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Popular Religion in *Adam Bede*

Kaoru Katsuta

In this assessment of *Adam Bede* as a literary response to the religion of the people in the early nineteenth century, my primary purpose is to clarify George Eliot's account of the baffling English national characteristics working against the attempts to establish a religious movement among the villagers made by various Christian denominations during this period. The time-span George Eliot dealt with is the eight years from 1799 to 1807, though the central drama takes place within two years, from 1799 to 1801. The geographical background she chose for this drama is a peaceful village of farmers and professional artisans, Hayslope.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Church of England was largely the instrument of the presiding country gentry, the farmers and others associated with them. Among the various groups of Dissenters opposed to this rural governing class, were the Methodists who had begun to appeal to the farm labourers. They were much disliked because of their rudeness and illiteracy and were suspected, without much ground, of being Jacobins. They were often arrested by the authorities for preaching without a licence or for preaching in the streets or public places. In *Adam Bede*, there is a perfect example of the early rural conditions described above, with an invasion of roving Methodist missionaries who often disregarded the parish boundaries. Though Dinah, the representative Methodist, does not make use of the hysteric techniques which are accompanied by violent physical symptoms which were often ascribed to the Methodists, the village people react to

her preaching with typical hatred and ridicule, as seen in the animosity of the robust farmer, Mr. Poyster:

I'm no opinion o' the Methodists. It's on'y tradesfolks as turn Methodists; you niver knew a farmer bitten wi' them maggots. There's maybe a workman now an' then, as isn't overclever at's work, takes to preachin' an' that, like Seth Bede....¹⁾

Most farmers and artisans described here are normally Christians of the Church of England and the rate of church-attendance is high. At the same time, however, we notice the curious spiritual inertia in Hayslope which makes Methodist preaching sound so alien and incomprehensible to the ears of the villagers.²⁾ In Hayslope Christianity has lost much its former vitality. The observance of religious rituals is highly important for people not because they shape their lives but because they are merely a routine part. Hayslope people often sound pious. But they do not think seriously about religion. For example, Mr. Poyster always invite people to tea after Sunday worships as if it were a "sacred custom". Mrs. Poyster wishes to see her niece Dinah married and settled down "like a Christian woman, with a house of her own over her head". The book is full of this kind of ironical reference. The church-going provides people with pious entertainment, with old raucous village orchestras and choirs and occasions for innocent rural gossip and associations with neighbor. The sermons given are short and moralistic, and do not explore any spiritual questions in depth. The audience—ignorant, sometimes illiterate people—is hardened and numbed by the routine toil. George Eliot gives us a succinct description of the characteristic response of this humble audience, to whom Christianity is a comfortable superstition:

...they knew a few "good words" by heart, and their withered lips now and then moved silently, following the service without any very clear comprehension indeed, but with a simple faith in its efficacy to ward off harm and bring blessing.³⁾

These are the people with whom Dinah, who receives unconditional authority from the author, has to deal. All the familiar elements which we usually associate with early Evangelicals are present in her portrait; the assumption of the total depravity of man, the doctrine of salvation by faith in the atoning death of Christ, the power and imminence of God, and a dedicated life of voluntary philanthropy. But the most outstanding feature in her Christianity is the presence of strong anti-intellectualism. Her Christianity, like the Christianity of early Evangelicals, is something which involves total commitment to life; it is an intense, urgent, all-consuming faith. It is not based upon a theological system but a series of compelling personal experiences. Her approach is at once emotional and experiential. She appeals wholeheartedly and exclusively to the emotions. Also, more significantly, she can enter into the suffering of others with loving kindness and without any conscious effort on her part. She gains her unobtrusive insight into others' feeling from the depth of her own troubled background. With this qualification as a preacher, she tries to convince the Hayslope people of their sinfulness and speaks of the terror, anguish, and isolation in the life on earth.

