George Eliot’s Middlemarch and Florence Nightingale: Friendship and Respect Influences Reform in Sanitation, Hospitals, and the Training of Nurses

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George Eliot’s *Middlemarch* and Florence Nightingale: Friendship and Respect Influences Reform in Sanitation, Hospitals, and the Training of Nurses

By

Kerrie A Patterson

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts In Literature and English Studies

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George Eliot’s Middlemarch and Florence Nightingale: Friendship and Respect Influences Reform in Sanitation, Hospitals, and the Training of Nurses

Kerrie A Patterson

This thesis has been examined and approved by the following members of the student’s committee.

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Abstract

George Eliot and Florence Nightingale were certainly two of the most influential women of their Era. George Eliot was known for her genius at writing intelligent novels that address societal and historical issues, and Florence Nightingale was known for her work in sanitation reform, hospital design, and as the founder of nursing as a profession. These two women met when they were thirty two years old, and from that meeting onwards, they shared a friendship and a high regard for each other’s work. This paper explores the influence that Nightingale had on George Eliot’s novel, Middlemarch, and it explores the influence Middlemarch had on Nightingale’s work with educating nurses. George Eliot respected Nightingale’s efforts in sanitation reform and hospital design. This respect is apparent in Middlemarch as George Eliot promotes sanitation reform and Nightingale’s recommendations for hospital design. However, George Eliot also promotes germ-theory a subject that Nightingale opposed. This paper suggests that after reading Middlemarch Nightingale changed her position on germ-theory and took action to educate her nurses about contagions even though it was expedient for her to publicly dismiss the notion of contagions spreading disease in order to encourage support for sanitation reform. This paper demonstrate how respect and friendship between a writer and a social activists is able to promote an outcome that benefits many.
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**Introduction**

George Eliot and Florence Nightingale were hugely influential women during the 19th century. These two gifted women were close in age: Eliot being born in November, 1819, and Nightingale in May of 1820. Their work influenced each other. Nightingale inspired Eliot’s heroine of *Middlemarch*, Dorothea, and inspired Lydgate’s interests in ventilation and hospital design. The medical reform Eliot highlights in *Middlemarch*, in turn, inspired Nightingale to make changes to her Nurses training program. The mutual respect and friendship of these two women created a climate where they were both willing to learn from each other and allow each other’s work to influence their own work. Nightingale’s crusade to reform sanitation and hospital design must have influenced Eliot’s inclusion of reforming sanitation and hospital design in *Middlemarch*, and Eliot’s research into contagion theory and transmission of disease that she included in *Middlemarch* via Lydgate influenced Nightingale’s view on contagions.

Ultimately, respect and friendship resulted in George Eliot’s *Middlemarch* supporting Nightingale’s reform in sanitation and hospital design, and made it possible for a work of literature to inspire Nightingale to make changes to her nurse’s education program that would educate nurses about the transmission of diseases and keep nurses from transmitting diseases to themselves and to patients. The idea that Florence Nightingale was influenced by a work of fiction to change her practices is almost radical. To professional nurses and scholars of nursing history, Nightingale is perceived as a trailblazer who based her advances in nursing practice on statistical evidence and observation. Nightingale’s enjoyment of reading literature and distributing books to patients is well document; however, the notion that Nightingale’s nursing practice was
influenced by a work of fiction has not been addressed by any scholar of nursing or literature. Also, the notion that George Eliot actively supported and promoted Florence Nightingale’s reform crusades in *Middlemarch* has not been discussed by literary scholars. This exploration of the influence between the literary genius, George Eliot, and the social science activist, Florence Nightingale, has been overlooked by previous scholars. By gaining an appreciation of the connection between Nightingale and Eliot, scholars are able to consider other connections that might exist in the past or could be formed in the future between writers of fiction and social science activists.
Chapter One – Review of Literature

In order to explore the possibility of a classic literary work such as *Middlemarch* being influenced by and influencing a historic social reformer such as Florence Nightingale, historical documents such as letters, notes, and lectures provide evidence necessary to support such a claim. Scholarship that laboriously sifted through those documents and organized by date category is invaluable. To research the relationship between George Eliot’s *Middlemarch* and Florence Nightingale, I have relied heavily on Gordon Sherman Haight’s nine volumes of *The George Eliot Letters* and Lynn McDonald’s numerous volumes of the *Collected Works of Florence Nightingale*. The task of attempting to research the relationship between author and reformer would be almost impossible without these invaluable works. To assist my understanding of the significance of the sanitation and medical reform occurring in the nineteenth century and in *Middlemarch* I have consulted the works of scholars of literature, philosophy, and medicine.

Recent Scholarship on Nightingale’s Criticism of Middlemarch

Louise Penner’s *Victorian Medicine and Social Reform: Florence Nightingale Among the Novelists* published in 2010 is probably the most detailed scholarship on the relationship between George Eliot’s *Middlemarch* and Florence Nightingale. Chapter 3 of Penner’s work is titled “Competing Visions, Nightingale, Eliot, and Victorian Health Reform.” In this chapter, Penner suggests that Florence Nightingale was irritated by George Eliot’s *Middlemarch* because Dorothea chooses to marry instead of committing her life to serving and because, more importantly, Nightingale feared progress in sanitary reform was threatened by Lydgate’s interest in Medical reform and Eliot’s research of
bacteria and contagion theory. Penner does not suggest that Nightingale perceived Eliot as in competition with her as a social reformer, but Penner acknowledges that Nightingale’s reaction to *Middlemarch* and her fears that Dorothea marrying did not send the right message to young women who are considering answering a call to serve was extreme and could have been masking a deeper fear that scientific research and medical reform presented by Eliot would negatively impact reform in sanitation.

Penner presents Nightingale’s frustration with Dorothea marrying and ignoring her call to be a St. Theresa or an Antigone with quotes from letters written by Nightingale about *Middlemarch* and by a quote from a letter written by Benjamin Jowlett to Nightingale. In her notes, Penner provides a longer quote from Jowlett written in 1874 asking Nightingale to stop asking him to urge Eliot to write about moral philosophies (166). Apparently, Jowlett had met with Eliot and was weary of Nightingale’s persistence in asking him to meet with Eliot again to discuss Nightingale’s fears of *Middlemarch* negatively effecting sanitation reforms. Penner analyses numerous portions of the text and explains how the Lydgate’s scientific knowledge could oppose Nightingale interests in sanitation and hospital reform.

Penner also discusses similarities and the differences between Eliot and Nightingale’s interest in the public’s perception of women and the role of women in society before discussing how Dorothea and Lydgate’s view on housing, health, and hospitals both reinforces and challenge Nightingale’s views in these areas. Penner also discusses how the scientific and medical theories presented in Eliot’s *Middlemarch* might challenge Nightingale statistical based sanitation theories. Penner provides numerous support for her claim that Nightingale’s fuss about Dorothea marrying deflected
Nightingales friends and readers from being aware of her true concern that Eliot’s presentation of scientific research and medical reform directly challenges theories that support sanitation reform.

While researching Nightingale’s letters that mention George Eliot and *Middlemarch*, Penner relied on the numerous volumes of Lynn McDonald’s *Collected Works of Florence Nightingale*. In volume 5 of the collection, *Florence Nightingale On Society and Politics, Philosophy, Science, Education and Literature: Collected Works of Florence Nightingale*, McDonald points out that Nightingale had expressed other opinions about *Middlemarch* and George Eliot other than the her emotional reaction to Dorothea marrying that Penner focuses on. McDonald points out that Nightingale was a fan of George Eliot and referred to *Middlemarch* as a novel of genius and she always kept an extra copy to lend to people. The addition of this knowledge questions the notion that Nightingale was concerned about *Middlemarch* being a threat to sanitation reform.

McDonald also points out in this volume that Nightingale recognized the influence of writers of powerful novels on social reform. Nightingale was an avid reader of novels and was particularly fond of works by Charles Dickens. Nightingale frequently quoted excerpts from Dickens’ novels. Nightingale valued Dickens’ contribution to bringing about changes in society. McDonald says, “Nightingale recognized the influence of Dickens in social reform, wishing that “an Indian Dickens could arise,” for the hope for reform lay in “powerful” writing that would interest the people “ (768). Nightingale’s appreciation of novels and their ability to bring about changes in society suggests that she was open to being influenced by powerful novels such as *Middlemarch*. Another point of interest that could be of significance is the friendship and respect Dickens and
Nightingale shared. The two corresponded with each other and Nightingale provided Dickens with material about nuns for an article he edited and published in *Household Words* (769).

In Volume 12 of McDonald’s *Collected Works of Florence Nightingale* which was published in 2009 a year prior to Penner publishing, McDonald mentions that in 1873, a year after *Middlemarch* was published, Nightingale approved the syllabus of lectures given by Doctor John Croft to nursing students on Disinfectants and Antiseptics. The syllabus included a basic understanding of germ theory (McDonald 16). Nightingale’s approval signals a change in her position of what should be taught to nurses. The timing of this change I hope to show correlates with Nightingale’s reading of *Middlemarch*. These changes in Nightingale’s actions do not correlate with her correspondences and public position on contagion theory. It was, perhaps Nightingale’s respect for Eliot’s genius that urged her to act on the side of caution to hire John Croft—knowing he was a supporter of the contagion theory—and approving Croft’s lectures on germ theory. At that same time, Nightingale instructed that chlorinated soda should always be available for nurses to wash their hands after dressing a patient’s wounds. This was of such importance to Nightingale that she mentioned this need for chlorinated soda in a section she wrote for Quain’s *Dictionary of Medicine* in the mid-to-late 1870’s. Penner’s analysis of Nightingale’s reaction to Eliot’s *Middlemarch* did not take into consideration Nightingale actions, but focused mostly on written notes and correspondence.

