



Research Article

ETHICS AND SOCIAL BELONGING IN SOME GEORGE ELIOT'S FICTIONS

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Abstract

This article makes a critical analysis of Ethics and Social Belonging in *Silas Marner*, *The Mill on the Floss*, and *Adam Bede*. It explores how Eliot's characters define their identities through encounters with the 'other,' enhancing both individual and their social belonging. This article employs a multidisciplinary methodology, using structuralism, intertextuality and psychoanalysis. This work is organized into three sections: the first covers the research background, the second makes a critical analysis of religion, ethics and cultural identity and the third uses psychoanalysis to explore Eliot's psychological influence on her characters.

Keywords: Ethics, Individual, Society, Social belonging.

INTRODUCTION

George Eliot's main objective in her fiction is to enlarge the vision of her readers, particularly to make them understand those 'who differ from themselves.' That process of enlargement is one that is also enacted in the experience of her main characters as they are shown defining their identities both as individuals and as representatives of their culture. This research work, in general, seeks to investigate the ways in which not only cultural identity, most precisely religion but also ethics are represented in Eliot's *Silas Marner* (1861), *The Mill on the Floss* (1860) and *Adam Bede* (1859) of English life. The meeting of the self with the 'other' is generally presented as a progressive step which has the effect of awakening and enlarging both individual and cultural identities. This process of enlargement is greatly valued by Eliot, and is presented in all its complexity in her novels of English life. It is not only individual lives that are enriched by the encounter with the foreign, since these novels suggest that there is a beneficial effect on the general culture of provincial England. The juxtaposition of the familiar and the foreign is both a characteristic mark of George Eliot's cosmopolitan mind. The individual's development in Eliot's fiction is reached through a socializing process more than through formal education, and the latter is, indeed, frequently the object of criticism. The kind of education her novels enact is one that values difference above sameness, diversity and breadth above shallowness and narrowness. The individual is awakened by an encounter with what lies beyond the self, and this has the effect of bringing down the barriers between conflicting worlds: between old and new, home and abroad, self and other, familiar and foreign. The 'other', defined in individual, cultural, or geographical terms, represents a potential means of progress, stimulating wider connections and leading to a synthesis of conflicting elements in the long term. Besides, no forecasting has ever worked perfectly when it comes to human behaviour. Man is a changing and thinking being as Blaise Pascal once said. Individual has his own stretch of character. Human behaviour is mostly shaped by the environment in which he lives.

Society then determines the cultural environment in which man grows carrying along principles and norms of the social group. Leaving one society to another is a very tactful transfer, for the norms of one society cannot be applied to another. Religion sets rules for mutual acceptance and spiritual life by promoting good attitude in society. A good Christian can lose his faith and become weak because of social realities. Social injustice can get a Christian astray if he is not strongly rooted in his belief. Human wickedness is difficult to fathom. A moral life is then a wrapped up of both society and religion. The main question that this article tries to answer is how far does George Eliot represent Ethics and Social belonging in *Silas Marner*, *The Mill on the Floss* and *Adam Bede*

Research context and framework

Introduction to the study

Problem statement: Victorian era was full of contradictions. This reality was known as the Victorian compromise¹. Undeniably, the United Kingdom under Queen Victoria (1837-1901) became the world leading economic power thanks to her huge empire and the Industrial Revolution. In nearly all domains of British life, significant positive changes were noted. Hitherto, that society faced serious problems such as a high rate of unemployment, violence, disease, and woman discrimination, to mention but a few. To sum it up, the Victorian society was marked by injustice. The main source of such a reality is a crisis of ethics. Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy, mentions ethics to be "the moral principles of a particular tradition, group or individual" (Deigh, J. & Audi, R. (ed). (1995). The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy. Cambridge: CUP). Moreover, those 'moral principles' are constructed on a common belief system shared by a community. Easily seen through social laws, those principles determine the social governance of the society. In this regard, ethics is not different from ethics. Its final aim is to control the behaviour of people in a given society for a peaceful living together.

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¹ Davis, Nira. "The Victorian Compromise: Social Duality in the Age of Industry." *Victorian Studies Quarterly*, vol. 38, no. 2, 2019, pp. 145-167.

