

145583

RELIGION AND WOMEN IN GEORGE ELIOT'S

ADAM BEDE

145583

ŞADIYE BİLGİÇ

JUNE 2004

RELIGION AND WOMEN IN GEORGE ELIOT'S

ADAM BEDE

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

OF

ÇANKAYA UNIVERSITY

BY

ŞADIYE BİLGİÇ

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

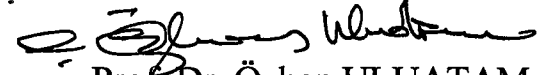
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

IN

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

JUNE 2004

Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences


Prof. Dr. Özhan ULUATAM

Director

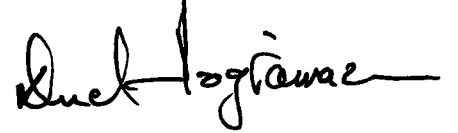
I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the
degree of Master of Arts.



Prof. Dr. Nail Bezel

Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it
is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of
Master of Arts.



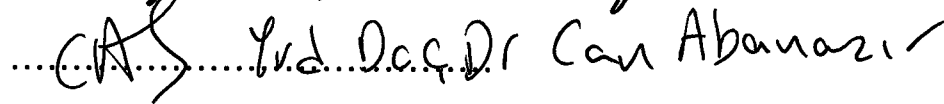
Prof. Dr. Emel Dođramacı

Supervisor

Examining Committee Members







ABSTRACT

Since her childhood George Eliot was a keen observer of her time in terms of human relationships, woman's status in society, and the concept of religion. Eliot reflected her observations in her novels by stating her views on the place and importance of religion in human life, and by discussing the social problems of her time. She lived in Victorian society, which was characterised by limited mobility or very little flexibility in terms of social behaviour and rules particularly for women. That is to say, the norms of the Victorian Age might be interpreted as a difficult life for most of its people.

As an incongruous individual of her time, George Eliot did not sacrifice her own ideals, her sense of religion, and social behaviour. She was radically different from the characters she depicted in her fiction; she did not reflect a traditional ladylike figure of her time in

her real life. Her novels provided her with ample opportunity and great freedom to reflect herself freely because fiction was her domain where there were no obstructions, limitations, and rules. Eliot never tried to impose her own way of living to her readers in her novels. For instance, her novel, *Adam Bede*, includes strong religious faith and moral teaching which does not fall in line with her real life. Rather, through the protagonists she emphasizes over and over again the significance of religion and praises the value of religious doctrines. Eliot deals with the concept of religion in *Adam Bede* through several contradictory characters to show that religion provides lessons and enables man to find his way in his life journey. The novel also emphasizes that religion offers comfort in times of trouble and provides hope in the midst of despair. In brief, religion in the novel suggests that the world is not only permeated with trouble and confusion, it is at the same time a friendly home created for man by the Divine Essence.

ÖZ

George Eliot çocukluğundan itibaren insan ilişkileri, kadının toplumdaki statüsü ve din konularında döneminin iyi bir gözlemcisi olmuştur. Eliot romanlarında din kavramının insan hayatındaki yerini ve önemini belirtmiş ve döneminin sosyal sorunlarını tartışarak gözlemlerini yansıtmıştır. Özellikle kadınlar için sosyal davranış ve kurallar göz önüne alındığında Eliot, katı kurallarıyla tanınan Kraliçe Victoria döneminde yaşamıştır. Victoria Çağı özellikle kadınlar için baskıcı yapısından ötürü zor bir dönem olarak yorumlanabilir.

Kendi ideallerinden, din anlayışından ve toplumsal yaşamda davranışlarından ödün vermeyerek, Eliot içinde yaşadığı zamana uymayan bir portre çizmiştir. Romanlarında tanımlamış olduğu karakterlerden radikal anlamda farklıdır. Kendi gerçek hayatı, zamanının geleneksel hanımefendi karakterini yansıtmaz. Romanları

ona kendisini özgürce anlatabilmesi için çok geniş bir imkan ve büyük özgürlük sağlasa da Eliot romanlarında hiçbir zaman kendi yaşam biçimini okuyucularına empoze etmeye çalışmamıştır. Örneğin, *Adam Bede* romanı kendi yaşam tarzı ile uyuşmayan çok güçlü dini inanç ve ahlaki öğretiler içermektedir. Romanda dinin önemini vurgulamış ve dini öğretilerin değerini yüceltmıştır. Eliot din kavramını *Adam Bede* romanında bir çok zıt karakter kullanarak işlemiştir. Bunun sebebi de dini, insanların hayat yolculuklarında yollarını bulabilmelerini sağlayan bir araç ve öğreti olarak görmesidir. Roman ayrıca dinin zor durumlarda rahatlama ve çaresiz durumlarda umut sağladığını vurgulamakta, dünyayı sadece kaos ve karmaşa ile kaplı değil, aynı zamanda İlahi Güç'ün insanoğlu için yaratmış olduğu dostane bir yuva olarak göstermektedir.



To my mother and father.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Prof. Dr. Emel Dođramacı for her invaluable help and guidance in the preparation of this thesis.

I would also like to thank Prof. Dr. Nail Bezel and Assist. Prof. Ertuđrul Koç for their kind assistance throughout my studies.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|---------------|
| APPROVAL PAGE..... | ii |
| ABSTRACT..... | iii-iv |
| ÖZ..... | v-vi |
| DEDICATION..... | vii |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS..... | viii |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS..... | ix |
| INTRODUCTION..... | 1-3 |
| CHAPTER I | |
| A GENERAL VIEW OF RELIGION IN ELIOT'S TIME..... | 4-11 |
| CHAPTER II | |
| GEORGE ELIOT IN HER PERIOD..... | 12-19 |
| CHAPTER III | |
| THE CONCEPT OF RELIGION IN <i>ADAM BEDE</i>..... | 20-54 |
| CONCLUSION..... | 55-58 |
| WORK CITED..... | 59-60 |

INTRODUCTION

George Eliot, -- the pseudonym for Mary Ann Evans, -- has become very well known all over the world that people hardly remember her real name. She was one of the remarkable voices of her century as a novelist who with the realism of her own, created memorable human characters. The critical developments in her life go back to her youth. From a staunch believer she evolved into a moderate and tolerant individual who, in her novels, analysed the human capacity for self deception in case of moral dilemmas. Eliot's human characters are life-like. They make mistakes; they repent, and they develop. She rejects the stereotypical depiction of women of her contemporaries, and even goes to the extent of merging a woman character (Dinah Morris) and religion in *Adam Bede*.

Dinah Morris, depicted as a noble character, is a female preacher devoted to religion. On the other hand, Hetty Sorrel is the antithesis of Dinah. By describing such figures, Eliot aims at showing her readers the norms of society, and the understanding of religion and man of her time. *Adam Bede* includes several serious religious teachings and doctrines, which are all praised by Eliot, and this shows her moderate approach both to man and religion.

Religion is the major subject of this thesis, and in the First Chapter the differences between religion, faith and belief will be studied in order to prevent possible confusions. Along with these differences the core of Methodism will be analysed. Since Dinah is a Methodist preacher, it is necessary to reveal the fiats of this sect to be able to understand the worldview of the female protagonist (Dinah Morris) and compare her with her antagonist (Hetty Sorrel). In the Second Chapter, Eliot's perspective concerning woman and her position in society will be studied. One of her primary concerns was to contribute to the status of women in England since women did not shoulder any responsibility in a field like running a church. Therefore, regarding religion she depicts the portrait of Dinah Morris in *Adam*

Bede and tries to convince the society that women have the capability to be successful outside home.

In the Third Chapter, religion in *Adam Bede* will be studied in detail. Although George Eliot herself rejects the doctrines of the Church, she does not reflect this in the novel. Rather, she presents a deep moral teaching, finally, demonstrates in *Adam Bede* that religion provides guidance, courage and spiritual joy for man's life.



CHAPTER I

A GENERAL VIEW OF RELIGION IN ELIOT'S TIME

Religion is, in fact, a part of man's life whether it is believed in, exploited, or ignored. The reason for the existence of religion is that, it offers an explanation of the universe, and the place of man in it. Religion might be a metaphorical map that enables man to find his way. Referring to the main source of this thesis, in *Adam Bede* Hetty Sorrel stands for an ignorant girl who murders her own child, denies it and confesses her crime and repents through religion.