Lyn McDonald’s, *Florence Nightingale and Hospital Reform: Collected Works of Florence Nightingale* Volume 16 which was published after Penner’s work, notes that by 1877, student nurses were receiving lectures on contagion theory and the transmission
of disease by touch and other various means of transmission (p 28). These lectures on contagion theory indicate an acceptance of the scientific evidence Eliot presented in Middlemarch. By 1877, scientific evidence proved the contagion theory, but because of Middlemarch, Nightingale four years before these lectures made changes to the nursing program that kept her nurses safe from transmitting diseases by touch. Four years of education and hand washing policy that helped prevent the transmission of diseases was, perhaps, only made possible because of the genius of a novelist and the respect a social reformer had for that genius.

Lyn McDonald’s Volume 16 of her Collected Works of Florence Nightingale also quotes a letter from Nightingale to Samuel Smith dated February 25, 1861 in which Florence Nightingale refers to Blaise Pascal (McDonald 626). This mention of Pascal is evidence that Nightingale was familiar with the French Philosopher and Mathematician. The importance of this familiarity with his work becomes important later in my as Dorothea “. . . knew many passages of Pascal’s Pensées” (MM 5). I’ll point out that few of the possible models that might have inspired George Eliot’s Dorothea would have had been familiar with the Blaise Pascal’s work.

Another source of evidence is of another letter Nightingale wrote to Madame Mohl dated February 2, 1875. Nightingale writes “. . . Do read Pascal’s Provinciales. There is nothing like it in the world; it is as witty as Molière; it is as closely reasoned as Aristotle; it has a style transparent like Plato” (Cook 317). Although this letter is written after Middlemarch was published, when considered with Nightingale’s letter written in 1861, it provides a convincing argument that Nightingale was familiar with Pascal which
she most likely read during her spiritual crises that she went through prior to meeting George Eliot.

**Nightingale’s Position on Contagions Prior to Reading *Middlemarch***

To discover Nightingale’s position about contagions and germ theory prior to reading *Middlemarch*, Florence Nightingale, *Notes on Hospitals* published in 1859 clearly lays out her thoughts and opinions. Nightingale starts by providing her definition of the word contagion. Nightingale says, “It implies the communication of disease from person to person by *contact*. It pre-supposes the existence of certain germs like the sporules of fungi, which can be bottled up and conveyed any distance attached to clothing” (9). Later, Nightingale without any reserve or hesitation expresses her opinion with gusto saying, “There is no end to the absurdities connected with this doctrine. Suffice to say, that in the ordinary sense of the word, there is no proof, such as would be admitted in any scientific inquiry, that there is any such thing as contagion” (9). Not only is her opinion significant to understanding the dramatic change that occurs in Nightingale’s actions in taking steps to prevent the spread of disease by her nurses in hospitals after reading *Middlemarch*, but it is also important to note Nightingale’s emotionally charged manner of writing and expressing herself. Nightingale does not write in an objective manner that modern day healthcare professionals would expect to see in a textbook or a research document. Nightingale’s emotionally charged writing seems to be an attempt to persuade readers to agree with her. Nightingale’s loaded words could suggest an underlining uncertainty and an inability to be objective.

Also within the text are details about where and how hospitals should be located and designed which are elements that are mentioned in Middlemarch and are, therefore,
in agreement with and supportive of Nightingale’s position on hospital design. Of the location of hospitals Nightingale says:

In country towns, and even in the larger manufacturing and commercial towns, there is no great difficulty in building hospitals in the purer atmosphere of the open country or suburbs. The distance from any part of the town likely to send its sick or maimed can never be very great; and gratuitous medical and surgical service can be rendered without much inconvenience by the officers of the hospital. The distance also to be traversed by friends on visiting days is not so great as to cause undue loss of time. (27)

Nightingale finds these elements of location so important that she summarizes her position in four points and adds one additional element to be considered. Nightingale reiterates:

The elements which ought to determine the position of a hospital are the following:-

First, and before all others, purity of the atmosphere

Second the possibility of conveying the sick and maimed to it.

Third, accessibility for medical officers, and for friends of the sick.

Fourth, convenient position for a medical school, if there be one. (29)

The first three elements Middlemarch’s Bulstrode seems to have taken into consideration when building the town’s new hospital. The fourth element to ensure a convenient position for a medical school is considered important by Lydgate when he expresses his hope of a medical school becoming part of the hospital. George Eliot’s inclusion of these
elements in *Middlemarch* demonstrate her support of Nightingale’s project of reforming hospitals. When Eliot wrote *Middlemarch*, Nightingale was acknowledged by many as an expert on the best location and the best design for new hospitals. By including these four elements that Nightingale recommends, Eliot is acknowledging Nightingale’s expertise in the area of hospital design. Lydgate’s desire for a medical school is also important to Nightingale when we take into consideration that nurses are also trained in a hospital with a medical school and that surgeons such as Lydgate would have been instrumental in teaching nurses. In fact, Nightingale chose to hire a surgeon similar to Lydgate to train her nurses at a major teaching hospital when she hired John Croft.

**Nightingale Hires Croft After Reading *Middlemarch***

The significance of Nightingale hiring of John Croft becomes apparent in the article, “Personalities, Preferences and Practicalities: Educating Nurses in Wound Sepsis in the British Hospital, 1870–1920” published in the *Social History of Medicine* in 2018 by Claire Jones et al. The article discusses the early history of educating nurses and provides a detailed account of the education provide to Nightingale’s student nurses—known as probationers—at St Thomas Hospital. A significant portion of the article discusses the content of John Croft’s lectures and his position of contagions and germ theory.

Apparently, “Croft was one of the first hospital surgeons in London to express enthusiasm for Lister’s ideas and practices, which were based on a germ theory” (584). This was something Nightingale would have known about Croft before she hired him and asked him to provided ongoing lecturers to Nightingale’s nurses. Croft’s goal in informing nurses about contagions seems to be to provide probationers with knowledge
of how contagions spread disease and how nurses should use disinfectants such as carbolic acid to disinfect surfaces. Croft stresses the importance of nurses knowing how diseases are spread as he says in his lecture on Disinfectants and antiseptics:

I shall have talked to you of disinfectants and antiseptics to little purpose if I have not impressed upon you the great necessity there is for employing these agents. Medical and surgical diseases are spread by the infectious particles and gases carried about by the air or by persons and things too numerous to mention, things ordinary and extraordinary. (584)

It is important to point out that Croft told the nurses, with Nightingale’s approval, that diseases are spread by infectious particles and gases from person to person. This is the basis of the contagion theory that Nightingale objected to before reading Middlemarch.

Later in this lecture, Croft stresses that he is teaching nurses about disinfecting and contagion theory to help the nurses while they are performing their duties. Croft says:

I have not given you detailed instructions how to disinfect every article after every special disease or how to disinfect rooms that have been occupied by the subjects of contagious diseases, or how to perform duties which belong to special sanitary officers as they are called, but I have given you information which should be of service to you in your nursing duties. (584)

Nightingale read and approved of Croft’s lectures before they were delivered and, although Nightingale nurses had always received instruction on cleanliness, the use of carbolic acid for disinfecting surfaces was not implemented until Croft was appointed head surgeon and lecturer.
When Nightingale hired Croft, she would have been aware of Croft’s view on contagions and germ theory. Nightingale would have been fully aware that Croft was lecturing about a subject that she had objected to and viewed as a controversial. Nightingale also would have been aware that Croft’s use of terminology that supported Lister’s theories that diseases were spread by contagions (micro-organisms). Nightingale’s hiring of Croft and approving of Croft’s lectures to her student nurses would suggest that something had change Nightingale’s mind about contagions. The timing of Croft being hired and the changes in lectures to nurses as well as the use of carbolic acid to disinfect surfaces support the idea that George Eliot’s *Middlemarch* had some effect on Nightingale’s thoughts about contagions.

**Friendship and Respect and Influence**

*Letters to and from friends*

To gain and understanding of how friendship and respect developed and continued between Eliot and Nightingale, Gordon Sherman Haight’s nine volumes of *The George Eliot Letters* containing letters by and to George Eliot provides valuable insights and understandings. From Eliot’s letters, I have gleaned that George Eliot’s and Florence Nightingale first met when they were thirty-two (32) years old. Their meeting occurred before Nightingale left for Crimea and before Eliot—then Marian Evans—met George Lewis and started writing novels and assumed the pseudonym of George Eliot. In 1852, Marian Evans, worked as the editor of the Westminster Review and lived in the Chapman residence at 142 Strand, London and in June of that year, Mrs. Samuel Smith and Miss Florence Nightingale visited Eliot.
In a letter Charles Bray dated June 29 1856, Eliot writes about Nightingale and Smith, “I like them both very much” and “I must tell you that Miss Florence Nightingale has read the *Philosophy of Necessity* and asked about you as an author” (Eliot and Haight II 39). This letter provides a hint that Charles Bray’s *Philosophy of Necessity* was significant in Nightingale and Eliot life and that both women shared some details of their own spiritual crises during their first meeting. Knowing they shared an understanding of each other’s spiritual crisis becomes important later in understanding Benjamin Jowett’s role as messenger for Nightingale requesting Eliot to write something with moral significance.

