

ÇANKAYA UNIVERSITY  
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
ENGLISH LITERATURE AND CULTURAL STUDIES  
MASTER THESIS

***ADAM BEDE: THE STORY OF CHARACTER FORMATION***

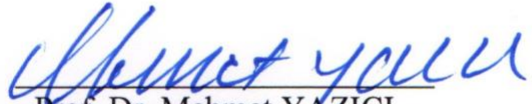
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**APRIL .2018**

Title of the Thesis : **ADAM BEDE: THE STORY OF CHARACTER FORMATION**

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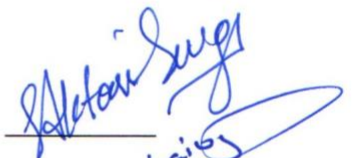
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**Examination Date: 04.04.2018**

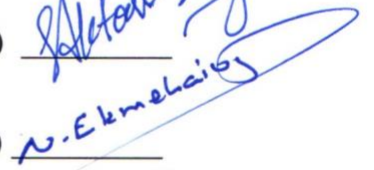
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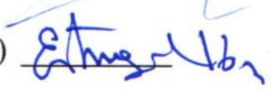


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## ABSTRACT

### ***ADAM BEDE: THE STORY OF CHARACTER FORMATION***

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April .2018, 61 Pages

George Eliot lived in a period marked by rapid changes and radical ideas. She had the opportunity to witness change and question the dogmas of her time during her transformation from a village girl to an educated woman, and through getting acquainted with the influential intellectuals of the nineteenth century. In time, she formed her own philosophy against the rigidly defined codes of Victorianism, and she came believe in the prominence of reality in life and art. Hence, reality became the perfect media for her to depict the true picture of individual in society. For Eliot, the individual is a problematic, self-deceptive being: he/she is inclined to form a fictitious image of himself/herself and fake social relations which result in self-deception and insincerity, and which distort the natural flow of life. The solution for this problem, Eliot thinks, is to encounter reality through a tragic experience which teaches and brings maturity to the individual and to life itself. In *Adam Bede*, George Eliot depicts four flawed, escapist characters: Adam, Dinah, Hetty, and Arthur are, in their own ways, self-deceptive, ego-centred figures. Having already formed second personality traits, they are neither true to themselves nor to the society do they live in. In the end these personality traits cause the emergence of tragedy and suffering after which their lives turn to normal. However, wisdom comes too late: it comes after experiencing tragedy.

**Keywords:** self-deception, family, parentification, individual, society, maturity

## ÖZ

### **ADAM BEDE: KARAKTER OLUŞUMUNUN ÖYKÜSÜ**

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Yüksek Lisans

Danışman: Prof. Dr. Ertuğrul KOÇ

Nisan .2018, 61 Sayfa

George Eliot hızlı değişimler ve radikal fikirlerin damga vurduğu bir dönemde yaşamıştır. On dokuzuncu yüzyılın etkili entelektüelleri ile olan tanışıklığı ve köylü kızından eğitilmiş bir kadına dönüşümü ile bu değişime şahit olma ve zamanın dogmalarını sorgulama fırsatını elde etmiştir. Zamanla Victoria Döneminin katı kurallarına karşı kendi felsefesini oluşturmuş hem hayatta hem de sanatta gerçekliğin önemine inanmıştır. Böylece gerçeklik toplum içerisindeki bireyi resmetmesi adına onun için mükemmel bir araç haline gelmiştir. Eliot'a göre birey problemlili, kendi kendini aldatan bir varlıktır: kendisine kurmaca bir imge oluşturarak içtensizlikle ve kendini aldatmayla sonuçlanan sahte sosyal ilişkiler kurmaya eğilimlidir ve bu da hayatın normal akışını bozmaktadır. Eliot bu sorunun bireyi eğitmekle beraber ona ve hayata olgunluk getirecek trajik bir deneyimle karşılaşarak çözülebileceğini düşünmektedir. *Adam Bede*'de, George Eliot kendi hayatlarından kaçmaya çalışan ve her biri kendi açısından kendini aldatan ve ben merkezli olan dört kusurlu karakteri resmetmektedir; Adam, Dinah, Hetty, ve Arthur. Çoktan ikincil bir kişilik oluşturan bu karakterler ne kendilerine ne de içinde yaşadıkları topluma karşı doğrudurlar. En sonunda bu kişilik özellikleri yaşanmasından sonra hayatı normale çevirecek olan bir trajediye ve ıstıraba sebep olur. Fakat bilgelik çok geç gelmektedir: trajedi yaşandıktan sonra.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** kendi kendini aldatma, aile, ebeveynlik, birey, toplum, olgunluk

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I count myself lucky for having the opportunity to work with my supervisor Prof. Dr. Ertuğrul Koç, without whose endless encouragement, assistance, guidance and more importantly patience this thesis would have never seen daylight.

I owe many thanks to my husband, parents, sisters, brothers in laws and friends for their love and support.

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## INTRODUCTION

George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans) was born in Warwickshire on November 22, 1819. She was the fifth child and the third daughter of Robert Evans, who was a land agent for the Newdigate family of Arbury Hall. Her birth was not a significant event for “a busy man to stop working.” (Hughes 1) As she grew up, she turned into an unattractive girl; she had a “large drooping nose, long chin, and a prominent jaw” (Maddox 3). Having such a face, she was believed to “fail a girl’s primary task of finding a husband” (3), and was directed to school and studies. She was sent to Miss Lathom’s school where she had some trouble with learning at the beginning. At the age of eight, she was registered to Mrs. Wallington School, which was more expensive than the former one, yet the family agreed on a qualified education since they were pessimistic about her future. In this school, she met Miss Maria Lewis, an Evangelist teacher, and a preacher. Even if Mary Anne came from a religious family, her early ideas about religion were shaped by her. After completing her education in Wallington School, she went to Franklin School which, compared to the previous one, was more academic and demanding. There she enhanced her intellect from literature to music to elocution, and to religion. This period was also a time of political changes and upheavals in the country (Reform Act 1832 and the following election). She had a chance to observe those events. At sixteen when she came home for Christmas, her mother went ill and died, which stopped her going further with her education. This, however, did not prevent her from improving herself since she had unlimited access to the library of the Arbury Hall due to her father’s job.

After her father’s retirement in 1841, Mary and her father moved to Coventry. There she encountered a new environment which was far broader than anything she could imagine in her former school. She entered a new society in which people were quite open-minded and fearless in questioning moral rules, religion, and even the existence of God. Her introduction to Bray couple was the turning point in her life regarding religious freedom. They could boldly discuss issues like divorce, population



control, and sexual education. In such an atmosphere like this, “her adolescent Puritanism fell away” (26). As a result, she stopped going to Church and rejected religious doctrines and teachings which caused her to fall out with her father. Out of respect, however, she continued to live with him, abiding his rules, until his death in 1849.

Upon her father's death, she travelled to Switzerland with the Brays since they thought this might help her to recover from the loss. In 1851, she returned to England to become a co-editor at *Westminster Review*, a magazine dealing radically with scientific issues, published by John Chapman, whom she had met at Rosehill, in Brays' House. After experiencing a couple of heart breakings with John Chapman, Herbert Spencer, etc., she finally found her soul mate; George Henry Lewes, who had an open marriage and fathered four illegitimate children. They eloped to Germany on 20 July 1854. After spending eight months there, they returned to London. There she had to live the life of an outcast because of her unapproved deeds and as a result of which she started composing her works; *Scenes of Clerical Life* (a collection of three short stories), *Adam Bede*, (1859), *The Mill on the Floss*, (1860), *Silas Marner*, (1861), *Romola*, (1863), *Felix Holt, the Radical*, (1866), *Middlemarch*, (1871–72) and *Daniel Deronda*, (1876).

Leading such a free life that enabled her to question even the strongest dogmas and witnessing not only the rich lives but also the poor and problematic ones, she created a gallery of people through her visual intellect for the public reading. Her objection to going to Church, her denial of God and the idea of an afterlife made her believe in the individual and in the requirements of the mundane world. All these formed the perfect media for her to create the concept of reality in her works.

In fact, Realism became the mainspring of Eliot's creations. In her works, she describes people living in rural areas in a web of relations. Her main theme is the human nature creating its own tragedy. As a realist, she is well aware of the human potential for self-deception. She believes that people are self-deceptive; they create alternative worlds and notions different from the real world and its requirements. In this world of escape, her characters prefer living by their prejudices and desires. It is only through a tragedy that they come to understand themselves and their own environment. By making her characters face the reality which destroys their dreams, she proposes that only through tragedy, which brings maturity, life becomes normal.

Her characters are from every walk of life, and this choice of Eliot contributes to her realism. Hence, she appealed more to the nineteenth-century audience whose expectation was the true depiction of life-like situations, and with such depictions she gained the sympathy of the reading public. Relying on this sympathy, Eliot undertakes the role of a teacher which was very common among nineteenth-century authors. When compared with her contemporaries like Dickens and Thackeray, her concept of reality expressed in her works was so attractive to the reader that they kept sending letters to Eliot including requests for the solutions of personal and social problems like marriage and religious dilemmas.

*Adam Bede*, Eliot's second novel, can be analysed as an example of Eliot's realism revealing the self-deceptions and personal tragedies of some particular characters. In it, she describes a group of self-deceptive people in search of identity. They ignore the social and biological forces acting on them. Hence, they encounter tragic situations, and in Eliot's philosophy, maturity emerges from tragedy, which is the result of self-deception. To reveal Eliot's philosophy, this thesis will discuss Eliot's narrative and characterization techniques by referring to the personal fluctuations of Adam Bede, Dinah Morris, Arthur Donnithorne, and Hetty Sorrel, the self-deceptive beings who later acquire the courage to face up reality and emerge as both free individuals and social beings. Moreover, the thesis will assert that through these characters' conflicts among themselves, and through the familial, religious, and social interactions (class structure), Eliot gives the social panorama of the early 1800s.

The main story of *Adam Bede* revolves around the search for the social and emotional satisfaction of the four characters; Adam, Hetty, Dinah, and Arthur in the rural village of Hayslope in 1799. An appreciated carpenter, Adam is in love with Hetty, a self-centred teenage girl who is yearning for a fancy life and who starts flirting with Captain Donnithorne. The landlord impregnates and leaves her. And Hetty gets engaged with Adam. The illicit affair between Hetty and Arthur produces an illegitimate baby, born to be murdered by the mother. Faced up with a scandal and tragedy, Adam finds himself in desperation. Meanwhile, a Methodist girl called Dinah with all her good intentions dedicates herself to the assistance of the ones in need. Troubles and tragedies are overcome with great compensations, and the novel ends happily with the marriage of Adam and Dinah.

Through *Adam Bede* Eliot explains how individuals are disillusioned about themselves if they try to become more than what they are. She believes that if one is not satisfied with his life, he enters into an endless struggle to change it. This dissatisfaction may stem from family background, social situation, responsibilities, and material issues. However, the individual does not always come victorious of the struggle. Frustrated by failure, he assumes a self-deceptive position which divides the personality into two. To illustrate this, the author depicts her characters as having second personality traits: one is the face they want to assume (socially and spiritually), and the other is the existing one.

In the novel, Adam is depicted as a perfectionist carpenter who lives by the rules of his society. He is so obsessed with his image that he wants to be a role-model to the other people. He is full of pride, and he even comes to underestimate his family: he is ashamed of his drunkard father, and he does not approve the whining of his mother who is never satisfied. Moreover, his brother's choice of a religious sect is denigrated harshly by him. By playing the self-righteous and the proud man, he is the outcome of his problematic family background. Hence, he tries to be strong, hardworking, reliable, and self-confident, all of which help him to improve the image he has already created in public. However, he does not know that he has extinguished the life force in himself by ignoring his own demands.

Hetty, an amazingly, beautiful teenage girl, is the cousin of Dinah. Her beauty is her strongest side. This beauty is frequently emphasized in the novel. Having a reputation as the most beautiful girl of the village, Hetty attracts Adam's attention. He comes to believe that marrying such a beautiful girl will amplify his public image. Such a union between him and Hetty is criticized by the other characters in the novel, yet Adam insists on her. Even if she has a legendary beauty which brings her many suitors, she is a girl with unrealistic dreams: she desires the life of an aristocratic lady. Therefore, Adam fails to realize that though beautiful she is an immature, characterless girl. Hetty, on the other hand, aware of her beauty, wants to use it as a means of reaching her aims. Unaware of the fact that she cannot get married to Arthur Donnithorne, the next landlord, she gives up her virginity, becomes pregnant thinking that Arthur will marry her. Hetty, however, deceives herself by believing that there would be an official union between Arthur and herself.

Arthur Donnithorne, the soon to be a landowner, deals with two different conflicts in his life: one is the security of his future place as a landlord, and the second is being tempted by Hetty's beauty. He is in a war with himself since he cannot have both of them. He wishes to be an excellent landowner and thinks about the goodness of the others. His grandfather, Squire Donnithorne, is a cruel old man. Therefore, the people of Hayslope reckon on him for a better future. Aware of their trust, he remains passive to fortify his image, and believes that he can be this imagined landowner without any effort. He is self-confident, yet he does not have the discipline to control himself. The other struggle he faces is his desire for Hetty. He is well aware that his feelings for her are impractical, and there is no happy ending for both. Even if he fights with his impulses, his desire overcomes his logic. After Hetty's transportation to Australia, he banishes himself from Hayslope. Having paid his penance, he returns to Hayslope as a mature and a humble man. His development can be regarded as the transformation of a boy into a man.