There are many things that go beyond man's understanding. In other words, it is difficult for man to realize certain things related to his life and the Earth he is living in, so he may refer to this metaphorical map in times of chaos, or when he is confused. Hence, through holy books, it can be easier for man to discover gradually the meaning of his being and life.

Louis Pojman states that

Offering a comprehensive explanation of the universe and of our place in it, religion offers us a cosmic map and shows us our place on the map. Through its sacred books, it provides lessons in cosmic map reading, enabling us to find our way through what would otherwise be a labyrinth of chaos and confusion. Religion tells where we came from, where we are, where we are going, and how we can get there . . . Moreover, religion is value-laden. It gives us a sense of dignity and self-worth . . . Religion offers comfort in sorrow, hope in death, courage in danger, and spiritual joy in the midst of despair. It tells us that this world is not a mere impersonal materialist conundrum but a friendly home, provided for us by our heavenly Father (Pojman iix).

As Pojman states, religion explains the origin of man, his position, his responsibilities, and the realization of his mission. In addition, Pojman highlights the concepts of dignity and self-worth. That is to say, through religion man might feel himself a valuable creation, or doctrines of religion may enable man to become more aware of the concepts of honour and wisdom.

One must be careful not to confuse “religion” with “faith.” Before analysing George Eliot’s *Adam Bede* from the viewpoints of religion, faith and belief, it would be useful first to consider the definition of these concepts.

The dictionary definition of faith is: “. . . belief; belief in what is given forth as a revelation of man’s relation to God and the infinite; a settled conviction in regard to religion . . .” (The New Webster Dictionary of English 316). It is therefore necessary to examine religion and faith together as they are both interrelated. Yet, they conceptually vary from each other. As Yandell states, religion is

. . . a conceptual system that provides an interpretation of the world and the place of human beings in it, bases an account of how life should be lived given that interpretation, and expresses this interpretation and lifestyle in a set of rituals, institutions, and practices. This definition views religions as providing persons with accounts of their world and their place in it – interpretations that are relevant to day-to-day living and that are given life in institutions, practices, and rituals (Yandell 16).

On the other hand,

Having faith involves having some understanding, very limited in some cases and quite rich in others, of the tradition within which the faith is had. Whether having faith involves some sort of conflict with reason – believing against evidence, accepting on authority an alternative no more favored by evidence than many others, or the like – depends on what tradition one accepts, and what the evidence is (Yandell 343).

By mentioning the word “tradition,” Yandell suggests religious tradition, and living in the light of that tradition considering its rites,

institutions, practices and its oral or written texts. Therefore, the word “limited” may be referring to religious tradition in which people accept a certain kind of diagnosis and cure offered by this tradition. On the other hand, the word “rich” might be referring to a broader concept, (faith itself) which suggests “the acceptance of religious doctrine and the endeavour to live in accord with it; an essential element in faith is trust if the doctrine claims the existence of a cosmic person” (Yandell 362). Yandell explains that faith seems to have a conflict with reason. However faith is a kind of internal assessment that does not need reason to prove what it is; it is within human beings. In *Adam Bede* Dinah Morris is the best example of a person having faith. She does not look for any concrete evidence to prove that she has faith. The Holy Bible is her guide and her confidence.

When we cannot be certain, we must proceed in part by faith-faith not only in the validity of our own capacity of making judgements, but also in the existence of certain outer realities, pre-eminently moral and spiritual realities. It has been said that faith consists in acting always on the nobler hypothesis; and though this definition is a trifle rhetorical, it embodies a seed of real truth (Huxley 6).

Huxley asserts that faith is not only one’s “own capacity of making judgements, but [it is] also the existence of certain outer realities”

(Huxley 6). He suggests that faith is a strong belief or unquestionable confidence. That is to say, there is not any distinct word, phrase or an explanation for faith. Otherwise it will be a frivolous rhetoric because it also includes spiritual values.

Now the normal meaning of *faith* is simply “confidence”; we say that we have great faith in someone or in some claim or product, meaning that we believe and act as if they were very reliable. Of such faith we can properly say that it is well founded or not, depending on the evidence for whatever it is in which we have faith (Pojman 344).

Pojman’s explanation of faith also supports Huxley’s description. Pojman makes the comment that, having faith represents accepting the reliability of a person or claim and act accordingly. The evidence of that idea is nowhere but within the one who has faith to that person or claim.

The Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard states that “faith is the highest virtue a human can reach; faith is necessary for the deepest human fulfillment” (Kierkegaard 377). Kierkegaard suggests that it is possible for man to find satisfaction in life if he has faith. He describes faith as the highest value that a man is able to find in himself. According to Pojman,

No one writes more passionately about faith nor values it more highly than Kierkegaard . . . For him, faith is the highest virtue precisely because it is objectively uncertain; for personal growth into selfhood depends on uncertainty, risk, venturing forth over seventy thousand fathoms of ocean water. Faith is the lover's loyalty to the beloved when all the evidence is against her. Faith is the soul's deepest yearnings and hopes, which the rational part of us cannot fathom (Pojman 377).

When he refers to faith as "objectively uncertain," he refers to the uncertainty in man's life; how man struggles in life to make his choices while he is growing up. Additionally, personality development of man also depends on his experiences in the journey in life, and faith is essential for this fullest development. Nevertheless, man has to take risks to survive and to get what he wants from life. While describing the concept, Kiergaard says that it "is the lover's loyalty to the beloved when all the evidence is against her" (Pojman 377). He means that there are obstacles or difficulties for man in life to arrive where he wants, and there is no guarantee for that. Moreover, everything may not go on as he has expected. However, what is more important than that is man's loyalty to his faith, and keeping on the way that he has faith in. Dinah Morris's effort in *Adam Bede* show that she is a loyal and faithful character who never thinks of giving up her mission. She

appeals even to the least religious people in the novel. It is religion that creates the identity of Dinah.

Kierkegaard also emphasizes that faith is the deepest desire of the soul, in a way it is possible to say that, the soul is not a whole without faith.

Octave Mannoni develops the difference between “faith (foi)” and “belief (croyance)”: when I say “I have faith in you,” I assert the symbolic pact between the two of us, a binding engagement, the dimension which is absent in simple “believing in” (spirits, etc.) . . . One can believe in ghosts without having faith in them, i.e. without believing them (considering them tricky and evil, not feeling bound to them by any pact or commitment) (Zizek 109).

The above quotation differentiates the concept “faith” from that of “belief.” In brief, belief does not require obedience. That is to say, one might believe in something without having faith in it. On the other hand, faith is a more broad and deep concept. As an example, one may go to Church and find meaning in its regularities because he is a religious person, though he may not need to have faith in religion.

Furthermore,

Having a right to believe whatever you want about anything you want means you have a right to think: You have a right to conceive of alternatives. Thus, what you think and what you believe is up to you. Belief is, in that

sense, like thinking, a subjective, personal matter (Kolak 13).

Therefore, being a subjective matter, belief enables one to think. It provides him the opportunity to make his own choice on what to believe. In other words, it is the individual who is going to accept a statement as true or not.



CHAPTER II

GEORGE ELIOT IN HER PERIOD

George Eliot was born as Mary Anne Evans in 1819 in Warwickshire. Her father, Robert Evans was a respected land agent and George Eliot was his youngest surviving daughter. Eliot had a close relationship with her brother Isaac and she reflected this in *The Mill on the Floss*. Rev. John Edmund Jones, a pious and Evangelical preacher, was one of the influential people in Mary Anne's life with his thoughts on religion. However, when she met Charles and Caroline Bray, she questioned her orthodox beliefs. This could be defined as a turning point in her life since the change in her upset and distanced her from her father for a time. Mary Anne became her father's housekeeper after the death of her mother in 1836. Nevertheless, she did not give up her interest in education, and she learned German and

Italian. She translated Strauss's *Life of Jesus*, and this was the only publication with her real identity, Mary Anne Evans.

While studying George Eliot's novel *Adam Bede* in relation to religion, one may wonder why she used a pen name in her novels rather than her actual name, Mary Anne Evans. To answer this question one must explore the status of women in her time. It was only proper for her to acquire a pen name because in the 19th century writing was supposed to be man's career, and a woman's place was her home. Briefly, woman was responsible for home and looking after children. The concept of home had particular importance such as holiness, shelter and security. Therefore, woman's work outside home seemed inappropriate. Hence, woman's dependence upon man was inevitable.