In a letter written by Eliot to Sara Sophia Hennell dated 16 July 1852, Eliot discusses the evening following that first meeting where Florence Nightingale along with Miss Carter, Madam Mohl and Miss Sara Clarke, alias Grace Greenwood visited Eliot at the Chapman residence. Eliot writes:

> I had a note from Miss Florence Nightingale yesterday. I was much pleased with her. There is a loftiness of mind about her which is well expressed by her form and manners. My talk the evening Miss Carter was at Mr. Chapmann’s was chiefly with Miss Nightingale and with Mrs. S Smith. . . . (Eliot and Haight II 45).

Eliot also mentions that she thought Hillary appeared a bit snobbish, but “. . . her friends (including Nightingale) seemed so entirely the reverse” (45). From this letter, it is apparent that Eliot appreciated Nightingale’s intelligence and conversation and perceived her as being friendly. At least, not snobbish.
An article written by Miss Sara Clarke but published under the name of Grace Greenwood, mentions that the after dinner discussions were focused on scientific and ethical questions. Greenwood mentions that Eliot seemed “at home” with these discussions. It must be assumed that Eliot and Nightingale were both comfortable talking with each other as well as with the group about these subjects (Collins 39).

A letter written by Eliot almost seven years after that first meeting shows that the two women kept track of each other’s careers through shared friends and acquaintances. Eliot writes to Sara Sophia Hennell on February 19 1859, “Thank you for sending me authentic word about Miss Nightingale. I wonder if she would rather rest from her blessed labours or live to go on working” (Eliot and Haight III 15). A footnote to a letter written by Eliot to Charles Bray dated July 5 1859 mentions that Charles Bray had forwarded letters to Eliot that contained comments from Florence Nightingale. These letters discuss Joseph Liggins falsely receiving money by allowing people to believe he was George Eliot and the author of Adam Bede. The fact that Nightingale wrote to their mutual friend, Charles Bray, and that he forwarded this letter to Nightingale offers proof that Nightingale was also concerned for Eliot and the distress the imposter had inflicted upon her (Eliot III 110). From this letter and the note, it is obvious that Eliot felt concern for Nightingale and Nightingale also felt concern for Eliot.

Friends and Acquaintances

Numerous letters between Eliot and her friends provide evidence that Eliot and Nightingale had quite a few friends in common and that they spoke with their friends about each other. George Eliot wrote to Sara Sophia Hennell dated July 9 1860, and says, “Madame Bodichon, who was here the other day, told me that Miss Nightingale and Miss
Julia Smith had mentioned their pleasure in your book” (Eliot and Haight III 317). The fact that Madame Bodichon passed on Nightingale’s opinion of Eliot’s friend’s book demonstrates that Eliot and Nightingale had the opportunity to hear from friends about each other’s opinions.

One letter that provides a possible understanding of how Nightingale’s closest friends might have viewed Eliot is a letter written by George Eliot to MME Eugene Bodichion, dated December 5 1859. Eliot speaks of a letter she received from Elizabeth Gaskell, a close friend of Florence Nightingale and the Nightingale family. Gaskell even stayed in Nightingale’s home while writing her novel, *North and South*. Eliot is delighted by the contents of Gaskell’s letter which references Eliot’s novels *Scenes of a Clerical life* and *Adam Bede*. Gaskell—quoted by Eliot—says, “I’ve never read anything so complete and beautiful in fiction in my life before” (Eliot and Haight III 226). In a footnote to that letter, Gaskell wrote to George Smith and says about Eliot:

Do you know I can’t help liking her,—*because* of she wrote all those books. Yes I do! I *have* tried to be moral, and dislike her and her books— but it won’t do. There is not a wrong word or a thought in them . . . I think the author must be a noble creature: and I shut my eyes to the awkward blot in her life. (Eliot and Haight III 226)

The blot Gaskell is referring to is Eliot living with Lewis while he was legally married to someone else. This letter shows that Gaskell, and therefore Nightingale, knew of Eliot’s relationship with Lewis, yet Gaskell, and probably Nightingale, had judge Eliot as likeable and noble.
Eliot was so happy with the letter from Gaskell that she mentions Gaskell’s letter to another friend, Sara Sophia Hennell. In her letter dated November 11 1859, Eliot says, “A very beautiful letter—beautiful in feeling—that I received today from Mrs. Gaskell today . . . Very sweet and noble words are they that she has written to me” (Eliot III 199). Eliot’s mention of Gaskell’s letter to two of her friends indicate that Gaskell thoughts and encouragement were of value to George Eliot. The fact that Nightingale’s close friend likes and respects George Eliot reinforces the understanding that Nightingale liked George Eliot (III 198, 199, 226).

Charles Dickens and Florence Nightingale were friends and letters written by George Lewis and George Eliot reveal that Dickens and Eliot were also friends. They corresponded with each other and Dickens occasionally came to dinner at the Lewes. Dickens had corresponded with Eliot and congratulated her on novel *Adam Bede* and supported her efforts in to be recognized as the true author of the novel. Interestingly, Dickens and Lewis had been friends for many years before Dickens came to dine with Lewis’ and was formally introduced to Eliot. In a letter written by Lewis to his sons dated November 10, 1859, Lewis writes to his sons, “To-day we are going to have Charles Dickens to Dinner. He is an intense admirer of your mother, whom he has never seen; and we expect a very pleasant dinner, at which time the two novelists will gobble and gabble” (III 195). In a journal entry written November 18, 1859 Eliot writes, “On Monday, Dickens wrote asking me to give him . . . a story to be printed in “All the Year Round” (205). This journal entry shows that Dickens also corresponded with Eliot as well as visiting. The fact that Dickens’ letter to Eliot is not included in Haight’s collection of Eliot’s letters suggests that there might have been more correspondence between to two.
Interestingly, Eliot received a letter from Nightingale’s close friend, Elizabeth Gaskell, on the same day as Dickens’ visit. The following day, Eliot promptly replied to Gaskell thanking her for her support. From the timing of Dickens visit and Gaskell’s letter, it is easy to speculate that Dickens spoke with Nightingale about Eliot and that Dickens also spoke with Eliot about Nightingale. Since both women were being talked about in the newspapers at that time, it would be unusual if Dickens was not talking with Eliot about Nightingale and Nightingale’s efforts to bring about sanitation reform in hospitals and in society.

*Nightingale in the News*

A search of the *British Libraries Newspapers* database provided numerous articles in the months leading up to Dickens and Eliot’s meeting that mention Florence Nightingale. In June of 1859, Newspapers were reporting on Nightingale’s poor health and many perpetuated a rumor that Nightingale had entered a convent as a nun. Other newspapers were reporting about money that was raised and donated to the Nightingale fund such as the article title “Viscountess Palmerston’s Assembly” that was published in the *Hampshire Advertiser & Salisbury Guardian* which reported that 40,000 pounds was raised and presented by the Lord Mayor to the Nightingale Fund. While other Newspapers reported Florence Nightingale’s activities and presentations of papers such as the article titled “Mr. Potter’s Explanation” published in the *North Wales Chronical* and mentions Nightingale’s presentation of a paper on the “Management of Hospitals” (Mr. Potter’s).

Nightingale was not only being talked about in the news sections of newspapers but also in the Literary sections that discussed recently published books. *The Morning*
Post published a long article in the Literature section mentioning the release of a book titled *Notable women: stories of their lives and characteristics: a book for young ladies* by Ellen Clayton. The Florence Nightingale was the first of the notable women and the article provides a lengthy summary of Florence Nightingale’s history and accomplishments (Literature). The book was most likely released prior to Dickens and Eliot’s meeting and supports the notion that Nightingale was being discussed in newspapers and probably many circles of friends and was most likely discussed by Dickens and Eliot during their meeting since both Dickens and Eliot were friends and supportive of Florence Nightingale.

Searching the *British Libraries Newspapers* between the 1859 and 1870 for articles on Nightingale’s efforts in sanitation reform that Eliot might have seen and inspired her to address the issue of living conditions of the poor revealed many articles. An article, “Miss Nightingale on Sanitary Reform” published in *The Bradford Observer* on July 26, 1860 is an example of the numerous articles that speak of Florence Nightingale’s campaign to bring about sanitation reform and improve living conditions for all. The article reports on a letter Nightingale wrote and asked Lord Shaftesbury to read at the International Statistics congress. The letter is printed in its entirety in the article and offers statistical evidence that “. . . some diseases have almost disappeared . . . through the adoption of sanitary measures” (Miss Nightingale). George Eliot, if she had not been made aware of Nightingale’s efforts towards sanitation reform by Dickens and other friends would have been made aware by the multiple newspaper articles that reported on Nightingale and sanitation reform. These newspaper articles offer convincing
proof that George Eliot was informed and fully aware of Sanitation Reform efforts and of Nightingale’s crusade to fight disease by improving sanitation.

In August of 1870, at the time Eliot was writing *Middlemarch*, the Newspapers were again buzzing with articles on Florence Nightingale. The Ladies Column in the *Penny Illustrated Paper* published a large article titled “Miss Nightingale’s Appeal” which included a large picture the Nightingale Jewel that featured diamonds, the Royal Crown, and an inscription to Miss Nightingale from Queen Victoria.