As opposed to flighty Hetty, Dinah is the earnest Methodist preacher in the story. She finds happiness in helping those in pain and does what she calls 'the Lord's will'. By picturing such a character in the novel, Eliot creates an idealistic woman whose existence is impossible. She helps all the characters including Hetty, Adam, Lisbeth and, even Arthur. She does not just help people, but shoulders the duty of sharing what she knows to be right with people by turning a blind eye to all the prejudices and criticism against herself. Gradually she is accepted and appreciated by the society that was sceptical towards her in the beginning. Brought up with her Methodist aunt, and under the influence of her environment, Dinah's perception of life is limited with religious teachings. While the girls of her age were playing with toys, Dinah had to travel a lot with her aunt. Her preaching journey is also the result of these travels. Hence, she comes to forget about her womanhood. She does not want an appropriate husband. Having cut her ties with the real world and its requirements, she lives in an ethereal world. She is an unnatural woman.

In the novel Eliot counterpoises these four figures who at first sight seem to be different, but who, in fact, are the same regarding their self-deceptive attitudes. No matter what their expectations are, they are not true to themselves. From one perspective, she presents Adam and Dinah, the two extreme figures, with their social traits: one assumes a fatherly role while the other becomes a motherly figure, ignoring

their needs. Adam believes that life is a mechanic of circle which has to be sustained at any cost, and Dinah sacrifices her life for the others, asking for no return. They ignore their natural and real desires, expectations. They are so obsessed with the personalities they have created for themselves that they prefer living by them. This extremity is the cause of their self-deception.

As opposed to them, Eliot presents Hetty and Arthur. Their inner worlds (desires, expectations, and conflicts) are given in a more overt way. Despite Arthur's desire to be the perfect landlord, he does not work enough for this, believing that this will come to him as his birth right. He is also so pampered by the people of Hayslope that he thinks that being a good leader is so easy. On the other hand, Hetty with her fondness on fineries pursues a rich life which, she thinks, will come to her easily because of her beauty. Merely trusting her beauty and believing that it will bring her everything she wants, she doesn't think about the other factors like social status and class distinction she, too, deceives herself.

At the end of the novel, all these self-deceptions are solved, and the characters pass through a process of maturation. With this growth, the characters experience an awakening which helps them realise and accept realities. Eliot's characters are not wicked or cruel, but weak, flaccid, and fail to judge the events as the way they are. Eliot believes that it is this failure which causes tragedies. Therefore, the reasons that lead to those wrongdoings are the main points of interest in the novel. The author diagnoses the cause of this deception as a tangle of individual, personality, and environment. To explain them, she refers to the characters' family backgrounds, their inner struggles, and she blends them with her own philosophy of realism.

In the first chapter of this dissertation, the self-deceptions committed by Adam, Dinah, Hetty, and Arthur will be shown with regard to the characters' families, friends, neighbours. Ashamed of his family, Adam wants to be an ideal good man in society since his father is a notorious drunkard. Grown up by her Methodist aunt, Dinah is both deeply affected by her, and she dedicates herself to the Lord's work. Apart from this influence, she finds her freedom as a woman in preaching in opposition to her cousin, Hetty, who lives with her aunt just like a servant girl, and who leads the life of a maid. She is deeply affected by Miss Lydia, and she fantasises about a wealthy life hoping to put an end to her "misery". Arthur, trapped between his desire for Hetty and his nobility, goes into a moral conflict. All these are the results of familial and social

constructions that influence the characters' developments. While explaining their psychological problems related to their family lives, Erich Fromm's theories concerning the role of the father and the mother will be referred to since he emphasizes the importance of both fatherly and motherly roles on the personality development of the individual. Apart from Fromm, Freud's ideas about the Superego will be referred to in order to explain Adam's and Dinah's obsessions about being the role models for the people of Hayslope. Finally discussing the importance of the parental love in the character development of a child, John Bowlby's "Attachment Theory" will be made use of to argue the importance of parental images.

In the second part of this dissertation, the cause and effect relation of the past and present lives of Adam, Dinah, Hetty and Arthur will be discussed. While Adam and Dinah embrace their past, learning a lesson from it, Hetty and Arthur fail to do so. This failure contributes to their self-deceptive attitudes, and to the final tragedy. As a believer of cause and effect relation Eliot suggests that without reconciling with past, one cannot build a new life. Hence, the author makes a generalization about human nature and assumes the role of a teacher. This chapter will also analyse, through historical and biographical approaches the role of Eliot's life in the construction of the novel's theme.

In the third chapter of this dissertation, the concepts of motherhood and fatherhood, which are the main themes in the work, will be analysed with reference to Eliot's own life. As a child, Eliot herself was deprived of a mother for she was always too ill to take care of her and her siblings. Therefore, she was sent to a boarding school, and this prevented her from establishing a mother-daughter bond. Her relationship with her father was weak, too, since he was too busy with his job. Hence, in accordance with Eliot's childhood experiences, the chapter will demonstrate that the characters with familial deficiencies come from early childhood memories of the author. Since the story shows similarities with the life of the author, autobiographical elements can be said to have shaped the main characters of the work including the different mother figures, and Eliot offers her own ideal mother through Dinah who matures in the end.

In the fourth chapter of this dissertation, Eliot's role as a social teacher will be analysed in terms of the relation between individual and society. How Eliot assumed this role will be explained through her ideas about the functions of art and literature. Affected by George Henry Lewis, her partner she believes that, both art and literature

serve to the goodness of public. Therefore, this chapter begins with how Eliot started writing, including her inspirations and reasons for becoming a novelist. Through *Adam Bede*, Eliot tries to suggest that a connection between individual and society should be established in order to have a healthy social life. Therefore, this chapter analyses the novel from a sociological perspective, and this includes both the social life in the work with the interconnected lives of the individuals, and how the lives of people in real life should be according to the author.

Finally, in the conclusion part, the dissertation will reveal how Eliot formulates her self-deceptive characters' maturation process through tragedy which, according to her own philosophy of life, can be regarded as valid for all the characters. All these four characters experience significant changes in their lives. Once they start living the lives that do not belong to them, they face up tragedies, they become normal. And tragedy, for Eliot, is a necessary step to be taken on the way to maturity. After the tragic experience normalization begins, and this brings balance and resolution.

## CHAPTER I

### FAMILY STRUCTURES, CHARACTERS AND THEIR SELF-DECEPTIVE ATTITUDES

In *Adam Bede*, Eliot asserts the importance of family as the basic influence in the lives of individuals. The family is the first social environment every individual enters, and this social institution “provides the first context for the recognition and communication of affective messages.” (Boyo and Parke 1) In such a miniature social environment, one shapes his/her the very first self. A child is affected either negatively or positively by his/her parents, brothers and/or sisters. The impact of this influence is so immense that it designs the future of each person. In the novel, this influence is shown to be the cause of certain personality traits of Adam, Dinah, Hetty, and Arthur. While Adam is the sufferer from the changing role of his father and from his complaining mother, Dinah, Hetty and Arthur are the ones lacking parents, siblings and hence, families. Dinah and Hetty had to live with their close relatives: While Dinah spends the very first years of her life with her Methodist aunt, Hetty lives with her aunt and uncle on a farm, finding herself dealing with the households and children. Arthur, on the other hand, is under the protection of his grandfather and his aunt. Lacking a stable family and because of his profession, he is always away, and he leads a freer, irresponsible life compared to the lives of the other characters. Eliot thinks that a secure family life is the basis for the development of a healthy personality.

Erich Fromm believes that in the personality formation of an individual both parents play vital roles. He suggests that an infant feels unguarded after delivery and even the fear of death is possible. Because of this, a baby in the very first years of its life regards the mother as the source for its basic needs and security. As the child develops and starts to realise the outside world, the child sees how the mother reacts to his/her actions. The child, as Fromm defines, “learns how to handle people; that



mother will smile when he/she eats; that she will take him/her in arms when he/she cries; that she will praise him/her when he/she has a bowel movement . . . , Hence, the child says, I am loved because I am.” (Fromm 39)

Fromm also emphasises that the love of the mother is an ‘unconditional’ one. That is, for such a love, the child does not have to do anything to obtain it. Gradually the child grows, becomes more and more independent, and gets ready to leave the comfort zone, the mother. At this stage, his/her interest shifts to the father. This happens nearly at the age eight to ten. Fromm compares this attitude of the child to the mother and the father as follows:

The relationship to father is quite different. Mother is the home we come from, she is nature, soil, the ocean; father does not represent any such natural home. He has little connection with the child in the first years of its life, and his importance for the child in this early period cannot be compared with that of the mother. But while father does not represent the natural world, he represents the other pole of human existence; the world of thought, of man-made things, of law and order, of discipline, of travel and adventure. Father is the one who teaches the child, who shows him the road into the world. (47)

For Fromm, while the mother has the function of security, the father is responsible for teaching the outside world and guiding the child to how to cope with those problems which can be confronted within the particular society the child is born into. Fromm believes that the key to the mental health and maturity lies in the synthesis of both motherly and fatherly loves.

He also asserts that if this synthesis is unsuccessful, neurotic problems will emerge:

One cause for neurotic development can lie in the fact that a boy has a loving, but overindulgent or domineering mother, and a weak and uninterested father. In this case he may remain fixed at an early mother attachment, and develop into a person who is dependent on mother, feels helpless), has the strivings characteristic of the receptive person, that is, to receive, to be protected, to be taken care of, and who has a lack of fatherly qualities—discipline, independence, an ability to master life by himself. He may try to find “mothers” in everybody, sometimes in women and sometimes in men in a position of authority and power. (45)

For Fromm, this type of development can be seen in the choices of an adult who, depending on the past experiences, makes wrong choices in life, especially in the choice of a spouse.

Keeping in mind what Fromm has said about the roles of motherly and fatherly figures, the characters of *Adam Bede* can be evaluated within their familial and social contexts. Adam's perception of life is shaped by his family, and within the Hayslope society. On the surface, he is a respected man, an exemplary figure. He is aware of the fact that the village community has a high esteem for himself. However, his family background from his perspective is a shameful one: his drunkard father Thias, his whiner mother Lisbeth, and his Methodist brother Seth Bede, he thinks, are the burdens on his shoulders.

Chapter four "*Home and its Sorrows*" gives a clear picture of the family life of Adam. This chapter begins with Adam's anger towards his father, when he finds out that he has not started to make the coffin he promised for the following morning. Driven by anger, he finishes it with his mother's whining, and sets on with his brother for the delivery only to find his father's dead body floating on the river. The chapter ends with Adam's thoughts over his late father, blaming himself for his death and repenting his own severity towards him.

This chapter is important because it is the first time the author enters Adam's mind and reveals his thoughts about his family. The narrative voice indicates that this is, in fact, the turning point for him to become a role model for the society. Adam's father, Thias Bede, was once a respected and talented carpenter. Adam was so proud to be his son that it made him feel like a privileged boy, and when asked "Who is your father?" he proudly answered "I am Thias Bede's lad." (Eliot 40) However, as the author describes, "Adam was someway on in his teens, and Thias began to loiter at the public-houses, and Lisbeth began to cry at home, and to pour forth her complaints in the hearing of her sons." (40) As the child grows up, everything turns upside down in the family, and Adam is even forced to witness how his father has come to humiliate himself before his drunken friends at the Waggon Over-out as he was shouting a song. It was such an intolerable scene that the author defines it as "a night of shame and anguish" (40). He was so ashamed that he even planned to run away but stayed home for his mother and brother's sake.

Fromm suggests that a child's interest depends on the mother at the beginning stages of his/her life. Later, however, this interest shifts to the father who teaches the child, and who shows him the road into the world. In the novel, Adam loses this teacher on his road to adulthood. He does not only lose the fatherly image, but he also shows a reaction against him. He is so disappointed by his father that this feeling forces him to take over the fatherly role.

In Adam's situation, the fatherly role of Thias creates hatred and negative feelings. Not only does he lose the guide on the life journey, but he also witnesses his father disgracing himself. Hence, Adam feels that this role, the role of an honourable carpenter, passed onto himself. While his father was tarnishing his image day by day, Adam has felt the necessity to improve it with the same pace. Facing all these embarrassments during his teenage years, Adam becomes a traumatic personality.

This trauma Adam experiences can be defined either as "Parentification", or as defined in the literature, "Role Reversal". There are many other terms to define the children in the same situation as; "parental child, hero-child, overachiever, underachiever, hurried child, and adult-child." (Chase ix). Defined as "the distortion or lack of boundaries between and among family subsystems, such . . . children take on roles and responsibilities usually reserved for adults." (qtd. in Hooper 34) This role reversal can either occur as "instrumentally where the child takes care of households and the family members or emotionally where the child becomes a friend or mate of a parent." (Pasternak and Schier 52) This reversal can have two different outcomes which are healthy parentification when a child receives adult-like behaviours like taking responsibility, and pathological parentification when a child unconsciously exceeds his/her limits.

A comprehensive literature review by Hooper on the subject has revealed a couple of reasons lying behind this traumatic situation which are "divorce, parental alcohol and drug use, disruption in attachment, family discord, low socioeconomic status, depression, and attachment and relational difficulties." (Hooper 35) The effect of this trauma can be long-lasting, and parentified individuals exhibit more caretaker characteristics than those who are not.