Another subject that evaded woman from social and intellectual activities is related to the fields of medicine and science. For instance, doctors of the era believed that during their menstruation period women became insane and this caused them to be lifelong invalids. According to anthropologists there was a particular kinship between women and animals. Moreover, women's intellectual and physical sufficiency was classified as between children and men. Therefore,

men appeared as superior beings to whom women helplessly depended on. Even this portrait of her period and society could not prevent Mary Anne from writing novels. She decided to adopt a male identity and eventually became George Eliot. Perhaps, she aimed at showing that women were as capable as men in undertaking similar professions. Consequently, she proved this idea by becoming one of the distinguished authors among the great Victorian novelists.

The literary figure George Eliot (1819-1880) is one of the outstanding names among the great Victorian novelists, paradoxically because of those works with which she, in her personal life, entirely disagreed.

As Mary Anne Evans, a private individual, she differed radically from her fiction in her outlook and her religious and social behaviour which was far different from the majority of contemporary women so strictly and faithfully tried to confine themselves to the artificial social laws and limitations characterized by such terms as 'sense of propriety', 'feminine virtue' and 'ladylike'. Her rebellious attitude towards the religion of her father and her rejection of the doctrines of Church may surprise the reader when he goes through her novels . . . In *Adam Bede*, which is permeated with strong religious faith and earnest moral teaching, the protagonist Dinah Morris reflects George Eliot's most exquisite tribute to the value of the religion she herself could not accept but had retained a strong hold on her ideals, her imagination, and her affections (Doğramacı, 1972: 1).

George Eliot had a different portrait than the average females of her time. Instead of being a ladylike figure and economically and otherwise depending on man, she preferred to be an individual who rejected living according to the rules of the society, or the existing stereotyped thoughts. In most of her novels, through her characters, Eliot argues and discusses the social problems of her time especially the lower status of women in society. For instance, women did not run the educational establishment, controlled the press or run the church. By depicting the portrait of Dinah Morris in *Adam Bede* she tried to prove that in all walks of life a woman could equally perform what was traditionally accepted as man's domain. George Eliot was faithful to her own ideals, sense of religion, and social behaviour. She had her own truths such as her partnership with Henry Lewes and her own way of living. Therefore, she denied her father's concept of religion. He was a conventional father who held orthodox beliefs. Yet, her readers witness a strong traditional religious teaching in her novels which create the impression that she herself was a follower of those teachings. Eliot does not reflect her real concept of religion in her books. She praises the value of religious doctrines and

thoughts in *Adam Bede*. For instance, Dinah Morris and Seth Bede are both representative figures of this notion.

Frederick Karl asserts that

Such a society had its own kind of rewards, although for most it meant a life of drudgery. But for a female child, it had special significance, since it permitted so little mobility. And for a female child of extraordinary intelligence and sensitivity, it meant an imprisonment of sorts for someone like Mary Anne Evans, it proved problematical: while she worshipped her father and lived a life of privilege as the daughter of a very successful man, at the same time she became increasingly aware of the constraints placed upon her (Karl 8).

Frederick Karl implies that the Victorian society or George Eliot's era was not a flexible, but a severe one. Hence, he uses the word "imprisonment" as a metaphor to point out the doctrines of the Church, the rules of the society, and how difficult it was especially for an intellectual woman like Eliot to live or survive as an author between these invisible walls. In fact, Queen Victoria was a model for her. However, she did not accept Eliot to her presence because Eliot broke the rules of the society; she set up a home with George Henry Lewes, and this was a ". . . marriage being out of the question as he already had an estranged wife" (*An Introductory Note*).

When she insisted on calling herself Mrs. Lewes, while the legal Mrs. Lewes was alive and well, she signalled traditional values within a radically new kind of family situation. In her every act, she found in her own split needs and divided personality those coordinates of the era which marked her as its voice . . . Women do not negotiate treaties, nor do they run the educational establishment. They do not fire weapons, control the press, run the church, or litigate in the courts. Eliot's awareness of these omissions in the public area almost a century earlier helps explain her philosophy of duty and sacrifice, her sense of discipline and social comity, her desire to locate women on higher ground where men could not exert control (Karl xiv).

The above quotation underlines that Eliot was faithful to her own principles, so that she did not hesitate to call herself as Mrs. Lewes although the legal Mrs. Lewes was still living and the society was not approving of such relationship. She was obviously not one of the traditional women of her period. She was courageous enough to break the metaphorical chains around her, no matter whether these chains referred to action, thought or speech. Thus, she represented the "new voice of a century." This phrase especially contributes to the development of the status of woman in England. Her awareness of women's omission from society drove her to take action, as she wanted to see women on equal par with men in almost every way possible in the society. In her novels George Eliot concentrated on

this basic issue: improvement in the position of woman in England. She pointed out women's social, educational and economic emancipation as much as she acknowledged women's individuality in relation to their society. "A great many changes, political, religious and above all economic, affecting as they did every aspect of life in the period, and not least the status of women, makes this era particularly remarkable" (Doğramacı, 1999: 3). Consequently, she represented the sophisticated intellectual women of the century.

Almost from childhood, she began to take on qualities—emotional and psychological as well as intellectual—which would transfer her from a country girl into a figure of universal renown: from a young girl deeply attached to the land, to flowers, to natural elements into a sophisticated woman who made all knowledge her domain. Her entire life from late childhood on was a process of transformation, reshaping herself, or, as an earlier biographer put it, emerging . . . Her use of the name George Eliot only three years after she started to call herself Mrs. Lewes indicates how she was redefining herself as a woman with her own language and her own story. She was not to be discouraged from her own sense of herself, even when the sense was itself full of irreconcilable elements (Karl xv).

As Frederick Karl stated above, Eliot was not an ordinary country girl; she was interested in every detail of her time and environment. Therefore, she "made all knowledge her domain" which

led her to a great intellectual transformation. Naming herself Mrs. Lewes or George Eliot after three years indicated how courageous and decisive she was during that time to redefine herself. Eliot became a representative woman of the nineteenth century. Thus, one may venture to say that Eliot's power is her imagination, and her pen is her weapon by which she used to reach her target. Expressing herself freely in fiction, she could use the two. In other words, she is completely far from any kind of invisible limitations which surrounded her in real life. Through this medium she minutely draws such pictures in her novels. For instance, the illegal relationship between Hetty Sorrel and Arthur Donnithorne in *Adam Bede* brings forth the simple-minded, pretty dilemma of a poor woman seduced by an aristocratic land owner; or Adam's hesitation in his choice of woman as wife in the same novel, where he struggles between his love for Hetty whom he desires, and his mother, who imposes her own choice of Dinah.

CHAPTER III

THE CONCEPT OF RELIGION IN *ADAM BEDE*

Adam Bede is one of George Eliot's well-known novels, in which characters are drawn from real life and the plot reflects the period of the novelist. The novel itself is permeated with strong religious faith and it seriously gives moral teachings. Although Eliot rejected the doctrines of the Church, she never reflected this rejection in her novels. "On the contrary, George Eliot deeply appreciates the importance of religion in human life and suggests that Christianity give her basic inspiration, directing all her works" (Doğramacı, 1999: 3).

As an important social subject, George Eliot dealt with the impact of religion on man in *Adam Bede* through various contradictory characters. Dinah Morris and her cousin Hetty Sorrel are the two central figures in the novel representing two different sides of

human nature regarding the concept of religion. Hetty Sorrel murders her own illegitimate child and denies it. On the other hand, Dinah Morris is a deeply religious Methodist preacher.

She is a true example of simplicity and of beauty and nobility of soul. After the early loss of her parents she had while still a child become acquainted with all sorts of misery, and her innate sympathy for sufferings of mankind increased daily. Her happiness was the happiness of those around her. To her there was no half way house: men were lost or saved, and she set herself to save the sinner . . . Dinah, the noble, kind-hearted, altruistic and self-confident preacher is delineated with remarkable appreciation and admiration for the performance of humane actions her strong religious faith inspired (Doğramacı, 1999: 3).