**Spiritual Crisis and Commonality of Beliefs**

Both George Eliot and Florence Nightingale experienced a spiritual crisis while they were young women. To understand to similarities of their spiritual crises, Ruth Jenkins’s *Reclaiming Myths of Power: Women Writers and the Victorian Spiritual Crisis* provides a detailed analysis and discussion on both Nightingale’s and Eliot’s spiritual crisis they experienced and the changes they made to their lives and, ultimately their careers. Jenkins begins the chapter on Nightingale by emphasizing Nightingale’s belief that it is man and not god that limits a woman’s opportunities to fully participate in her society. Jenkins points out that Nightingale’s spiritual crisis centered on the limitations imposed upon her by her church and her family because she was a woman. Jenkins explains that while quite young, Nightingale believed god had spoken to her and called her to serve him. Nightingale’s spiritual crisis grew out of frustration with her church and her mother’s objections to Nightingale functioning in society in any means other than what the church and society dictated. This frustration led to depression and rejection of her church’s teachings on women’s role in a Christian society.
Jenkins points out that during an episode of deep depression with thoughts of suicide brought about by feeling controlled and limited by the societal restraints imposed on her, Nightingale channeled her anguish into rewriting the established church doctrine to a doctrine more acceptable to women and workers. Nightingale wrote three volumes of *Suggestions for Thought to Searches After Religious Truth*. Jenkins explains that Nightingale believed Victorian religion did not improve humanity’s spirituality but merely supported patriarchal ideology (40). Jenkins says that in *Suggestions*, “. . . Nightingale rejects patriarchy as divinely inspired and creates a new model, not matriarchal, but one enfranchising all who use their God-given talents” (52). Jenkins discusses Nightingale’s frustration with the Protestant church doctrine that limited women to a narrow form of service of being a man’s wife or remaining a father’s daughter. Jenkins explains that Nightingale saw marriage as a church ordained institution that made a woman property of a man, and that a woman’s husband also acquired all a woman’s wealth when she became “his.” Nightingale wanted to do more with life than be a wife or a daughter and Jenkins quotes Nightingale as she cried out for ‘A profession, a trade, a necessary occupation, something to fill and employ my faculties’ (53). Jenkins analysis of Nightingale’s frustration with the limitations imposed upon her and her desire for an occupation to make use of her intelligence supports my argument that Nightingale is similar to Eliot and to Eliot’s Dorothea.

Jenkins begins her chapter on George Eliot by noting how the “Prelude” to *Middlemarch* focuses on societal restraints on Saint Theresa and how modern day Theresas experience similar restraints, yet just as Saint Theresa was able to circumvent those restraints so too do modern day Saint Theresas such as Dorothea (117). Jenkin’s
detailed discussion on Eliot’s “Prelude” to *Middlemarch* provides insights that could link Nightingale, a modern day Saint Theresa, with Dorothea. At this point, readers could consider that Eliot knew of the societal restraints that Nightingale had experienced and might well have thought of Nightingale as a modern Saint Theresa.

Jenkins also provides a detailed explanation of Eliot’s spiritual crisis as a young woman and discusses Eliot’s views on religion which Jenkins says, “echos Nightingale, who also believed that man had appropriated religion” and “… stymied individual development” (123). Jenkins also points out that in the “Finale” to *Middlemarch*, Eliot defines religion as an “individual effort directed toward a larger human good, not egotistic concerns” (124). This description of religion is similar to Nightingale’s belief that any practice of Christian faith should be focused on benefiting all. The fact that their individual spiritual crisis resulted in a similar belief that a person should work to benefit human good supports the idea that the two women understood each other’s reasons for wanting to work to benefit their fellow man. Eliot would have understood and respected Nightingale’s desire to use her intelligence to benefit society through social activism, and Nightingale would have understood and respected Eliot’s desire to use her intelligence through writing works of fiction.

**Nightingale as Dorothea in *Middlemarch***

In the book, *George Eliot: A Critic's Biography* published 2006, Barbara Nathan Hardy discusses Eliot’s claim that none of her fictional characters were portraits of friends, but she did manipulate her models. Hardy refers to Eliot’s letter to Mr. and Mrs. Charles Bray and Sara Sophia Hennell written June 27, 1859 in which Eliot says “There is not a single portrait in the book, nor will there be in any future book of mine” (Eliot
and Haight III 99). Eliot continues that there may have been two in portraits in Clerical Scenes but that that was before she became good at manipulating her material. The fact that Eliot is good at manipulating and reimagining her models opens the door for many to speculate who the initial model might have been.

Hardy proposes that Jane Senior was the model that inspired Eliot’s Dorothea (128). Senior was younger than Eliot by nineteen years and, according to Hardy, assisted Eliot with her millinery and acted as a shopping advisor. Apparently, Senior also sent Eliot gifts of clothing (Hardy 121). Senior, it seems, knew about dressing with style and probably dressed stylishly and fashionably. Since Dorothea, dresses modestly and doesn’t express interest in the style or fashion of the day, It is a bit of a stretch to imagine Jane Senior as Eliot’s model/inspiration for Dorothea. I also doubt that Jane Senior was familiar with French philosopher Blaise Pascal. As noted earlier, Dorothea was familiar with Pascal’s work. The model that Eliot chose to manipulate and reimagine in order to create Dorothea probably had a mind that was interested in reading works by philosophers and theologians.

However, Hardy is accurate in her analysis of Middlemarch, being a novel of reform, needing a woman of character with vision and defined talent who was urgently ambitious and socially frustrated (128). To me, Hardy’s woman of character describes the young Florence Nightingale that George Eliot met in 1852 before Nightingale had embarked on her journey to bring about reform in sanitary conditions in hospitals and educating nurses. Nightingale at that time was urgently ambitious and socially frustrated. Hardy also points out that Dorothea represents an early stage of proto-feminism not an achiever like Florence Nightingale (129). To which I would argue that the young
Nightingale of 1852 was not an achiever but was most definitely represented the early stage of proto-feminism. Hardy’s book also provides a detailed outline of Georg Eliot’s Life and Writing which has proven to be useful when comparing Eliot’s activities and publications with the letters she received and written.

**Appearance**

To discover if Dorothea resembled Nightingale, examining descriptions of Nightingale’s appearance by friends and people that met her is the first step. The National portrait gallery provides Queen Victoria’s description on Nightingale. The Queen writes:

> I had expected a rather cold, stiff, reserved person, instead of which, she is gentle, pleasing & engaging, most ladylike, & so clever, clear & comprehensive in her views of everything. Her mind is solely & entirely taken up with the one object, to which she has sacrificed her health, & devoted herself like a saint. But she is entirely free of absurd enthusiasm, without a grain of ‘exaltation’, which so often leads to over strained religious views, – truly simple, quite pious in her action, & her views, yet without the slightest display of religion or a particle of humbug. … She is tall, & slight, with fine dark eyes, & must have been very pretty, but now she looks very thin & care worn. (Victoria)

Queen Victoria perceived Nightingale as tall and slender with dark eyes and possibly pretty in her youth. The queen also perceived Nightingale as simple and pious and as devoted like a saint to her mission—Sanitation and Hospital reform and the training of nurses. The physical description of Nightingale is also supported by Elizabeth Gaskell. In a letter to her daughter, Elizabeth Gaskell describes Nightingale’s appearance:
She is tall; very slight & willowy in figure; thick shortish rich brown hair[,] very delicate pretty complexion, rather like Florence’s [Gaskell’s daughter], only more delicate colouring, grey eyes which are generally pensive & drooping, but when they choose can be the merriest eyes I ever saw; and perfect teeth making her smile the sweetest I ever saw. (Gaskell)

Both Queen Victoria and Elizabeth Gaskell perceived Nightingale as tall, slender, with a sweet smile that suggests that she might have been pretty in her youth. The fact that Nightingale might have been pretty in her youth is important since Dorothea is young and pretty.

**Eliot’s Support of Medical Reform in *Middlemarch***

Lilian Furst, in her essay, “Struggling for Medical Reform in Middlemarch” points out that Eliot’s extensive notes on medical reform indicate that, for Eliot, medical reform was an integral part of the novel’s themes. Furst explains that:

She, Eliot [sic], took considerable care to become well informed about the medical controversies of the day and their background, reading various works on the history of medicine and devoting almost the first part of her preparatory notes to an assortment of medical jottings ranging from . . . current legal medical decisions, questions of remuneration, the spread of cholera in 1830-1832, German treatise on microscopic discoveries in cell-theory, and the constitution of the medical colleges. (Furst 342 para 1)

The importance of Eliot’s research and scientific reasoning becomes apparent in Lydgate and important for Nightingale who had knowledge of the history of medicine and medical practices. If Eliot made a mistake about medical practices, Nightingale would know it.
In order to help readers understand history of medicine that Eliot and Nightingale knew, Furst provides background information on the history of the Doctors Registration Movement that occurred in the 1830s. Furst provides details on the hierarchical structure of medical practitioners in the 1830s and suggests Lydgate challenges the hierarchical structure with his knowledge gained through education outside of England and with his practice that was based on evidence garnered from recent research. Furst suggests that, to Eliot, the introduction of the scientific method of diagnosing and treating patients as well the revision of the structure of the medical profession were equally important in reforming the practice of medicine.

