George Eliot's "Brother Jacob": An Experimental Story for the Writing of the Novel (Part II)

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In Part I, I argued that "Brother Jacob" is an experimental story for the writing of the novel, particularly *Romola*. The story is a study in which George Eliot practices writing a fable with a clear moral lesson. It is also an experiment in, or preparation for, the depiction of a shallow, deceitful and self-centered male character based on the analysis of egoism. To be more precise, David Faux is an experimental protagonist, or a kind of preliminary study, for the creation of the hero of *Romola*, "beautifully dramatized" (Wilt, 195) Tito Melema. Both have several inward characteristics in common, though Tito Melema is treated with far greater subtlety and complexity than David Faux is. The most remarkable feature common to the two characters is their "movement away from moral light" (Stump, 4): their moral de-terioration progresses with the development of the plots. It is both ex-tremely interesting and instructive to put them side by side because a careful comparison of these two characters reveals that George Eliot was obviously entertaining a clear image of Tito Melema while writing "Brother Jacob." In Part II, I intend to examine what results the author's attempt at a fable in "Brother Jacob" has brought in her later novels: *Silas Marner* and *Romola*, then to analyze David Faux and Tito Melema in order to support my argument.

First, I want to consider "Brother Jacob" as a fable, for it is unmistakably a fable. This is apparent at once from the epigram on the front piece, which is quoted from La Fontaine[1] and also from the last sentence of the story in which George Eliot tells the readers that

the story is " an admirable instance of the unexpected forms in which the great Nemesis hides herself. "(327) Besides, as Gordon S. Haight points out," the frivolous names she [George Eliot] uses "(*George Eliot: A Biography*, 340) in the story shows that Eliot intended the story as a fable. For example, the name *Faux*" neatly combines' fox 'and ' false '" (Fisher, 23) : *Faux* means " false, deceitful, duplicitous "in French and reminds us of " fox "in English. " Freely, "the pseudonym which David Faux assumes in the town of Grimworth, symbolizes his unscrupulous deception of the townspeople by *freely* inventing false exploits in the West Indies and" riding the high horse. "(296). The name of the woman whom Faux is anxious to marry is Penelope Palfrey. She is called Penny, which implies cheapness, and " palfrey "is a women's saddle horse, which is tame and gentle but has no will of its own; thus her family name gives the readers the impression that she will be easily deceived by a " fox. "In fact, Penny is " quite tremulous at the greatness of her lot in being married to a man who [has] traveled so much. "(315) When it becomes the general talk among young people at Grimworth that " Mr. Freely's heart [is] pierced "(298) by the love for Penny, Miss *Fullilove* suspects that not real love but ambition is the real motive of Freely paying special attention to Penny: " Miss Fullilove was quite sure that if she were Miss Penny Palfrey, she would be cautious; it was not a good sign when men looked so much above themselves for a wife. "(298)

The original title of the story was " Mr. David Faux, Confectioner," but George Eliot changed it later to " The Idiot Brother "and finally published it in the *Cornhill Magazine* in 1864 as " Brother Jacob."It is significant that she changed the title from the name of the protagonist to that of his idiot brother. In my opinion, this is because her didactic intention was uppermost while writing it and thought it appropriate to give the story the name of Jacob who appears in it " in the shape of Nemesis."But this didactic intention is so undisguised and the author intrudes directly into the story so often to deliver moral commentary that both her didacticism and intrusion are highly objec-

tionable and obtrusive. In addition, the fact that George Eliot makes David Faux the target of her scathing satire from beginning to end impresses the readers that she is scornful of him, and treats him with derision. The consequence is that the readers inevitably feel that she has failed to maintain emotional detachment from David Faux. For that matter, Eliot shows no sympathy for other characters, even for the idiot brother Jacob; the only exception is David's parents, who escape the author's devastating sarcasm. Nor is there any humor which would soften the bitter, critical tone of the work. The author's excessive didacticism and her lack of sympathy for the characters make them "merely puppets to act out the working of Nemesis."(Haight, *George Eliot: A Biography*, 340) This is a serous flaw, for the readers cannot extend sympathy to any of them; they get more and more alienated from them as they read on.

Thus, "Brother Jacob" has obvious defects and carries little conviction, but it is important as George Eliot's attempt at a fable. The story serves as "a prelude to a strange sequence of fiction which [includes] *Silas Marner* and [ends] with *Romola*."(Redinger, 433) George Eliot began to use a double plot in *Silas Marner*, in which the Silas-Eppie plot develops side by side with the Godfrey-Nancy plot. The former is told in the style of a fable; the very opening sentences establish at once the atmosphere of one:

> In the days when the spinning-wheels hummed busily in the farmhouses — and even great ladies, clothed in silk and thread lace, had their toy spinning-wheels of polished oak — there might be seen in districts far away among the lanes, or deep in the bosom of the hills, certain pallid undersized men, who, by the side of the brawny country-folk, looked like the remnants of a disinherited race. The shepherd's dog barked fiercely when one of these alien-looking men appeared on the upland, dark against the early winter sunset; for what dog likes a figure bent under a heavy bag ? — and these pale men rarely stirred abroad without

that mysterious burden. (51)

These opening sentences remind the readers of the conventional opening phrase of a fairy tale: " Once upon a time. '" [Certain] pallid undersized men, '" a figure bent under a heavy bag" and " that mysterious burden" sound more like a fable than a realistic novel.