Parentified children may carry out logistical parenting tasks such as preparing meals, caring for and disciplining younger children, performing household chores, and earning money or

managing the family budget, or they may carry out emotional parenting task, such as providing for or responding to the emotional or self-esteem needs of the parent or family and serving as a parental confidant, peacemaker, mediator. (Chase et al. 106)

Adam's case is a good example of a parentified child. His alcoholic father fails in fulfilling his duties as a father, and Adam feels responsible for the tasks ignored by the father. His choice of not running away, but undertaking the responsibility of constructing the coffin, his father's job, his paying for his brother's commutation fee, and even his decision to live with his brother and mother after marrying Hetty show how deeply he assumed the role of Thias Bede.

Come, Mother, donna grieve thyself in vain," said Seth, in a soothing voice. "Thee 'st not half so good reason to think as Adam 'ull go away as to think he'll stay with thee. He may say such a thing when he's in wrath—and he's got excuse for being wrathful sometimes—but his heart 'ud never let him go. Think how he's stood by us all when it's been none so easy—paying his savings to free me from going for a soldier, an' turnin' his earnin's into wood for father, when he's got plenty o' uses for his money, and many a young man like him 'ud ha' been married and settled before now. He'll never turn round and knock down his own work, and forsake them as it's been the labour of his life to stand by. (Eliot 37)

This excerpt presents the extent Adam overtakes the fatherly role in the family since Seth trusts him more than his father and mother. This extract also gives the reason lying behind why Adam preferred not to marry.

Having left with the burden of the family because of his father's irresponsible behaviours and his mother's inability to take charge of the family, Adam becomes the father figure and this parentification process of him seems to be healthy at first: he becomes a caring brother and a son, and a very talented, productive carpenter. However, this role reversal causes an extremity for him, and he tries to bring everything including his profession, social relations and romantic life to perfection, which affects his future life in a negative way. He demonstrates the negative consequences of such parentification in his vital choices concerning his wish to marry Hetty.

In fact, a parentified child is deprived of some essential necessities for his/her development.

Parentified children, in effect, are parents to their parents, and fulfil this role at the expense of their own developmentally appropriate needs and pursuits.... Parentification is more complex and simply the logistical “filling in” in the absence of the parent. (Chase x)

However, parentification is not the only impact on Adam that leaves marks on his life. After assuming the role of his father, Adam gets obsessed with creating a perfect image. This struggle comes from the embarrassment his father has caused. He rules out everything that he thinks inappropriate for his image. He is so normative about his job that he, even after his work ends, does not stop until he finishes what he is dealing while his workmates run away throwing their equipments. He criticises them saying that “Look there, now! I can’t abide to see men throw away their tools i’ that way, the minute the clock begins to strike, as if they took no pleasure i’ their work and was afraid o’ doing a stroke too much.” (Eliot 8) He gets into new and bigger business contacts which will provide him more respect and importance in Hayslope. He attends the night school to improve himself. He even attends the Church regularly and reads the Bible in his spare time. These are the examples in the novel that show how he is obsessed with what people think about him.

If analysed from the Freudian perspective, Adam can be said to be the superego personified since psyche is “described as a successful instance of identification with the parental agency [which] aims for perfection. It is made up of the organized part of the personality structure, which includes the individual’s Ego ideals, spiritual goals, and one’s conscience” (Siegfried 1), and “[it is], the psychic apparatus to pursue idealistic goals and perfection. It is the source of moral censorship and of conscience.” (K. Lapsley and C. Stey 1) At this point, Adam’s obsession with his father’s long-gone public image prevents him from perceiving the real world and causes a clash between his ego and super-ego which results in his self-deception.

Adam gets so obsessed with improving his image that he forgets about his own nature and starts acting against it. He is about twenty-five, still a bachelor. Adam’s choice of a spouse (Hetty) also shows the state of his psyche. He wants to marry Hetty Sorel who, in the novel, is desired by many other suitors. This affinity for her is best

seen in Arthur's birthday feast. All the males, including Arthur, line up for her hand for the dance. Even Arthur asks for her hand in advance when he paid a visit to Poysers house to ask; "will you promise me your hand for two dances, Miss Hetty? If I don't get your promise now, I know I shall hardly have a chance, for all the smart young farmers will take care to secure you." (Eliot 72) Having a reputation for such a beauty and tagging many people after her, she is not a random choice for Adam.

It is a beauty like that of kittens, or very small downy ducks making gentle rippling noises with their soft bills, or babies just beginning to toddle and to engage in conscious mischief—a beauty with which you can never be angry, but that you feel ready to crush for inability to comprehend the state of mind into which it throws you. Hetty Sorrel's was that sort of beauty. (71)

Adam is old enough to be a bachelor in those times, and after waiting for a long time, he goes for the most charming girl of the town. Adam falls for the beauty of Hetty blindfolded: he fails to judge her as an individual. A marriage to the most beautiful girl in Hayslope will satisfy his super-ego. He does not know much about himself and what he is after. Therefore, he has no idea who this beautiful girl is, and with this ignorance he builds a dream upon her.

When compared with Adam, the other major characters who live with their relatives lack parental figures in their lives. While Dinah lives with her aunt Judith until her death and then moves to Poysers joining Hetty who has been living with them since the loss of her own parents, Arthur lives with his grandfather and aunt. Even if parents with psychological problems, addictions, and abuse are listed as the reasons for a relative to become the ultimate caregiver of a child, it is the death of a parent that really affects the child's future which creates an absence in the life of the child and makes him/her predatory of a parental image. The negative effects of this absence are accepted as the causes of problems in future life. Eliot's choice of creating such familial backgrounds for these characters is no coincidence because she was well aware of the psychological consequences of leading such a life since she had lost her mother, too.

Experiencing the death of a parent can be regarded as a traumatic situation for a child. From one perspective, the child has to cope with the loss, but from another perspective, he/she will be deprived of "love, care, guidance and discipline" (Adda

1) which will have long term consequences. There are various definitions of the responsibilities of a mother and a father in the character development of a child. Mothers are generally described as the “primary caregivers, taking care and fulfilling the needs of the children” while “the fathers are the breadwinners, working outside and earning a living for the family.” (Si Han and Pei Jun 1) Traditionally it is the mother who provides the kids emotionally and nurtures him/her. By doing so the mother helps the child’s “emotional, spiritual, companionship and social development.” (2) The responsibilities regarding “financial support, protection, and moral or faith-based guidance” (2) are attributed to the father. Therefore, parentless children need some other figures to fulfil these roles on the way to development. Lacking at least one of these figures the child generally has to live with a close relative, in many cases with grandparents. However, these raising relatives generally fail in replacing a parent since they are not able to form any genuine bonds with the child.

Apart from being deprived of parental figures to guide them, parentless children will also have problems in their character development. Attachment Theory, suggested by John Bowlby gives priority to the concept of ‘attachment’ which is a “deep and enduring emotional bond that connects one person to another across time and space” ( qtd in Salcuni; 273), and through this attachment a child “creates a sense of stability and security necessary to take risks, branch out, and grow and develop as a personality<sup>1</sup>” Therefore, Bowlby, relates the loss of a parent to “an increased likelihood of and a greater vulnerability to future adversity.”(qtd. in Maier & Lachman; 2000, p.183) As a result, a child experiencing an absence of at least one parental figure finds hard to adapt himself/herself to the outside world in adulthood since “the psychological foundation of character is . . . laid in childhood development through experience and socialisation.” (Braddock 2) Even if long term studies on the issue are not enough to come up with a result, “the disruption of the parent-child bond during childhood has been widely considered an important risk factor in future development.” (qtd. in Coyne 109)

Having lost both of her parents, Dinah spends the early periods of her life with her aunt who has accepted the Methodist discourse of Protestant Christianity which follows the teachings of John Wesley<sup>2</sup>. Early Methodists started preaching on open air

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.psychologistworld.com/developmental/attachment-theory.php>

<sup>2</sup> Cambridge Dictionary

by travelling to the farthest reaches of the country and were famous for their passionate preaching and sermons. They believed that people were all sinners, and they could only be saved through faith. Dinah went wherever her aunt went, and experienced the spiritual environment her aunt and her friend created that caused her to experience an unusual childhood. Remembering her past, Dinah says;

It was on just such a sort of evening as this, when I was a little girl, and my aunt as brought me up took me to hear a good man preach out of doors, just as we are here... his voice was very soft and beautiful, not like any voice I had ever heard before. I was a little girl and scarcely knew anything, and this old man seemed to me such a different sort of a man from anybody I had ever seen before that I thought he had perhaps come down from the sky to preach to us, I said, 'Aunt, will he go back to the sky to-night, like the picture in the Bible?' (Eliot 19-20)

In this extract, she shares her first experience of preaching outside. In this experience, she accepts that 'she scarcely knew anything' about life. Yet, because of growing within a Methodist environment she had no other choice but to accept the divinity of the movement. As a little girl, her opinion of Methodism was shaped by her aunt, and she perceived Methodism as some sort of a life form that did not belong to this world. Dinah gives her first sermon in Hayslope. She has already witnessed how Methodists sacrificed their worldly lives to help the poor, and this magnified them in the eyes of Dinah so high that her desire to be one of them started at a very early age. She even took her first training from her aunt, her closest relative.

You look th' image o' your Aunt Judith, Dinah... only her hair was a deal darker than yours, and she was stouter and broader i' the shoulders... I allays said that o' Judith, as she'd bear a pound weight any day to save anybody else carrying a ounce. And she was just the same from the first o' my remembering her; it made no difference in her, as I could see, when she took to the Methodists, only she talked a bit different and wore a different sort o' cap; but she'd never in her life spent a penny on herself more than keeping herself decent." "She was a blessed woman," said Dinah; "God had given her a loving, self-forgetting nature, and He perfected it by grace. (65)



Lacking her parents, she substituted her aunt with them. Since she had the chance to observe her dignified aunt every day, she identified herself with her. In psychological terms, this identification is a process in which “the subject assimilates an aspect, property, or attribute of the other and is transformed, wholly or partially, by the model the other provides. It is by means of a series of identifications that the personality is constituted and specified.” (Laplanche and Pontalis 205) In Dinah’s case, a little girl is affected by the religious demeanour of the aunt, which is the sole exemplary behaviour of her childhood. In the novel, no one forces her to follow the fiats of Methodism. However, as Freud argues, “parents and authorities . . . follow the precepts of their own super-egos in educating children. Whatever understanding their ego may have come to with their super-ego, they are severe and exacting in educating children. . . Thus, a child’s superego is in fact constructed on the model not of its parents but of its parents’ super-ego.” (qtd in Mijolla et al. 789) And for Dinah, the aunt is both the model and the instructive super-ego. Her personality is shaped by her aunt’s way of life.

At an unconscious level Dinah becomes a miniature model of her aunt; she accepts her truths, and when she comes of the age, she overtakes the duty of preaching. Her personality has developed through her aunt’s perspective, and since she has experienced so little while growing up, she sets up her life on religion, and through religion she comes to have life experiences outside the religious life. Her only aim is to help those who are suffering, yet she is not aware of her own nature. Hence, she is in dilemma, and her dilemma stems from her inexperience. Till she meets Seth and Adam, she has no idea of a romantic relation, and her perception regarding love and marriage is limited with the Methodism. Therefore, her rejection of love is because of her religious obligation she feels. She says,

Seth Bede, I thank you for your love towards me, and if I could think of any man as more than a Christian brother, I think it would be you. But my heart is not free to marry. That is good for other women, and it is a great and a blessed thing to be a wife and mother; but ‘as God has distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every man, so let him walk.’ God has called me to minister to others, not to have any joys or sorrows of my own, but to rejoice with them that do rejoice, and to weep with those that weep. . . Seth, that you would try to be a help and not a hindrance to my work; but I see that our marriage is not God’s will—He draws my heart another way. I desire to live and die

without husband or children. I seem to have no room in my soul for wants and fears of my own, it has pleased God to fill my heart so full with the wants and sufferings of his poor people (29)

Indicating that she has no interest in herself, she demonstrates how staunch her belief in God is. And she has already married God's poor people; she is ready to sacrifice herself for the sake of those creatures of God. She is, however, self-deceptive for she does not know much about her own disposition. Moreover, she has developed a wrong perception about marriage. She thinks that in marriage people have personal sorrows and joys, and they limit themselves with their spouses and children. Yet, as a biological existence, it is quite normal for Dinah to be impressed by a man like Adam, and to desire to marry him. This is implied in the novel when Dinah goes to console Lisbeth after her husband's death:

Dinah, for the first time in her life, felt a painful self-consciousness; there was something in the dark penetrating glance of this strong man so different from the mildness and timidity of his brother Seth. A faint blush came, which deepened as she wondered at it. (99)

For the first time in her life Dinah is affected by a man in a "romantic" way, and this impact shows itself with a blush which is generally accepted as a reaction of shyness caused by love. With Adam's glance at her, Dinah realizes that he is different from his brother Seth whom she cannot marry since she believes it is not Lord's wish. However, the underlying reason is that she is not attracted by him as the way she is attracted by Adam. Hence, this will be the starting point for their future relation and Dinah's biological awakening.

When it comes to her preaching career, she believes that her gender is not an obstacle for preaching as she explains to Mr Irvine:

And you never feel any embarrassment from the sense of your youth—that you are a lovely young woman on whom men's eyes are fixed?"... "No, I've no room for such feelings, and I don't believe the people ever take notice about that . . . I've preached to as rough ignorant people as can be in the villages about Snowfield—men that looked very hard and wild—but

they never said an uncivil word to me, and often thanked me kindly as they made way for me to pass through the midst of them. (77-78)

She believes that her gender is not an obstacle for her to preach contrary to the general expectation, and she constantly rejects Seth's marriage proposal saying that it is not God's will for her to marry. However, in the end, she marries Adam and stops preaching even if Adam does not stand against her.