Dinah is completely devoted to religion. Her ultimate aim is to know, follow, and spread the will of God. She has a persuasive manner in inculcating her goal to other characters in the novel. Dinah appears in chapter II (The Preaching) as a young female preacher who arrives in the village for a sermon. Dinah is so influential on people that the “traveller,” a male figure on his horse passing by the village, pauses to see and listen to her due to some hearsays about Dinah. In other words, the traveller is curious about a female preacher. She, in her speech, emphasizes God’s love of the poor and his will of

forgiveness for the sinner. She starts her speech with a striking calling;

‘Saviour of sinners! When a poor woman, laden with sins went out to the well to draw water, she found Thee sitting at the well. She knew Thee not; she had not sought Thee; her mind was dark; her life was unholy. But Thou didst speak to her, Thou didst teach her, Thou didst show her that her life lay open before Thee, and yet Thou wast ready to give her that blessing which she had never sought. Jesus, Thou art in the midst of us, and Thou knowest all men: if there is any here like that poor woman-if their minds are dark, their lives unholy – if they have come out not seeking Thee, not desiring to be taught; deal with them according to the free mercy which Thou didst show to her’ (*Adam Bede*, 1859: 34).

Dinah’s message for the lost or for the ones who feel desperate and helpless reminds the Divine Essence. Whatever sin or crime they have committed, they have the chance for forgiveness as He has mercy for everyone. Dinah talks about Jesus; she implies that he is like one of them, and he is God’s messenger and a light or a guide for man when they get lost in the dark. Then she continues,

‘Lord, Thou art with Thy people still: they see Thee in the night-watches, and their hearts burn within them as Thou talkest with them by the way. And Thou art near to those who have not known Thee: open their eyes that they may see Thee-see Thee weeping over them, and saying ‘Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life’-see Thee hanging on the cross and saying, ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do’-see Thee

as Thou wilt come again in Thy glory to judge them at the last. Amen' (*Adam Bede* 34).

Dinah refers to the existence of Jesus, who is spiritually close to human beings, no matter whether the people are aware of him or not. Therefore, when Dinah addresses Jesus and asks him to “open their eyes,” her purpose is to remind them of the Divine Essence they might reach through Jesus’s guidance. In this way, Jesus will be the medium for God’s mercy on the sinful man. She also points out that Jesus asks for God’s mercy for man’s sins. In a way she insinuates to man to follow the same path for salvation.

Adam Bede gives quite enough information about early Wesleyan Methodism and Dinah is a real Methodist. At this point, it would be necessary to give some brief information about Methodism and how it originated. John Wesley was the chief religious figure in 18th century; he and his brother Charles belonged to a group at Oxford, and in 1729 they began meeting for religious exercises. “From their resolution to conduct their lives and religious study by ‘rule and method,’ they were given the name Methodists” (The Columbia Encyclopedia 1759). Methodism appeared as a popular movement in 1738, and members of the movement preached

in houses, open fields, barns or wherever it was possible for the audience to come together. The essence of Methodism suggests “repentance, faith, sanctification, and the privilege of full, free salvation for everyone” (The Columbia Encyclopedia 1759). The movement became well known, especially in America, in 1784 so that the organization was able to separate from the Church of England.

Another detailed statement about the origin of Methodism is that,

Methodism arose from the search of John Wesley and his brother Charles for a deepened religious life within the ordered ways of the Church of England, which John described as the best constituted national church in the world. He sought no drastic reform in doctrines but rather a greater emphasis upon a personal experience of God’s saving and perfecting grace and more opportunity for a spiritual quest within Christian groups, undeterred by denominational barriers (Encyclopedia of Religion 493).

The definition of Methodism suggests that, “A Methodist, [is the] one that lives according to the method laid down in the Bible” (Encyclopedia of Religion 493).

After his heart was ‘strangely warmed’ on 24 May 1738, Wesley began to preach salvation by faith with the conviction of personal experience, and he gathered around him an organized society in London . . . Wesley argued that a society was simply a company of men ‘having the form, and seeking the power of godliness,’

united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation. There was only one condition for membership, ‘ a desire . . . to be saved from [their] sins.’ To test and reinforce his followers’ sincerity, however, the Rules insisted that members should avoid evil, do good, and seek holiness, for which illustrative examples were given in all three categories (Encyclopedia of Religion 493).

In *Adam Bede*, Dinah is a Methodist preacher,

whose greatest aim was to know the will of God and to follow it. The Methodists believed in present miracles, in instantaneous conversion, in revelations by dreams and visions; they drew lots, and sought for Divine Guidance by opening the Bible at hazard (Notes on George Eliot’s *Adam Bede* 6).

Wesleyan Methodism aims at warning man against worldly vanity. In one of his preachings John Wesley says,

wear no gold, no pearls or precious stones, use no curling of hair, buy no velvet, no silks, no fine linen, no superfluities nor no mean ornaments, however much in fashion. I do not advise women to wear rings, ear-rings, necklaces or ruffles (Notes on George Eliot’s *Adam Bede* 6).

One can observe the same structure in Dinah’s sermon in *Adam Bede* when she points out the young girl Bessy:

‘Poor child! He is beseeching you, and you don’t listen to him. You think of ear-rings and fine gowns and caps,

and you never think of the Saviour who died to save your precious soul . . . She thought of her lace caps and saved all her money to buy 'em; she thought nothing about how she might get a clean heart and a right spirit-she only wanted to have better lace than other girls. And one day when she put her new cap on and looked in the glass, she saw a bleeding face crowned with thorns . . . Ah, tear of those follies! Cast them away from you, as if they were stinging adder. They are stinging you-they are poisoning your soul-they are dragging you down into a dark bottomless pit, where you will sink for ever, . . . away from light and God' (*Adam Bede* 41).

Dinah's effective speech emphasizes the significance of spiritual values rather than worldly matters since these will be of no help on the day of judgement. Precious materials such as gold, pearls, necklaces, ear-rings, or laces are all transient. On the contrary, man's awareness of his responsibilities towards God and his efforts for his soul's salvation are, in fact, transcendental.

Here, it is necessary to mention Mrs. Poyser, because "there was a strong family likeness between her and her niece, Dinah, but there was a contrast between her keenness and Dinah's seraphic gentleness of expression" (*Adam Bede* 81). Mrs. Poyser is an average Victorian woman. She is a sharp-tongued, traditional woman and has faith in religion. Mrs. Poyser finds Dinah's preaching to pretentious

and gets angry with her. She expresses her reaction towards Dinah in an irritated way;

‘If there isn’t Captain Donnithorne and Mr. Irwine a-coming into the yard! I’ll lay my life if 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’ (*Adam Bede* 86).

Dinah replies these words gently by saying “You’ve no cause for such fears . . . I didn’t preach without direction” (*Adam Bede* 86).

However, these words do not calm Mrs. Poyser down. She says,

‘Direction! I know very well what you mean by direction, . . . when there’s a bigger maggot than usual in your head you call it ‘direction’; and nothing can stir you-you look like the statty o’ the outside o’ Treddles’on church, a-starin’ and a-smilin’ whether it’s fair weather or foul. I hanna common patience with you’ (*Adam Bede* 86).

Perhaps, Mrs. Poyser implies here Dinah’s great interest in Wesleyan Methodism.

Dinah is a young but a self-confident figure. She knows what she is doing, and she is bold enough to call out the village people for a meeting. She says “I know you think me a pretty woman, too young to preach . . . But you must think of me as a saint” (*Adam Bede* 33).

The reason for this is that she knows that many of the people go there

out of curiosity to see how a young female teach and preach about God and religion. However, when she pauses for a while to look at the people, she realises that they are more interested in her preaching and approach her in order to be closer to her so that they will not miss any word uttered by her.

In relation to Dinah's sermon Haldane makes the following comment;

To her there was no half-way house: men were lost or saved, and she set herself to save the sinner. The beauty of her sermon in the beginning of the book preached on the village green can never be forgotten: it was written with the author's heart blood, with hot tears as they surged up in her own mind, as she puts it. She stood and turned on the people. There was no keenness in the eyes; they seemed rather to be shedding love than making observations; they had the liquid look which tells that the mind is full of what it has to give out, rather than impressed by external object . . . Dinah is a great creation (Haldane 149).

Haldane emphasizes George Eliot's ability in creating her characters, and she points out that Dinah is an outstanding and the proper character of the author to give the message she wants. When she says "it was written with the author's heart blood," she implies George Eliot's childhood and youth as she grew up in accordance with her father's religious teachings. Thus, she has an immense knowledge of

religion. Nevertheless, “when she met the progressive intellectuals Charles and Caroline Bray, . . . she questioned her orthodox beliefs, a development which upset and distanced her father for a time” (*An Introductory Note*). At this point, it is possible to say that she made her own judgement. It is her own choice, her lifestyle and ideas she wanted to share her with her readers.