In fact, the Silas-Eppie plot is filled with the elements of a fable. While young, Silas belonged to a certain religious sect at " Lantern" Yard, the name of a street in a great manufacturing town. " Lantern" suggests moral darkness: Silas 'cataleptic fit was regarded as a mark of divine favor by the majority of the members of the sect. But his catalepsy gave William Dane[2], his " bosom friend," the opportunity to make a false accusation against him of having stolen church money. When he was declared guilty by drawing " the lots '", he left Lantern Yard in " that despair in his soul — that shaken trust in God and man, which is little short of madness to a loving nature." (61) He came to Raveloe and for fifteen years, has continued to be a weaver in this idyllic village without recovering his " trust in God and man." He has kept himself isolated in the village, refusing to mingle with the villagers. He has been in a kind of paralysis for fifteen years; hoarding gold is the only thing that he has lived for. Then Eppie comes to him by chance and becomes the most valuable part of his life. It is owing to his cataleptic fit, which once became " an opportunity for exploitation" (Carroll, 153), that Eppie reaches the door of his cottage. On New Year's Eve, while Silas stands at the door and looks out for a long time, which has become his custom since his money was stolen, he is suddenly seized by catalepsy:

> He went in again, and put his right hand on the latch of the door to close it — but he did not close it: he was arrested, as he had been already since his loss [of his gold], by the invisible wand of catalepsy, and stood like a graven image, with wide but sightless eyes, holding open his door, powerless to resist either the good or

evil that might enter there. (167)

The door is kept open because of this fortuitous fit, and the light that leaks out attracts Eppie, a small baby, into his cottage.

The sudden entrance of Eppie into his life awakens Silas from the state of paralysis; he unexpectedly declares in the presence of many villagers, who are at the Red House to celebrate New Year's Eve, that he will adopt the baby. This decision is the beginning of the process in which Silas gets back his religious faith and trust in fellow human beings through "*the remedial influences of pure natural human relations*." (Letters, III, 382. My Emphases) While looking after Eppie for himself, Silas experiences a gradual swing from one extreme to the other. In this way, the Silas-Eppie plot develops like a fable and is told in the style of a fable; it is certainly treated more realistically than "Brother Jacob," but there is no satire in it which is so pungent in the latter. On the whole, the Silas-Eppie plot shows an obvious improvement on "Brother Jacob." The process of Silas 'rebirth through his love for Eppie, "the movement toward moral light," is told with much sympathy, and gives the readers an exquisite satisfaction. Furthermore, the Silas-Eppie plot forms a harmonious contrast with the other plot, in which Godfrey is punished by Nemesis for having deserted his own daughter Eppie, but Nemesis is not so severe with him: he is compensated for the loss of his daughter with the love of his wife, Nancy.

George Eliot has written a fable again in *Romola*, a realistic novel. The crisis of Romola's spiritual suffering plunges her into despair. She has ceased to see "the mystic union" (434) in her married life and has lost her trust in Savonarola, the sole spiritual support for her. In this state, she longs for an escape from the life in Florence:

> Romola felt even the springs of her once active pity drying up, and leaving her to barren egoistic complaining. She longed for that repose in mere sensations of her early girlhood, when she

fancied herself floating naiad-like in the waters. (435)

Her longing for an escape appears in the form of a longing for " her early girlhood "and " floating in the waters. "She imagines herself gliding in a boat " on the darkening waters. "(436) " [The] burden of choice "has become intolerable and she wishes to " commit herself to destiny which would either bring death or else new necessities that might rouse a new life in her. "Then she drifts out to sea in a small boat. She falls asleep while drifting. She wakes up to find her boat " lying still in a little creak. "(476) She realizes that the boat has been " the gently lulling cradle of a new life "(477), but she immediately hears " the cry of a little child in distress that no one came to help. " (478)

At this point, *Romola*, which has been a realistic novel so far, suddenly becomes a fable — the Madonna fable. Laura Comer Emery points out that " [when] Romola drifts out to sea, the setting not only changes from city to country, but from realistic-historical to openly symbolic. "(99) George Levine says nearly to the same effect:

> When Romola drifts away, the book can no longer be regarded as a novel in the traditional sense. It is as though the moral education of Romola must begin again, as though the whole circumstantial world of Florence and the history of her life have not existed. Romola must be born again and she can be reborn only by moving through a ritual repetition of her first departure from Florence, and by entering a setting which is frankly unrealistic. (90)

The place she has reached is, in fact, unrealistic: a plague-stricken village. The novel suddenly becomes implausible. The scene in which she is seen by one of the villagers who are still alive is described as follows:

With her gaze fixed intently on the distant slope, the long lines of her thick grey garment giving a gliding character to her rapid walk, her hair rolling backward and illuminated on the left side by the sun-rays, the little olive baby on her right arm now looking out with jet-black eyes, she might well startle the youth of fifteen, accustomed to swing the censer in the presence of *a Madonna less fair and marvelous than this*.

"She carries a pitcher in her hand — to fetch water for the sick. It is *the Holy Mother*, comes to take care of the people who have the pestilence."(480, My Emphases)

The youth, who is a young acolyte, brings word to "the Padre" that he saw "the Holy Mother with the Babe, fetching water for the sick; she [is] as tall as the cypresses, and [has] a light about her head, and she looked up at the church."(482) The parish priest trembles "at the thought of the mild-faced Mother." When she speaks to him, her voice has "a preternatural sound for him." She explains to him the reason of her presence there: "'I am come over the sea to help those who are left alive — and you, too, till help them now.'"(483) It is obvious that Romola, who has been idealized by the author so far, is now apotheosized: she *is* "the Holy Mother." She is absorbed in tending the sick villagers. She is not afraid of getting infected with the plague, because, as she says, "'I am used to the pestilence.'"(481) She stays there for nearly two months. Thanks to her ministrations, the village recovers from the plague. She is now "the blessed Lady"(484) to the villagers. This experience brings about Romola's rebirth: it is "like a new baptism"(485) to her and she is converted to altruism, or sympathy for fellow human beings, which is always the theme of the main plot in George Eliot's fiction.