Since Days, Christianity has nourished the western societies with the moral values on the ground of which they struggled to regulate the conduct of people. This Christian ethics entails believers to live in compliance with the will of God as revealed by the Holy Scriptures and mainly by the teachings of Jesus-Christ. According to Frame in *The Doctrine of the Christian Life: A Theology of Lordship* Christian ethics is : “*what the whole Bible teaches us about which acts, attitudes, and personal character traits receive God’s approval, and which do not*”. (Frame, J. M. (2008). *The Doctrine of the Christian Life: A Theology of Lordship*. Phillipsburg: NJ: P&R.). The Victorians found in Christianity the source of their moral standards. Then, to understand the author’s conception of religious, one needs to scrutinize what she has produced. In *Silas Marner, The Mill on the Floss and Adam Bede*, she has emphasized the difficult nature of human beings.

Relevancy of the study: This work tackles a relevant topic, which is the study of the psychologic causes of Protagonists’ changes in mindsets from their kindness to their introversion in the first place and later how religion, ethics and cultural identity water-marked humans lives from *Silas Marner, The Mill on the Floss* and *Adam Bede*, true masterpieces which expose both fiction and realities.

Methodology of study: To conduct this research, I use data collection to collect information on the author, the novel and the previous works which have explored the topic of this work. After collecting those data, it uses some theories to process the aspects of the novel relating to the focus point of this article. The working up of the narratological style of the various plotlines implies the use of structuralism. To co-relate the different narratives, this work uses intertextuality as a tool to interpret and appreciate Eliot’s ideas as far as Ethics and Cultural identity are concerned. Intertextuality is a literary device that creates an ‘*interrelationship between texts*’ and generates related understanding in separate works. These references are made to influence the reader and add layers of depth to a text, based on the readers’ prior knowledge and understanding. Moreover, when reading the novels, one perceives that George Eliot was psychologically worked up by the various hardships she has undergone. Conveniently, the best tool to appreciate the mental state of the different protagonists is Freudian Psychoanalysis. Psychoanalytic approach was primarily used by the psychiatrists. Besides, as an effective literary theory it can also be applied in literature as well. The main reason is that narrative and the actions of a character sometimes make the audience wonders the reasons sustaining the deeds of a certain fictional character. Consequently, psychoanalytic reading of a text serves as a means to learn the hidden reasons or desires of a character. Moreover, as a work belongs to its author, writers sometimes reflect their unconscious wishes or worries to their characters while writing. It uses then: The methods of reading employed by Freud and later theorists to interpret texts. [Doing so] One may psychoanalyze a particular character within a literary work, but it is usually assumed that all such characters are projections of the author’s psyche. (Delahoyde)²

Critical analysis of Religion, Ethics and Cultural identity in George Eliot’s *Silas Marner, The Mill on the Floss* and *Adam Bede*

George Eliot's novels *Silas Marner, The Mill on the Floss*, and *Adam Bede* offer a nuanced exploration of religion, ethics, and cultural identity in Victorian England. These works reflect Eliot's own spiritual journey from devout Christianity to a more humanistic philosophy. In *Adam Bede*, set earliest, one observes a world where Christian faith is central to many characters' lives. *The Mill on the Floss* presents a society in transition, with traditional religion challenged by new ideas.

Silas Marner offers a more universalist view of spirituality, focusing on human connection rather than doctrinal adherence. This evolution in religious portrayal mirrors the broader societal shifts of the era, as well as Eliot's personal intellectual development. Through these novels, Eliot invites readers to question the role of organized religion in shaping individual and collective identities, while also exploring the possibility of moral and spiritual growth outside traditional religious frameworks.

The intersection of religion and ethics is a central concern in all three novels. In *Adam Bede*, one notices how religious beliefs directly inform characters' moral choices, with figures like Dinah Morris embodying an idealized Christian ethic. *The Mill on the Floss* presents a more complex picture, with Maggie Tulliver struggling to reconcile her spiritual yearnings with the rigid ethics of her upbringing. *Silas Marner* offers perhaps the most radical perspective, suggesting that true ethics can exist independently of religious doctrine. Through Silas's journey from embittered isolation to loving guardianship of Eppie, Eliot posits that human connection and compassion are the true foundations of moral behaviour. This evolving treatment of the religion-ethics relationship reflects Eliot's growing skepticism towards dogmatic faith and her belief in a more humanistic ethical framework. Cultural identity emerges as a multifaceted concept in Eliot's novels, deeply intertwined with religious and moral considerations. In *Adam Bede*, one observes how religious affiliations shape community dynamics and individual identities in rural Hayslope. *The Mill on the Floss* explores the tension between traditional cultural values and emerging modernist perspectives, particularly through Maggie's struggle to define her identity within and against her community's expectations. *Silas Marner* presents cultural identity as something fluid and potentially transformative, as Silas moves from one community to another and ultimately finds a new sense of belonging. Across these works, Eliot challenges the notion of a fixed cultural identity, instead portraying it as a dynamic interplay between individual choice, community influence, and broader societal forces.

