetched home till the end of the fortnight.’ (E, George 1860, P.130).

Maggie has been invited for a week to stay with her brother Tom at his school. But, because of her superior intelligence and creative imagination, the Rileys suggest that she should stay with them for two weeks. Their behaviors let believe clearly intimate that they have notice Maggie’s difference. It is probably a great pride for her father Tulliver who agrees to go back to his house without his beloved daughter. Maggie has also been an important girl at some points for Stephen Guest:

‘Maggie could contradict Stephen and laugh at him, and he

could recommend to her consideration the example of that most charming heroine, Miss Sophia Western, who had a great 'respect for the understandings of men'. Maggie could look at Stephen-which, for some reason or other, she always avoided when they were alone; and he could even ask her to play his accompaniment for him, since Lucy's fingers were so busy with that bazaar-work; and lecture on hurrying the tempo, which was certainly Maggie's weak point.' (E, George 1860,P.366).

Stephen believes that Maggie is a useful girl who can help him. In fact he thinks that she can be her companion when his girlfriend Lucy is absent. Moreover Dr. Kenn on his side, has found her a job: 'He himself wanted a daily governess for his younger children and though he had hesitated in the first instance to offer this position to Maggie, the resolution to protect with the utmost force of his personal and driven away by slander, was now decisive.' (E, George 1860, P.460). Dr. Kenn has chosen Maggie as a governess for his young children. This suppose that he is confident that she can greatly help the children succeed in their studies. Maggie who is in search of an occupation, does not hesitate to accept the offer

that can probably contribute to her freedom.

2.2. Maggie has got some freedom.

When Maggie has started her job as a governess, she no longer depends on her parents who are now free of some obligations towards her. The following passage shows how independent she is after he has started working:

‘Maggie gratefully accepted an employment that gave her duties as well as support: her days would be filled now, and solitary evenings would be a welcome rest. She no longer needed the sacrifice her mother made in staying with her, and her mother was persuaded to go back to the mill.’ (E, George 1860,P.460).

The job has given Maggie some responsibility and she is no longer a child who always needs her parents’ support. This independence can probably help to use her skills and abilities to achieve some profits, owing to her self-motivation. So it can be admitted that her parents have got some dignity, as well as Maggie herself. It is also worth mentioning that she has previously been admired and accepted in the St Ogg’s society where she has had some freedom to live without too many restrictions from other people:

‘Maggie was introduced for the first time to the young lady’s life, and knew what it was to

get up in the morning without any imperative reason for doing one thing more than another. This new sense of leisure and unchecked enjoyment amidst the soft-breathing airs and garden-scents of advancing spring-amidst the new abundance of music, and lingering strolls in the sunshine, and the delicious dreaminess of gliding on the river-could hardly be without some intoxicating effect on her, after her years of privation; and even in the first week Maggie began to be less haunted by her sad memories and anticipations.’ (E, George 1860, P. 363).

Maggie is no longer a child everybody is interested in her. In this context, she may start forgetting about her sad past which means she will be content with the present situation where she is free to do whatever she wants when and the way she wants. Thus, it is obvious that life will be pleasant for her from then.

2.3. Maggie Becomes a Happy Girl

George Eliot’s statement through the following passage lets believe that Maggie is no longer a sad and miserable girl after she has been admitted to St Ogg’s society:

‘Life was certainly very

pleasant just now: it was becoming very pleasant to dress in the evening, and to feel that she was one of the beautiful things of this spring-time and there were admiring eyes always awaiting her now; she was no longer an unheeded person, liable to be child, from whom attention was continually claimed, and on whom no one felt bound to confer any.' (E, George 1860,P.363).

The author's speech shows that Maggie is now happy, finding herself in a new environment where everything is beautiful and pleasant. These living conditions are probably the ones she has always expected. In such a situation she may have the necessary self-motivation to say or do whatever she wishes. The passage below shows that she is now self-reliant which means she is able to do or decide things by herself rather than depending on other's people for help:

'It was pleasant, too, when Stephane and Lucy were gone out riding, to sit down at the piano alone, and find that the old fingers between her fingers and the keys remained, and revived, like a sympathetic kinship not to be worn out by separation-to get

the tunes she had heard the evening before, and repeat them again and again until she had found out a way of producing them so as to make them a more pregnant, passionate language to her.' (E, George 1860,P.363).

