This dissertation examines the relationship between education, class and gender in The Mill on the Floss (1860) and Daniel Deronda (1876) by George Eliot; and in The Woodlanders (1887) and Jude the Obscure (1896) by Thomas Hardy. The Introduction discusses how, in nineteenth-century Britain, education was intended to "improve" individuals and society. The Introduction establishes the Marxist and feminist critical background of the study, and briefly surveys the nineteenth-century debates on "The Education Question," and on education for women.

The novels examined show education failing to 'improve.' Maggie Tulliver, in The Mill on the Floss, and Jude Fawley in Jude the Obscure cannot gain access to the knowledge they seek. They 'educate' themselves, without guidance; their 'educations' increase their alienation. Grace Melbury, in The Woodlanders, is sent from her rural home to London, to be educated as a 'lady.' This is impelled by her father's social ambition, and has a disruptive, alienating effect on Grace. Daniel Deronda, in the novel of his name, has the advantages of social position, and of being a man, but his social and psychological integration are unconvincing.

Textual analysis shows each narrator establishing a proprietary distance from subject matter and characters, and using a voice which identifies with the educated readership of the novels. Eliot's narrators attempt to moderate the presentation of characters' suffering, and to re-affirm family and community. Hardy's narrators maintain an aloof, rationalistic stance, leaving characters to suffer alone. This contrast in aesthetic ideology has many causes, amongst which are the difference in gender between the two authors, and the fact that Hardy wrote at a later time than Eliot.

The failure of education to socially or psychologically integrate characters is common to both authors. All four novels depict education as unable to change character, leading to the conclusion that education reinforced distinctions of class and gender, instead of removing them.

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children. When she was five years old, she and her sister were sent to boarding school at At George Eliot was an English poet and novelist. Check out this biography to know about her childhood, family life, achievements and other facts related to her life. Her last novel 'Daniel Deronda', which was written in eight parts, was built on the contrast between a poor girl and an upper class one. The keen analysis of the characters in this novel by Evans is appreciated by her critics. Awards & Achievements. A Companion to George Eliot, p. 457. CrossRef, Google Scholar. Ball, Derek 2015. SINCE THE PUBLICATION in the 1980s of Gillian Beer's Darwin's Plots and George Levine's Darwin and the Novelists, the map of Victorian literature has been almost wholly redrawn through critical interest in the relationships of literary and scientific writing. Very little attention indeed, however, has been given by literary scholars to the workings of mathematics in Victorian culture. This is a problematic absence from both Victorian studies and literature and science studies. It has resulted in a tendency to overemphasize the cultural impact of some scientific disciplines, and