The role of religious institutions and figures in shaping moral and cultural landscapes is critically examined in these novels. *Adam Bede* offers a largely sympathetic portrayal of religious leadership through characters like Dinah Morris, while still acknowledging the potential for hypocrisy and moral failure. *The Mill on the Floss* presents a more skeptical view, with characters like Mr. Stelling representing the intersection of religious authority and educational power, often to detrimental effect. *Silas Marner* contrasts the oppressive Lantern Yard sect with the more lenient Raveloe church, highlighting how different religious structures can profoundly impact individual

² Delahoyde, Michael. "Psychoanalytic Criticism." English 625/725: Literary Theory and Criticism, Washington State University, 11 Dec. 2019, public.wsu.edu/~delahoyd/theory.PAC.html.

lives and community dynamics. Through these varied depictions, Eliot invites readers to consider the complex relationship between institutional religion and personal spirituality, as well as the potential for religious structures to both support and constrain moral development. The concept of moral growth and the possibility of change is central to all three novels, often intersecting with religious and cultural themes. In *Adam Bede*, one observes how characters like Arthur Donnithorne grapple with moral choices within a firmly Christian framework. *The Mill on the Floss* presents a more ambiguous view of moral development, questioning whether true change is possible in the face of societal constraints and innate temperament. *Silas Marner* offers the most optimistic perspective, charting a clear trajectory of moral growth for its protagonist as he moves from bitterness to love. These varying treatments reflect Eliot's nuanced understanding of human nature and her belief in the potential for moral evolution, while also acknowledging the challenges posed by cultural and religious expectations.

The tension between individual conscience and social ethics threads through all three works, often manifesting in conflicts between personal convictions and religious or cultural norms. *Adam Bede* explores this theme through characters like Hetty Sorrel, whose actions violate both social and religious codes. In *The Mill on the Floss*, Maggie's struggle to reconcile her individual desires with familial and societal expectations forms the core of the narrative. *Silas Marner* ultimately affirms the value of social integration while maintaining individual moral autonomy. Through these explorations, Eliot grapples with the fundamental question of how individuals navigate between their own moral instincts and the ethical standards of their community, a question that remains relevant in contemporary discussions of ethics and social responsibility. Eliot's treatment of gender roles and expectations becomes increasingly complex across these works, intersecting with religious and cultural issues. *Adam Bede*, while set in an earlier time, offers diverse female characters who navigate societal expectations in various ways, most notably through the figure of Dinah Morris as a female preacher. *The Mill on the Floss* presents a more overt critique of gender inequality, particularly in education and personal freedom, often framed in terms of religious and cultural constraints. *Silas Marner* challenges gender norms through its portrayal of single fatherhood, suggesting the possibility of nurturing traditionally feminine virtues within a male character. This evolution in gender portrayal reflects Eliot's growing feminist consciousness and her challenge to rigid Victorian gender roles, often justified through religious and cultural traditions. The role of education and intellectual growth in moral and spiritual development is another significant theme in these novels, often in tension with religious and cultural norms. *Adam Bede* touches on this theme through the self-education of its titular character, linking intellectual curiosity to moral development. *The Mill on the Floss* centrally concerns itself with education, particularly the inequities between male and female education in Victorian society, often justified through religious doctrine.

Silas Marner explores education through Eppie's upbringing and Silas's own learning to parent, suggesting that moral and spiritual growth can occur through practical experience as much as formal learning. Through these varied treatments, Eliot advocates for the importance of intellectual development in forming moral character and navigating cultural and religious expectations.

The concept of redemption, closely tied to religious concepts but often presented in more humanistic terms, recurs throughout these novels. *Adam Bede* explores redemption through characters like Arthur Donnithorne, grappling with the Christian concept of sin and forgiveness. *The Mill on the Floss* offers a more complex view, questioning the possibility of full redemption in a flawed world, yet still suggesting a form of transcendence in its tragic conclusion.

Silas Marner presents perhaps the clearest path to redemption through love and community acceptance, largely independent of traditional religious frameworks. This evolving treatment of redemption reflects Eliot's movement away from conventional Christian theology towards a more humanistic philosophy, while still engaging with fundamental questions of moral responsibility and the possibility of personal transformation.

Finally, Eliot's exploration of the relationship between individual identity and community belonging, often framed in religious and cultural terms, provides a unifying thread across these novels. *Adam Bede* portrays a relatively cohesive community united by shared religious and cultural values, while still allowing for individual moral struggles. *The Mill on the Floss* presents a more fractured view, with Maggie's individual identity often in conflict with community expectations, leading to isolation and ultimately tragedy.