Lydgate’s position in that hierarchical structure as a surgeon and not as a physician is explained in detail by Furst. Apparently, in the 1830s, physicians and surgeon, were different in knowledge and social standing. A physician’s knowledge of medicine was not as important as his social and moral standing in the community. Physicians were referred to as doctors. Surgeons, on the other hand, were referred to as mister, but were often more knowledgeable in medicine and science than a physician. Furst points out that Lydgate was a surgeon and was refer to as Mr. Lydgate and that he was an astute diagnostician who was avant-garde in his treatments, but he was also a gentleman with a higher social standing than most surgeons. Furst highlights portions of the text that illustrate the importance of Lydgate being both a gentleman and a knowledgeable medical practitioner. This becomes significant in my argument when comparing Lydgate to John Croft; the gentleman surgeon that Nightingale hired to educate her nurses. Croft, like Lydgate, was a surgeon who was avant-garde in his practice and was a gentleman.
Nightingale Reforms Nurses Training After Reading Middlemarch

After reading the first few installments of Middlemarch, Nightingale made significant changes to the education of student nurses. The first change she initiated was to replace Mr. Whitfield with Mr. John Croft—a surgeon who believed and promoted germ theory and that diseases were spread by contagions. Up until reading the first few chapters of Middlemarch, Nightingale had been adamantly opposed to the idea of contagions and only allowed nurses to be educated about the importance of cleanliness to prevent the spread of diseases. The scholarly work by Edward Tyas Cook, The Life of Florence Nightingale, provides an insight into why Nightingale hired Croft even though he promoted germ theory and did not support Nightingale’s position that diseases were spread by filth. Cook notes:

Mr. Whitfield, the Resident Medical Officer, who had acted since the foundation of the Nursing School as Medical Instructor of the Probationers, resigned that post, and Mr. J. Croft, who had lately become one of the Surgeons to the Hospital, was appointed in his stead. Miss Nightingale saw and corresponded with Mr. Croft, and liked him much.

(246)

The resignation of Mr. Whitfield and the appointment of Mr. Croft to the position of the Resident Medical Officer made it possible for Nightingale to ask Croft to be the Medical Instructor for the Nursing School. The fact that Nightingale knew what Croft wrote and liked him despite of his belief in germ theory suggests something had mellowed Nightingale’s objections to contagions.
Apparently, Croft not only promoted educating medical professionals in the spread of disease by contagions, he was also interested in all areas of nursing education. Cook says of Croft:

He gave clinical instruction to the Probationers; delivered courses of lectures—general, medical, and surgical in the several terms—throughout the year, of which he submitted the syllabus to Miss Nightingale, and at her request drew up a “Course of Reading for Probationers. (246)

Cooks points out that Nightingale remained closely involves with the education of her nurse and that Nightingale read all the lectures Croft delivered to probationers.

Edward Cook’s book, includes a letter Nightingale wrote to Croft in which she offers her guidance to Croft on how he can improve his lectures. Nightingale:

I read your Case-papers . . . with more interest than if they were novels. Some are meagre, especially in the history of the cases. Some are good. Please remember that, besides your own instruction, you can give me some too, by making these most interesting cases as interesting as possible by making them accurate and entering into the full history. (246)

The fact that Nightingale corresponded and liked Croft before she hired him, and that Nightingale read all the lectures Croft delivered to student nurses supports the idea that Nightingale knew and did not hinder Croft from educating nurses on germ theory and diseases being spread by contagions.

To garner more information about John Croft’s qualifications, his obituary in *The British Medical Journal* provides details about his medical education, his medical career, and standing as a gentlemen in society. Croft’s obituary provides precise details of his
education, the exams that he passed, the diplomas he was awarded, his appointments as a surgeon, and lectures and papers he delivered. The final paragraph of Croft’s obituary notes his character: “He was most courteous and dignified, and had a stern sense of duty. A man of strong religious convictions, he was always ready to ally himself with those working to remedy some social defect and to produce a higher ideal” (page 1494). These are all qualities that Nightingale would approve of. But the fact that Croft was a gentleman and a surgeon who wanted to improve the practice of medicine as well as nursing, suggests that he is similar in some ways to Eliot’s young idealistic Lydgate. Perhaps Nightingale liked the gentleman surgeon that brought reform to medical and hospital practices in *Middlemarch* and looked for a surgeon such as Lydgate who would bring new ideas to nurses. Understanding Croft and the new ideas he brought to educating nurses helps us to appreciation the significance of Nightingale choosing a surgeon like Lydgate.

A resource that provides insight into the content of the lecture John Croft provided to student nurses is the article, “Personalities, Preferences and Practicalities: Educating Nurses in Wound Sepsis in the British Hospital, 1870–1920,” published in the *Social History of Medicine* by Claire Jones, Marguerite Dupree, Iain Hutchison, Susan Gardiner, Anne Marie Rafferty. Jones et al. points out that, “Lecture topics included the management of wound sepsis (including dressings), pre- and post-operative preparation of patients, bandaging and methods of treatments for ‘hospital diseases’” (191). Part of the pre-and post-operative preparation would have included the use of carbolic acid which was not introduced to the education and practice of nurses until after Nightingale had read the first few installments of *Middlemarch* and after she had hired John Croft.
Florence Nightingale’s article, "Nursing the Sick," which she wrote especially for Richard Quain’s *Dictionary of Medicine*, published in the late 1870s, also illustrates the precautions Nightingale insisted on to protect her nurses from “contracting” any diseases from germs carried by a patient. Nightingale insists that chlorinated soda should always be available for nurses to wash their hands after dressing a patient’s wounds. Nightingale says, “It may destroy germs at the expense of the cuticle” and then quotes a humorous anecdote she had heard from a surgeon: “‘if it takes off the cuticle, it must be bad for the germs’” (1045). At the time of writing her article, Nightingale was still publicly dismissing contagion theory, but her article demonstrates she wanted to protect nurses from germs that could be contagious. The article also disproves Louise Penner’s claim that Nightingale never used the words “contagion” and “germs” uncritically.

Cecil Blanche Woodham Smith’s book, *Florence Nightingale, 1820-1910,* published in 1951, provides valuable background and discussion of Florence Nightingale. Woodham Smith discusses Nightingale in an informal tone that hints that Woodham Smith personally knew Florence Nightingale. The familiar tone made the book easy and quick to read. Woodham Smith credits numerous sources throughout the text which makes his storytelling form of analysis believable. Woodham Smith provides historical background to the family and social influences that shaped Florence Nightingale’s thoughts and decisions. Woodham Smith provides insights into the Nightingale’s travels and social connections throughout England and Europe. Nightingale was well educated, spoke many languages and was well informed of the political events in England and Europe. Woodham Smith has numerous comments on Nightingale’s frustrations with her mother and sister and in not being able to contribute to society. Although Woodham
Smith does not use the word feminist or feminism, he does describe Nightingale’s intelligence and desires to use her intelligence beyond the limitations that her church, her mother, and her sister imposed upon her. This background information, when combined with Jenkins analysis of Nightingale’s spiritual crisis, further supports my argument that Nightingale experiences similar frustrations and desires to use her intelligence as Dorothea and that Nightingale might have identified with Dorothea while reading *Middlemarch*.

Previous scholarship has overlooked the influence Florence Nightingale and George Eliot had on each other’s work. My research provides insight into how both Eliot and Nightingale did not work in isolation of the arts or the social sciences. My hope is that by understanding how Eliot’s and Nightingale’s work benefited from each other’s friendship, we can learn more about each of these women and their contribution to bring about reform that ultimately lead to changes in the living conditions of the poor, the layout of hospitals, and the education of nurses.
Chapter Two – Analysis

In 1873, Florence Nightingale wrote what seems to be both praise and complaint about George Eliot’s *Middlemarch*. Nightingale says,

A NOVEL of genius has appeared. Its writer once put before the world (in a work of fiction too), certainly the most living, probably the most historically truthful, presentment of the great Idealist, Savonarola of Florence. This author now can find no better outlet for the heroine — also an Idealist because she cannot be a ‘St. Teresa’ or an ‘Antigone,’ than to marry an elderly sort of literary impostor, and, quick after him, his relation, a baby sort of itinerant Cluricaune or inferior Faun. (Nightingale “A Note of Interrogation” 1)

Nightingale’s criticism of the novel’s heroine, Dorothea, choosing to marry instead of choosing a life of service seems harsh. Some literary critics have interpreted Nightingale’s comment as her view about the whole novel. One critic, Louise Penner suggests that Nightingale was upset because *Middlemarch*—being a novel that champions, sanitary and hospital reform— “stepped on her toes” and encroached on Nightingale’s area of expertise (106). But Penner also points out that Eliot and Nightingale knew and admired each other’s work” (82). It appears that Nightingale’s comment was in essence, merely an emotional reaction to Dorothea choosing marriage instead of service. Nightingale respected and admired Eliot. I argue that regardless of Nightingale’s somewhat emotional comment about Eliot’s *Middlemarch*, Nightingale valued the contribution that Eliot through *Middlemarch* made to promoting sanitary reform and reform in hospital design. I also argue that Nightingale after reading the
novel, made changes to her nurses’ education program: changes that ensured nurses were educated about contagions and protected nurses from contracting or spreading diseases through contagions.