The fact that the novel suddenly departs from realism and becomes a fable at the moment of the greatest spiritual crisis of Romola impresses the readers that the author has cut the Gordian knot to res-cue the heroine from her inward struggle. Inevitably the question

occurs to the readers: did the idea of the heroine's drifting on the sea and the plague-stricken village scene suddenly occur to George Eliot? The answer to the question is given by the author herself; she writes to Sara Sophia Hennell as follows:

> ... the "Drifting Away" and the Village with the Plague belonged to my earliest vision of the story and were by deliberate forecast adopted as romantic and symbolical elements. (*Letters*, Ⅲ, 164)

The letter shows that the idea did not suddenly occur to George Eliot. From the beginning, she had the intention of rescuing the heroine from despair by taking leave of realism and making the last part of the main plot the Madonna fable. The question remains whether "romantic and symbolic elements" are assimilated into the realistic frame of this novel, but I refrain from considering it further, because I have already treated it before.[3] Let me simply state my opinion that the fable in *Romola* is based on George Eliot's experience of having written "Brother Jacob."

So much for discussing "Brother Jacob" as a fable. I want to take up now the next point: David Faux and Tito Melema have so much in common that we can say the former is the prototype of the latter; in other words, the concept of Tito Melema was formed in George Eliot on the basis of that of David Faux. I conclude that Tito Melema is the refined version of David Faux. It is also possible to say that George Eliot wrote "Brother Jacob" partly as a preparatory or experimental story for the writing of *Romola*. It is extremely intriguing to compare these two figures. Their similarities are so striking that I have inevitably reached the above conclusion. I am going to expatiate on the features of David Faux first and then go on to analyze those of Tito Melema.

David Faux is described as an extremely unattractive young man; he is the main character of "Brother Jacob" but there is nothing heroic about him. He is given an unattractive outward appear-

ance: he is " a young gentleman of pasty visage, lipless mouth, and stumpy hair. "(270) While a child, he even had " a slight promise of bow-legs which had not been altogether unfulfilled. "(271) His lack of attractiveness in outward appearance is not compensated by inward beauty; rather, it represents his despicable character. He is a repulsive protagonist from beginning to end. The only merit given to him is his excellent, inventive skill as a confectioner. In the other respects, there is nothing superior about him. His lack of self-knowledge is conspicuous to the point of being absurd. He has no merits whatsoever that justify his extraordinary ambition and vanity. He is so vainglorious as to believe that " there [is] nothing average about him, "and that he " ought to be something remarkable. "(269) He has such a soaring ambition as to aspire to be a prime minister: he thinks that being a confectioner " is *not* the best preparation for the office of prime minister. "(268, Eliot's Emphasis) It is obvious that his mentality has grave defects, which are palpable in his sympathy for Inkle in *Inkle and Yarico*. David Faux feels " very sorry for *poor* Mr. Inkle "(269, My Emphasis), but Inkle is not worth being called " poor. "He is a contemptible young man who does not deserve the readers ' sympathy, and in this sense, David Faux is a duplicate of Inkle. There is something seriously wrong with David's moral sense; or rather, it would be more appropriate to say that he has no moral sense.

Influenced by *Inkle and Yarico*, David Faux thinks of going to the West Indies. The motive is absurdly simple; he is sure that, because he has " the broad and easily recognizable merit of whiteness "(270), " some Princess Yarico [will] want to marry him, and make him presents of very large jewels beforehand. "(280) He reflects that, after he gets the presents, he " needn't marry her unless he likes. "David intends from the first to follow the example of Inkle, who intends to betray Yarico, his savior, in order to marry Narcissa and get 30 thousand pounds. To obtain the fare to go over to the West Indies, and to lay the foundation of his future, David intends to steal his mother's money: he discovered that she keeps twenty guineas in a wooden box.

He also knows that she saved them while she had been in service for twenty years. In the presence of his mother, David is a well-behaved son, who comforts her by praising himself to her and assures her "that he never [falls] into the vices he [sees] practiced by other youths of his own age, and that he [is] particularly fond of *honesty*." (271, My Emphasis) He is a sanctimonious hypocrite and his hypocrisy is relentlessly exposed by the author in his inventive and skillful self-justification for stealing "matri-money."(Bodenheimer, 149) He convinces himself that "it [is] not robbery to take the money belonging to his mother."(271) Moreover, he is sure that "she [won't] prosecute him."

Along with David's "spirit of contrivance"(268) and "ingenuity" (271) — the words which take on an extremely satirical tone when applied to David Faux, he has the "prudence," which means cowardice in the context, to "run no risks on his account."(270) He lacks the audacity to rob other people, but he steals "matri-money" without scruple because he is quite sure of his own safety. He does not care at all if other people suffer from pain as long as he himself is untouched by the pain. He protects himself by impenetrable armor of thorough egoism. Therefore, he does not hesitate to commit sacrilege to attain his aim: he chooses "the third Sunday in Lent"(272) for the theft, when every member of his family has gone to church except Jacob, who "[has] been out on one of his occasional wanderings for the last two days." He even thinks that "it must have been kindly intended by Providence for such purposes."