Maggie is enjoying a good moment. In fact she is pleased to be alone and to do whatever she wants. Under such circumstances she may get some new skills and become more and more performing in doing some activities. So, it can be admitted that she is happy. Consequently she will certainly be pleased at every time:

‘The mere concord of Octaves was a delight to Maggie, and she would often take up a book of studies rather than any melody, that she might taste more keenly by abstraction the more primitive sensation of intervals. Not that her enjoyment of music was of the kind that indicates a great specific talent; it was rather that 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, but also prevented her vanity from taking the form of mere feminine coquetry and de-
vise, and gave it the poetry of ambition.’ (E, George 1860, P.364).

Maggie probably believes that her future will be brilliant. In other words, she has become optimistic. But it was not easy for her to reach the current stage.

3. The Obstacles to the Struggle for Emancipation

In the novel, George Eliot has focused on some of the problems Maggie faced. In fact, she has been a victim of some contemptuous behaviors as well as some frequent humiliation.

3.1. Contemptuous Behaviors towards Maggie

The author is showing Tulliver’s scornful behaviors towards his daughter when she writes:

‘what! They mustn’t say any harm o’ s Tom, eh?’ said Tulliver, looking at Maggie with a twinkling eye. Then, in a lower voice, turning to 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

knew it all beforehand. And allays at her book! But it's bad, 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.' (E, George 1860, P. 12).

According to Tulliver Maggie's being clever will lead to no good. He probably believes that his daughter will be a threat to her society. So, Maggie's cleverness is a problem for her. His conception lets suppose that in the Victorian period many parents are reluctant to send their daughters to school. But unfortunately, this contemptuous behavior seems to be a daily practice in our societies, mainly in the rural areas where some parents think it is more profitable to send their sons to school. The following dialogue between Maggie and her brother Tom equally underlines, and the latter has behaved contemptuously towards his sister:

'Now, then, come with me into the study, Maggie,' said Tom, as their father drove away. ' what do you shake and toss your head now for, you silly?' he continued;

for though her hair was now under a new dispensation, and was brushed smoothly behind her ears, she seemed still in imagination to be tossing it out of her eyes. 'It makes you look as if you were crazy.'

'Oh, I can't help it,' said Maggie, impatiently. 'don't tease me, Tom. Oh, what books!' she exclaimed, as she saw the book-cases in the study.' (E, George 1860,P.130).

Tom is aware that Maggie is more intelligent than he is. But, unfortunately his behaviors point out that he does not want to show his sister that the latter is superior to him as far as the way of checking information is concerned. This hypocrisy is often noticeable in our families where boys tend to show their superiority to girls. In addition, Tom has shown his disapproving behavior towards Maggie throughout the following speech: 'oh, I know what you've been doing,' said Tom; 'you've been reading the English at the end. Any donkey can do that.'" (E, George 1860,P.132). Whereas Tom is unable to read the English words, Maggie has managed to do so. But instead of congratulating his sister, Tom has told her that anybody can do what she has just done. His desire to discourage his sister is also pointed out throughout the answers he gives her when she clearly formulated her desire to attend the same

school as her elder brother. tells him she would like to go to the same school as he is doing:

‘I’m sure you couldn’t do it, now,’ said Tom; and I’ll just ask Mr Stelling if you could.’

‘I don’t mind,’ said the little conceited minx. I’ll ask him myself.’

‘Mr Stelling,’ she said, that same evening when they were in the drawing-room, ‘couldn’t I do Euclid, and all Tom’s lessons, if you were to teach me instead of him?’

‘No; you couldn’t,’ said Tom, indignantly. ‘girls can’t do Euclid; Can they sir?’ (E, George 1860,PP.134-135).

Discovering that Tom is not willing to help her, Maggie has taken the decision to ask Stelling whether she can do Euclid like Tom. But without waiting Stelling’s answer, Tom has told her sister that girls can’t. His behavior shows that he wants by any means to prevent his sister from learning the same lessons as him. This denotes both his wickedness and jealousy for his sister. Obviously, his hateful behaviors for his sister would not be advantageous to the family. But, unfortunately Tom is comforted in this position by Stelling’s answer: ‘They can pick up a little of everything, I daresay,’ said Stel-

ling. 'they've a great deal of superficial cleverness; but they couldn't go far into anything. They're quick' and shallow.' (E, George 1860, P. 135). Tom is surely delighted with Stelling's verdict and will consequently show his triumph over his sister.