Eliot explains Dinah's case, her inexperience, in accordance with her aunt's upbringing her: "From her girlhood upwards she had had experience among the sick and the mourning, among minds hardened and shrivelled through poverty and ignorance, and had gained the subtlest perception of the mode in which they could best be touched and softened into willingness to receive words of spiritual consolation or warning." (97) Since such a life is the only life she has lived so far, her view of life is limited. By preparing such an end for Dinah, Eliot suggests that one should not make self-limiting decisions in life by taking into consideration the present experiences because change is the essential part of life.

Hetty Sorrel is the opposite of Adam and Dinah, and to some extent their foil. She is an important character since all the main events revolve around her. The lives of Adam, Arthur, and Dinah are touched by the mistakes she makes. Through her and her deeds, all these characters face an awakening. While Adam starts to understand that he cannot control everything around, Dinah begins to realize her true nature which has been suppressed by her aunt's Methodist doctrines. Arthur, on the other hand, observes that there is a result for his actions.

Hetty is an orphan girl. She lives with her aunt and uncle, Mrs and Mr Poysers. She is only seventeen, and she is obsessed with her physical beauty which is spoken out by many of the Hayslope people. Arthur is aware of her beauty, and Eliot emphasises his admiration for Hetty saying, "Oh yes! She was very pretty. Captain Donnithorne thought so. Prettier than anybody about Hayslope—prettier than any of the ladies she had ever seen visiting at the Chase—indeed it seemed fine ladies were rather old and ugly—and prettier than Miss Bacon, the miller's daughter, who was called the beauty of Treddleston." (128) Even if Hetty changes through the course of the novel, from her vulgar manners can be discerned that she has not received any familial or formal education during her stay with the Poysers, and this lack of

education explains her constant failures and vanity. In order to reach her aim, a rich life, she acts instinctively, ignoring the results of her actions. She has to live with her relatives and with their society, and she is appreciated there as long as she contributes to them productively: “Hetty was particularly clever at making up the butter; it was the one performance of hers that her aunt allowed to pass without severe criticism; so, she handled it with all the grace that belongs to mastery.” (72) She is praised by her aunt if she makes butter and cheese in the dairy. However, she does not want to be an ordinary farm girl. She thinks that she has an advantage, and this is her beauty. Appreciated for having immense feminine charms, she thus finds a way to be loved by both lovers: Adam and Arthur.

Hetty’s character can be defined as egoistic and morally weak. She has a heart ‘as hard as a pebble’ (133), and she is not interested in people around her unless there is something to gain. “Hetty’s hardness is that of childish or at best adolescent egocentricity: all people and events have value or significance only as they impinge upon the narrow circle of her own life; failing that, they are of no importance.” (Creeger 228) She does not care for the ordinary people around her, and she is always on “holiday [and] in dreams of pleasure.” (Eliot 319)

Her weak character is the direct result of the absence of her parents. As Fromm suggests, father is the law, the authority, and traditionally accepted as “moral or faith-based guidance.” (Si Han and Pei Jun 2) In other terms, father is the guide who prepares his child for the social environment, and teaches him/her the rules of society. The only person that can undertake this role for her is her uncle Mr Poyser, who is a “simple-minded farmer . . .” (Eliot 356) But he never shows enough interest in Hetty’s personal development. Just like her husband, Mrs Poyser too, does not care about her development. “Her loss of her parents leaves with a certain social or moral identity, and she fails to find an adequate maternal substitute in Mrs Poysers, who judges her beauty by her parents’ moral lapses.” (Marck 455) Lacking such parental figures, she is ignorant of the outside world; about the moral rules and social norms. Hence, she is not aware of the fact that having sexual intercourse before marriage, telling lies to people around her including Adam, and causing the death of her own baby are immoral and criminal acts. Another consequence of growing without a parental figure is seen in her attitudes towards people. She is selfish and cruel. She shows no love to Totty, the little girl of Poysers, and her hatred towards children is indicated in the novel:

“Hetty would have been glad to hear that she should never see a child again; they were worse than the nasty little lambs that the shepherd was always bringing in to be taken special care of in lambing time; for the lambs were got rid of sooner or later.” (Eliot 132) This excerpt is a foreshadowing of what she will do to her own baby. Moreover, she lies to Adam and trifles with him. She has no feeling towards him, yet she wants to take him for granted because she hates Mary Burge, whom she regards as a rival to her own beauty and whom she envies for the rich life she has.

But Hetty had never given Adam any steady encouragement. Even in the moments when she was most thoroughly conscious of his superiority to her other admirers, she had never brought herself to think of accepting him. She liked to feel that this strong, skilful, keen-eyed man was in her power, and would have been indignant if he had shown the least sign of slipping from under the yoke of her coquettish tyranny and attaching himself to the gentle Mary Burge, who would have been grateful enough for the most trifling notice from him. “Mary Burge, indeed! Such a sallow-faced girl: if she put on a bit of pink ribbon, she looked as yellow as a crow-flower and her hair was as straight as a hank of cotton.” (84)

Her insensitivity for nearly all the characters in the novel can be explained with the absence of a parental image, a role model. Therefore, her behaviours suggest the lack of both fatherly and motherly images.

The only figure that truly penetrates into Hetty’s life is Miss Lydia Donnithorne. She is an aristocratic, rich lady. She can even be defined as a role model for her. Hetty goes to her for some maidenly training. She observes her and memorises all her physical aspects from her new bonnet to her new shoes. Lacking parental figures, and having no one to show her the way to the outside world, the inexperienced Hetty is overwhelmed by the finery of Miss Lydia.

And Hetty’s dreams were all of luxuries: to sit in a carpeted parlour, and always wear white stockings; to have some large beautiful ear-rings, such as were all the fashion; to have Nottingham lace round the top of her gown, and something to make her handkerchief smell nice, like Miss Lydia Donnithorne’s when she drew it out at church; and not to be obliged to get up early or be scolded by anybody. (85)

Her choice of role model shapes not only her childish personality but also her motivations in life. Her obsession with luxury is the direct result of her connection with Miss Lydia. The effect of a role model is the same for Dinah, too. Yet her choice takes her to a very different direction. Like Hetty, Dinah is also an orphan. While Hetty grows up in Hayslope with the mixed (poor and rich) society without a guide, Dinah grows up in the religious society of her aunt, spending her days in preaching and other religious practice in Snowfield.

When compared with the other three major characters, Arthur's familial background is not given in detail. His parents are not even mentioned once, and his only close relatives are his grandfather Squire Donnithorne, and his aunt Lydia Donnithorne. The other characters he is in touch with are Mr Irvine, who plays the role of a mentor (a passive one), and Adam, who used to be a role model for him during his childhood. Arthur's relation with his grandfather is not an affectionate one and does not suggest any intimate connection. Their relation is more of an arranged and planned one based on the cession of the title of the "landlord". Squire Donnithorne is known to be a cruel man, and he is loathed by many of the residents of Hayslope. He does not manage his lands properly, and people living there are in despair. He is selfish and hard to be satisfied. He is cross with Adam over one of his works he has completed for Miss Lydia. He even tries to take away the estate of Poysers by playing a trick on them. Hence, all his evil deeds have caused the people of Hayslope to put faith in Arthur. In the beginning of the novel one of the residents of Hayslope explains his enthusiasm for Arthur's return saying that "It's Captain Donnithorne as is th' heir, sir—Squire Donnithorne's grandson. He'll be comin' of hage this 'ay-'arvest, sir, an' we shall hev fine doin's. He owns all the land about here, sir, Squire Donnithorne does." (12-13) Naturally, Arthur is seen as a saviour by the people of Hayslope.

Arthur's second close relative is his maiden aunt, Miss Lydia. She leads an isolated life, and she has no role either in Arthur's life or in the lives of residents of the land. Arthur defines her as ". . . poor Aunt Lydia, who has been a slave to [Squire Donnithorne] all her life, with only five hundred a-year, for the sake of giving me all the more . . ." (221). Old Donnithorne plans to cut her off his will to make Arthur's share even bigger whom he regards as the future 'landlord'. She is so inactive that Arthur finally comes to believe that she is a slave of his grandfather since she is

dependent on the money and property he has. She is neither interested in her orphan nephew nor in the people of Hayslope. When described in the novel, her clothes, and how she gets dressed are mentioned: “there was a crimson altar-cloth, embroidered with golden rays by Miss Lydia’s own hand. . . her fashionable little coal-scuttle bonnet, with the wreath of small roses round (169-170), and “looking neutral and stiff in an elegant peach-blossom silk” (234). Eliot’s definition of her is limited with her outer appearance, and the character’s inner world is never revealed, suggesting that she has no character. The only time when she is depicted as emotional is when her father dies: “Her sorrow as a maiden daughter was unmixed with any other thoughts than those of anxiety about funeral arrangements and her own future lot; and, after the manner of women, she mourned for the father who had made her life important all the more because she had a secret sense that there was little mourning for him in other hearts” (380). Aware of her father’s cruelty, she feels pain for his loss although her father has hardly treated her as his own child. She experiences a breakdown with the loss, and Arthur is the only relative to console her.

Arthur’s grandfather’s indifference combined with his aunt’s ineffectiveness prevents him from developing parental role-models, and this causes him to build up a split personality. Especially the absence of a maternal figure causes him to be cold and unconscientious since mother shapes “the emotional, spiritual, companionship and social development.” (Si Han and Pei Jun 2) From one perspective he is a respected landlord to be who is honest and fair with his approach to the people of Hayslope. Furthermore, he is regarded as a great man as Eliot describes his return to Hayslope as the return of a hero: “He walked on, speaking to the mothers and patting the children, while Mr Irwine satisfied himself with standing still and nodding at a distance, that no one’s attention might be disturbed from the young squire, the hero of the day” (Eliot 232). And from another perspective, he is a cheater, liar, and a trickster when he trifles with an ignorant farm girl and lies to Adam and the people of Hayslope. Hence, he has already formed a double personality: a fair landlord and a seducer. In the end, he becomes the victim of his split personality.

Another important figure in Arthur’s life is Mr Irvine, who has to take care of his mother and his maiden sisters. He is the Rector of Broxton, and he is loved by the people of Hayslope. Even if he is like Arthur’s tutor, he fails to prevent his lust for Hetty when he is about to confess his intentions.

And the last person who holds an important position in Arthur's life is Adam. During his childhood, he took lessons of carpentry from him and, Adam, in a way, substitutes a place for a brother.

However, both Mr Irvine and Adam are well aware of the class difference, and they keep their distance with Arthur. In the novel, the acceptance of this difference is emphasised: "Adam had the blood of the peasant in his veins, and that since he was in his prime half a century ago, you must expect some of his characteristics to be obsolete" (140). Arthur is also aware of his higher place in the community, and he takes the advantage of this. This is the ultimate legacy Arthur has inherited from his grandfather. He acts like a feudal landlord: he is inconsiderate of the results of his deeds.

While revealing the psychologies of her four major characters, Eliot explains the characters' familial backgrounds. As a realist author, she is well aware of the fact that parents and the people one may meet during his/her early phases of life affect the character development, and the choices of the characters in the future. For Eliot, nothing happens *ex nihilo*, and it is possible to trace back some causes and see the consequences of the actions of the characters. In the novel, the characters find themselves in the middle of dilemmas, and they are forced to make choices and decisions. Since they have deficiencies in their personalities, they are weak, and their judgements are erroneous which, as Eliot suggests, is the consequence of the absence of parental figures. All these deficiencies and wrong choices lead the characters to self-deception. For Eliot, this is a defence mechanism which helps them to cope with hard situations in a self-deceptive way.



## CHAPTER II

### ELIOT'S PAST REPRESENTED THROUGH THE CHARACTERS

Eliot decided to write fiction after spending years as a journalist. She was, in fact, hesitant at first, yet the constant encouragements of George Henry Lewis<sup>3</sup>, who “was a philosopher as well as a critic, [and whose] theory of art was constructed upon a philosophical foundation” (Kaminsky 998), helped her to start writing novels. However, her motivation to write was not just limited with the encouragement from her lover. There were other underlying reasons for her to embark on writing which can be explained through her wish to reveal her personal experiences, her psychology, and her philosophy of life. Hence, her works are, to some extent, autobiographical compositions through which Eliot reveals the traumas of her younger days that contributed to the formation of this philosophy.

Eliot lived in a period marked by rapid changes and radical ideas. She witnessed transformations in many fields like science, politics, religion, philosophy, and etc. In her biography, composed by her husband John Cross after her death, the relation between her mind and the time she lived in is explained as follows: “[Eliot’s] roots were down in the pre-railroad, pre-telegraphic period-the days of fine old leisure-but the fruit was formed during an era of extraordinary activity in scientific and mechanical discovery. Her genius was the outcome of these conditions.” (qtd. in Grant 117) Eliot is said to be the “novelist of reminiscence” (Leavis 33) which means that she enjoyed describing a period preceding her birth. Yet the philosophy she revealed in her novels was shaped by her own time. And during this paradigm shift she also passed through a personal evolution: starting life as a religious fanatic, she then turned

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<sup>3</sup> George Henry Lewis was a British philosopher and a critic. He and George Eliot were in love and they eloped together. Yet, because of his marriage, they were not able to marry. Even if Eliot referred him as husband an official union never happened

into a sceptic, and finally, with intellectual accumulation and experiences, ended up being a logician and a philosopher. Though her ideas were shaped by the age she was living in, she opposed “the philosophy of some novelists of her day whose primary object was to employ every principle of the writer’s art to satisfy both the literary critics and the general popular taste.” (Bailey 1) Acting in accordance with the artistic and literary tastes of the society or of the critics of her time was not her priority. For her, writing “was a path . . . to reach the goal of teaching, influencing, and helping . . . [her] readers.” (2) Therefore, she had the intellectual ability to observe the causes and analyse the consequences of the individual behaviours which helped her to constitute her own writing philosophy. Her reflections include the discussion of the divergent concepts like the past, religion, morality, and marriage.