Florence Nightingale, most likely, became emotionally invested in *Middlemarch* as soon as she read the prelude and discovered that Dorothea was, in many ways, similar to herself. The prelude to *Middlemarch*, begins with the narrator informing readers that:

> Here and there is born a Saint Theresa, foundress of nothing, whose loving heart-beats and sobs after an unattained goodness tremble off and are dispersed among hindrances, instead of centering in some long-recognizable deed. (Eliot 3)

Although the text is referring to Dorothea, Nightingale must have recognized herself in the text as Nightingale, when she was a young woman, was very much like Saint Theresa in that she believed she had been called by god, and she desperately desired to serve god and contribute to society in some noble way. Jenkins mentions that Nightingale claims she had been called by god to serve since she was very young, and by the time she was thirty, she was anxiously waiting for an opportunity to follow that calling and serve god and society. Jenkins says that Nightingale wrote in her diary, “‘I am 30 . . . the age of which Christ began His Mission. No more childish things, no more vain things, no more love, no more marriage. Now, Lord, let me only think of thy will’” (54 para 2). Jenkins also points out that by paralleling her life with Christ’s, Nightingale is identifying that the central purpose of her calling is to serve god. In this aspect, Nightingale is similar to Saint Theresa who from an early age, yearned to answer god’s call.
Nightingale, again like Saint Theresa, was for many years a foundress of nothing. Nightingale, being a woman living in the Victorian Era, was hindered by the constraints of her mother, her church, and her society who told that, as a woman, she should be satisfied with being a good daughter or a good wife. But being someone’s good daughter or good wife was not enough for Nightingale just as it was not enough for Saint Theresa. Nightingale, again like Saint Theresa, sobbed after an opportunity to do some good and to use her intelligence in a productive way. Jenkins points out Nightingale’s tears and frustration are apparent in an entry Nightingale made in her diary. Nightingale writes:

> The thoughts and feelings that I have now . . . I can remember since I was six years old. A profession, a trade, a necessary occupation, something to fill and employ all my faculties, I have always felt essential to me, I have always longed for. . . My God! What is to become of me? (53 para 6)

Jenkins explains that Nightingale suffered with depression directly because she was a woman constrained by family and by society. As an intelligent person, Nightingale wanted and desired an occupation outside of her home. As she read Eliot’s description of a modern day Saint Theresa, Nightingale couldn’t help but recognize the similarities between her younger self and the young Dorothea. If Eliot looked for a modern day Saint Theresa as a model for Dorothea, few people in Eliot’s life time could have been better suited than the young Florence Nightingale that Eliot first met in 1852.

**Nightingale as a Model for Eliot's Dorothea**

When considering a possible model for Dorothea, Eliot would have looked for someone who was not only spiritual with a desire to serve humanity but also possessed intelligence and an interest in theology and who had a keen mind for mathematics.
Dorothea, as readers learn early in the novel, is intelligent and “. . . knew many passages of Pascal’s Pensées and Jeremy Taylor by heart” (Eliot 5). A note at the bottom of the text informs readers that Blaise Pascal was a French Philosopher and Mathematician and Jeremy Taylor was Theological Writer (5). Nightingale also new passages from Pascal’s Pensées and passages of Jeremy Taylor by heart and referenced both passages in her journals (Nightingale and McDonald Vol 2 164) (Nightingale and McDonald Vol 3 583). Eliot and Nightingale might have participated in a discussion about Pascal and Taylor during the dinner party at Chapman’s home, or Eliot and Nightingale might have discussed the topic when they discussed Bray’s Philosophy of Necessity—a discussion that Eliot mentions in a letter to Charles Bray (Eliot and Haight Vol II 39). No matter when or if Eliot learned of Nightingale’s knowledge of Pascal and Taylor, Dorothea possesses a similar intellectual interest as Florence Nightingale. Nightingale must surely have read of Dorothea’s interests in Pascal and Taylor and recognized the similarity between Dorothea’s intellectual interests and her own. Eliot and Nightingale both had friends in intellectual circles that would have had active discussions about theology, and from this group of friends, Eliot might have known other women who could quote passages from Pascal and Jeremy Taylor, but since Nightingale was known for referring to these passages in her journals, It seems most likely that Eliot thought of Nightingale when she gave Dorothea an interest in Pascal and Taylor. There is little doubt that Eliot chose Nightingale’s intellect and interest as a model for Dorothea.

**Similarities Shared by Nightingale and Dorothea**

Besides sharing similarities of spirituality and intellect, Florence Nightingale also shares similarities with Dorothea in appearance and in how she appears to others. As
described earlier, Queen Victoria perceived Nightingale as gentle, pleasing, and as a woman who is focused on what she is devoted to and not on herself. Nightingale appears as a woman who is pious and like a saint. The queen notes that Nightingale is clever and expresses her views clearly and comprehensively. Queen Victoria also notes that Nightingale is tall, slight, with dark eyes and still shows signs of being pretty in her youth even though she looks tired and worn. Nightingale’s close friend, Elizabeth Gaskell, when describing Nightingale, emphasizes her sweet countenance, but both Queen Victoria’s and Elizabeth Gaskell’s descriptions of Nightingale mention that Nightingale is tall and has a slight figure. Both comment on her eyes which seem to be a dominant aspect of her face. While Gaskell focuses on Nightingale’s physical appearance and mentions her brown hair and sweet smile, but it is Queen Victoria’s description of how Nightingale appears to her is the most useful in seeing a connection between Nightingale and Eliot’s Dorothea.

*Middlemarch*’s narrator describes Dorothea with features and overall appearance as gentle woman who is focused on what she is devoted to and not on herself. Dorothea is described as “open ardent and not the least self-admiring” (Eliot 7 para 4). Dorothea has dark brown hair, large eyes (Eliot 121 para 2). Also, Dorothea’s “. . . large eyes seemed like her religion, too unusual and striking” (Eliot 7 para2). But it is the German artists and friend of Ladislaw, Neumann, who sees in Dorothea the same piousness that Queen Victoria observed in Nightingale. Naumann describes Dorothea as looking like a Quaker or a nun, but most importantly, Naumann describes Dorothea as having “a sensual force controlled by spiritual passion” (Eliot 122 para 3). Dorothea’s controlled spiritual passion is similar to the queen’s description of Nightingale as being “quite pious . . . yet without
the slightest display of religion or a particle of humbug” (Victoria). Nightingale’s spiritual views, like Dorothea’s, are controlled. The queen says Nightingale appears to have devoted herself like a saint, so too Naumann also sees Dorothea as a saint: “a sort of Christian Antigione” (Eliot 122 para 3). Both Nightingale and Dorothea appear to be spiritual and saintly as well as having brown hair and large eyes. And, of course, both women are clever.

Because of her devoutness and intellect, the narrator describes Dorothea as a young woman who might have difficulty finding a suitable marriage partner. Readers are told that a wary man might “. . . hesitate before he made an offer” and that Dorothea “. . . might refuse all offers” (Eliot 6). Nightingale had difficulty with offers of marriage and the one offer of marriage she did receive she refused. Dorothea yet again possesses similar characteristics and life experiences as Florence Nightingale. It is easy to believe that as Nightingale read the first few pages of Middlemarch, she recognized these characteristics and traits that she shared with Dorothea Brooke. Noting these similarities, Nightingale must have identified with Dorothea and hoped that Dorothea’s path in the novel would also resemble her own.

Even if Eliot did not choose Nightingale as a model for Dorothea, Nightingale, recognizing herself in Dorothea, might well have become emotionally invested in Dorothea. This emotional investment explains Nightingale’s emotional criticism of Eliot choosing to orchestrate Dorothea in marrying not just once—which could be put down to immaturity—but twice, and before the second marriage, she had the choice to dedicate her life to service as Nightingale had chosen. Nightingale’s reaction is understandable, but her reaction and criticism is directed to this one aspect of the novel and not to the
Nightingale knee that Dorothea’s marriage meant Dorothea would no longer be able to serve her community by investing her time and money into reforming cottages and supporting projects such as the new hospital. But more importantly, Nightingale’s emotional reaction came at the very end of the novel many months after the first book was published; therefore, Nightingale’s early reading and appreciation of the novel was not tainted by emotions and disappointment of Dorothea choosing to marry.

**Designing Cottages and Sanitation Reform**

When Nightingale read the first book of *Middlemarch* in December 1871, Nightingale must have been delighted to learn that Dorothea is interested in improving the cottages of the workers living on her Uncle’s estate. Part of Nightingale’s efforts in sanitation reform involved improving the cottages and the overall living conditions of the poor. Nightingale says in her *Notes on Nursing for the Labouring Classes*

> Among the more common causes of ill health in cottages is overcrowding. There is perhaps only a single room for a whole family. . . Ventilation would improve it, but still it would be unhealthy. The only way to meet this overcrowded state of cottages is by adding rooms, or by building more cottages on a better model. (Nightingale and McDonald Vol 6. 54)

Nightingale encouraged building new cottages and even drew plans for models. Many of Nightingale’s friends and supporters viewed Nightingale as an authority on how cottages should be designed to ensure good health for all members of the families who dwell in the cottages. Nightingale believed cleanliness and fresh air were essential for good health.
Nightingale also believed that novels played a significant role in influencing social reform. McDonald explains that Nightingale valued Charles Dickens’ novels as influential in swaying public opinion towards social reform. Nightingale expressed a hope that other writers like Dickens would arise and use their creative skill to capture the general public’s imagination and help them realize the need for social and sanitary reform. Nightingale says, “. . . the only hope for reform lay in ‘‘powerful’’ writing that would interest the people” (McDonald Vol 5 768 para 3). As soon as Nightingale read about Dorothea’s interest in reforming cottages, she must have hoped Middlemarch would be a novel that would interest people, capture their imagination, and help them appreciate the need for sanitary reform that would improve the living conditions of the poor and improve the overall health of all people.

Nightingale’s battle for sanitary reform for dwellings such as the cottages on the estates of the wealthy citizens in Middlemarch was fought politically and publicly. George Eliot and many of her readers would have been well aware of the battle Nightingale fought to educate the wealthy about the need to improve dwellings and sanitation. In 1860, eleven years prior to Eliot publishing Middlemarch, Florence Nightingale wrote a letter to Lord Shaftesbury about sanitary reform and asked him to read her letter at the International Statistical congress. Nightingale was noted at the time for her use of statistical evidence to elicit change and reform in military hospitals. In this letter which was later published in numerous British newspapers, Nightingale provides statistical evidence about the negative effect of unsanitary dwellings of the poor and how squalid living conditions contributed to the spread of disease. Nightingale also emphasized that by improving dwellings of the poor the mortality rate falls. Nightingale
pointed out that “... some diseases have almost disappeared... through the adoption of sanitary measures” (Miss Nightingale on Sanitary Reform 7). In this letter, and in other letters that Nightingale continued to write and publish, Nightingale addresses the concern of cost that some wealthy gentry held as a reason for not taking measures to improve the dwellings of workers on their land. Nightingale explained with statistical evidence that the cost of disease was greater than the cost of improving living conditions and sanitation issues of communities. As a friend and follower of Nightingale’s work, Eliot must have been well aware of Nightingale’s persistent efforts to bring the issue of good sanitation and suitable living conditions to the attention of the wealthy citizens and politicians. In Middlemarch, George Eliot adds her support to Nightingale’s efforts to convince wealthy gentry to take action and improve the cottages on their estates.