Perhaps, one can say that *Adam Bede* is a metaphor for a mirror. The owner of this mirror or the creator of it is George Eliot. In other words, she built the object (the mirror = the novel). The mirror is an ideal device for generating ideas of self-reference or, the mirror is a reflector of surface reality. It does not reflect the internal self, but it reflects the external self. In the light of these connections, when one remembers Dinah’s physical description it is possible to say that Dinah’s and Eliot’s physical descriptions are rather similar.

Dinah had a small oval face, of a uniform transparent whiteness, with an egg-like line of cheek and chin, a full but firm mouth, a delicate nostril, and a low, perpendicular brow, surmounted by a rising arch of parting between smooth locks of pale reddish hair. The eyebrows, of the same colour as the hair, were perfectly horizontal and firmly pencilled. The eyelashes, though no darker, were long and abundant. It was one of those faces that make one think of white flowers with light touches of colour on their pure petals. The grey eyes had no peculiar beauty, beyond that of expression (Notes on George Eliot’s *Adam Bede* 64).

Therefore, the reflection in the mirror is Dinah, who represents the external self of George Eliot. The one in the mirror and the real one outside are not the same.

Eliot does not follow the doctrines of the Church or her father's way in her real life but she presents it in a detailed way in *Adam Bede* through Dinah. Dinah may be suggesting how George Eliot's father wanted to see his daughter. Furthermore, mirror has other different uses like duality or light. Eliot is an invisible light for her readers, and so is Dinah for the poor in *Adam Bede* with her religious teachings.

During her sermon Dinah raises several questions about religion and God.

'Can God take much notice of us poor people? . . . how do we know he cares for us any more than we care for the worms and things in the garden, so as we rear our carrots and onions? Will God take care of us when we die? And has he any comfort for us when we are lame and sick and helpless? Perhaps, too he is angry with us; else why does the blight come, and the bad harvest, and the fever, and all sorts of pain and trouble? For our life is full of trouble, and if God sends us good, he seems to send the bad too. How is it? How is it? . . . What shall we do if he is not our friend?' (*Adam Bede* 36).

Dinah predicts what is on the audiences' minds. In other words, she both asks and replies the questions, and therefore she attracts the attention of the congregation. To reply all these questions, Dinah

addresses “the Gospel” and Jesus, reminding the congregation of the words of the clergyman: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. Jesus Christ spoke those words - he said he came to preach the Gospel to the poor” (*Adam Bede* 35). Then Dinah explains “ ‘Gospel’ meant ‘good news’. The Gospel, you know, is what the Bible tells us about God” (*Adam Bede* 35). Then Dinah told how the good news had been brought

‘So you see, dear friends . . . Jesus spent his time almost all in doing good to poor people; he preached out of doors to them, and he made friends of poor workmen, and taught them and took pains with them. Not but what he did good to the rich too, for he was full of love to all men, only he saw as the poor were more in want of his help. So he cured the lame and the sick and the blind, and he worked miracles to feed the hungry because, he said, he was sorry for them; and he was very kind to the little children and comforted those who had lost their friends; and he spoke very tenderly to poor sinners that were sorry for their sins (*Adam Bede* 37).

During the sermon Dinah seems to be calling the congregation as poor people, metaphorically meaning “ignorant of the codes of religion” since she uses the phrases “poor women,” “poor sinners,” “poor workmen” very often. In fact, she points out that God is full of love and mercy for all people, rich or poor. Therefore, it is the mission of Jesus to help, to treat and to feed the poor ignorant first.

Besides, “the poor” refers to the sick, the lame, the blind as much as it refers to the sinners. Dinah emphasizes how Jesus speaks tenderly to sinners and helps them when they regret their sinning. She also touches upon another question with regard to Jesus:

‘Well, dear friends, who was this man? Was he only a good man-a very good man, and no more-like our dear Mr. Wesley, who has been taken from us? . . . He was the Son of God-‘in the image of the Father,’ the Bible says; that means, just like God, who is the beginning and end of all things-the God we want to know about. So then, all the love that Jesus showed to the poor is the same love that God has for us. We can understand what Jesus felt, because he came in a body like ours and spoke words such as we speak to each other. We were afraid to think what God was before-the God who made the world and the sky and the thunder and the lightning. We could never see him; we could only see the things he had made; and some of these things was terrible, so as we might well tremble when we thought of him. But our blessed Saviour has showed us what God is in a way us poor ignorant people can understand; he has showed us what God’s heart is, what are his feelings towards us’ (*Adam Bede* 37).

Dinah emphasizes God’s power while creating the world. Hence, Jesus is similar to God in the form of man. He can create miracles to save man. Dinah refers to the statements in the holy book about Jesus and tries to introduce Him to the audience in a detailed way. She affirms that it is not strange to be afraid of such a power as God’s; it is impossible to see Him, whereas it is possible to see

what He makes, creates and to understand His feelings for men. The way to understand Him is to know Jesus, who is “in the image of the Father.” Dinah realises that it sounds so complex to make people understand the concept of God. Therefore she says Jesus’s teachings are simple enough especially for the poor to understand.

At the beginning of the novel there is a discussion on religion between Mr Irwine, the vicar of the village, and Dinah. Here, the reader learns how Dinah first hears the voice within. She says,

‘It seems as if I could sit silent all day long with the thought of God overflowing my soul . . . for thoughts are so great –aren’t they sir? They seem to lie upon us like a deep flood; and it is my basement to forget where I am and everything about me, and lose myself in thoughts that I could give no account of, for I could neither make a beginning nor ending of them in words . . . sometimes it seemed as if speech came to me without any will of my own, and words were given to me that came out as the tears come, because our hearts are full and we can’t help it . . . I had wonderful sense of the Divine love as we walked over the hills, where there is no trees, you know, sir, as there is here, to make the sky look smaller, but you see the heavens stretched out like a tent, and you feel the everlasting arms around you’ (*Adam Bede* 96).

Dinah expresses that her devotion to the Divine Essence and preaching is a part of her existence. She describes her feelings as an outcome of her inner self. In other words, what she feels and says

naturally come out from the depths of her heart that she sometimes cannot find any word to describe them. In addition, she uses metaphors to define her sense of the Divine love. The word “tent” refers to heaven above and “the everlasting arms around” represent the existence of God. Moreover, “tent” may also refer to shelter and protection since heaven is safe and pure in which there is goodness and peace there. Additionally, “the everlasting arms around” suggests protection. The phrase implies that God protects all human beings in the world. It is impossible to see Him, but one can feel the greatness of the Divine power.

Dinah says “when God makes His presence felt through us, we are like the burning bush” (*Adam Bede* 97). From her explanation it is possible to discern how strong her religious faith is. Dinah has no intention and interest in material things or property. She runs after spiritual fulfillment and work for man in accordance with God’s will.

On the other hand, Hetty Sorrel is created as the complete antithesis of Dinah Morris. Hetty Sorrel is a secular type whose priorities such as possessing jewellery, fun, richness and making love are worldly. Hetty represents an incongruous individual whose ears are not “open” to listen to any companion’s advice. She holds tightly

to her own whims and fantasies. Her striking selfishness is another dimension to be considered.

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 bescoldded by anybody. She thought, if Adam had been rich and could have given her these things, she loved him well wnohough to marry him (*Adam Bede* 105).

The above quotation shows what a materialistic character Hetty is. She gives priority to worldly properties, especially to jewellery, nice clothing, and perfume to make herself look more beautiful and smell nice. Thus, the reader understands Hetty's obsession with appearance and richness, and her love for the young, attractive, handsome and rich squire, Arthur Donnithorne whether it is real love or selfishness. Arthur is the village squire's grandson and he is also the heir to his grandfather's property. Hence, Hetty knows that Arthur can provide all the things she yearns for and make her dreams come true. Hetty admires Arthur's aunt, Miss Lydia because she lives a life that Hetty is longing for. Therefore, Hetty's love for Arthur and her admiration for Miss Lydia are all because of their pompous life-styles,

but not because they are genuinely good or respected people. Furthermore, Hetty's understanding of love appears more clearly, when she treats Adam as if he were just a poor beggar demanding her love. Her attitude towards Adam could have been completely different if Adam had been a wealthy man. In this case, she would deign to love and marry Adam.