In this chapter how Eliot, by inserting into *Adam Bede* her childhood traumas, handles the past paradigm will be analysed in detail. For Eliot, the past has two meanings: one is her own immediate past life the novel is built on, and the other one is the way the characters react to their previous experiences that affect their lives either in a negative or positive way. Her semi-autobiographical work of is, therefore, the culmination of her experiences in her early life, and also the novelist’s wish to create a new, but a more insightful picture of the pre-Victorian society through which she explains the present.

Even if *Adam Bede* is regarded as Eliot’s debut, she started her writing career with *Scenes of a Clerical Life* which consists of three different stories set in the last years of the eighteenth century. Both works are praised for their vivid descriptions of the rural life where Eliot spent the early years of her life. Although she was criticised for lack of creativity and abundance of rural descriptions, she believed that “for the people who do not enjoy the description of scenery [the narration] will seem tame and stupid. . .” (Hughes 176) Yet Eliot’s depictions are not in vain. Borrowing from her childhood memories to recreate “an England of rural parishes and small market towns . . . [where people] travelled by coach or on horseback, or indeed on foot . . . an England which was no longer parochial and isolated.” (Jedrzejewski 2) While creating the England of bygone times, she also implies the emergence of a new England with “new industries, new technologies, new ideas, and in consequence new challenges.” (2007 2) With these descriptions, she creates a wonderland through which she reveals the

difference of the past from the present, but also the inevitable interaction between the two.

Published in 1859, the novel is set in 1799 which is sixty years before Eliot's birth. As a "novelist of reminiscence ... George Eliot ... writes out her memories of childhood and youth, renders the poignancy and charm of personal experience, and [describes] . . . the England of her young days." (Leavis 33) She constantly borrows from her own childhood especially in building the beautiful environment in the work. This fascinating scenery, however, is the glamorous façade covering human conflicts, familial problems, and the psychological traumas of individuals, especially of the author's.

As an affectionate little girl, Eliot was safe and secure in her family life, yet this life was a problematic one. Her mother was always too ill to care both for her and her siblings, and her father was too busy with his job to spare time to his children. Her relation with her father and brother Isaac was important for her. She loved them so much, yet she was not loved and admired by them as the way she desired. Since there was a weakness in the intimacy among the family members, and since she was sent to a boarding school at a very early age, irrecoverable childhood injuries occurred in her early life. Eliot, however, makes use of these childhood traumas in her novels in two ways: Firstly, she uses them as the starting point while forming her problematic characters and the incidents surrounding them. She "tr[ies] to recapture the different events which marked her childhood, among the people who held a predominant place in her life and left a deep impression on her." (Koumakpai 203) Hence, by creating in *Adam Bede* extreme characters who later acquires maturity, she emphasises the importance of getting experienced in life. And secondly, "Eliot's representations of childhood experiences . . . [are important because] . . . in the representation of early childhood trauma" (Henry 219), she tries to understand herself.

Eliot uses the past events as her starting point in *Adam Bede*. In her journal<sup>4</sup>, she explains her sources, and how she formulated *History of Adam Bede*:

The germ of *Adam Bede* was an anecdote told me by my Methodist Aunt Elizabeth Evans (The wife of my Father's younger brother): an anecdote from her own experience. We

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<sup>4</sup> Eliot's journal is a compilation of her personal journal and entries published by The Cambridge University Press as "*The Journals of George Eliot*" in 2000

were sitting together one afternoon during her visit to me at Griffie [sic], probably in 1889 or 90, when it occurred to her to tell me how she had visited a condemned criminal, a very ignorant girl who had murdered her child and refused to confess-how she had stayed with her, praying, through the night and how the poor creature at last broke into tears and confessed her crime. My aunt afterwards went her in cart to place of execution, and she described to me the great respect with which this ministry of hers was regarded by the official people about the gaol. The story, told by my aunt with great feeling, affected me deeply, and I never lost the impression of that afternoon and out talk together; but I believe I never mentioned it through all the intervening years, till something prompted to tell it [to] George... (Eliot 297)

Her aunt is the core for Dinah character in the work, and this anecdote is the sad story of Mary Voce, who was put in prison for infanticide. She was “an ignorant girl . . . convicted, and sentenced to be hanged. . .and . . . Elizabeth Evans. . . remained all night praying and seeking to comfort the poor woman, who at last confessed her guilt. Mrs Evans rode with her in the cart to the gallows where the execution took place.” (Ollcott 43) This scene is recreated in *Adam Bede* when Dinah goes to comfort Hetty in prison the night before her trial.

Having revealed her source of inspiration for *Adam Bede*, Eliot strongly rejected the criticism for merely transferring the real events of the past to her work. She explains her sentiments in her journal, saying “The character Dinah grew out of my collections of my aunt, but Dinah is not at all like my aunt, who was a very small, black-eyed woman. . .” (Eliot 297) Her aunt’s story about Mary Voce inspired Eliot to come up with a saint like character like Dinah who, in the story, is modified to also fit into the concept of an ideal wife.

Eliot accepts that the character of her father was the initial impetus for her to create *Adam Bede* for she says that “. . . one or two incidents connected with him were suggested by [her] father’s early life.” (297) Eliot is known to be deeply fond of her father; and therefore, it is quite normal for her to depict a character on the basis of her father for her first full novel. Beside Adam’s attitudes towards life, his profession of carpentry is the profession of her father.

However, Adam and Dinah, though inspired by her father and aunt, are the products of her creativity. She says “. . . but Adam is not my father, any more than Dinah is my aunt. Indeed, there is not a single *portrait* in ‘*Adam Bede*’: only

suggestions of experience wrought up into new combinations'' (297). Though she started designing her characters out of real people, she reshaped them through the filter of her own philosophy and life experience, and this made her novel, to some extent, an autobiographical work. In fact, Eliot,

Avoids the quality of the documentary in most of her novels . . .  
. her material is bound to her by actual experience or by personal  
association and is transformed by memory and reflection. . . .  
She is giving her vision of a way of life that, although it is rooted  
in the past, continues to exist powerfully in her imagination.  
(Bissel 224)

For her, the life continuing today is not free from the past since she believes in the cause and effect relationship. Hence, "she fully realises that this is an untidy and irrational world, that morals, manners and social institutions bear with them the superstitions and the prejudices as well as the enlightenments of the past." (223) However, Eliot does not just re-create the past, but she "examines the past carefully than to speculate about the future . . . and she is skilled in analysis, in the uncovering of hidden causes and obscure motivations . . ." (224) She uses her power to analyse the tragedies of her characters. Hence, she shows the roots of their problems and offers solutions for such problems.

Eliot starts the novel saying, "With a single drop of ink for a mirror, the Egyptian sorcerer undertakes to reveal to any chance comer far-reaching visions of the past." (Eliot 3) Even at the beginning of the work, Eliot admits that she is going to deal with the past. In the work, she takes the reader back to the beginning of the nineteenth century, "to an era that George Eliot did not, of course, know at first hand, but whose flavour was communicated to her by stories and reminiscences heard during her youth" (Bissell 229). The secret love affair of Arthur and Hetty also contributes to Eliot's formation of the past in the work since it is "the familiar story of the handsome, carefree squire who seduces the pretty, unsophisticated peasant girl and shatters what might have been an idyllic pastoral romance." (229) Just like the anecdote of her aunt, the recollections she uses for the novel are not her own experiences. However, she manages to transfer them into a well-knit story with a philosophical key by presenting events through her own vision of life which she believes requires reconciliation with the past. For Eliot, "the secret of our emotions

never lies in the bare object, but in its subtle relations to our own past.” (Eliot 171-172) She believes that people should make choices through confronting with their own past lives.

In the work, Eliot frames her characters with their stories thoroughly told. She presents her characters with a timeline which helps the reader to understand the circumstances that explain their positions, deeds and actions. She shows the past as the cause and the present as the effect. For her, life can only be sustained by building a balance between the present and the past. If one fails to do so, a tragedy might emerge. When formulating Adam, Dinah, Hetty, and Arthur, Eliot refers to the past experiences of her characters, the world where mistakes have been committed. While Adam and Dinah come to embrace their own past, though reluctantly, Hetty and Arthur ignore their past mistakes.

Adam is a strong man but with childhood traumas related to his father. As he is still fixed on his father’s wrong-doings and “scenes of the sad past, and probably sad future, floating before him. . . ” (40), his experiences, however, give him the chance to confront his own past. After the loss of the father “Adam’s mind rushes back over the past in a flood of relenting and pity” (45). And through this, he gains sympathy for his father.

Adam’s relation with Hetty also requires a settlement with his past. Until the end of the novel Adam insists on her, rejects to see her mistakes. So long as he does not let her go from his life, he cannot start his new life with Dinah. On the day of the trial when Hetty says, “Adam . . . I’m very sorry . . . I behaved very wrong to you . . . will you forgive me . . . before I die?” He replies, “Yes, I forgive thee Hetty (353), and by forgiving her, Adam brings peace both to her and to himself. This dialogue between the two shows both Adam’s attachment to the past and his character development since Eliot herself states in the work saying, “But no story is the same to us after a lapse of time—or rather, we who read it are no longer the same interpreters” (455) She believes under for the same circumstances one cannot always give the same reaction because experience changes the way one perceives life, and it is this perception that brings maturity. In this scene, Hetty is no longer the “pretty the little puss” (130) that Adam used to love. She is a liar, a cheater, a murderer, and finally she is a victim. For Eliot, a person constantly experiences different situations in life, and this helps him/her to

see the events with a different perspective. And when Adam is able to understand himself, he also understands Hetty and her suffering.

Reconciling with the past is the hardest for Dinah in the novel. Her life is built upon preaching and Methodist practises. For her, accepting Adam's proposal means giving them up all. When Adam proposes her, she faces a dilemma. She says "I know marriage is a holy state for those who are truly called to it and have no other drawing; but from my childhood upwards I have been led towards another path." (437) She accepts that she has been directed to be a Methodist, and this has prevented her from revealing her own emotions. She also admits that she loves Adam, too, saying,

Yes, Adam, my heart is drawn strongly towards you; and of my own will, if I had no clear showing to the contrary, I could find my happiness in being near you and ministering to you continually. I fear I should forget to rejoice and weep with others; nay, I fear I should forget the Divine presence, and seek no love but yours. (437)

She tries to resist herself at first, but with the developments outside her control, she discovers her own nature. After all, she is a human, a biological being with some certain needs. Though she believed that by accepting Adam's hand she would betray to her own past and her aunt, she is, however, aware of herself now, and she answers to him saying,

Adam, my mind is full of questionings about that; for now, since you tell me of your strong love towards me, what was clear to me has become dark again. I felt before that my heart was too strongly drawn towards you, and that your heart was not as mine; and the thought of you had taken hold of me, so that my soul had lost its freedom, and was becoming enslaved to an earthly affection. (438)

In the end, she stops contradicting her womanly nature and accepts his hand. By accepting Adam, Dinah frees herself from the religious bondages that restricted her.

When compared with Adam and Dinah, Hetty and Arthur ignore their past and prefer living in the future. "The trend of events in *Adam Bede*, . . . depict the immediate consequences of error and shows that the undoing of Hetty and Arthur, . . . was the result of their inability to cope with present circumstances." (Wade 271) They are

unable to accept their guilt; they ignore it, and this prevents them from dealing with the consequences of their affair.

Arthur wants to be the next landlord. Yet he seduces an ignorant girl believing that “He would amuse himself by seeing [her], and get rid of the whole thing from his mind.” (73) Hence, he undermines the consequences of his actions. He impregnates Hetty, involuntarily, and leaves her after Adam’s threat. He does not even think that she can be with a baby. He goes on with his life until he learns about her case. What causes his downfall is his ignorance of his past mistakes, and he finally stops dreaming of becoming the landlord. It is only through facing his wrongdoings that he realises he does not only create problems for himself, but he has also affected the lives of the other characters. In his confrontation with Adam after Hetty’s transportation Arthur says:

It would never have happened if I’d known you loved her. That would have helped to save me from it. And I *did* struggle. I never meant to injure her. I deceived you afterwards—and that led on to worse; but I thought it was forced upon me, I thought it was the best thing I could do. And in that letter, I told her to let me know if she were in any trouble: don’t think I would not have done everything I could. But I was all wrong from the very first, and horrible wrong has come of it. God knows, I’d give my life if I could undo it. (Eliot 403)

He leaves Hetty and lets her renew her relationship with Adam which turns into an official engagement. He does so believing that his trivial experience with her will be no harm. By doing this, he escapes from his past mistake and ignores it. He regrets about his lies and ignorance in the end, but this is no use either for himself or for Hetty. His mistake changes not only his life but also of Hetty’s. Moreover, Adam and Dinah are also affected by this deed. With Arthur, Eliot shows how the past can create problems if one turns a blind eye on it, and how everyone is connected to everyone.