Through Dorothea’s uncle, Mr. Brooke, Eliot addresses the resistance of the wealthy gentry who are hesitant to invest money to improve the horrid living conditions of their tenants. Dorothea chastises her uncle and points out to him that, “Life in cottages might be happier than ours, if they were real houses fit for human beings...” (Eliot 21 para 2). Dorothea’s reprimand to her uncle can be seen as emblematic of Nightingale’s pleas to wealthy gentry, and Mr. Brooke’s neglect of his tenant’s cottages and lack of interest is presented as shameful. Through Dorothea, Eliot is shaming the British gentry that ignore Nightingale’s pleas and refuse take action, and through Dorothea, Eliot encourages the wealthy gentry to think about Nightingale’s pleas as Dorothea repeats her chastisement of her uncle’s neglect of his tenants living conditions. Dorothea pleads with her uncle to think of the reality of his tenants living conditions and to:
Think of Kit Downes, uncle, who lives with his wife and seven children in a house with one sitting-room and on bed-room hardly larger than this table! – and those poor Dagleys, in their tumbled down farmhouse, where they live in the back kitchen and leave the other rooms to the rats. (Eliot 242 para 8)

As Dorothea reprimands and educates her uncle, Eliot is reprimanding and educating the wealthy gentry and all her readers and encouraging them to listen to Nightingale’s call for sanitary reform and make all houses sanitary and fit for human beings.

Dorothea’s plans to improve the cottages are similar to Nightingale’s plans for cottages in that they are drawn with accuracy and could appear as if drawn by an architect. Dorothea informs us of there accuracy and detail when she encourages Celia to “... look at my plan; I shall think I’m and architect, if I have not got incompatible stairs and fireplaces” (Eliot 10 para 10). Dorothea’s approach to planning her cottages is also similar to Nightingale’s approach. Dorothea consults Loudon’s book in order to make her plans for the cottages architecturally viable as well as being “fit for human beings” (Eliot 21). Penner points out that Loudon’s designs were “informed by miasmatic disease theory” (88). Nightingale believed in the miasmatic disease theory and that disease was spread by filth. Dorothea’s choice to consult Loudon’s book makes it appear that Eliot is supporting Nightingale’s efforts to prevent the spread of disease by following the miasmatic approach of eliminating disease by eliminating filth and building cottages that facilitate clean living.

Nightingale also drew plans in detail for hospitals as well as cottages as part of the sanitation reform effort. In her *Notes on Hospitals*, Nightingale drew and discussed
plans of twelve different hospitals to illustrate hospital plans that were defective and hospital plans that could be considered acceptable. Nightingale’s *Notes on Hospitals* and hospital designs were perceived at the time as revolutionary and Nightingale was consulted by the governments of Britain, Prussia, Holland, and Portugal to design hospitals for them. The Edinburgh Infirmary, the Coventry Hospital, and the Infirmary at Leeds are just a few of the many hospital that were built according to plans drawn up by Florence Nightingale (Woodham-Smith 226). Nightingale also drew plans for cottages that were to be located near hospitals in India. Eliot’s readers would have immediately associated Nightingale with Dorothea as it would have been unusual for women to draw detailed plans for buildings, and Nightingale would might have been the first person they thought of when they read about Dorothea drawing plans for cottages. Readers and Nightingale by this stage in the novel, would have begun to recognize the multiple similarities between Nightingale and Dorothea.

Readers would have recognized that Dorothea is also like Nightingale in her endeavors to introduce sanitation reform and improved cottages putting her voice behind her plans and talking to everyone who would listen. Dorothea, we know from Sir Chettem, spoke with Mr. Lovegood about her plans (Eliot 20 para 20). We can assume that Dorothea spoke about her plans for the cottages at every opportunity possible, and we are given a glimpse of Dorothea talking about her plans at a social gathering through the eyes and conversation of Mrs. Cadwallader and Lady Chettam. Readers and Nightingale also see Dorothea having an animated conversation about cottages and hospitals with the new surgeon in Middlemarch, Mr. Lydgate (Eliot 59). Nightingale could easily envisage Dorothea passionately explaining her hopes and plans in a social
setting as Nightingale herself had frequently been involved in many similar conversations in an attempt to win over leaders and people with influence. Woodham-Smith says that when Nightingale was endeavoring to get a bill amended for sanitary reform she “campaigned furiously” (303 para 3). Dorothea, by talking to multiple people of influence about her plans, is campaigning vigorously.

The fact that Dorothea tells Lydgate about her plans might also signal that Dorothea recognizes Lydgate as a person with some influence, and since their conversation also includes hospitals, readers and Nightingale can safely assume that Lydgate also has an interest in hospital design. Very quickly readers discover that Lydgate does indeed have an interest in hospital design, and he also has an interest in ventilation. Mr. Brooke informs us that, “Lydgate has lots of ideas, quite new, about ventilation” (Eliot 59). Again Nightingale and most of Eliot’s readers knew that a significant part of Nightingale’s hospital designs was aimed at improving ventilation. Nightingale’s work in the Crimean war with British military hospitals and her ongoing work with improving hospitals was directly related to improving ventilation. Nightingale’s *Notes on Hospitals* devotes over twenty pages to the topic of ventilation. Nightingale details defective ventilation in current hospitals and suggests improved ventilation for future hospitals. Nightingale offers advice on how to improve the ventilation of surgical hospitals, convalescent hospitals, and cottages. Eliot’s reader must recognize Lydgate as a supporter her Nightingale’s designs and efforts to improve ventilation. We can assume, that in Nightingale’s eye, Eliot is demonstrating support of Nightingale’s work by introducing Lydgate as yet another character of intelligence that shares an interest in reforming sanitation and hospital design.
Location of Middlemarch’s Hospital

Eliot appears to follow Nightingale’s advice for the location of hospitals in country towns and locates Middlemarch’s new hospital approximately five minutes’ drive from Lydgate’s residence in the town. Eliot, following Nightingale’s advice ensures that the hospital has green plots surrounding it (Eliot 269 para 3). The narrator informs us that Mr. Bulstrode, a wealthy businessman with a desire to do the right and “Christian thing” in his community, had the greatest influence in choosing the location of the new hospital. Bulstrode considers Lydgate’s arrival in town and the possibility of Lydgate taking on the position of superintendent of the new hospital as sign from god. Bulstrode says piously, “I am encouraged to consider your advent to this town as a gracious indication that a more manifest blessing is now to be awarded to my efforts” (Eliot 80 para 5). It seems that in Bulstrode’s mind that god will bless his efforts to build a new hospital with a surgeon who trusts science to assist him in diagnosing and treating patients. Bulstode’s belief in god and trust in science was understood by both George Eliot and Florence Nightingale. Even though both women experienced a spiritual crises and choose a different path than the traditional church that they were raised in, neither women dismissed the value that religion brings to those that believe. George Eliot wrote to a friend before writing Middlemarch, “I have no longer any antagonism towards any faith in which human sorrow and human longing for purity have expressed themselves; on the contrary, I have a sympathy with it that predominates over all argumentative tendencies” (Eliot and Haight III 230-1). Nightingale also had sympathy for those who chose to have a faith. Nightingale encouraged those who were sick to seek comfort from their faith by insisting that the spiritual needs of the sick are taken care of and that all
hospitals have a chapel on campus (see appendix 3). Nightingale would have understood Bulstrode’s belief that both god and a science based approach to medicine worked together.

The character of Bulstrode with his wealth and mix of beliefs in religion and science could easily have represented wealthy men of that time who having heard Nightingale’s call to build new hospitals, acted in the best interest of their community and built a new hospital in the location Nightingale recommended: a short distance away from the main town surrounded by green fields. Bulstrode, like many wealthy businessmen of that time, knew he had the power to influence and make decisions. Eliot would have known that Nightingale spent a lot of time speaking to wealthy businessmen and people with power endeavoring to influence them to invest in a new hospital for their town. By giving Bulstrode the financial resources and the ability to build a new hospital in a location similar to what Nightingale recommended, Eliot is recognizing Nightingale’s hard work and efforts to influence powerful men such as Bulstrode.

Fortunately, for the citizens of Middlemarch, Mr. Bulstrode not only built the new hospital in the best location, he also endorses Lydgate as the superintendent of the new hospital because Lydgate’s understanding of scientific evidence is superior to the local physicians and surgeons. It is Bulstrode who informs us that there is a problem with the current medical profession and its education. Bulstrode explains:

> With our current medical rules and education, one must be satisfied now and then to meet with a fair practitioner. As to all the higher questions which determine the starting-point of a diagnosis—as to the philosophy of medical evidence—any glimmering of these can only come from a
scientific culture of which country practitioners have usually no more notion than the man in the moon. (Eliot 80-81 para 8-1)

Lydgate’s knowledge of scientific studies and diagnosing using medical evidence is of great interest to Bulstrode—knowledge, we learn later, Lydgate has gained from his studies in Paris. The significance of Lydgate’s studies in Paris might have given Nightingale cause to pause and wonder as Nightingale would have been more impressed by Lydgate’s studies in Edinburgh (Eliot 81 para 2). Teaching hospitals in Edinburgh, at that time, gave student surgeons practical experience in hospital wards and operating rooms. In Nightingale’s eyes, attending a teaching hospital would have been preferable for a surgeon than attending a university in England as English Universities only taught theory to student surgeons and did not provide them with practical experience (BBC podcast). Nightingale fully supported and promoted doctors and nurses being educating in a teaching hospital.