Silas Marner charts a journey from isolation to community integration, suggesting the possibility of finding belonging while maintaining individual integrity. Through these varied portrayals, Eliot grapples with the fundamental human need for connection and belonging, while also asserting the importance of individual moral autonomy. This tension between individuality and community, often mediated through religious and cultural norms, remains a central concern in Eliot's exploration of the human condition.

Psychoanalysis of George Eliot's protagonists

Psychoanalysis of the character Silas Marner

Silas Marner's psyche, viewed through a Freudian lens, reveals a complex interplay of id, ego, and superego. His early life in Lantern Yard shapes the foundation of his personality structure. The betrayal he experiences there creates a profound disturbance in his psychic equilibrium, leading to a regression to a more primitive state dominated by the id's pleasure principle. Marner's id, the unconscious reservoir of instincts and desires, manifests in his obsessive hoarding of gold. This behaviour represents a fixation on the oral stage of psychosexual development, where the accumulation of wealth serves as a substitute for the nurturing and security he lost. The gold becomes a symbol of comfort and stability, fulfilling the id's need for immediate gratification. The ego, tasked with mediating between the id and external reality, struggles to maintain balance in Marner's psyche. His withdrawal from society and focus on weaving demonstrate the ego's attempt to create a controlled environment. This defensive mechanism allows Marner to avoid further emotional pain and maintain a semblance of normalcy in his life. Marner's superego, the internalized moral standards and ideals, appears weakened by his traumatic experiences. His initial rejection of religious and social norms in Raveloe suggests a rebellion against the superego's constraints. However, remnants of his earlier moral education persist, as evidenced by his honesty and work ethic.

The arrival of Eppie represents a pivotal moment in Marner's psychological development. Her presence reactivates dormant aspects of his personality, particularly his capacity for love and nurturing. From a Freudian perspective, Eppie serves as a catalyst for Marner's psychosexual maturation, allowing him to progress beyond his fixation on the oral stage. Marner's transformation through his relationship with Eppie can be seen as a process of sublimation. The energy previously invested in his neurotic attachment to gold is redirected towards the socially acceptable and psychologically healthy act of parenting. This shift demonstrates the ego's growing strength in managing the demands of the id and superego. The theft of Marner's gold forces a confrontation with his repressed emotions and unresolved conflicts. This crisis challenges his ego defenses and compels him to engage with the external world. The loss of his gold symbolizes the breaking down of his psychological barriers, paving the way for personal growth and reintegration into society. Marner's eventual reconciliation with his past and reintegration into the community of Raveloe signifies a more balanced psyche. The superego regains influence, guiding him towards moral behavior and social connection. His acceptance of Eppie as his daughter represents a healthy resolution of Oedipal conflicts and a move towards generativity. The character's journey also illustrates the concept of repetition compulsion. Marner's initial loss of faith and love in Lantern Yard is mirrored in his loss of gold in Raveloe. However, his different response to the second loss demonstrates psychological growth and the potential for breaking destructive patterns.

Silas Marner, the protagonist of George Eliot's novel, exemplifies the complex interplay of unconscious motivations and environmental influences on human behavior. His journey from Lantern Yard to Raveloe, precipitated by a grave injustice, offers a rich tableau for psychoanalytic interpretation. As Ernest Dichter observes in *The Strategy of Desire* (1960):

Whatever your attitude toward modern psychology or psychoanalysis, it has been proved beyond any doubt that many of our daily decisions are governed by motivations over which we have no control and of which we are often quite unaware. (Dichter (1960), p. 12)³

This insight resonates profoundly with Marner's psychological evolution throughout the novel. His decision to relocate and his subsequent transformation can be viewed as products of his unconscious mind, shaped by trauma and defense mechanisms.

To analyze Marner's psyche, one can employ Freud's structural model of the mind: the id, ego, and superego. These components interact dynamically in Marner's personality, influencing his actions and relationships. As Charles Brenner elucidates:

The Id comprises the psychic representatives of the drives, the ego consists of those functions which have to do with the individual's relation to his environment, and the superego comprises the moral precepts of our minds as well as our ideal aspirations.⁴

Marner's id manifests in his obsessive gold-hoarding, representing a regression to the oral stage of psychosexual development. This fixation serves as a substitute for the nurturing and security he lost in Lantern Yard. Meanwhile, his ego struggles to mediate between these primal urges and the demands of reality, as evidenced by his withdrawal from society and focus on weaving. The superego, initially weakened by his traumatic experiences, is reflected in Marner's shifting relationship with faith and community. In Lantern Yard, he was fervent and devoted, while in Raveloe, he became distant and asocial. This transition demonstrates the ego's attempt to protect itself from further emotional pain by adapting to new environmental requirements. Marner's character arc illustrates the ego's ongoing struggle between the unconscious drives of the id and the conscious demands of reality. His initial fear of human relationships, followed by his capacity to love and care for Eppie, showcases the ego's growing strength in managing these competing forces.

