In my work I focus on George Eliot's 3 early novels: Adam Bede, The Mill on the Floss and Silas Marner. I have analyzed the relations between the individual and community using the pair of concepts Gemeinschaft (community) and Gesellschaft (society). I have not used the concepts to label the stages in the evolutionary progress of mankind, but rather as labels of sets of characteristics. The Gemeinschaft set of values includes the traditional values like keeping one's word, respect to elders, deference to class, family ties etc. The Gesellschaft, on the other hand, is in my reading foremostly defined by self-centredness and egoism. The symptom of these qualities in Eliot's view was a day-dreaming lack of interest in reality. The community awakens the self-centred individuals to a sense of extramantal reality and sympathizing moral breadth of vision. In spite of the cruel means this process is brought about, it ultimately makes Eliot's characters more sympathizing, wiser and more humane.