However, the Hayslope people resist being evangelized. They are perplexed and disturbed at these compelling ideas for which their unspiritual Christianity fails to provide any equivalent. The utmost response Dinah can evoke is, for example, something like this;

...the big soft-hearted man had rubbed away some tears with his fist, with a confused intention of being a better fellow, going less to the Holly Bush down by the Stone-pits, and cleaning himself more regularly of a Sunday.⁴⁾

Speaking with Mr. Irwine, Dinah expresses this unresponsiveness in this way:

...I've noticed that in these villages where the people lead a quiet

life among the green pastures and the still waters, tilling the ground and tending the cattle, there's a strange deadness to the Word, as different as can be from the great towns, like Leeds...It's wonderful how rich is the harvest of souls up those high-walled streets, where you seemed to walk as in a prison-yard, and the ear is deafened with the sounds of worldly toil. I think maybe it is because the promise is sweeter when this life is so dark and weary, and the soul gets more hungry when the body is ill at ease.⁵⁾

Dinah recognizes the cause of unresponsiveness at its most obvious level. There is a kind of philistinism pervading among the comparatively well-off rural population. There, people can lead a peaceful life, monotonous and eventless, perpetually refreshed by the beauty of the surrounding nature. Habitual hard-work enables people to maintain an independent life while their hard-headed practicality and common sense has long established the standard of a decent life. This absence of material pressure and of a sense of deprivation in Hayslope subsequently diminishes spiritual hunger for sustaining religious belief. This secularism has something to do with the disintegration of Christianity in Hayslope. In the first place this utilitarian conscience, expressed in the popular cult of hard-work, renders any serious spiritual challenge impossible in Hayslope because utilitarian view relies on an optimistic correspondence between public good and self-interest and is incompatible with Christian spirit of altruism. A new notion of dedicated life cannot take root in the presence of an already established set of values—observance of religious rituals as tradition rather than as a means to spiritual guidance, coherent hierarchy, and the utilitarian standard of comfortable living.

The contrast between the peaceful landscape of Hayslope and the desolate landscape of Snowfield presents another aspect of rural peculiarities which form a significant part of life there—clinging to the native soil and an attachment to local customs which amounts to almost a popular superstition.⁶⁾ Spiritual hunger, which is necessary for the rebirth of the soul, is more likely to be found where hard-work does not guarantee any material affluence and conse-

quently tends to produce a sense of unfairness and a questioning of Providence. But it is equally true that spiritual hunger takes its edge where industrialization is in the process of destroying the surrounding nature, tearing apart the happy correspondence between nature and men and leaving men in a changed, unfamiliar environment. In Lisbeth's insistence of the burial place for her husband and in the desolate perspective of wandering in strange lands held by the Poyster household after their disgrace through Hetty's conduct, we can see the ways in which people come to associate particular values with the rural environment. This rootedness shapes part of popular religion, and if people are surrounded by protecting Mother Nature, the sense of deprivation or anxiety of identification is least likely to be produced. This aspect of local culture is powerfully established when Hetty's wandering quest for Arthur becomes more and more desperate as she recognizes in increasing degree her own rootlessness in local culture.⁷⁾

I have discussed, so far, the two local peculiarities as the causes of religious irresponsiveness in Hayslope; the secularism of the utilitarian viewpoint among the farm labourers and the exclusiveness of a self-sufficient rural culture. Before seeking further causes contributing to this irresponsiveness, it might be useful to make a brief comment on the portrait of the clergyman, Mr. Irwine. He represents the refined attributes of a true gentleman—the developed sensibility, worldly wisdom, and benign dignity. In short, he is a representative of secular virtues at their most civilized stage rather than a representative of any Christian spirituality. If George Eliot can attack the self-righteousness, religious trivialism, insensibility, and intolerance of the Christianity of her day, she can equally exploit its ineffectiveness and shortsightedness in the description of this enlightened pagan.⁸⁾ Mr. Irwine, for example, cannot draw confession from Arthur at a crucial moment. As a gentleman, he is always unwilling to inflict pain to others; because of this tendency, he abstains from harrassing Arthur with questions, knowing all the time that Arthur is involved with Hetty

in a compromising way. For Mr. Irwine, to avoid pain is to avoid successfully the evil. ('the inward suffering...is the worst form of Nemesis.') Certainly Eliot is sympathetic toward this minister, who has a personality laudable in many ways, but behind the description of his ideas, tastes, and mentality, lies recognizable irony:

...his was one of those large-hearted, sweet-blooded natures that never know a narrow or a grudging thought; Epicurean, if you will, with no enthusiasm, no self-scourging sense of duty; but yet ...of a sufficiently subtle moral fibre to have an unwarying tenderness for obscure and monotonous suffering...He really had no very lofty aims, no theological enthusiasm...he felt no serious alarms about the souls of his parishioners...He thought the custom of baptism more important than its doctrine, and that the religious benefits the peasant drew from the church where his fathers worshipped and the sacred piece of turf where they lay buried were but slightly dependent on a clear understanding of the Liturgy or the sermon...His mental palate, indeed, was rather pagan, and found a savouriness in a quotation from Sophocles or Theocritus that was quite absent from any text in Isaiah or Amos.⁹⁾

Further exploration into local peculiarities can be made through an examination of the central male figures, Adam and Arthur. Despite the repeated emphasis on the author's part on Adam's intelligence, what we feel most strongly in his personal qualities is his Wordsworthian naïveté, stoicism, and hard-headed pragmatism. The familiar cult of hard-work finds its place naturally in his pragmatism. And Adam speaks out his notion of man's relation to God in this way:

...we must have something beside Gospel i' this world. Look at the canals, an' th' aqueduc's, an' th' coal-pit engines, and Arkwright's mills there at Gromford; a man must learn summat beside Gospel to make them things, I reckon...I know a man must have the love o' God in his soul, and the Bible's God's word. But what does the Bible say? Why, it says as God put his sperrit into the workman as built the tabernacle, to make him do all the carved work and things as wanted a nice hand. And this is my way o' looking at it; there's the sperrit o' God in all things and all times....¹⁰⁾

Everything is determined by this pragmatism. At the beginning of the story, he is rather a stoic realist than a Christian and he can value Dinah's work because of its effectiveness. But Christian spirituality, which inspires her work is incomprehensible for him, for pragmatism is based on self-interest and is alien to Christian altruism. In this respect, his distrust of Dinah's enthusiasm is as uncompromising as Mrs. Poyster's incomprehension of her asceticism. However, only Dinah's Christianity successfully survives at the end of the story and reconciliation between this Christianity and its unspiritual counterpart of Hayslope can be made only by emotional involvement in it. Moral sensibility is the final measure for this emotional involvement and this novel tells us about the process of the development of Adam's moral sensibility which enables him to reach a compassionate understanding of human suffering.¹¹⁾ He partly recognizes the meaning of this lesson through his repentance for past hardness toward his father brought about by Thias' death. But he still has to learn how to participate in the suffering of others through reconciliation with his enemy.

The first indication of his firmer grasp of newly developed moral sensibility occurs on the very morning of Hetty's trial. He gains this new sensibility out of his own experience of agony caused by the disaster of the beloved:

Deep unspeakable suffering may well be called a baptism, a regeneration, the initiation into a new state. The yearning memories, the bitter regret, the agonized sympathy, the struggling appeals to the Invisible Right—all the intense emotions which had filled the days and nights of the past week, and were compressing themselves again like an eager crowd into the hours of this single morning, made Adam look back on all the previous years as if they had been a dim sleepy existence, and he had only now awakened to full consciousness. It seemed to him as if he had always before thought it a light thing that men should suffer, as if all that he had himself endured and called sorrow before was only a moment's stroke that had never left a bruise. Doubtless a great anguish may do the work of years, and we may come out from that baptism of fire with a soul full of new awe and new pity.¹²⁾