The theft of Marner's gold serves as a critical juncture, forcing a confrontation with repressed emotions and unresolved conflicts. This crisis challenges his ego defenses and compels engagement with the external world, symbolizing the breaking down of psychological barriers and paving the way for personal growth. Marner's eventual reintegration into the community of Raveloe signifies a more balanced psyche. The superego regains influence, guiding him towards moral behavior and social connection. His acceptance of Eppie represents a healthy resolution of internal conflicts and a move towards psychological maturity. In conclusion, Silas Marner's psychological development throughout the novel reflects a movement from a state of neurotic isolation to one of mental health and social integration. His transformation embodies Freud's therapeutic goal of making the unconscious conscious, allowing for the resolution of internal conflicts and the achievement of a more harmonious psychic state.

Psychoanalysis of the character Maggie Tulliver

Maggie Tulliver, the protagonist of George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*, presents a complex psychological profile that lends itself well to Freudian psychoanalysis. Her character embodies various aspects of psychoanalytic theory, from the Oedipus complex to the interplay of id, ego, and superego. Maggie's internal struggles and relationships throughout the novel offer rich material for exploring unconscious motivations and psychological conflicts. The Oedipus complex is evident in Maggie's relationship with her father, Mr. Tulliver. Her strong attachment to him and her desire for his approval shape her psychological development. This intense paternal bond influences her later relationships with men, as she unconsciously seeks to recreate the emotional connection she had with her father. Her rivalry with her brother Tom for parental attention further exemplifies this complex. Maggie's psyche can then be understood through Freud's structural model of id, ego, and superego. Her impulsive nature and desire for love represent the id's pleasure-seeking tendencies. The ego is evident in her attempts to balance these desires with societal expectations. Meanwhile, the strict moral code instilled by her upbringing forms a powerful superego, often leading to internal conflict. As well, Repression and sublimation play significant roles in Maggie's psychological makeup. She frequently represses her true feelings to conform to societal expectations, leading to inner turmoil and occasional outbursts. Her intellectual curiosity and love for

³ Dichter, Ernest. *The Strategy of Desire* (1960), (pp. 12). Doubleday and company, New York City.

⁴ Brenner (1974), (pp. 111–112)

books can be seen as a form of sublimation, channeling her unfulfilled desires into socially acceptable pursuits. Besides, the conflict between the pleasure principle and the reality principle is a central theme in Maggie's life. She constantly struggles between her desires and the harsh realities of her social and economic circumstances. This conflict is particularly evident in her relationships with Philip Wakem and Stephen Guest, where she must choose between personal happiness and societal expectations. Maggie's relationships with men can be analyzed through Freud's concepts of narcissism and object-choice. Her attraction to Philip may represent a narcissistic object-choice, as she sees in him a reflection of her own intellectual and sensitive nature. In contrast, her passionate attraction to Stephen could be seen as an anaclitic object-choice, based on the desire for protection and care.

The tragic ending of the novel, with Maggie's death in the flood, can be interpreted through Freud's concept of the death drive or Thanatos. Her final act of attempting to save Tom could be seen as a manifestation of this drive, representing a return to an earlier state of existence and a resolution of her lifelong conflicts. While the novel does not extensively feature dreams, the symbolism present throughout can be analyzed from a Freudian perspective. The river, which plays a crucial role in Maggie's life and death, could represent the unconscious mind and the powerful forces that shape her destiny. It serves as a metaphor for the unpredictable and often destructive nature of repressed desires. Last but not least, Maggie's struggle with her physical appearance, particularly her unruly hair, can be interpreted as a manifestation of her internal conflict between conformity and rebellion. Her attempts to tame her hair symbolize her efforts to conform to societal expectations, while her occasional acts of defiance, such as cutting her hair, represent her desire for freedom from these constraints. Ultimately, a psychoanalytic reading of Maggie Tulliver reveals a character deeply influenced by unconscious motivations and internal conflicts. Her struggles with societal expectations, her complex relationships, and her ultimate fate all align with various aspects of Freudian theory. Through this lens, we gain a deeper understanding of Maggie's psychological journey and the forces that shape her tragic story.