He steals his mother's guineas, puts them in a small canvas bag, and is about to bury it "under the roots of an old hollow ash"(273), when Jacob suddenly appears. David is always afraid of his idiot brother, "a large personage who [goes] about habitually with a pitch-fork in his hand."(272) His plan to retrieve the money afterward and leave for the West Indies with it is obstructed by Jacob. David has great difficulty "[shaking] off"(278) Jacob, for the latter becomes so fond of his younger brother that he will not leave David; when Jacob

goes to sleep in a carrier's cart on its way to the next town, his arms are "tightly fastened round his dear brother's body; and if ever David [attempts] to move, the grasp [tightens] with the force of an *affectionate* boa-constrictor."(284, My Emphasis) In other words, "fondness is David's most threatening obstacle."(Mann, 22)

James Diedrick argues that "[in] Part I, Jacob functioned as David's grotesque *double* shadowing him everywhere."(264, My Emphasis) Though Deidrick does not expatiate on this point, his interpretation of Jacob's function as David's double is quite original and carries strong conviction to me. Let's take Poe's *William Wilson*, one of the most famous works that treat a double, or dual personality — there are some conspicuous similarities between this story and "Brother Jacob."William Wilson the namesake interferes with William Wilson the narrator, as Jacob interferes with David:

> My namesake alone ... presumed to compete with me in the studies of the class — in sports and broils of the play-ground — to refuse implicit belief in my assertions, and submission to my will — indeed, to interfere with my arbitrary dictation in any respect whatsoever. (Poe, 341)

The narrator infers that "a whimsical desire to thwart, astonish, or mortify [him]"(342) is the sole motive of the namesake's interference, and he has

> a feeling made up of wonder, abasement, and pique, that he mingled with his injuries, his insults, or his contradictions, a certain most inappropriate and assuredly most unwelcome *affectionateness* of manner. (342, Poe's Emphasis)

As Jacob entertains "fondness"for David Faux, the namesake shows affection for the narrator. While Jacob's "fondness"is "most threatening obstacle"to David's plan, William Wilson the narrator hates

the namesake's "affectionateness of manner" and regards it as a "most unwelcome" obstacle. It is quite obvious that the namesake is the narrator's double; at Oxford, "the most dissolute university in Europe," the narrator has been devoted to vice and "out-Heroded Herod." (349) Then the namesake appears before the narrator again and exposes "'the true character of the person who has to-night won at *écarté* a large sum of money from Lord Glendinning.'" (352, Poe's Emphasis) At the conclusion of *William Wilson*, the narrator stabs his namesake with his sword, but it means that he kills himself:

> It was my antagonist — it was Wilson, who then stood before me in the agonies of his dissolution. His mask and cloak lay, where he had thrown them, upon the floor. Not a thread in all his raiment — not a line in all the marked and singular lineaments of his face which was not, even in the most absolute identity, *mine now!*
>
> It was Wilson ... and I could have fancied that I myself was speaking while he said:
>
> "*You have conquered, and I yield. Yet, henceforward art thou also dead — dead to the World, to Heaven and to Hope! In me didst thou exist — and, in my death, see by this image, which is thine own, how utterly thou hast murdered thyself.*" (356-7, Poe's Emphases)

Like the namesake, Jacob suddenly appears before David in Grimworth and unintentionally exposes the true identity of David Faux/Edward Freely and ruins him at the end of the story. Both function as Nemesis who punishes the protagonists. Diedrick maintains that Jacob functions as David's double only in Part I, but the conclusion shows that Jacob functions as such throughout the story.

As David's double, Jacob symbolizes the lack of moral sense and primitiveness in David Faux. That Jacob is an idiot represents the undeveloped primitive mentality of David. David knows that "Jacob [is] quiet as long as he [is] treated indulgently, but on the slightest

show of anger, he [becomes] unmanageable, and [is] liable to fits of fury which [will] make him formidable even without his pitchfork. "(283) The fact that Jacob always has a pitchfork in his hand gives the image of the Devil to David. In fact, Jacob seems to David " like a triumphant demon "(281) when he finds Jacob taking out the tin box out of the hole in the ground in which he concealed the guineas he had stolen from his mother; at this moment, Jacob is the embodiment of David's guilty conscience which never comes up to the surface of his mind. It never occurs to David to kill " this fraternal demon "(282) to get free from Jacob. David has to be kind to " this ogre "(283) to carry out his plan. This comparison of Jacob to a devilish person reflects David's inner defects. At the same time, Jacob represents what is lacking in David: " Jacob was not an intense idiot, but within a certain limited range knew how to choose the good and reject the evil "(274) Jacob is given a better moral judgment than David, which implies that David is inferior even to his idiot brother in moral discernment. He is described as a thoroughly abominable, contemptible figure and the readers naturally withhold sympathy for this protagonist; they get more and more aloof from David Faux with the increase of their knowledge concerning his baseness.

What serves to further strengthen the readers ' sense of chilliness toward this despicable protagonist is his extreme susceptibility to fear, which is the most conspicuous feature of David Faux. His cowardice, unscrupulous egoism, hypocrisy, and even calculation come from this liability to dread. Though he is an utter scoundrel, he is easily frightened at any sign of danger which is likely to harm him in the slightest degree. This is pointed out by the author soon after the beginning of the story. While he was an apprentice to a confectioner, he thought of stealing his master's money, but he was too " cautious "(270) to put the idea into practice. He is too timid to commit any act " that [is] at all likely to be discovered. "So he decides to steal his mother's money. He is thoroughly wicked, but his wickedness lacks audacity. He is a cowardly, sneaking villain without the least bit of

boldness. It is only when he is sure that the result of an evil action will harm other people that he shows much courage. In fact, he is called“ a timid young man ”(272) by the author.