In the same sense, Hetty dreams of a bright future for herself, and she “could have cast all her past life behind her and never cared to be reminded of it again.” (132) She is not happy about her present life, and she believes that she will not have a future as she desires if she does not marry Arthur. However, her plans fail after Adam’s discovery of their affair. When she receives the letter from Arthur which says that that their relation must come to an end, she feels sad. However, what makes her even sadder is her knowledge of her pregnancy. At this point, by accepting Adam’s proposal, Hetty



tries to cover up her mistake and hides her pregnancy from Adam. She “comes to see Adam as the only means of escaping the narrow limitations of life with Poysers.” (Martin 748) This, however, is a vain attempt for her pregnancy becomes more and more apparent. At the same time, her disappointment about life gets worse when Adam explains his plans of living with his family. Finding herself in a desperate situation, Hetty runs away, and continues to make more mistakes. As her “Journey in Hope” turns into a “Journey in Despair”, she is “pressed upon by the chill of definite fear, repeating again and again the same small round of memories—shaping again and again the same childish, doubtful images of what was to come.” (317) Her so-called bright future turns into a dark one, and she keeps on thinking about her past mistakes. In the end, she delivers the baby and kills it out of desperation. She admits her misery saying “I didn’t kill it—I didn’t kill it myself. I put it down there and covered it up, and when I came back it was gone . . . It was because I was so very miserable, Dinah . . . I didn’t know where to go . . .” (Eliot 388) By introducing into the novel a girl like Hetty, Eliot shows that irresponsibility, combined with ignorance, leads to tragedy. She also suggests that irresponsible behaviours do not only affect those who cause them but also everybody around and this reveals her philosophy of cause and effect. She believes that “actions, both our own and those of others, inevitably constrain our future choices.” (Markovits 786) For her, life is a chain of events and everybody is connected to everybody through the chain of cause and effect relations.

*Adam Bede* is a combination of Eliot’s past and childhood memories that constitute the source for the depiction of the rural life of Hayslope, and for the creation of the characters in the work. Through the setting and the characters, Eliot shows her strong bond with her past. By doing this, she does not only rediscover her own past life, but she also amalgamates them with her own psychology and philosophy. She assumes the role of a moral teacher by juxtaposing the past and the present of the characters, showing their progress towards maturity which is a result of their external and internal conflicts and past experiences. As a believer of cause and effect relation in life, she thinks that one should be able to solve his/her problems by reconciling with the past and with the requirements of the present. There will always be the consequence of the actions committed, and if one fails to embrace the past, this gives way to self-deception, and to imbalance which prevents the person from going further

in life. For Eliot, continuity of life is essential, and building up a new life requires reconciling with the past.



## CHAPTER III

### ABNORMAL MOTHER FIGURES AND ELIOT'S FAMILIAL LIFE REPRESENTED IN ADAM BEDE

When Eliot started writing *Adam Bede*, she was forty; she had already overcome youthful problems, arrived at the middle stage of life, and acquired maturity. Hence, she was able to analyse her past subjectively. In the novel, she looks back to her past through some certain characters: she re-evaluates her teenage years, early adult life, and her heartbreaks. By doing so she had a chance to understand her own psychology, and her own mistakes. This self-analysis makes the novel, to some extent, an autobiographical work. "The lives of her characters are therefore viewed from the vantage point of maturity and extensive experience; this perspective is accentuated by her practice of setting her stories back in time to the period of her own childhood, or even earlier." (Norton Anthology Ninth Edition Vol 2 1353) With such a perspective she was able to understand herself and transfer her own experiences to her readers through filtering them with the maturity she obtained during her life.

When her early life and her relationship with her family are studied in detail, it is seen that she also had deficiencies in her personality which caused her to form a low self-esteem of herself just like the characters (Adam, Dinah, Hetty and Arthur) she created in *Adam Bede*. Therefore, in this chapter, Eliot's early life will be analysed to find out what, in fact, stimulated Eliot to compose a novel in which she talks about the self-deceptions and disillusionments of her characters.

Eliot's life was a circle of misfortunes surrounding her from her infancy until her death. When she was born, she was immediately labelled as unattractive. Fourteen months after her birth, her mother delivered twin boys, and they died shortly after the delivery. This depressed Eliot's mother so heavily, and "being left with the

unattractive little girl as her last child only made matters worse.” (Maddox 4) Her mother was to be a chronically ill woman until her death. She could not bear her husband’s children from his first marriage and sent them away and did the same to her own children, too. She sent them to different boarding schools, and Eliot was only five years old when she was sent away.

At the beginning of her school life, Mary<sup>5</sup> was known to be shy and unskilful. This might be a direct result of her separation from home and since “children who are separated from their parents often imagine that their bad behaviour is to blame.” (Hughes 19) She did the same, and she was obsessed with becoming number one on any course or talent she was to learn; she started reading sophisticated literature books, learning French, playing the piano, etc.

One Christmas, when Eliot was sixteen years old, her mother was on death bed suffering from breast cancer, and “for the first time almost... the three children of Robert Evans’ second marriage were living under the same roof” (27) The mother died in pains, and when her mother died, Eliot could no longer continue her education, and she had to stay with her father, fulfilling the role of a “surrogate wife” (27) She left school, rejected her father’s offer to hire a servant, and started to look after him by herself. By doing so she assumed her mother’s role just like Adam assuming his father’s role in *Adam Bede*.

In fact, information concerning Eliot’s mother is very little. Eliot’s second husband, John Cross, who produced a biography of his late wife, interviewed her surviving siblings Isaac and Fanny to get some information about Mrs Evans. After making some research, he came up with a definition of her as “a woman with an unusual amount of natural force- a shrewd practical person, with a considerable dash of Mrs Poyser’s vein in her” (qtd in Hughes 15). Apart from this research, “in [Eliot’s] personal journal and diaries there is little evidence that her own mother figured very strongly in her life except to register disapproval.” (Maddox 7) As a mother she was supposed to be closer to her, yet they were not close, and as a result, the child (Mary) lacked in her life a maternal figure.

Lack of data about Eliot’s mother explains why Eliot uses biographical elements and reflective psychology in the novel concerning the concept of

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<sup>5</sup> George Eliot changed her name she constantly

motherhood. “Critics have long noted the lack of warm, easy mother –child relationships in Eliot’s novels. Mothers are often dead and if they survive, then, like Mrs Bede. . . are both intrusive and rejecting, swamping and fretful . . . they demand constant attention from their son by complaining about them.” (Hughes 17) Starting with *Adam Bede*, Eliot explains her ideas about motherhood as “the mother’s yearning, that completest type of the life in another life which is the essence of real human love” (Eliot 371) which suggests the notion that she puts an extreme importance on motherly love, something that she was deprived of just like her characters in her novels.

In the novel, Eliot presents the concept of motherhood with two different configurations. On the one hand, there are those motherless characters, Dinah, Hetty and Arthur, (whose problems concerning lack of maternal figure is explained in the first chapter), and how they cope with this situation. On the other hand, there are unpleasant mother figures like Lisbeth Bede and Rachel Poyser, and the murderer mother Hetty.

Eliot creates a dichotomy by juxtaposing Adam – Dinah and Arthur – Hetty. Adam and Dinah represent goodness and diligence. “[They] . . . are guided by the feeling of altruism [and] are contrasted to Hetty and Donnithorne, whose dominant passions are the inferior ones of pride and vanity.” (Fyfe 138) Both Adam and Dinah believe in hard work, they want to help those in need, and they are ready to change their priorities for others if necessary. Adam is so committed to his work that he tries to do his best for his work which shows that he is also honest and skilful. He is so caring that he plans to stay with his family after his intended marriage to Hetty. Moreover, he does not leave Hetty alone during her trial.

Just like him, Dinah too, goes wherever she is summoned. She has dedicated herself to the goodness of people. She comes to Poyser’s when they need her, she goes to Lisbeth, Adam’s mother, to comfort her when she loses her husband, and she stays with Hetty during her night in prison to ease her pains when she is about to confess her crime. Both of these characters do their best to help the people around them. They pay more attention to their problems than their own.

In contrast to these characters, Hetty and Arthur are pictured as lustful, selfish characters who want to achieve their goals without effort. Hetty wants to marry Arthur in order to be a rich lady. She is never interested in other people’s problems. Even if

she does not regard Adam as a lover, she wants to keep him under her own control when she hears about a possible match between Adam and Mary Burge. She does so because Mary is her rival in beauty, and undermining Adam's feelings and encouraging him more she wants to beat defeat her. When she hears about the death of Adam's father, she does not show any sympathy. Moreover, she does not show any feeling for the family she is living with, the Poysers, and for her cousin Dinah, either. She mocks Dinah's Methodist mission by wearing her clothes, and by making fun of her in front of the Poysers. She is insensitive to the norms of the society she is living in. When she goes to church, she prinks excessively and for Hetty, going to church is not a religious duty but more of a fashion show where she will be able to show off, and where she will have the chance to see other rich ladies with their latest clothes.

Arthur, on the other hand, dreams of being a good landowner for the people of Hayslope, but he fails to control his passion for Hetty. He is a spoilt man, and through his irresponsible deeds, he betrays his friendship with Adam. Even if he tries to remain at bay by leaving her alone in the woods when they come closer, he cannot keep the distance and encourages Hetty to dream more about a future with him by kissing her and by never rejecting her properly. In the work, Arthur accepts his weakness when he talks to Adam, and compares his self-control with Adam's saying "you've got an iron will, as well as an iron arm. But however strong a man's resolution may be, it costs him something to carry it out, now and then. We may determine not to gather any cherries and keep our hands sturdily in our pockets, but we can't prevent our mouths from watering" (Eliot 43). This comparison reveals Arthur's failure in controlling himself. Another flaw of Arthur lies in his confidence about his future title as land-owner. He believes that it is all about heritage, and he does not have to do anything to be a beloved landowner. However, in order to be an appreciated figure, he should work hard, listen to the people of Hayslope, and win their hearts. Yet he fails to do so by seducing Hetty.

Although Eliot explains how Adam assumes his father's role, as the novel progresses, Adam's fatherly role expands and gradually covers Arthur and Hetty. As the only witness of their secret affair (for he sees them kissing) Adam beats and forces Arthur to stop playing with Hetty (unaware of the extent of their relation and the sexual intercourse) and makes him write a letter to her informing that their relation is over. For Adam "Arthur is guilty not only of a more serious error for [him] and the

community's ethic, but of competing successfully for Hetty, whom [he] cannot win by his character alone'' (Martin 749). Though there seems to be a rivalry between the two, Adam, different from Arthur, is a man of wisdom, and he also feels responsibility for him. Since Adam is more experienced and insightful than both Arthur and Hetty, he can judge their secret affair more reasonably. As he knows the class difference between them, he is aware of the fact that they will not be able to marry.

Adam's manner towards the representative of aristocracy shows a transfer in authority. His strong attitude prevents Arthur from continuing his affair with Hetty. Since there is no strong fatherly or motherly image in Arthur's life, this threatening warning stops him. By representing authority and wisdom, the roles generally attributed to fathers, Adam assumes the fatherly role on Arthur.

In the same sense, Adam tries to offer a better life for Hetty by arranging everything as she wishes after their engagement. He tries to free her from prison, hires a room from where she is to be taken to the court. His role of a lover gradually turns into humane sentiment. In the end, he is no longer in love with her, and but he is more human and humane. He says,

No—O God, no," Adam groaned out, sinking on his chair again; "but then, that's the deepest curse of all . . . that's what makes the blackness of it . . . *it can never be undone*. My poor Hetty . . . she can never be my sweet Hetty again . . . the prettiest thing God had made—smiling up at me . . . I thought she loved me . . . and was good . . . (364)

Hetty, the "distractingly pretty girl of seventeen" (70) assumes the role of a problematic child for Adam whose fatherly role exceeds his own family.

While Adam assumes the fatherly role for Hetty and Arthur, the motherly role for them is played by Dinah. With her endless compassion for all human beings, Dinah especially feels soft for her cousin. Aware of her cousin's immaturity, she offers her help by saying:

Dear Hetty, she said, "It has been borne in upon my mind tonight that you may someday be in trouble—trouble is appointed for us all here below, and there comes a time when we need more comfort and help than the things of this life can give. I want to tell you that if ever you are in trouble, and need a friend that will always feel for you and love you, you have got that friend in

Dinah Morris at Snowfield, and if you come to her, or send for her, she'll never forget this night and the words she is speaking to you now. Will you remember it, Hetty? (137)

While Dinah makes this statement, Hetty's mind is busy with hiding her earrings, a gift from Arthur, and she does not pay much attention to her. However, after murdering her baby and being put into the prison, Hetty refuses to talk to anyone except Dinah. Devastated by disappointment, horror, and regret, Hetty experiences a breakdown, and it is Dinah who comforts her and eases her pains by persuading her to confess the crime.

For Arthur, who has no strong woman figure in his life, Dinah is the only woman who has really penetrated into his life. He talks about his admiration for Dinah saying:

But there's that sweet woman—that Dinah Morris. . . she says she shall stay with her to the very last moment—till she goes; and the poor thing clings to her as if she found some comfort in her. I could worship that woman; I don't know what I should do if she were not there. Adam, you will see her when she comes back. I could say nothing to her yesterday—nothing of what I felt towards her. Tell her," Arthur went on hurriedly, as if he wanted to hide the emotion with which he spoke, while he took off his chain and watch, "tell her I asked you to give her this in remembrance of me—of the man to whom she is the one source of comfort, when he thinks of . . . I know she doesn't care about such things—or anything else I can give her for its own sake. But she will use the watch—I shall like to think of her using it. (404)

For the first time Arthur shows his emotions, and Dinah is the cause of his sentimental evolution. Arthur, who was once an irresponsible man behaving without considering the consequences, turns into someone who takes the responsibility of his deeds in the case of Hetty in the end and sends himself into exile.