On her side, Maggie will probably be mortified because on contrary to her belief, her quickness is notified as a brand of inferiority. As a matter of fact, she would like to be slow as her brother. Later on, Tom has even told her sister about the disadvantages of being quick: 'Ha, ha! Miss Maggie' said Tom, when they were alone; 'you see it's not such a fine thing to be quick. You'll never go far into anything, you know.' (E, George 1860, P. 135). One can guess that Maggie is oppressed by this dreadful destiny that she has no spirit for a retort. In addition, Maggie has also been made feel ashamed or stupid by both her father and her brother throughout the novel

3.2. Humiliating behaviors towards Maggie.

Maggie's father, Tulliver is not pleased with Maggie when the latter has been reading the book entitle *The history of the Devil* by Daniel Dafoe:

' Go, go!' said Tulliver peremptorily, beginning to feel rather uncomfortable at these free remarks on the personal appearance of a being powerful enough to create lawyers; 'shut up the book, and let's hear no more o' such talk.

It is as I thought-the child' ull learn more mischief nor good wi' the books. Go, go and see after your mother.' (E, George 1860,P.14).

Tulliver who should normally be pleased with his daughter's cleverness, appeared nervous when the latter is reading. In such a situation, one can think that she has been saying something girls should not say. His behavior shows that there are some hindrances to the girls' expression at that period. So, the lack of freedom of saying or doing certain things children are victims of nowadays is an old dated phenomenon. Tom Tulliver has also tended to disgrace Maggie:

'Oh, bother! Never mind! Come, it's time for me to learn my lessons. See here! What I've got to do,' said Tom, drawing Maggie towards him and showing her his theorem, while she pushed her hair behind her ears, and prepared herself to prove her capability of helping him in Euclid. She began to read with full confidence in her face flushed with irritation. It was unavoidable-she must confess her incompetency, and she was not fond of humiliation. 'It's nonsense!' she said, 'and very ugly stuff-nobody need want to make it

out.' 'Ah, there now, Miss Maggie!' said Tom, drawing the book away, and wagging his head at her, you see you're not so clever as you thought you were.' (E, George 1860, PP.131-132).

The above dialogue shows that Tom always wants to make Maggie know she is not as intelligent as she can imagine. One can say that his desire is to discourage his sister. But it is thinkable that his humiliating behaviors will not always favor his progress because Maggie may get less and less interested in him. Her reaction in the following dialogue underlines that she is conscious of disgraceful behaviors of her brother towards her:

'Creskens genittivo,' exclaimed Tom, with a derisive laugh, for Tom had learned this omitted passage for his yesterday's lesson, and a young gentleman does not require an intimate or extensive acquaintance with Latin before he can feel the pitiable absurdity of a false quantity. 'creskens genittivo! What a little silly you are, Maggie!'

'well, you needn't laugh, Tom, for you didn't remember it at all. I'm sure it's spelt so; how was I to

know?’
‘phee-e-e-h! I told you girls couldn’t learn Latin. It’s *Nomen non crescens genitivo.*’ (E, George 1860, P. 133-134).

Maggie has shown Tom how ignorant he is. In fact, she courageously tells her brother that as he does not know how to pronounce some words, he ought not to laugh at her. Her reaction may make Tom start respecting her.

Conclusion

It is imperative that girls know they are the first and the most important actors in the struggle for their emancipation. To reach their goal, they should be imaginative and creative as George Eliot has mentioned in *Adam Bede*: ‘All passion become strength when it has an outlet from the narrow limits of our personal lot in the labour of our right arm, the cunning of our right hand or the still creative activity of our thought.’ (E, George 1860,P.178). The statement also suggests they should be clever in order to be able to overcome some obvious obstacles as difficulties may even come from some of their friends as Dorothea Brooke has told Fare brother in *Middlemarch*: ‘People glorify all sorts of bravery except the bravery they might show on behalf of their nearest neighbours.’ (E, George 1860,P.791). So, to be successful in their struggle they should not rely on anybody, even though some people of good will might help them.

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