George Eliot also emphasizes the physical difference between Hetty and Dinah. She says,

What a strange contrast the two figures made, visible enough in that mingled twilight and moonlight! Hetty, her cheeks flushed and her eyes glistening from her imaginary drama, her beautiful neck and arms bare, her hair hanging in a curly tangle down her back, and the baubles in her ears. Dinah, covered with her long white dress, her pale face full of subdued emotion, almost like a lovely corpse into which the soul has returned charged with sublimer secrets and a sublimer love (*Adam Bede* 159).

Thus, not only their characters but also their appearances are different from each other, or one may say that their appearances give some clues about their priorities in life. Eliot emphasizes the phrase "mingled twilight" as a metaphor for Hetty. This can be paraphrased in the sense that Hetty is fond of wearing colourful things and make up. Yet, this phrase may denote a negative connotation: that is Hetty's

life is based on confusion just as the mingled colours of twilight. Hetty is unable to attain stability in her way of life. On the one hand, her relationship with Arthur satisfies her superfluous character and on the other, she is ignorant about the end of her affair. Moreover, “twilight” signifies the end of the day. It may refer to the end of hopes towards the end of the novel.

Another connotation of opposites can be observed between the words “moonlight” and “twilight”. The first one represents illumination and brightness, represented by the moon. Although it is pale and colourless, it has the power to enlighten the sky and the world in darkness, just as Dinah Morris tries to enlighten people through preaching. On the other hand, “twilight” suggests that the day is ending and it is time for darkness. In this connotation, Dinah represents the moon which is high above, while Hetty represents the twilight which is going down. Thus, one may conclude that Hetty’s future is not as hopeful as Dinah’s.

Dinah is suspicious about the relationship between Hetty and Arthur, and she wants to warn Hetty beforehand. Hetty asks Dinah: “But why should you think I shall be in trouble? Do you know anything?” (*Adam Bede* 160). Dinah replies,

‘Because, dear, trouble comes to us all in this life . . . 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 . . . we set our hearts on things which it is not God’s will for us to have, and then we go sorrowing; the people we love are taken from us, and we can joy in nothing because they are not with us; sickness comes, and we faint under the burden of our feeble bodies; we go astray and do wrong, and . . . I desire for you, that while you are young you should seek for strength from your Heavenly Father, that you may have a support which will not fail you in the evil day’ (*Adam Bede* 160).

Dinah’s words create anxiety and fear in Hetty. In fact, there is an implied message in Dinah’s words, and although Hetty gets the message she pretends not to have understood it. She does not give any meaning to the way Dinah speaks. What Dinah wants to underline in her speech is that both happiness and sorrow are for man and when it is a day of grief, man can get courage and strength from God to endure misery.

Hetty’s reaction is not the one Dinah expects. Hetty gets angry and stops Dinah’s talk: “Don’t talk to me so, Dinah. Why do you come to frighten me? I’ve never done anything to you. Why can’t you let me be?” (*Adam Bede* 161). It is too late when Hetty understands that she is in trouble. Arthur leaves her and then she has an

illegitimate child. During her times of shock and nightmare Hetty recalls Dinah's words and faces the reality.

She was not thinking of her neck and arms now; even her own beauty was indifferent to her. Her eyes wandered sadly over the dull old chamber, and then looked out vacantly towards the growing dawn. Did a remembrance of Dinah come across her mind? Of her foreboding words, which had made her angry? Of Dinah's affectionate entreaty to think of her as a friend in trouble? (*Adam Bede*, 321).

Hetty experiences a flashback, but she knows that there is no possibility to go back in time. She wishes she were in a dream. The reality is so hard for her to tolerate that she is not interested in her jewellery. She realises how serious her trouble is. The word "vacantly" may represent Hetty's emotions. She is unable to think of anything as she is unconscious after an accident. The phrase "the growing dawn" might refer to Dinah, because Dinah is the only person Hetty remembers as a friend in her cold loneliness now. Dinah might flash in Hetty's mind in the form of "the growing dawn," as she is the only one, or Hetty's unique hope to ask for help in this desperate situation. Hetty, with her illegitimate child, feels that she has no way out and she finds the situation unbearable so she murders her own

baby. When she later regrets it, she finds out that the baby has already passed away.

In the rest of the story Hetty Sorrel resembles the woman in Dinah's sermon at the very beginning of the novel. Hetty is like "a poor woman laden with sins, went out to the well to draw water . . . her mind was dark; her life was unholy" (*Adam Bede* 34). Hetty's life turns into chaos now, and she finds the solution in death. It is possible to understand this from Eliot's description: "sitting for hours under the hedgerows, looking before her with blank, beautiful eyes; fancying herself at the edge of a hidden pool, low down" (*Adam Bede*, 366). Hetty wonders if it is very painful to be drowned, and if there is anything worse after death than what she has been experiencing in life. At this point, one wonders whether Hetty is going to seek shelter in God. However, the reader finds out that

Religious doctrines had taken no hold on Hetty's mind. She was one of those numerous people who have had godfathers and godmothers, learned their catechism, been confirmed, and gone to church every Sunday, and yet, for any practical result of strength in life, or trust in death, have never appropriated a single Christian idea or Christian feeling. You would misunderstand her thoughts during these wretched days, if you imagined that they were influenced either by religious fears or religious hopes (*Adam Bede* 366).

Hetty several times tries to commit suicide, but she cannot do it “ [because] death seemed still along way off, and life was so strong in her” (*Adam Bede* 366). When Hetty’s murdering her own child comes to light, the court sends her to prison. Dinah’s existence beside Hetty to comfort her encompasses several religious speeches and praying, since there is no other way for spiritual salvation of the helpless one who is condemned to death.

Dinah tries to focus Hetty’s attention on one thing for her soul’s salvation, and that is to make her remember God’s existence. Hetty feels better when Dinah is with her in prison. She says “you won’t leave me, Dinah? You will keep close to me?” (*Adam Bede* 425). Dinah replies “No, Hetty, I won’t leave you. I will stay with you to the last . . . But, Hetty, there is someone else in this cell besides me, some one close to you” (*Adam Bede* 425). In this quotation, the word “last” refers to the moment of death, or the moment of Hetty’s execution. Dinah promises to be near Hetty, to give her courage and strength to tolerate the finale. Hetty is unable to understand whose presence Dinah is talking about since she asks “in a frightened whisper, ‘who?’” (*Adam Bede* 425). Dinah answers:

‘Someone who has been with you through all your hours of sin and trouble – who has known every thought you have had – has seen where you went, where you lay down and rose up again, and all the deeds you have tried to hide in darkness . . . we are in the presence of God’ (*Adam Bede*, 426).

Hetty cannot concentrate on Dinah’s words because she is thinking of the moment of execution, and she asks whether anybody can rescue her or not. Dinah tries to explain that her death is inevitable but it is possible to ease the soul’s pain and suffering if she trusts God. However, Hetty says she has no idea about how to do it. Dinah explains that this is because Hetty is trying to hide the truth and shutting up her soul against God. Dinah says,

‘Don’t shut God’s love out in that way, by clinging to sin . . . He cannot bless you while you have one falsehood in your soul; his pardoning mercy cannot reach you until you open your heart to him, and say, ‘I have done this great wickedness; O God, save me, make me pure from sin’. While you cling to one sin and will not part with it, it must drag you down to misery after death, as it has dragged you to misery here in this world, my poor, poor Hetty. It is sin that brings dread, and darkness, and despair: there is light and blessedness for us as soon as we cast it off. God enters our souls then, and teaches us, and brings us strength and peace. Cast it off now, Hetty-now: confess the wickedness you have done-the sin you have been guilty of against your Heavenly Father. Let us kneel down together, for we are in the presence of God’ (*Adam Bede* 426).