Apart from playing parental roles for both Hetty and Arthur, Adam and Dinah compensate for their own parental deficiencies, too. Dinah becomes the calm and affectionate mother something which Adam cannot find in her own mother, and Adam becomes a father figure for Dinah, who has no such figure in her life. Therefore, their choice of marrying each other also represents the fulfilment of these deficiencies. In the end, their abstract fatherly and motherly roles become real with the births of their own children. In fact, Dinah can be regarded "as a just and desirable reward for Adam



once . . . acquired” (Martin 751) after his long suffering. In the same sense, Adam is also a reward for Dinah with his wisdom and goodness.

Eliot juxtaposes Dinah, Hetty, and Arthur, and asserts that with the effect of the environment, individuals can react differently to similar situations. While Dinah is able to cope with being a motherless child, Hetty and Arthur, the two selfish characters, fail to do so. However, Eliot never blames them for their failures. She suggests that they are the products of their environment which has failed to help them to form a healthy personal development.

Apart from the motherless figures there are also unpleasant mother figures in the work, Lisbeth is described as “an anxious, spare, yet vigorous old woman” (32) who is a malcontent, an interfering and whining personality. She always talks, and this makes Adam so angry.

What art goin’ to do, Adam?” said the mother, with a tone and look of alarm. “Thee wouldstna go to work again, wi’out ha’in thy bit o’ supper?” Adam, too angry tvo speak, walked into the workshop. But his mother threw down her knitting, and, hurrying after him, took hold of his arm, and said, in a tone of plaintive remonstrance, “Nay, my lad, my lad, thee munna go wi’out thy supper; there’s the taters wi’ the gravy in ’em, just as thee lik’st ’em. I saved ’em o’ purpose for thee. Come an’ ha’ thy supper, come. (33-34)

When Adam has to deal with his father’s promised coffin she stays with him, insisting that he should have his supper constantly and this makes him angrier. After losing her husband she becomes more and more sensitive and unbearable asking for more attention, especially from Adam.

The other mother figure is Rachel Poyser. She is an ordinary farm wife whose main duties are raising children and doing households. She is a strict woman with strict rules. She always criticises people and tries to control them including her children, her nieces, her husband, and even Adam. She wants to do so for she believes she is doing what is right for them. She thinks that preaching is neither good for Dinah nor for them.

If there isn’t Captain Donnithorne and Mr. Irwine a-coming into the yard! I’ll lay my life they’re come to speak about your preaching on the Green, Dinah; it’s you must answer ’em, for

I'm dumb. I've said enough a'ready about your bringing such disgrace upo' your uncle's family. I wouldn't ha' minded if you'd been Mr. Poyser's own niece—folks must put up wi' their own kin, as they put up wi' their own noses—it's their own flesh and blood. But to think of a niece o' mine being cause o' my husband's being turned out of his farm, and me brought him no fortin but my savin's— (67)

She also thinks that what Dinah is doing is not something acceptable as a woman. For her, Dinah is expected to marry and have children as the other females of the time. She has similar ideas concerning Hetty, too. She scorns her whenever she gets the opportunity and treats her just like a servant. She witnesses her vanity and tries to warn her about her future. She accepts her beauty, yet she also expresses her mistakes.

Mrs. Poyser, who professed to despise all personal attractions and intended to be the severest of mentors, continually gazed at Hetty's charms by the sly, fascinated in spite of herself; and after administering such a scolding as naturally flowed from her anxiety to do well by her husband's niece—who had no mother of her own to scold her, poor thing!—she would often confess to her husband, when they were safe out of hearing, that she firmly believed, “the naughtier the little huzzy behaved, the prettier she looked. (71)

Mrs Poyser wants to help Hetty, yet the method she chooses, yelling all the time, does not affect Hetty, who is dreaming of a rich life despite being reduced to the position of a servant in her relatives' house.

The last important mother figure in the novel is Hetty. She gives birth to the illegitimate child of Arthur, kills the baby, and she is put into prison “For a great crime—the murder of her child” (352). Losing all her hopes to marry Arthur and become a lady, she gets engaged with Adam to cover up the secret affair and lies to him about her pregnancy. When the date of the wedding comes closer and her pregnancy becomes more and more noticeable, she runs away to find Arthur in order to put an end to her misery. However, she cannot find him. She gives birth to the baby and leaves it to death. While explaining what happened to Dinah, she says, “I did do it, Dinah . . . I buried it in the wood . . . the little baby . . . and it cried . . . I heard it cry . . . ever such a way off . . . all night . . . and I went back because it cried” (388). She accepts her guilt: she confesses how she left the baby to death. And this acceptance is

the turning point for Hetty, she finally dares to shoulder the responsibility of her behaviour and acquires maturity.

Eliot herself was deprived of motherly love. She was ignored by her mother when she needed her the most. Her mother however, could not be with her because of her own problems (her psychological depression and other chronic illness). Therefore, this deprivation assisted Eliot in formulating flawed mother figures in *Adam Bede*. In a sense, Eliot reveals, through the characters' traumas, her own life experiences. Yet, she is hardly sentimental for she always sees a cause-effect relationship behind individual tragedies. Each character in the story suffers, but Eliot lays bare the reasons behind their sufferings. Maturity, however, comes too late, usually after the tragic events take place. Motherlessness, self-deception, and disillusionment are followed by such a tragedy and it is with this tragic experience that the characters become better, down to earth individuals.

## CHAPTER IV

### ELIOT'S INSTRUCTIVE ART: THE PROGRESSION OF THE INDIVIDUAL FROM SELFISHNESS TO SELF-AWARENESS

In *Adam Bede*, Eliot creates characters who are not true to themselves, and who have the capacity to be self-deceptive. Not only in *Adam Bede* but in her other works, too, this self-deceptive attitude of the characters has a function. The narrative voice in *Adam Bede* says;

Falsehood is so easy, truth so difficult...Examine your words well, and you will find that even when you have no motive to be false, it is a very hard thing to say the exact truth, even about your own immediate feelings -- much harder than to say something fine about them which is *not* the exact truth ( 152)

And this reveals Eliot's viewpoint about the problematic individual. She sees that there is a great potential in individuals to be untrue to themselves, and this stems from a lacuna in the backgrounds of the characters. Hence, it functions as a defence mechanism for them to cope with the unpleasant reality, and the depiction of such escapist behaviours contributes to Eliot's realism and her notion of art. In this chapter I will deal with Eliot's realism through the author's treatment of the self-deceptive characters; I will demonstrate how Eliot, in her first novel, developed a realistic attitude towards life and characters who finally come to the point of facing up reality. Assuming the role of a social teacher, she regards the society and the individual as a whole, and what she does in *Adam Bede* is to teach her audience the urgency of realism through cause-effect relation. She illustrates that everybody is responsible for everybody, and if one commits a mistake out of self-deception, this affects everyone in society.

Even if Eliot had a scandalous life that caused her to lead the life of an outcast, she assumes the role of a moral teacher in her works, and she believes that “art . . . has a social and moral mission: it helps to destroy our self-absorption and attaches our feelings to other objects. By stimulating the imagination of the reader art builds up moral and sympathetic emotions” (Strang 952). For Eliot art is a vehicle to give her messages for creating insight and moral awakening in the audience. This is the most important function of art and the artist. She says,

The greatest benefit we owe to the artist, . . . , poet, or novelist, is the extension of our sympathies. Appeals founded on generalizations and statistics require a sympathy ready-made, a moral sentiment already in activity; but a picture of human life such as a great artist can give, surprises even the trivial and the selfish into that attention to what is a part from themselves, which may be called the raw material of moral sentiment. (Sheppard 145)

For her, a writer should raise our sympathies and interest in the subject that may affect us extensively. Yet this impact can only be achieved by being real. When it comes to describing reality, she believes that “art is the nearest thing to life; it is a mode of amplifying experience and extending our contact with our fellow-men beyond the bounds of our personal lot” (1883, p.145). Hence, when a writer deals with life unfaithfully, he or she betrays reality, and this disturbs the formation of the sympathy. Eliot explains this, saying,

Falsification . . . is far more pernicious than in the more artificial aspects of life. It is not so very serious that we should have false ideas about evanescent fashions—about the manners and conversation of beaux and duchesses; but it *is* serious that our sympathy with the perennial joys and struggles, the toil, the tragedy, and the humor in the life of our more heavily laden fellow-men, should be perverted, and turned toward a false object instead of the true one. (145)

She thinks that creating unreal situations when describing humanity may distort the message and the perception of the reader. After reading the false depictions, readers may fail to grasp the meaning of her messages. Therefore, depicting life as it is was her main aim in her works.

In fact, Eliot became an important figure in literature when women were not taken seriously as novelists. As a female writer who wishes to create an illusion of reality in her works, she criticizes her fellow writers, especially the female novelists, for being fake and unreal. In her essay '*Silly Novels by Lady Novelists*' she explains her reasons as follows,

Silly novels by Lady Novelists are a genus with many species, determined by the particular quality of silliness that predominates in them—the frothy, the prosy, the pious, or the pedantic. But it is a mixture of all these—a composite order of feminine fatuity, that produces the largest class of such novels, . . . The heroine is usually an heiress, probably a peeress in her own right, with perhaps a vicious baronet, an amiable duke, and an irresistible younger son of a marquis as lovers in the foreground, a clergyman and a poet sighing for her in the middle distance, and a crowd of undefined adorers dimly indicated beyond. Her eyes and her wit are both dazzling; her nose and her morals are alike free from any tendency to irregularity she has a superb contralto and a superb intellect; she is perfectly well-dressed and perfectly religious; she dances like a sylph, and reads the Bible in the original tongues . . . She is understood to have a depth of insight that looks through and through the shallow theories of philosophers (Eliot 301)

What she criticises in her fellow-writers is that they tend to create unreal heroines who are inconsistent and artificial. And these unreal characters do not appeal to the nineteenth century audience who “were staunch materialists, completely indulged in the present, and seemed to be unconcerned with the spiritual or abstract concepts; yet, they were quite religious, incredibly idealistic, and nostalgic of past.” (Koç 30) With the changing life and the system around them, the people of the nineteenth century wanted to see actual life presented in the novel instead of heroes or heroines with authentic features.

In this changing world, the position of the novelist was a matter of debate also.

Although eighteenth century novelists and their works have some similarities with the work of nineteenth century novelists and their works, the differences, however, are more than the similarities. ‘One of the chief differences lies in the responsibilities each century places upon its writers. The nineteenth century novelists not only faced a more severely changing world, but –along with the prophets and the poets-

found himself in a greater position of importance (12-13) The novelist was still an entertainer, but more important than that, he was a social critic and social teacher. (qtd in Koç 33-34)

Now that the novelists had a more serious duty, George Eliot was no exception. Moreover, she became the leading figure in this sort of realism. She had intellectuals around her, and due to her profession, she was able to get in contact with many of the scientists and the philosophers of her time whose ideas helped her to form her own ideas regarding life. Accumulation of these ideas directed her to talk about reality in her works.

Apart from her own experiences the effect of George Henry Lewis on Eliot's realism who "[is] always conscious of the novel as a serious form of art (Kaminsky; 1955, p.999), cannot be denied. He says, "art always aims at the representation of reality, i.e. of Truth; and no departure from truth is permissible, except such as inevitably lies in the nature of the medium itself." (qtd. in Furst 4) Lewis holds the idea that it is only with the product that an artist can depict the events in an erroneous way. Hence, "[Eliot's] realism is preoccupied with establishing the literary work's relation to the world and with its power to denote, describe, and represent things and events in that world." (McGowan 173-174) And in all of her novels she depicts lifelike characters, settings, and events. As Levine argues,

The energizing principle of George Eliot's art was realism. And realism is a mode that depends heavily on reaction against what the writer takes to have been misrepresentation . . . It is rarely, and certainly was not for George Eliot, simply accuracy in representation of things as they are, although it is always that, too. . . It is also and necessarily a kind of authenticity, an honest representation of one's own feelings and perceptions; otherwise accuracy of representation would itself be impossible. Thus, she claims, 'The fantastic or the boldly imaginative poet may be as sincere as the most realistic: he is true to his own sensibilities or inward vision, and in his wildest flights he never breaks loose from his criterion – the truth of his own mental state'. (27)

Eliot presumes that writing novels is not just writing stories which are appropriate to the taste of the audience. Hence, she believes that a writer should delve into his/her own self to come up with lifelike creations. Furthermore, "her realism is preoccupied with establishing the literary work's relation to the world and with its power to denote,

describe and present things and events in that world” (McGowan 174). Instead of creating heroic characters with admirable personality traits she prefers to compose characters that already have existed in society. Their ordinary lives and their individual problems become the source material for Eliot to depict her moral mission.

In her works, she deals with the problematic aspects of life, and the fading interaction between society and individual. She believes that "the more deeply we penetrate into the knowledge of society in its details, the more thoroughly we shall be convinced that a *universal social policy has no validity except on paper*” (qtd in Freed, 61). She regards society as a living entity that requires to be studied in detail, Sully argues that Eliot was affected by Kant’s definition of ‘organism as a whole’ in *Critique of Judgement* which promotes the idea that “no element was autonomous; rather each owed its form to its role and position within the development of whole” (Sully 3) According to this view, there is an ‘organic interdependence’ among the members of a society, and this dependence requires a mutual responsibility. Sully also asserts that,

The fundamental attraction of the organic conception lay in the fact that it appeared to offer a model that could reconcile the eighteenth century ideals of individualism with the newly perceived demands of social order . . . organic theorists stressed the interdependence of the whole, rather than the freedom of the parts and the necessity for gradual cumulative growth rather than the infinite potentiality for chance. (3)

Within this frame, individuals rather than detaching themselves from society, should integrate (adapt) themselves to that society. In her works, Eliot deals with the conflict between individual and society; she holds the idea that “society is not an artificial creation of men, but an organic whole whose laws of natural growth must be observed” (4), and therefore she tries to portray “the precise nature of the duty to weigh the relative claims of individual right and social demands” (5) Regarding society and the individuals as a whole, what Eliot seeks in her works is to project a society in which each person reconciles with the community. As a novelist of the nineteenth century who witnessed how individuals became more and more isolated from each other, she compares the society she was living in with the one she had heard in childhood, the times when people used to live in solidarity. As a social teacher, she tries to portray eighteenth century in her early works to give a panorama of the time to



her contemporary readers, and to give them a chance to compare their today with their past. Therefore, with *Adam Bede* she tries to show that the extreme characters that prefer to isolate themselves from society due to their egoistic traits will either be a part of it or punished eventually.