As William Wilson the narrator holds“ a feeling of even terror ”(Poe, 355) toward the namesake, David ́s fear is mainly directed toward his idiot brother, his double: he has“ a considerable dread and hatred of Jacob ”(272), who never lets go of his pitchfork. Jacob seems to be endowed with the same“ omnipresence and omnipotence of Wilson ”(Poe, 355): Jacob suddenly appears at the place where David is going to hide his mother's guineas as if he had known David ́s intention beforehand. On the other hand, David is so much frightened to see Jacob at the place where the evidence of his theft lies that his heart beats audibly and“ if he [had] any lips they [would be] pale. ”(274) Though he has no faith in God and commits sacrilege without scruple, he prays at this moment,“‘ Oh, save me this once, and I'll never get into danger again! ’”(280) It is characteristic of this cowardly antihero that he prays to God when he feels much frightened.“ Such alarms ”as the sudden appearance of an idiot does not agree with David's constitution, and he feels“ so much nausea ”that“ no doubt his liver [is] affected. ”When he finds it very difficult to make Jacob leave him, he feels himself“ in a cold perspiration. ”(284) David is filled with“ [his] own utter weakness and helplessness ”(Poe, 355) in the presence of his idiot brother and has to“ submit to ”Jacob ́s“ arbitrary will ”(Poe, 355) implicitly but with bitter hatred.

In Chapter Ⅱ, David Faux appears as Edward Freely in the market-place of Grimworth six years after his departure for the West Indies. Then, in Chapter Ⅲ, the readers know that he couldn ́t find any princess Yarico in the West Indies, because George Eliot suggests that“ those hidden merits of a man which are so well known to only him were not recognized in Kingstown in Jamaica. ”(309) The readers also know that David Faux is exactly what he used to be six years ago:“ his soul didn ́t change at all even if he changed his skies and saw new constellations. ”(309) That he is still a timid, petty

villain is apparent from the fact that he obtained the capital necessary to set up the confectionery business at Grimworth partly by blackmailing:“ he got a sum or two for charitably abstaining from mentioning some other people ̓s misdemeanors. ”(311)

David Faux alias Edward Freely establishes himself at Grimworth as a man who comes of a good family, and succeeds as confectioner, believing that he has cut himself from the ties with his family and his past. At first, he is viewed with“ dim suspicion ”(297) by“ the maturer minds of Grimworth through the early months of his residence there, ”as the villagers of Raveloe are suspicious of Silas Marner when he first came to the village. But the suspicion gradually begins to disappear, and with “ his advancing prosperity and importance, ”he comes to be accepted in the town. He charms“ the ears of Grimworth Desdemonas ”(296) by *freely* inventing stories in the West Indies in which he courageously overcame various dangers. The motive of this big talk is not his desire to make himself sexually attractive to the young women in the town, but the satisfaction of his vanity. David Faux/Edward Freely lacks such sexual energy. He has no genuine passion; he only has“ [cheap] impulsive passion and trivial imagination ”which “ result in selfishness and lack of moral discernment. ”(Weisser, 132) In“ The Lifted Veil, ”Latimer's sexual desire for Bertha Grant, his elder brother Alfred's fiancée, and her sexual desirability are unmistakably communicated to the readers; but, as is the case with Tito Melema, George Eliot refuses to refer to, or even hint at, David ̓s sexual desire; she even seems to deny its existence both in David and Tito. When David begins to court Penny Palfrey, whose father“ Squire Palfrey ”is a wealthy farmer, the real motive is at once obvious: ambition. David is not sexually attracted by Penny; he has no such passion. The same is true of Tito Melema. He desires to win the love of Romola, but no sexual desire is perceptible in him even while he is courting her. Like David, Tito can love only one person — himself. Tito lacks passionate desire for Romola; he wants her essentially as a woman“ who [belongs] to the desirable

furniture of his life."(361) This lack of passion is one of the unmistakable sign of a character who "moves away from moral light" in George Eliot's works.

To attain his ambition, David Faux/Edward Freely conciliates the favor of her parents who he knows are suspicious of him. He is very good at insinuating himself into other people's favor and confidence once he sets his mind on it. David obtains Penny's consent to marry him; he is now on his way to success and prosperity at Grimworth. Yet, his downfall is intimated by the existence of three characters who are suspicious and distrustful of him. Mr. Prettyman, "the highly respectable grocer,"(296) is dubious of the reason Edward Freely went to the West Indies: he wants to know "how he came to go to the Indies" because "[it's] unnatural in a confectioner." Miss Fullilove suspects that he is courting Penny out of ambition. Above all, Letitia, Penny's younger sister, distrusts him from the first. "The handsome, proud Letitia"(315) instinctively perceives his baseness and is contemptuous of him, thinking "her future brother-in-law an odious person." Their indelible suspicion and distrust foreshadows the exposure of David's true nature and subsequent downfall.[5)]