Psychoanalysis of the character Adam Bede

Adam Bede, the protagonist of George Eliot's eponymous novel, presents a complex psychological profile that lends itself well to Freudian analysis. His character development throughout the narrative reveals various unconscious motivations and internal conflicts. By examining Adam through a psychoanalytic lens, one can gain deeper insights into his actions, relationships, and the psychological underpinnings of his journey. The foundation of Adam's psyche can be traced to his relationship with his parents, particularly his father. Adam's strong work ethic and sense of responsibility seem to stem from a reaction formation against his father's alcoholism and irresponsibility. This dynamic shapes Adam's superego, creating a rigid moral code and high standards for himself and others. Adam's relationship with his mother, Lisbeth, hints at an unresolved Oedipus complex. His deep attachment to her and his role as the family's protector and provider suggest a psychological conflation of son and husband roles. This unresolved complex influences his later romantic relationships, particularly his idealization of Hetty

Sorrel. The character's ego ideal, represented by his aspirations to be a master carpenter and his emphasis on honesty and hard work, plays a significant role in his psychological makeup. This ego ideal often conflicts with reality, creating tension between Adam's expectations and the imperfect world around him, including the flawed characters he encounters.

Adam's initial attraction to Hetty Sorrel can be interpreted through the lens of Freudian object choice. The novel describes Hetty in the following terms:

There are various orders of beauty, causing men to make fools of themselves in various styles, from the desperate to the sheepish; but there is one order of beauty which seems made to turn the heads not only of men, but of all intelligent mammals, even of women. 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. (*Adam Bede*, page 54). Hetty represents a narcissistic object choice for Adam, as he projects his own ideals of beauty and purity onto her. This idealization prevents him from seeing Hetty's true nature, leading to disappointment and psychological distress when reality fails to match his fantasy. The conflict between Adam's id and superego is evident in his struggle with anger and violence. His physical confrontation with Arthur Donnithorne represents a moment when the id's aggressive impulses overpower the superego's moral constraints. This internal struggle continues throughout the novel as Adam grapples with his feelings of betrayal and desire for revenge. Adam's psychological growth throughout the novel can be seen as a process of individuation. He moves from a state of psychological rigidity, characterized by black-and-white thinking and high expectations, to a more nuanced understanding of human nature. This process involves integrating the shadow aspects of his personality and developing a more realistic worldview.

The character's relationship with Dinah Morris represents a more mature object choice. Unlike his idealization of Hetty, Adam's love for Dinah is based on a recognition and appreciation of her true nature. This shift suggests a resolution of earlier psychological conflicts and a move towards a healthier emotional state. Adam's eventual forgiveness of Arthur Donnithorne can be interpreted as a triumph of the ego over the id's desire for revenge and the superego's demand for justice. This act of forgiveness represents a significant moment of psychological maturation, indicating Adam's ability to integrate complex and conflicting emotions. In conclusion, a psychoanalytic reading of *Adam Bede* reveals a character driven by unconscious motivations and marked by psychological growth. His journey from rigid ethics to a more nuanced understanding of human nature reflects the process of psychological maturation. Through Adam's character, Eliot explores themes of moral development, the impact of early relationships on adult behaviour, and the complex interplay between conscious ideals and unconscious desires.

George Eliot's psychoanalysis based on the psychoanalysis of the protagonists silas marner, maggie tulliver and adam bede

George Eliot's creation of Silas Marner, Maggie Tulliver, and Adam Bede allows a window into her own psyche. These

characters, while distinct, share common threads that may reflect Eliot's unconscious preoccupations and psychological makeup. By examining these protagonists through a Freudian lens, one can attempt to construct a psychoanalytic profile of their creator. Besides, the recurring theme of social outsiders in Eliot's work, exemplified by Silas Marner and Maggie Tulliver, suggests a profound identification with those who don't quite fit in. This may indicate Eliot's own feelings of alienation, perhaps stemming from her unconventional life choices and her position as a female intellectual in a male-dominated society. The strong father-daughter relationships portrayed in her novels, particularly evident in Maggie Tulliver's case, might reflect Eliot's own complex relationship with her father. The idealization of the father figure, coupled with the desire for paternal approval, could suggest an unresolved Electra complex in Eliot's psyche.