In *Adam Bede*, Eliot has her own perception of what art should be for she already had an idealized concept of life regarding how life should morally and really be. Therefore, characters, settings, and historical events in the work are depicted in accordance with this frame; she accurately depicts the bucolic England (Hayslope and Snowfield), Methodists and Methodism, and above all, she portrays lifelike, ordinary people with their external and internal conflicts, weaknesses, desires, and ambitions. “The characters in the novel are ordinary in either social class or native endowment and frequently in both, its tragic action grows out of a commonplace seduction, and its setting is humble and representatively agrarian” (Adam 127). She prefers to write about the people of everyday life with ‘unheroic natures’ (128), and she deals with their problems in their ordinary lives. Hence, she creates sympathy between the characters and the reader. While doing so, she balances her art with her moral mission since she believes in the “artistic purpose. The true artist will 'faithfully depict life and leave it [the art] to teach its own lesson” (Rust 168) If one fails to find this balance in the planned work, it will not sound real and probably will not be appreciated by the readers who want to see reality depicted in the novel.

In her art Eliot indicates that for a person to be fully developed, he or she needs to be a part of a society and live in solidarity with the others. This favouritism of mutual life in Eliot lies in her faith that there is an endless interaction among the members of a society. When an action is taken by one, its consequences affect everyone around. In the novel, the narrative voice explains this as follows,

For if it be true that Nature at certain moments seems charged with a presentiment of one individual lot must it not also be true that she seems unmindful unconscious of another? For there is no hour that has not its births of gladness and despair, no morning brightness that does not bring new sickness to desolation as well as new forces to genius and love. There are so many of us, and our lots are so different, what wonder that Nature's mood is often in harsh contrast with the great crisis of our lives? We are children of a large family, and must learn, as such children do, not to expect that our hurts will be made much

of—to be content with little nurture and caressing, and help each other the more (Eliot 251-252)

In this excerpt, the narrative voice emphasises that individuals, the constituents of a society might be different from each other, yet it is with the interaction among them that they can form a society. However, sometimes these individuals become isolated due to some personal deficiencies or problems the outcome of which is self-deception. In the work, the four major characters, Adam, Dinah, Arthur, and Hetty are isolated characters with unrealistic future plans.

Just like the real people, Eliot's characters are flawed personalities. In a sense, *Adam Bede* is about how the characters cope with those flaws, and how they come to a balanced state. She puts her characters in situations where they deny their own beings and prefer to live fake lives. Hence, they gradually start to detach themselves from the society they are living in. In the end, they become outcasts, and they are severely criticized by the society because of their excesses. Eliot suggests that with tragic endings caused by their ambitions to become more than what they are, they acquire maturity and finally become a part of society. Therefore, characters who isolate themselves from the society are the ones Eliot criticizes most since this isolation becomes the reason of their self-deceptive behaviours.

In the end, what makes the people good or evil is the extent of the damage that has been caused by their mistake in the way of this transformation. The transformation itself, relatively, can be regarded as the education of the individual to adapt him/her into the society.

George Eliot was always chary of the naïve belief that human lot could be bettered though legislation and abstract schemes. It is wrong to suppose that progress is a matter of man's adaptation to the laws of the social state because he is not unresistingly plastic in the hand of the legislators. Deducing her principle from this reasoning, George Eliot visualized progress through education of individual. Things, in fact, work out in the evolving universe by purely natural laws with which it is quite possible for man to successfully interfere. And, for this reason, no charity, however, great and no idealism, however sublime can help uplift society. Therefore, George Eliot emphasized slow cultural progress through the gradual and steady education of the individual through whom alone society grows and develops (.43)

For Eliot, the development of an individual as a social being means adjusting himself/herself to a society which requires maturity and sometimes tragic events help the individuals to improve accomplish this. Therefore, it is crucial for every individual to pass through this process of development in order to make up a better society. In the beginning of the novel the major characters do not feel any kind of belonging to society. Therefore, their awaking comes as a result of their experiences and tragedies they go through. For Eliot, one cannot survive alone because the people living in a society are connected through unseen ties.

To conclude, George Eliot, who prefers to deal with real life in her works, centres her stories on the characters that isolate themselves from the community they are living in because of their self-deceptive and egoistic notions and behaviours. She believes that this isolation damages society as a unity. Assuming the role of a social teacher, she presents isolated characters by categorising them in two in *Adam Bede*; the ones who adjust themselves to society and the ones who resist. By presenting them, she suggests that an isolated individual should adapt him/herself to society he/she is living in. If they fail to do so, they have to live the life of an outcast.

## CONCLUSION

When Eliot embarked on her writing career with her first full length novel *Adam Bede* at the age of forty, she did not only come up with a novel which depicted the anterior rural paradigm, but also with her own perspective of individual and society. While revealing this viewpoint, she develops her own philosophy of life. Despite the ups and downs in her life, George Eliot, through writing novels, formed conservative ideas and became the moral teacher and the philosopher of the middle-class audience. With her viewpoint, which is the ultimate blend of her chaotic (but somehow tamed) life with the traditional Victorian life from which emerges her unique, realistic style.

George Eliot adapts reality as the baseline for her art since she believed that it is only through realism that one can depict individual, society, and the individual in society in the most correct way. As a prominent realist of her time in England, she also recognized the immediate impact of art on the feelings of her audience, and within this frame, she assumed the role of a moral teacher in her novels by ascribing a moral function to art. Assuming this role, she questions the function of the individual in society: she observes the isolation of the individual from society and himself, and regards this isolation as a kind of threat to the social organism. While doing this, her logic is that such an isolation might harm the harmony in society.

For Eliot cause and effect relation is an inseparable part of the human life where the action of the one affects not only himself but the whole community. In order to present the consequence of such an isolation to the reader, she creates a microcosmic society of a previous time in *Adam Bede* of, nearly sixty years ago, to show the panorama of how they, the people of late eighteenth century, actually were. Even though she might be perceived as a presenter of nostalgia in the work, what she really intends to do is to exhibit the progress, and therefore, the hard-won maturity of both the individual and society. Hence, *Adam Bede* emphasizes the unavailability of the

individuals' self-deception, the necessity of acquiring self-awareness and maturity, and finally developing solidarity among individuals for a healthy social structure.

For Eliot, the social structure is a prerequisite for the harmony in society and each individual of this social structure should know his/her place: for her every single person in society should act not only in accordance with the role assigned to him/her but also with an awareness of his/her needs. The individual's accepting or rejecting his or her own core defines the fate of the individual, and this becomes one of the important themes in *Adam Bede*.

This awareness, however, is not easy to acquire since individuals are prejudiced about their own identities, and she thinks that this prejudice is the result of the traumatic events in their pasts which prevent them from acquiring self-actualization. For Eliot, such an individual accomplishment is the key to form a harmonious society. However, self-deceptive behaviours prevent individuals from knowing themselves, and as a result, they fail in constructing their own social personalities. Therefore, as Eliot points out, occurrence of a tragic event is a must in their lives for understanding themselves. It is only through a tragedy that they break away from their prejudices, and they come to look at the incidents from a different perspective: they finally have the opportunity to judge and interpret themselves. And for Eliot, it is through this awakening that the individual acquires maturity. Hence, her characterization in *Adam Bede* mainly revolves around ignorance and experience. She presents the characters by referring to their deficiencies in their backgrounds, reveals the tragic mistakes they commit, and suggests that they finally overcome their traumatised selves and become insightful human beings.

As well as depicting the beauties of pastoral England for which the novel was highly praised, Eliot also unfolds human psychology in the novel through familial and social contexts. She uses the two to show the inevitable relation of a person with family and society for she sees that an individual almost always wants to run away from both, but finally attaches himself/herself to these institutions. In order to attain such freedom, these individuals initially form second personality traits as a defence mechanism, and that mechanism makes them self-deceptive, hindering the truth to be perceived. Despite the characters' stubbornness, life is a great teacher, and they learn by experience. To depict the process of individual development, Eliot presents the characters with their self-deceptive attitudes and their results: she shows the causes of

the characters' self-deceptions but also indicates the consequences of their deeds. Hence, she evaluates, through her realistic perspective, the development of her immature characters in life. The forgiving tone for the misdeeds of the characters is the result of such realism: since we know the causes, we understand the consequences.

In the novel, Eliot depicts four naïve characters: Adam, Dinah, Hetty, and Arthur. What these characters have in common is that they are all extreme, self-deceptive characters: they ignore their own needs and try to become more than what they are. While depicting such figures, Eliot refers to her own gallery of people: they are the characters from her past. In her personal journal, she states that the core of Adam and Dinah comes from her own life. While the perfectionist Adam is an interpretation of her own father Robert, Dinah is modelled on her Methodist aunt Elizabeth Evans. She also presents problematic mother figures, reminding the audience the fragments of her own mother.

In the context of the first chapter the familial backgrounds of each of these four characters have been analysed. In the novel, while Adam has a "real" family, Dinah, Hetty, and Arthur lack this institutional environment. Even if Adam has a family, this family is made of a drunkard father, a whiner mother, and a useless brother, and this situation forces Adam to assume the role of the father in the family, which has been explained in the dissertation with the concept of parentification. With such an incapacitated father and a simple mother, Adam is parentified and becomes 'the father'. However, this parentification has a negative impact on him, damaging his own nature and forcing him to be a perfectionist for a simple carpenter when he does not need to be.

When compared with Adam, other characters, too, lack the parental figures in their lives, and they have to live with their relatives. Dinah lives with her Methodist aunt up to her death, and she only experiences her aunt's life. This (in)experience causes her to identify herself with her aunt, and she becomes a preacher as her aunt was. With such a narrow view of life, Dinah makes a crucial decision regarding her future that later turns to be wrong for her. Eliot, then, presents Hetty and Arthur as the other problematic characters: they neither have parental images nor role models before them. Therefore, they do not have developed personalities. Lacking both motherly and fatherly images they are morally weak and insensitive to their environment. With reference to Erich Fromm, it can be claimed that both the father and the mother have

influential roles in the character development, and if one fails to lack these parents, this might affect the future of an individual. By creating unsettled characters with problematic familial backgrounds, Eliot indicates the vital role of family in the personality formation. Within the psychological framework this novel can be said to reflect the real human psychology with its real problems, results, and solutions. At this point, what Eliot does is to show the reader that there is always a reason for the mistakes these parentless characters commit.

In the context of the second chapter this thesis has dealt with how Eliot revisits her own past to create *Adam Bede*. The novel has autobiographical elements in some certain ways. Apart from the characterizations, Eliot uses her childhood memories to depict the pastoral details of Hayslope since she was also brought up in a rural village. Revisiting those memories, she was able return back to her own childhood which was an unhappy one because of her own family life. Hence, referring back to those childhood memories helped Eliot to embrace her own past, healing her and to some extent bestowing her maturity. Since this self-therapy has a healing effect for her, Eliot, in the same fashion, makes her characters reconcile with their own pasts. In the work, it is through this reconciliation that the characters acquire maturity: Adam, Dinah, Hetty, and Arthur find peace at the end.

In the third chapter the concept of motherhood is analysed. Even if Hetty is believed to be the evil mother, she is not the only disruptive mother figure in the work. Lizbeth, Mrs Poysers, and Aunt Lydia are the main motherly figures. In the work only the unpleasant mother figures are presented, and this gives the reader clues about Eliot's own mother. Therefore, it can be suggested that Eliot prefers to depict problematic motherly figures, and by doing so she also depicts her own mother who was always too ill to care for her and her sibling. Through the motherly characters in the work. Eliot implies that her motherlessness caused a lacuna in her own life, and the characters who are motherless are the potential sufferers. Hence, the novel is also an autobiographical work reflecting Eliot's own view on the concept of motherhood.

In the last chapter, Eliot's own ideas regarding life and art, and realism have been discussed. Eliot believes that art depicts life, and this must be a true depiction. In this picture, she presents flawed personalities as one might be in real life. She also suggests that past and present are interwoven in the lives of individuals, and art should be a mirror held up to those lives; should reflect life as it is. In order to accomplish

this, her novel should talk about the past and the present simultaneously, emphasising the importance of cause and effect relation more accurately since life is a combination of the two. Therefore, while formulating her story and her characters, she does not only prefer to talk about a previous time to make the reader of her time aware of their own past but also pays great attention to the background of the characters.

To conclude, *Adam Bede* is a tragic story, yet it has its own philosophy in the background. From one perspective Eliot criticises the self-deceptive characters. By presenting such characters who are acting both against their own natures and the society they are living in, Eliot suggests that this does not comply with real life. She also demonstrates that self-deceptive behaviours will eventually come to an end with a tragedy, but she thinks that tragedy brings maturity.





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