In fact, his downfall is as rapid as his advancement, and it begins with his own greed for money. Though David is "cautious" and is afraid of getting into contact with his family again, he yields to avarice: he covets his share of his father's legacy which he gave up on his departure for the West Indies with "matri-money." He meets his eldest brother Jonathan at an attorney's and obtains "eighty-two pounds and three shillings."(311) Owing to his short-sightedness born of greed, it becomes known to his family that he is living in Grimworth. The result is the sudden appearance of Jacob in Grimworth, which immediately arouses uncontrollable fear in David Faux. At the sight of his brother Jacob, who grasps him *affectionately* with great force, he "[turns] cold, and [trembles] in his brother's grasp."(316) He refuses to recognize him as his brother, saying: "'*I don't know who he is; he must be drunk*.'"(316, My Emphases) His extreme

susceptibility to fear is manifested most conspicuously in these words delivered to Mr. Palfrey. David can only deny " in a low tone " (316) his being related in any way to " a large man in a smock-frock, with a pitchfork in his hand "who blabbers inarticulately, "' I'se Zacob, B'other Zacob. Come 'o see Zavy. '" David runs out, intending to bring the constable, but he decides not to; he fears that to get Jacob taken to the workhouse or to the prison " as an offensive stranger " (317) may have " awkward effects "if his family inquires after Jacob. So he decides on " more patient measures. "He has murderous intent in his mind but not enough courage to treat him coldly and drive him out. He decides to treat him kindly. His kindness to Jacob incites Letitia to say maliciously: "' you're very good to this stranger, Mr. Freely ... I think you could hardly treat him better if he was really your brother. '"(318) The arrival of his eldest brother Jonathan at Grimworth exposes his true identity, and his ignominious past conduct is brought to light. David is now the object of public derision at Grimworth, and is discarded by the Palfreys.

George Eliot's comment on this story at the end gives the impression that the story is merely " an admirable instance of the unexpected forms in which the great Nemesis hides herself. "(327) Her comment sounds disarmingly simple. Seemingly, David Faux's ruin at Grimworth is brought by the outward factor: the sudden appearance of his idiot brother in the town. But, when we take into consideration Diedrick's argument that Jacob functions as the double of David Faux, we notice that there is a deeper, more significant meaning in George Eliot's last comment on the final collapse of David Faux. David's refusal to recognize Jacob as his brother — the denial of his own double — is an act equivalent to the killing of William Wilson the namesake by William Wilson the narrator; it is an act of selfdestruction. In other words, David ruins himself owing to his intense fear of his own double. The cause of his downfall lies concealed in himself.

The last subject is Tito Melema. When we compare David Faux

and Tito Melema, we notice that there are striking similarities between these two characters. There are certainly some obvious differences, too. For instance, David Faux is quite unattractive in personal appearance while Tito Melema is exceptionally handsome and graceful in outward appearance. David's inner defects are exposed with ruthless tenacity by the author; she views him with such an extremely critical eye that her dislike, and even contempt, of him is quite obvious. Not only the style which George Eliot employs in the description of David Faux, but her direct comments on him, which are frequent and obtrusive, are filled with bitter irony. This lack of emotional detachment from the protagonist is one of the conspicuous features of "Brother Jacob." This is not the case with Tito Melema. Apart from the problem of George Eliot's concept of the character of Tito Melema, the readers who proceed to this novel directly after "Brother Jacob" become aware at once that her treatment of Tito Melema is remarkable in its objectivity and that George Eliot maintains her detachment from him throughout the work. George Eliot makes a much more detailed analysis of this hero based on psychological realism than that of David Faux. Tito's inner mechanism — which is compared to "a machine with complex action" (99) — is so logically and minutely analyzed throughout the novel that Tito is often regarded "as one of George Eliot's greatest triumphs." (Stephen, 139) There is such a wide gap between the author's treatment of David Faux and that of Tito Melema that they seem to be completely different characters. But, as I take it, they belong to the same category, or to put it in another way, Tito Melema is the refined, polished version of David Faux. My last task is to analyze how George Eliot dramatizes egoism in her treatment of Tito Melema in order to support my argument that Tito Melema was created on the model of David Faux.

"'*Some madman, surely,*'" (191, George Eliot's Emphases) says Tito to Lorenzo Tronabuoni who queries, "'Who is he, I wonder?'" It is the crucial moment in the relationship between Tito Melema and his fos-

ter father, Baldassarre. At the moment, Tito hardly knows why he uttered these words of renunciation of his foster father. To Tito, they seem to have been born of impulse which he had no power to control. But, in fact, these simple words expressing his total negation of Baldassarre were the offspring of his susceptibility to fear, which is the most prominent characteristic of Tito Melema. The words came out of his lips merely as a result of his elaborate and egoistic self-justification for his decision not to go in search of his foster father which had been evolved in him long before the moment. David Faux refuses to recognize Jacob as his brother, saying,"' I don't know who he is; he must be drunk. '"David is alarmed by the sudden appearance of Jacob at Grimworth, and when he is grasped by his brother, he feels " arrested for having stolen his mother's guineas "and " [turns] cold, and [trembles] "(316). Tito is suddenly grasped by the arm by an escaped prisoner on the steps of the Duomo. Tito and the prisoner, Baldassarre, look at each other," silent as death, "because they recognize each other at once. There is an expression of intense fear on Tito's face. Tito is " fascinated by terror "(191) when he knows that the prisoner is his foster father whom he has betrayed and forsaken. Both David and Tito are paralyzed with fear at the critical moment of renouncing those who have close ties with them, and it marks the beginning of radical changes in their fates.