Nightingale probably agrees with Bulstrode that Lydgate with his interest in hospital design and ventilation and his education is the best person to manage the new hospital. Lydgate, we can assume, will ensure good ventilation and sanitary practices are enforced. Another aspect of Lydgate the Nightingale would have approved of a seen as a nod to her work with nurses is Lydgate’s belief that medicine is both a science and an art. The narrator tells us that Lydgate:

. . . carried to his studies in London, Edinburgh, and Paris, the conviction that the medical profession as it might be was the finest in the world; presenting the most perfect interchange between science and art; offering
the most direct alliance between intellectual conquest and the social good
(Eliot 93 para 2).

Nightingale was well known for claiming Nursing was an art. And Nightingale herself endeavored to use her own intellect to promote social good. Eliot, through Lydgate, has acknowledged Nightingale’s beliefs and he works with educating nurses. Nightingale must have enjoyed discovering that Lydgate had similar interests and beliefs as herself and hoped he might have done a great deal to promote sanitary reform; however, as the novel progresses, Lydgate’s skills at diagnosis and treatment using the latest scientific research become the most valued aspect of his practice in Middlemarch and not, as Nightingale might have hoped, his ability to push for sanitary reform. Lydgate is more interested in medical reform.

**Lydgate and Germ-Theory**

Even though Lydgate is more interested in medical reform that sanitary reform, Lydgate with his practical education and his interest in ventilation and good sanitary practices is the type of surgeon Nightingale would want to see working in teaching hospitals where her nurses are being educated. Nightingale would have recognized that Lydgate is a surgeon with more to offer medicine and teaching hospitals than what Nightingale initially perceived as important. Lydgate, Nightingale and readers discover, hopes to make scientific discoveries that will benefit the prevention and spread of diseases. Lydgate has dreams of emulating Edward Jenner the discoverer of vaccine (Eliot 93 para 3). Lydgate also wants to conduct research using the microscope to follow Bichat’s work and make discoveries in anatomy and primitive tissue (Eliot 95 para 2). He appreciates the value of empirical evidence that can be garnered from the examination of
specimens under a microscope. Nightingale at this point in history, has little appreciation for the knowledge that can be gained from looking through a microscope. Eliot, we know from her letters and from “Quarry for Middlemarch” has spent time looking through a microscope and spent time reading about the most current research on pathology. Through her research, Eliot probably gained a better understanding about microscopic pathogens and germ theory than Nightingale. Lydgate represents surgeons who are familiar with the most current research in pathology and contagions.

Eliot demonstrates to Nightingale and all readers how surgeons such as Lydgate utilizes their knowledge in pathology to make medical diagnosis and prescribe treatment based on empirical evidence. Nightingale, as a statistician and a health care professional, valued empirical evidence in making decisions to benefit the health of patients, so Lydgate’s approach would have been familiar to her, and since the novel was set in 1830s but was written in 1871-1872, Lydgate’s evidenced-based method of diagnosis and treatment would have been well established and recognized by Nightingale as correct. However, Lydgate’s view on how diseases are spread and his desire to designate the new hospital as a fever hospital to prevent the spread of fever diseases such as typhoid and cholera would have challenged Nightingale’s position. Nightingale did not believe isolating fever patients was necessary as she did not believe that contagions spread disease.

Nightingale’s Beliefs about Contagion Theory

As noted earlier, Nightingale says in Notes On Hospitals, “There is no end to the absurdities connected with this doctrine . . . there is no proof, such as would be admitted in any scientific inquiry, that there is any such thing as ‘contagion’” (Eliot 9 para 2).
Penner suggests that Nightingale perceived the idea of diseases being spread by contagions as a threat to her sanitation reform (80 para 3). Nightingale pushed politicians and people with power to reform the sanitation conditions for all as well as hospital patients. Nightingale might have been concerned that politicians and people who had the power to make difference in improving living conditions of the poor might perceive germ-theory as an excuse not to make needed improvements. McDonald explains:

For Nightingale the great disadvantage of germ theory was its implications for treatment—isolation of patients or quarantine instead of vigorous measures to remove ‘‘filth’’ in its various forms, the approach of the ‘‘miasma’’ theory she preferred. Nightingale’s methods worked, then, without or even in opposition to the correct theory. (Nightingale and McDonald 23)

Nightingale didn’t want germ-theory to interfere with improving the living conditions of the poor and the improvement of hospitals.

Nightingale needed to publicly dispute the notion of contagions in order to encourage the wealthy such as Middlemarch’s reluctant Mr. Brooke to improve dwellings of their poor tenants, to improve sanitation such as ventilation and drainage, and to build new, well designed, hospitals. As mentioned earlier, Nightingale’s style of writing is designed to persuade her reader. Nightingale’s protest about the existence of contagions is most likely written with the purpose of persuading these people with power to continue listening to her and not think that improving sanitation was no longer necessary if diseases were spread indeed spread by contagions.
Nightingale might not have been thrilled with Eliot’s inclusion of microbiology or the notion that the spread of fevers such as typhoid fever could be diminished by isolation. However, through *Middlemarch*, Eliot is able to demonstrate how microbiology and Nightingale’s sanitation reforms can work together to prevent diseases spreading. Eliot is clearly suggesting that an understanding of how diseases are spread and the improvement of sanitation work together to provide better preventative measures to reduce the spread of diseases. Eliot obviously took up Nightingale’s cause to improve the sanitation and living conditions of workers of laborers with Dorothea’s interest in building new cottages, and Eliot’s inclusion of advances in pathology and medical research might place Eliot as one of the most forward thinking reformers in healthcare of her era, but more importantly, Eliot’s work most likely persuaded Nightingale to make changes to the education of nurses.

**Nightingale Hires Croft and Makes Changes to Nursing Education**

In 1872, Florence Nightingale took actions that might have appeared as contrary to her beliefs about contagions and germ theory. Nightingale’s first action was to hire John Croft to educate her nurses. Croft, like Lydgate, is a surgeon and a gentleman who is clever and talks well and believes in the germ-theory which he teaches nurses and student surgeons about disease being spread by contagions. In this role as educator, Croft “delivered courses of lectures—general, medical, and surgical in the several terms—throughout the year, of which he submitted the syllabus to Miss Nightingale” (Cook 246). Nightingale knew everything Croft said to the student nurses and does not ask him to not teach germ-theory to her nurses. The second action that Nightingale took after reading *Middlemarch* was to insist that chlorinated soda should always be available for nurses to
wash their hands after dressing a patient’s wounds. Before reading Middlemarch, Nightingale instructed her nurses to wash their hand with soap and water after dressing a patient’s wounds. The addition of chlorinated soda (chlorine bleach) to hand washing suggest Nightingale is acknowledging the need to disinfect in order to kill microscopic pathogens/bacteria/contagions. Nightingale might be publicly dismissing germ-theory, but her actions suggest she is taking action to educate and protect her nurses against diseases spread by contagions. It seems that Nightingale, out of respect for Eliot’s intelligence and her friendship, has heard Eliot’s call for healthcare professionals to become educated about recent microscopic research and accept the diseases such as typhoid are spread by contagions. Nightingale’s bias against germ-theory seems to have been disarmed by the creative genius of George Eliot and is why Nightingale later credits Eliot with “unsurpassed talent in literary craft” (McDonald 161). It also explains why Nightingale always kept an extra copy of Middlemarch that she could lend out to friends and acquaintances.

Fortunately, through Nightingale’s and Eliot’s mutual respect for each other’s intellect and work, they both contributed to bringing about reform to sanitation, hospital design, and the education of student nurses. Perhaps Nightingale’s belief that “the only hope for reform lay in “powerful” writing that would interest the people” is correct and that through Middlemarch, Eliot not only influenced readers of her time about the need for reform, but also demonstrated how writers and social activists can work together to capture the general public’s imagination and interest them in the need to make changes and bring about reform.
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Appendix 1

A watercolor depicting a young Florence Nightingale (seated). Dorothea’s physical appearance and the manner in which she presents herself seems to be similar to that of the young Florence Nightingale.

Florence Nightingale; Frances Parthenope, Lady Verney
by William White
Watercolour, with traces of pencil and some bodycolour, on Whatman wove paper, circa 1836 18 1/4 in. x 14 1/8 in. (462 mm x 358 mm) overall NPG 3246
Appendix 2

A drawing of a mature Florence Nightingale wearing a bonnet that forms a halo around her head and dressed in a Quaker style gown similar to the bonnet and gown worn by Dorothea in Rome.

Florence Nightingale
by Sir George Scharf
Pencil on wove paper, 28 December 1857
An example of one of the Hospital plans that Nightingale drew and included in her *Notes on Hospitals*. Middlemarch’s new Fever Hospital might have resembled this layout. Note the prominence of the chapel. Bulstrode, being a concerned with the spiritual welfare of patients might have included a chapel in the same location as Nightingale’s Children’s Hospital.