In the above quotation, “one falsehood,” “great wickedness” or Hetty’s sin suggests her murdering the infant. What Dinah tries to do for Hetty’s salvation is to persuade her to confess her guilt, as this is the only way to release her soul. For the first time the reader witnesses Hetty having a religious turn of mind because she “obeyed Dinah’s movement, and sank on her knees. They still held each other’s hand, and there was long silence” (*Adam Bede* 426). However, it is so hard for Hetty to confess her crime and she is too scared to say anything. She could only say “Dinah . . . help me . . . I can’t feel anything like you . . . my heart is hard” (*Adam Bede* 427). Therefore, Dinah with all her patience and calmness calls out to God in the name of Hetty and asks Him for help. After a long speech Hetty is ready to speak with the strength and courage she gets from Dinah and finally she confesses “the great wickedness,” “the sin” (her murdering the baby), and the reason of doing it. Hetty says,

‘I will speak . . . I will tell . . . I won’t hide it anymore . . . 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 . . . But I thought perhaps it wouldn’t die-there might somebody find it. 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 . . . and I tried to kill myself before,

and I couldn't. Oh, I tried so to drown myself in the pool, and I couldn't . . . I went to find him, as he might take care of me; and he was gone; and then I didn't know what to do . . . I couldn't bare that. Oh, it was so dreadful, Dinah . . . I was so miserable' (*Adam Bede* 428).

After her confession Hetty hesitates and asks "Dinah, do you think God will take away that crying and the place in the wood, now I've told everything?" (*Adam Bede* 431). These words of Hetty suggest that she needs consolation. At least she wants to hear Dinah's tender words. Dinah only replies "let us pray, poor sinner. Let us fall on our knees again, and pray to God of all mercy" (*Adam Bede* 431). She advises Hetty to trust God as He has mercy for everybody. One can venture to say here that, Hetty repents through her cooperation with Dinah. There is no chance for Hetty's survival, but praying is an opportunity for her to save her soul or unlock her soul and find shelter in God's forgiveness.

As Dinah has promised her, she is beside Hetty to her last moment. Dinah says "close your eyes, Hetty, . . . and let us pray without ceasing to God" (*Adam Bede* 431). At this point of the climax, Arthur Donnithorne, Hetty's seducer, "arrives with a reprieve; her sentence is commuted to transportation" (Notes on *Adam Bede* 6).

Arthur succeeds in saving Hetty from the gallows, but he cannot prevent her transportation.

Seth Bede is another important character in the novel: he has such an unselfish personality that he can be happy when his beloved Dinah gets married to his brother Adam. Similar to Dinah, he has strong faith in religion and at the same time loves her. When Seth proposes to Dinah she replies that she has no room in her heart for such feelings. However, this is not because she opposes to this union.

On the contrary, she believes in its holiness. Therefore, she says;

‘But my heart is not free to marry. That is good for other women, and it is a great and blessed thing to be a wife and mother . . . God has called me to minister to others, not to have any joys or sorrows of my own . . . My life is too short, and God’s work is too great for me to think of making a home for myself in this world . . . 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’ (*Adam Bede* 45).

Dinah emphasizes how short human lifetime is, and how long a way she has to follow in order to realize her mission. In other words, she refers to her responsibilities considering religion. She expresses that she can rejoice or weep with people but it is impossible for her to have any joys or sorrows of her own as her soul is filled with

preaching and love towards the Divine Essence. She also does not miss to thank Seth Bede for his proposal and explains how important he is for her as a Christian brother.

After Dinah's decline of his proposal it is so hard for Seth to utter any words. Hence, he finds strength in the lines and rhyme of a hymn that he has often repeated for his love for Dinah:

In darkest shades if she appear,
My dawning is begun:
She is my soul's bright morning star,
And she my rising sun
(*Adam Bede* 46).

In this stanza, the phrase "darkest shades" is a metaphor for Seth's hard times in sorrow such as the death of his father. Dinah was the first person who came and stayed with them and their mother Lisbeth, for consolation. Therefore, it is possible to say that Dinah appears close to people, as she has said before, to share their times in grief. At this point, one may remember that she did the same thing for Hetty: Dinah was the only light for her, she was like a bright moon high above the sky in the cell next to Hetty. Hence, the word "dawning" and the phrases "bright morning star" and "rising sun" refer to light, to a new beginning, to life and hope. They may also

reflect Seth's respect for Dinah, as all are high above and vital for man's life on Earth.

Since the point of discussion includes metaphors such as "morning star," "rising sun," and "dawning," another connotation might also merge. As it has earlier been discussed, Dinah represents moonlight for Hetty. For Seth Bede, she is a bright sun, heat and lively colours. These two natural phenomena, the sun and the moonlight are the reflections of the state of mind of two different persons: Seth Bede full of the warmth of the sun, representing hopefulness and, on the other hand, Hetty with full moonlight suggesting hopelessness. In addition, these two natural phenomena mentioned above are actually embodied in the person of Dinah, who scatters light. Dinah reflects the glorious colours of the sun for Seth but for Hetty she reflects the moon's white illumination. Dinah in her efforts to calm down and sooth Hetty's pain, tries to make Hetty see the ultimate glory of God as there is no other possibility. Dinah is only able to help Hetty for her soul's salvation in prison. It is not possible for her to erase Hetty's sin or change her future, since Hetty is a murderer. Seth Bede has a chance to start a new life with a person he loves, thus his future is bright. But even after her marriage to Adam, Dinah continues to

consider Seth not as a lover but as a Christian brother. Dinah may be considered as the symbol of “dawning,” and “morning sun” for Seth in any period of his life as they both continue to be respected people and having faith in religion.

Another point of discussion for Dinah’s refusal of marrying Seth is due to religious missions as she explains to Seth in the above quotation. Keeping this idea in mind, the reader witnesses that she gets married to Adam at the end of the novel. In fact, it is the only point when Dinah realizes that her heart involves human feelings for Adam. When Adam passionately asks “Tell me-tell me if you can love me better than a brother?” (*Adam Bede* 479). Dinah replies,

‘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’ (*Adam Bede* 479).

One can infer from the quotation that Dinah makes a kind of confession of her love for Adam or, at least, she does not deny it. However, she is still worried about her responsibilities towards God. Dinah is uncertain if her love for Adam would divert her from the love

of God. But as Adam too has faith in religion, he has a reasonable explanation. He says,

‘How can there be anything contrary to what’s right in our belonging to one another and spending our lives together? Who put this great love into our hearts? Can anything be holier than that? . . . I’d never think o’ putting myself between you and God, and saying you oughtn’t to do this and you oughtn’t to do that. You’d follow your conscience as much as you do now’ (*Adam Bede* 479).

When Adam proposes to Dinah, he does not aim at bringing limitations to her, that is to say, she does not need to give up anything she has been doing before. Adam means mutual help, understanding and love in everything would help them go on their own track. He also mentions the holiness of the mutual love in their hearts, and he implies that it is the Divine presence’s will. Adam suggests that Dinah’s love for him will not shut up her heart but it is only an addition to what she has been doing before. Marriage is not going to take anything away from Dinah. From then on, Dinah gradually becomes aware that human love towards a man is also possible without ignoring her responsibilities towards God. Dinah, with the encouragement she receives from Adam, says,

‘It is the divine will. My soul is so knit to yours that it is but a divided life I live without you. And this moment, now you are with me, and I feel that our hearts are filled with the same love, I have a fullness of strength to hear and do our heavenly father’s will, that I had lost before’ (*Adam Bede* 501).

Now, Dinah feels safe and comfortable, and understands that loving a man will not oblige her to shut out the heavenly light, or leading her to darkness. On the contrary, she feels more powerful and courageous to walk further as she has a companion, Adam, to support her.

Regarding the union of the two sexes through marriage, there is another similarity between Dinah Morris and George Eliot. They both experienced marriage in their own lives. However, because H. Lewes was already married, he and Eliot were not able to marry. Divorce then was not as easy as it is today; it was only after 1858 that marriage could be dissolved through a special Act of Parliament. The society then did not approve of Eliot’s illicit relationship with Lewes, therefore she was not accepted as a “respected” author. In fact, Eliot herself was not against marriage, but her situation was due to the laws of her era. Here, it is possible to say that Eliot was faithful to her love for Lewes though she breached “the social laws” set around her by

Victorianism. Her “marriage” to Lewes was not legal, but she was a devoted mother to his three children of his previous but legal wife, Mrs. Lewes. After the death of H. Lewes, George Eliot married John W. Cross, who was her old friend and admirer, and also her first biographer. From this perspective, one might come to the conclusion that Eliot as a woman, did not reflect her own experiences and her own concept of marriage in her novels. She could not find satisfaction in her solitary life. Therefore, she created some idealised characters in her novel.

Proceeding to Dinah, although she was against marriage at the beginning of the novel, she later realized that marriage was not an obstacle for her mission. The concept of marriage was blessed for her too, as much as it was for each and every woman. Dinah also understood that she became stronger after marrying a man like Adam Bede.