Leslie Stephen maintains that the reason Tito Melema is often regarded as " one of George Eliot's greatest triumphs "is that he is " thoroughly and to his fingers 'ends a woman. "(139) It is undeniable that Tito has a certain effeminacy; for instance, his timidity is described as follows: " He [is] not apprehensive or timid through his imagination, but through his sensation and perceptions he [can] easily be made to shrink and turn pale *like a maiden*. "(98, My Emphases) But this does not necessarily mean that he is feminine," a woman "; the impression of his being effeminate is simply the product of his facile, pleasure-loving and cowardly nature, and " the feminine nervousness "(Stephen, 140) of Tito comes from his extreme vulner-

ability to fear. Intense fear is born in his mind the moment he negates his relationship with Baldassarre, and he becomes a slave to mortal fear from that moment. But, prior to this scene that decides his fate in Florence, his nature is given a thorough analysis; George Eliot elaborately accumulates the descriptions of every trait of Tito and explains the mechanism of his mind meticulously in order to convince the readers that Tito's negation of Baldassarre is the inevitable result of" long premeditation. "(191)

The author often drops hints of Tito's betrayal of his foster father previous to the scene on the steps of the Duomo. In the opening scene, in which Tito speaks with Bratti, a peddler and dealer in second-hand goods, Bratti suspects that Tito stole the jewels he wears from a corpse, and says: "' but if you took the jewels, I hope you buried him and you can afford a mass or two for him into the bargain. '"(9) At that, " something like a painful thrill [appears] to dart through the frame of the listener. "Tito's guilty conscience is obvious from the beginning. While he is talking about himself to Nello the barber, he is about to say" my foster father, "catches himself and uses far more ambiguous words," an Italian ": "' ... I was born at Bari, and *my* — I mean I was brought up by an Italian .... '"(25, My Emphasis) Tito refrains from saying" my foster father "because he is already thinking of forsaking Baldassarre and he does not want it to be known that he has a foster father whom it is his duty to rescue from slavery. He is well aware that he should sell the gems and gets enough money to ransom his foster father. This is why he is morbidly sensitive to the words " treachery "and " ransom. "He deeply flushes when Nello mentions " treachery. "(32) When Bardo, Romola's blind father, mentions" a man's ransom "(61), he gives" a slight, almost imperceptible start "and looks at the blind face as if the words, which are " a mere phrase of common parlance, at a time when men were often being ransomed from slavery or imprisonment, "have some special significance. Tito again flushes when Nello makes general remarks upon the Greeks:

"Still we have our limits beyond which we call dissimulation *treachery*. But it is said of the Greeks that their honesty begins at what is the hanging point with us [the Florentines], and that since the old Furies went to sleep, your Christian Greek is of so easy conscience that *he would make a stepping stone of his father's corpse*." (32, My Emphases)

Piero di Cosimo, "a strange freakish painter" (29), perceives the traitor in Tito Melema at once. The artist asks him to sit for "'a picture of Sinon deceiving old Priam'" because he wants Tito's face for Sinon. At this request, Tito gives a start and looks at the painter "with a pale astonishment in his face as if at a sudden *accusation*." (35, My Emphasis)

These reacts of Tito's are involuntary products of his bad conscience, but he does not have any serious inner struggle for it: compunction never penetrates deep into his awareness. His shallow, cowardly, deceitful, treacherous, pleasure-loving nature with no sense of loyalty to anyone or anything is at ease as long as there is nothing that threatens his personal safety. This reminds the readers of David Faux, to whom repentance never occurs as long as he is sure of his own personal safety. It is only when the appearance of Jacob at Grimworth brings him to the brink of ruin that he regrets having told lies and stolen his mother's money: "what enviable people those were who had never robbed their mothers, and had never told fibs!" (320) David is the object of the author's unconcealed dislike and contempt; probably because of this, the delineation of his psychological movement is simple and has no complexity. On the other hand, George Eliot never gets emotionally involved with Tito Melema; she is always impartial and unprejudiced toward him. Thanks to this detachment, Tito is given far more elaborate and objective treatment. The process in which Tito comes to the conclusion that he does not need to go in search of his foster father has remarkable clarity and

carries great conviction.

David Faux establishes himself at Grimworth as a stranger and is rapidly making his way to prosperity. He skillfully insinuates himself into the favor of Penny's father, and succeeds in winning her love. In the same way, Tito Melema decides on Florence, where he is a stranger," as the place in which to establish himself. "(83) The original purpose of his having come to Florence is to sell his foster father's jewels and obtain the money necessary to rescue him. But he is vaguely thinking of forsaking him once he gets there. He is wearied of the old man whom he has ceased to love; he even hates him now. In addition, he finds his life in Florence comfortable and his success there is rapid. He manages to obtain the favor of Bardo, Romola's father, and soon afterward wins the love of Romola, whom he used to regard as an unattainable love. He also gradually secures his position in the political circle in Florence, in which his being a stranger proves to be advantageous. He is thus sailing " under the fairest breeze. "(83) Having " an unconquerable aversion to anything unpleasant "(95), Tito suspends and procrastinates the final decision whether to go in search of his foster father or not. He is just about to begin" a life of distinction and love "(100) and has no intention to give it up. His unscrupulous egoism and self-love, pleasure-loving nature, calculation, lack of compunction and loyalty, and above all," the fear of what he [believes or sees is] likely to rob him of pleasure "(101), act like " a virulent acid "on him and having explained away Baldassarre's claim, he concludes that he has no need to waste his life in a futile search of his foster father. He cleverly justifies himself for not going in search of Baldassarre Calvo. Even when he reads a letter from Baldassarre and knows that he is alive, he only wishes for the death of the carrier of the letter, Fra Luca, to keep the matter secret. The moment he decides not to go to rescue his foster father is the moment when he has" sold himself to evil "(102) and it marks the beginning of his deterioration, or his" movement away from moral light. "