He finally succeeds in his moral re-orientation through reconciliation with Arthur, which takes place when he accidentally meets Arthur in the Grove immediately after Hetty's execution day. Having abandoned the intended revenge and decided to start a new life elsewhere, he comes to the unforgettable Grove for the last time and meets Arthur unexpectedly, who comes out of the same intention. Having suffered himself, he cannot bring himself to utter any hatred against Arthur whose suffering he now recognizes painfully:

Often, in the last fortnight, Adam had imagined himself as close to Arthur as this, assailing him with words that should be as harrowing as the voice of remorse, forcing upon him a just share in the misery he had caused; and often, too, he had told himself that such a meeting had better not be. But in imagining the meeting he had always seen Arthur, as he had met him on that evening in the Grove, florid, careless, light of speech; and the figure before him touched him with the signs of suffering. Adam knew what suffering was—he could not lay a cruel finger on a bruised man.¹³⁾

In spite of the gathering hostility and misunderstanding which, in the succeeding scene, repeatedly threatens to extinguish the attempted reconciliation, his new sensibility enables him to discern Arthur's sincerity in his intended act of retribution. At the same time, he recognizes that his sin was spiritual pride. (Adam says to Arthur, "I've no right to be hard towards them as have done wrong and repent.")

From our present viewpoint to discover the resistance to Christianity in a local culture, however, what is most enlightening in Adam's mentality is the presence of an anti-intellectualism peculiar to farm labourers. Adam is suspicious of all 'unorthodox' religious sects because he distrusts their spiritualism. We can discern this tendency in such a passage as this:

Adam was not a man to be gratuitously superstitious, but he had the blood of the peasant in him as well as of the artisan, and a peasant can no more help believing in a traditional superstition

than a horse can help trembling when he sees a camel. Besides, he had that mental combination which is at once humble in the region of mystery and keen in the region of knowledge; it was the depth of his reverence quite as much as his hard common sense which gave him his disinclination to doctrinal religion, and he often checked Seth's argumentative spiritualism by saying, "Eh, it's a big mystery; thee know'st but little about it." And so it happened that Adam was at once penetrating and credulous.¹⁴⁾

The peasant disinclination to treat religious matters as intelligible has its obvious counterpart in the British upper-middle class and aristocracy which Henry James is later to fully explore in such novels as *The Tragic Muse* and *The Golden Bowl* and certainly has a weakening influence on the spiritualism of the regional religious movement.

The final and more subtle form which the destructive elements in local peculiarities takes is revealed in the characterization of the typical British gentleman, Arthur Donnithorne. We have a delightful picture of an advanced young local gentleman, full of goodwill, quick sympathy, and, simple-heartedness:

His own approbation was necessary to him, and it was not an approbation to be enjoyed quite gratuitously; it must be won by a fair amount of merit. He had never yet forfeited that approbation; and he had considerable reliance on his own virtues, No young man could confess his faults more candidly; candour was one of his favourite virtues; and how can a man's candour be seen in all its lustre unless he has a few failings to talk of? But he had an agreeable confidence that his faults were all of a generous kind—impetuous, warm-blooded, leonine; never crawling, crafty, reptilian. It was not possible for Arthur Donnithorne to do anything mean, dastardly, or cruel...He was nothing if not good-natured; and all his pictures of the future, when he should come into the estate, were made up of a prosperous, contended tenantry, adoring their landlord, who would be the model of an English gentleman....¹⁵⁾

However, as is expected, he must pay a heavy price for his engaging English characteristics. That is his curious simple-mindedness, the intellectual counterpart of his simple-heartedness. We

have an early indication of the seamier side of his nature in the passage immediately following:

He couldn't bear to see any one uncomfortable...Whether he would have self-mastery enough to be always as harmless and purely beneficent as his good-nature led him to desire, was a question that no one had yet decided against him, he was but twenty-one, you remember, and we don't inquire too closely into character in the case of a handsome generous young fellow, who will have property enough to support numerous peccadilloes—who, if he should unfortunately break a man's legs in his rash driving, will be able to pension him handsomely; or if he should happen to spoil a woman's existence for her, will make it up to her with expensive bon-bons, packed up and directed by his own hand.¹⁶⁾