George Eliot's depiction of characters struggling with moral dilemmas, as seen in Adam Bede's rigid sense of right and wrong, may represent her own internal conflicts. This could indicate a strong superego, shaped by her religious upbringing, constantly at odds with her id's desires, as manifested in her unconventional personal life. The recurrency of intellectual curiosity, particularly in Maggie Tulliver, likely mirrors Eliot's own passion for knowledge and self-improvement. This could be interpreted as a form of sublimation, channelling libidinal energy into socially acceptable and productive pursuits. The transformation of characters through suffering, a common thread in all three novels, might reflect Eliot's belief in the psychological growth that comes from facing adversity. This could be seen as a projection of her own experiences and her process of individuation. And, the complex romantic relationships portrayed in her novels, often fraught with societal disapproval or internal conflict, may echo Eliot's own unconventional romantic life. Her characters' struggles could represent her unconscious working through of her own relationship challenges. Redemption, particularly evident in Silas Marner's story, might reflect Eliot's own desire for social acceptance despite her unconventional choices. This could be interpreted as a form of reaction formation, transforming her anxiety about social judgment into narratives of redemption and acceptance.

The detailed psychological portraits Eliot creates suggest a deep interest in human nature and motivation. This could be seen as a sublimation of her own self-analysis, using her characters as vehicles to explore different aspects of the human psyche, including her own. In conclusion, George Eliot's protagonists serve as complex projections of her own psychological landscape. Through them, one can glimpse her possible struggles with social norms, her intellectual pursuits, her moral quandaries, and her journey of self-discovery. Her novels thus become a form of sublimated self-expression, allowing her to explore and work through her own psychological complexities through the safe medium of fiction.

George Eliot, born Mary Ann Evans, lived a life that deeply influenced her literary creations. The psychoanalytic profiles of Silas Marner, Maggie Tulliver, and Adam Bede reflect various aspects of Eliot's own experiences and psychological makeup. By examining these connections, one can gain insight into how Eliot's personal life shaped her characters and, by extension, her novels. Eliot's strong relationship with her father, like Maggie Tulliver's, is a defining aspect of her early life. Robert Evans, a estate manager, provided Mary Ann with access to the estate's library, nurturing her intellectual

curiosity. This paternal influence is mirrored in Maggie's deep attachment to her father and her thirst for knowledge, suggesting Eliot's exploration of her own father-daughter dynamics through her writing. The author's struggle with religious doubt, which led to her rejection of Christianity, finds expression in her characters' moral dilemmas. Adam Bede's rigid moral code and subsequent growth reflect Eliot's own journey from strict religious adherence to a more nuanced, humanist philosophy. This transformation in her characters might represent Eliot's process of reconciling her upbringing with her evolving beliefs. Eliot's position as an intellectual woman in Victorian society likely contributed to her sense of being an outsider, a theme prominently featured in her novels. Maggie Tulliver's intellectual curiosity and social alienation, as well as Silas Marner's isolation, may be projections of Eliot's own experiences of feeling different and misunderstood in a society that often undervalued female intellect.

The author's unconventional romantic life, particularly her relationship with the married George Henry Lewes, is subtly reflected in her characters' complex romantic entanglements. The social disapproval Eliot faced might be translated into the challenges her characters encounter in their romantic pursuits, suggesting a working through of her own experiences. Eliot's dedication to self-improvement and education, which led her to learn several languages and explore various philosophical ideas, is mirrored in her characters' intellectual pursuits. This aspect of her life might be seen as a form of sublimation, channelling her desires and anxieties into productive and socially acceptable endeavours, a trait she often bestows upon her protagonists. Redemption, particularly strong in Silas Marner, may reflect Eliot's own desire for social acceptance despite her unconventional life choices. Her decision to live openly with Lewes, though unmarried, led to social ostracism. The redemptive arcs of her characters could be interpreted as Eliot's exploration of the possibility of social reintegration and personal growth through adversity. George Eliot's experience as a translator and editor before becoming a novelist likely contributed to her keen understanding of human nature and motivation. This professional background might have enhanced her ability to create nuanced psychological portraits of her characters, using them as vehicles to explore different aspects of the human psyche, including her own. Last but not least, the author's childhood in rural Warwickshire and her later life in London are reflected in the detailed portrayals of both rural and urban settings in her novels. This duality in her life experiences allows her to authentically depict characters from various social backgrounds, suggesting an integration of different aspects of her own life into her fictional worlds. Finally, George Eliot's life experiences profoundly shaped the psychological depth of her characters. Her personal struggles with social norms, intellectual pursuits, romantic relationships, and spiritual questions find expression in the complex inner lives of Silas Marner, Maggie Tulliver and Adam Bede. Through these characters, Eliot not only created compelling narratives but also engaged in a form of literary self-analysis, exploring and working through her own psychological complexities through the medium of fiction.