Tito Melema is possessed by intense fear since he refuses to rec-

ognize Baldassarre as his foster father when“ the soiled worn hands ”(191) of Baldassarre clutch his“ velvet-clad arm ”on the steps to the Duomo. As David only feels weak and helpless at the sudden appearance of his brother Jacob at Grimworth and is unable to do anything active to drive away Jacob, Tito never thinks of any scheme for removing Baldassarre, now his enemy. His dread produces no such active malignity; the only measures that occur to him are“ cool deceit ”(194), the purchase of *defensive* armor (chain armor) and his own flight from Florence. The fear presses on him like“ a cold weight ”(215) and it intensifies the alienation from Romola, his wife. It is entirely due to his fear of Baldassarre that he sells the Bardi library, breaking the promise with Bardo who is now dead. Thus Tito is guilty of double betrayal: he betrays both his foster father and his father-in-law. Romola, for whom the library is the symbol of the sacred ties with her dead father and its preservation is the most sacred duty, can only feel contempt for her husband who, to her mind, trampled on her sanctuary, and she says to him scornfully,“‘ You are a treacherous man. ’”(249) But Tito does not repent having sold the library; he only feels that“ the moment [is] eminently unpleasant. ”The sense of having deeply hurt his wife never penetrates deep into his consciousness. But he cannot possibly tell her the real reason for the disposal of the library, because it means that he has to confess the truth concerning Baldassarre. He has“ innate love of reticence ”(82), which forbids him from revealing the truth; for him,“ concealment [is] wisdom. ”(155) and he shrinks from anything that is likely to give him pain in the slightest degree and from all relations that are not easy and agreeable.

Tito is moving farther and farther away from“ moral light ”but he has no sense of his own corruption. He is deceitful not only in his private life but also in the political activities.“ [His] triple deceit ”(303) takes on the aspect of“ a tempting game ”which he plays without scruple because his life is now“ the successive falsities ”like David's life at Grimworth. His decision to leave Florence is made

with ease.

Like David Faux, Tito Melema is spiritually rootless; he lacks spiritual direction. He feels no ties at all to anyone or any party in Florence. He asks himself in his mind as follows: " Could he not strip himself of the past, as of rehearsal clothing, and throw away the old bundle, to robe himself for the real scene? "(414) He believes that he can completely cut off his ties with the past and begin a new life which has no room for things of the past. This is exactly what David Faux thinks when he establishes himself in Grimworth under the pseudo-nym of Edward Freely. Both achieve brilliant success with rapidity and, at the height of their prosperity, the past suddenly overtakes each of them. The result is that both are punished by Nemesis: David becomes the object of the derision and ridicule of the Grimworthians. His past theft of his mother's guineas and his falsities are exposed and he is obliged to leave Grimworth in disgrace: " Mr. David Faux, alias Mr. Edward Freely, [has] gone — nobody at Grimworth [knows] whither. "(326) Nemesis is much severer with Tito Melema; he is pun-ished with death — he is strangled to death by Baldassarre Calvo.

Thus, the similarities between David Faux and Tito Melema are conspicuous. Both have grave moral flaws: they are shallow, deceitful, and self-centered egoists; they have no passion, no loyalty, no conscience, no sense of duty, no sense of ties but have only self-love and calculation. Total lack of altruism is also common to them. Above all, they are cowardly and they are extremely vulnerable to fear. They are despicable villains who betray those who have very close ties with them without scruple: David steals " matri-money "; Tito steals " patri-money " and breaks the promise with his father-in-law after he is dead. They don't mind inflicting pain and suffering as long as they are sure of their own security. Yet they get easily frightened at anything that is likely to rob them of joy and threatens their safety. They are so similar to each other that I conclude that Tito Melema was created on the basis of David Faux, or that David Faux is the

crude prototype of Tito Melema. The only differences between them are that David's ugly personal appearance corresponds to his inward ugliness while Tito's wickedness is concealed beneath his beautiful outward appearance, and that the analysis of Tito is done with far greater subtlety and complexity than that of David.

Notes

1 *See* SHIOKAWA, *George Eliot's "Brother Jacob": An Experimental Story for the Writing of the Novel*, Seijo English Monographs No. 29, Seijo University, 1989. pp. 3-4.

2 In the Notes appended to the Penguin Classics version of *Silas Marner* is the following note concerning this name: "*William Dane*: In the manuscript he is always William Waif, except that the first (here) 'Waif' has been written over 'Wake.' As this manuscript is what the novelist sent to the printer, she must have altered 'Waif' to 'Dane' in proof. Probably she thought 'Waif' too obvious, though she must have had the intention of keeping an alliterative name, since both the first two forms start with a 'W.' 'Waif' is a foundling while 'Dane' is a heathen savage, more trenchant, and less direct a hint."

3 *See* SHIOKAWA, *A Study of* Romola: *Retrogression in Artistic Creativity*, Seijo English Monographs No.26, Seijo University, 1989. pp. 42-45.

4 *See* the above, p. 15.

5 Also in *Romola*, three characters see what Tito really is: Piero di Cosimo the painter, Bernardo del Nero (Romola's god-father and Bardo's only friend in Florence), and Romola his wife. Piero di Cosimo penetrates to the truth beneath his outward beauty. He happens to witness the scene in which Tito is clutched by Baldassarre Calvo on the steps of the Duomo; afterward, he paints a picture of Tito whose face is deadly pale struck by intense fear. Bernardo suspects Tito of concealing a cowardly and treacherous nature behind his beautiful facade from the beginning. He warns Bardo to take care not to be robbed of Romola: "'Remember, Bardo, thou hast a rare gem of thy own; take care no one gets it who is not likely to pay a worthy price. That pretty Greek has a lithe sleekness about him, that seems marvellously fitted for slipping easily into any nest he fixes his mind on.'"(64) In fact, Tito "slips into the nest" left vacant by Dino, or Fra Luca, who forsook his father, Bardo. Nello points out to Tito as follows: "'... fate seems to have measured and chiselled you for the niche that was left empty by the old man's son.'" (116)

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