A similar experience can be seen in George Eliot’s life: “Her friendship with George Henry Lewes, starting with mutual intellectual admiration, brought them closer to each other and hence also to mutual liking and understanding.” (Dogramacı, 1999: 4) From this perspective, it is possible to say that both George Eliot and

Henry Lewes trusted each other in every field that when Lewes fell ill, Eliot took over some of his work and that enabled a closer relationship. At this point, one might remember Dinah's expression about the cooperation between man and woman:

What greater thing is there for two human souls, than to feel that they are joined for life-to strengthen each other in all labour, to minister to each other in all pain, to be one with each other in silent unspeakable memories at the moment of the last parting? (*Adam Bede* 501).

Hence, one might say that Eliot and Lewes had a similar cooperation in every field of their lives since they were together till Lewes's death separated them. A similar cooperation can also be seen between Dinah and Adam. That is to say, through the union of marriage, Adam and Dinah promised to support each other both in good and bad days of their lives.

Besides, Dinah and Adam in the beginning were just friends and respected each other as Eliot and Lewes were. The reader sees in the novel that Dinah and Adam had no idea of marrying, as he was in love with Hetty, and he knew that his brother Seth was in love with Dinah. Furthermore, Dinah knew that Adam loved Hetty. In order to

open Hetty's eyes, Dinah refers to the conversation she had with Adam's mother, Lisbeth Bede:

'she has been telling me what Adam has done, for these many years, to help his father and his brother; it's wonderful what a spirit of wisdom and knowledge he has, and how he's ready to use it all in behalf of them that are feeble. And I'm sure he has a loving spirit too' (*Adam Bede* 143).

This quotation highlights Dinah's respect for Adam as he had the qualifications of a wise man. He has conscience; he is honest and faithful to the members of his family. In fact, it is possible to observe that Adam has similar feelings of respect and friendship for Dinah as

he put her above all other friends in the world. Could anything be more natural? For in the darkest moments of memory of the thought of her always came as the first ray of returning comfort. The early days of gloom at the Hall Farm had been gradually turned into soft moonlight by her presence (*Adam Bede* 461).

Adam points out how Dinah is an important character in his life, especially in times of pain and sorrow. Adam, too, respects her as he puts Dinah "above all other friends in the world." "The early days of gloom at the Hall Farm" represents Adam's father's death, and Adam refers to Dinah as "the first ray of returning comfort." This is because

Dinah has a calming and soothing effect on people. The phrase is also a metaphor for Dinah that she “scatters light” around her. In addition, the reader sees the word “moonlight” uttered again. Therefore, it is possible to say that Dinah suggests “moonlight” (white illumination) for the characters whose ending has no possibility of chance of redeeming. That is to say, Adam’s father is dead and Hetty is a murderer. On the one hand, Dinah represents light for Hetty in her moments of darkness in prison and on the other, she represents light for Adam’s family to sooth their souls in pain when Lisbeth lost a husband and the brothers lost a father.

CONCLUSION

George Eliot was a highly intellectual novelist of her time. Keeping in mind the beauty of her art and the philosophy she reveals through this beauty, one can perceive that she was also a critical, observant and imaginative thinker.

George Eliot's first full-length novel, *Adam Bede*, presents a broad spectrum with different portraits and events of her time. The characters in the novel have their own personality traits. They interact in specific scenes with each other for specific purposes, since they serve the novelist's aim in writing the novel. *Adam Bede* is like a vehicle for religious exhortation or instruction and for ethical information. Although Eliot's attitude towards religion is quite different from her own understanding of the concept, she never reflected this in *Adam Bede*.

The characters in the novel come about with the conclusion that the impact of religion on humanity is indisputable. However, the significance or how much each concept means for each individual in the novel changes from one to the other.

Each character in *Adam Bede* represents a different dimension of the theme of “religion.” Dinah Morris, the protagonist, stands for the three concepts: religion, belief and faith. Dinah is especially different from the other characters in the novel in terms of her having strong faith in God and religion. She is an example of nobility and simplicity. She also represents a real type of a Methodist, who organises her life according to the teachings of the Bible. This is why Dinah has such a great sense of responsibility while undertaking her mission which is to know the will of God by heart. Individuals must understand and follow this will.

On the other hand, one can see Mrs. Poyser representing a typical religious woman of the Victorian period. She often goes to church and follows the doctrines as required. The point where she is different from Dinah is that, Mrs. Poyser thinks that Dinah’s efforts in achieving God’s mission are over courageous. George Eliot has created such contradictory characters to give a clearer picture of a

Methodist preacher who has faith in her religious mission. In that era, the number of people like Mrs. Poyser was quite high, whereas people like Dinah Morris were not in abundance.

As one can deduce from the events in the novel, the role of Dinah Morris as a Methodist (an altruistic person) is influential throughout her relationship and interaction with Hetty Sorrel, who is far from being aware of religion, belief or faith. As it has already been discussed, Hetty portrays a selfish figure, unconscious and unaware of moral and spiritual values for she is obsessed with material values. Nevertheless, the reader witnesses Dinah's persuasive manner which is instrumental in making Hetty realise the place and importance of religion in man's life, and in the salvation of her soul. Considering the role of Dinah, one can come to the conclusion that if a person has faith, s/he is responsible for herself/himself and for everybody.

Throughout the novel, the reader, over and over again, are reminded of Dinah's great love for God and humanity. This nobility of her heart makes her an anchor for people in deep sorrow and darkness. The reader also sees that the concept of worldly love towards a man and marriage do not have any place in her heart till she becomes more familiar and friendly with Adam Bede towards the end

of the novel. From this perspective, Adam appears as an important figure who manages to make Dinah realise that love for a man does not mean an obstacle for her mission. When towards the end of the novel Dinah understands that both she and Adam have the same faith same belief and same religion, and how he endeavours to support her, she decides to marry him. Dinah and Eliot's experiences also prove that marriage is holy since it involves several noble concepts such as friendship, caring and sharing, cooperation, respect, honesty and faithfulness till death.

In brief, *Adam Bede* emphasizes the importance of religion in human relations and in women's performance. Achieving success in different fields does not only belong to males. The novel not only highlights a superior character like Dinah but also enables the reader to realize the weaknesses and defects of the female characters. What is more striking is that *Adam Bede* provides a perspective of these weak characters' development throughout the story.

WORK CITED

An Introductory Note to *Adam Bede*.

Chernow, A. Barbara. (Ed.) (1993.) *The Columbia Encyclopedia*. Fifth Ed., Columbia U P.

Doğramacı, Emel. (1972.) *George Eliot As Mary Evans*. Hacettepe Bulletin of Social Sciences and Humanities. Ankara: Hacettepe University Press.

Doğramacı, Emel. (1999.) *George Eliot and Her Work*. Proceedings of The Seventh METU British Novelists Seminar 11-12 March. Ankara.

Eliade, Mircea (Ed.) (1987.) *The Encyclopedia of Religion*. Vol.9, London: Macmillan.

Eliot, George. (1994.) *Adam Bede*. London: Penguin. First pub., 1859.

Haldane, S. Elizabeth. (1974.) *George Eliot and Her Time. A Victorian Study*. New York: Haskell House Publishers Ltd.

Huxley, Julian. (1918.) *Religion Without Revelation*. Thinker's Library. No: 83. London: Watts and Co.

Jay, Elizabeth.(1987.) *The Journal of John Wesley. A Selection*, Oxford: U P.

- Karl, R. Frederick. (1995.) *George Eliot Voice of a Century, A Biography*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Kierkegaard, Soren (1846.) *Concluding Unscientific Postscript, Subjectivity Is Truth*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Pr.
- Kolak, Daniel. (1994.) *In Search of God*. California: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Notes on George Eliot's Adam Bede*, Study-Aid Series, Methuen & CO Ltd., London, 1966.
- Pojman, P. Louis. (2003.) *Philosophy Of Religion, An Anthology*. Wadsworth: Thomson Learning.
- Thatcher, Virginia S. (Ed.) (1968.) *The New Webster Dictionary of The English Language*. Vol.II. New York: Grolier.
- Yandell, E. Keith. (1999.) *Philosophy of Religion. A Contemporary Introduction*. London: Routledge.
- Zizek, Slavoj. (2001.) *On Belief, Thinking In Action*. London: Routledge.