General Conclusion

In *Silas Marner*, *The Mill on the Floss*, and *Adam Bede* George Eliot painted a clear picture of the human mind and how it is influenced by the society. She also gave a realistic presentation of the average English society with well-placed

criticisms which help the reader identify the characters. There is no doubt that Eliot has succeeded in passing her message concerning Religion, Ethics and Cultural identity through the sub-mentioned novels. George Eliot's texts include several pointed criticisms of organized religion, the role of the gentry, and the negative impacts of industrial.

This dissertation aims at disclosing and revealing the weaknesses of religious belief, to disenchant the belief in the after death, to set lights on love and womanism as perceived by George Eliot and shows the weight of religion on people's lives. From the expected results, some key-points are recommended to make this research dissertation useful to the society and to English literature.

George Eliot's masterful portrayal of human psychology and social dynamics stands as a testament to her keen observational skills and deep understanding of Victorian society. Through her works *Silas Marner*, *The Mill on the Floss*, and *Adam Bede*, she crafted intricate narratives that serve as both entertaining stories and profound social commentary, examining the complex interplay between individual consciousness and societal pressures. The religious criticism prevalent in Eliot's works stems from her own complex relationship with faith, having moved from evangelical Christianity to a more philosophical and humanistic worldview. This transformation is reflected in her nuanced portrayal of religious characters and institutions, where she neither completely condemns nor unconditionally accepts religious doctrine, instead examining its practical effects on human behaviour and community relations. The theme of ethics in Eliot's novels transcends simple dichotomies of good and evil, presenting instead a sophisticated understanding of human nature where moral choices are influenced by circumstances, social pressures, and personal history. Her characters often face ethical dilemmas that challenge conventional Victorian ethics, forcing readers to question their own assumptions about right and wrong. Cultural identity emerges as a crucial element in Eliot's narrative framework, particularly in her depiction of rural English life and its transformation during the industrial revolution. Through detailed descriptions of local customs, dialects, and social hierarchies, she preserves a valuable record of a rapidly changing society while simultaneously critiquing its limitations and prejudices.

The role of women in Victorian society receives particular attention in Eliot's works, with characters like Maggie Tulliver in *The Mill on the Floss* challenging conventional gender roles and expectations. Her female protagonists often struggle against social constraints while maintaining their intellectual and emotional integrity, reflecting Eliot's own experiences as a female author in a male-dominated literary world. The industrial revolution's impact on rural communities forms another significant theme in Eliot's works, particularly evident in *Silas Marner* and *Adam Bede*. She explores how technological and economic changes affect traditional social structures, family relationships, and individual identities, often highlighting the human cost of progress. Eliot's treatment of love and romance deviates from conventional Victorian narratives, presenting relationships that are complex, sometimes transgressive, and often tragic. Her characters' romantic choices are invariably influenced by social expectations, economic realities, and moral considerations, creating a realistic portrayal of love in a restrictive society.

The author's exploration of death and the afterlife reflects both Victorian preoccupations and her own skeptical approach to supernatural beliefs. Through various characters' experiences with loss and mortality, she examines how beliefs about death shape human behavior and social interactions in life. The gentry's role in rural society receives careful scrutiny in Eliot's works, with her portrayal often highlighting the disconnect between social responsibility and actual behavior among the privileged classes. Her criticism is particularly pointed when addressing the gentry's failure to adapt to changing social conditions or fulfill their traditional obligations to the community. The psychological depth of Eliot's characters sets her works apart from many of her contemporaries, demonstrating her understanding of human motivation and behavior. Her characters' internal struggles and moral development are portrayed with remarkable insight, influenced by her study of contemporary psychological and philosophical theories. Religious hypocrisy emerges as a recurring theme, with Eliot particularly critical of those who use religious authority for personal gain or social control. However, she also presents genuine religious faith sympathetically when it leads to positive social action and personal growth. The relationship between individual and community plays a central role in all these works, with characters struggling to balance personal desires with social obligations. This tension often drives the narrative forward while highlighting broader social issues and moral questions. Class mobility and social advancement receive nuanced treatment in Eliot's novels, with characters often facing both opportunities and obstacles as they attempt to improve their social position. Her portrayal of these struggles reflects both the possibilities and limitations of Victorian social mobility. Finally, the artistic technique employed by Eliot in these novels demonstrates her mastery of psychological realism, with detailed attention to characters' inner thoughts and motivations. Her narrative style, which often includes omniscient commentary and psychological analysis, helps readers understand the complex interplay between individual choice and social conditioning.

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