What we are meant to see here is his curious immaturity as seen in his irresponsibility and easy optimism. Also, he is too confident that future somehow takes care of itself. We have repeated proof of this immaturity, which is common, it seems, among the engaging young men of the local upper-class. His simple-mindedness is often pitiable and sometimes is almost pathetic. The tragedy of seduction which violates the established social order in rural community and causes personal ruin as well, develops out of this simple-mindedness.¹⁷⁾ Again and again, in the course of the novel, he comes to the verge of recognizing that his love-affair may not be as innocent as he imagines but may be irrevocably wrong. However, at each flash of recognition, he shrinks from it, and in these moments, we become aware of another weakness of his character which is as culpable as his simple-mindedness. When he comes to confess his secret to Mr. Irwine, he suddenly finds his former determination has failed him:

Nevertheless, at this point in the conversation, he was conscious of increased disinclination to tell his story about Hetty...the mere fact that he was in the presence of an intimate friend, who had not the slightest notion that he had any such serious internal struggle as he came to confide, rather shook his own belief in the seriousness of the struggle. It was not, after all, a thing to make

a fuss about; and what could Irwine do for him that he could not do for himself?¹⁸⁾

What we recognize in this and similar passages is his constant evasiveness, a tendency to avoid the consideration of moral responsibility and the fact that he is capable of sustained self-deception whenever the occasion demands the total re-orientation of former behaviors and judgements. The striking thing is that this moral evasiveness is inseparably mixed up with his other positive qualities; his conscience, earnestness, and good-will. Like Adam, he comes to recognize the irrevocability of the past through his suffering. At the crucial meeting with Adam in the Grove, he ardently seeks for the possible retribution. He momentarily feels the pang of wounded pride and humiliation at Adam's rebuff. But presently:

Arthur was silent some moment...In spite of other feelings dominant in him this evening, his pride winced under Adam's mode of treating him. Wasn't he himself suffering? Was not he too obliged to renounce his most cherished hopes? It was now as it had been eight months ago—Adam was forcing Arthur to feel more intensely the irrevocableness of his own wrong-doing. He was presenting the sort of resistance that was the most irritating to Arthur's eager ardent nature. But his anger was subdued by the same influence that had subdued Adam's when they first confronted each other—by the marks of suffering in a long familiar face. The momentary struggle ended in the feeling that he could bear a great deal from Adam, to whom he had been the occasion of bearing so much....¹⁹⁾

Arthur's moral re-orientation is even more shattering an experience than Adam's, depriving him of all his vitality of mind and leaving him in a state of general weariness. ("You can't think what an old fellow I feel," he writes to Mr. Irwine from the battlefield of the Napoleonic Wars, "I make no schemes now. I'm the best when I've a good day's march or fighting before me.") When we remember his first appearance—all beautiful and brave in his youth—we are fully convinced of the heaviness of the price he has to pay for his engaging characteristics. I have discussed the

causes of religious irresponsiveness in local culture—that is in pervading pragmatism, rootedness, and British hatred of ideas—which fails to revitalize the vague, undemanding Christian morality. In Arthur's case, however, what makes the re-evaluation of his vulgarized Christian moral codes most difficult is his curious immaturity.

In this novel, Christianity serves as an available standard of ethical values examined by the central characters. In his easygoing and complacent conception of Christian morality, Arthur thinks his behaviour can be successfully sanctioned by his sincere concern for respectability and his instinctive desire to avoid pain in others as well as in himself. ('He didn't like to witness pain, and he liked to have grateful eyes beaming on him as the giver of pleasure.') In this latter respect, he is much like Mr. Irwine. But this epicurean equation of pleasure with virtue and of pain with vice works adequately only as long as moral perception is clear. His moral perception is, we later know, perpetually blurred by his evasiveness and egotism. The devastating consequence of the story proves the limitations and lack of imagination of a Christian gentleman. Curiously enough, the opposite moral quality turns out to be equally inadequate. Adam's basis of judgement and conduct is exactly the opposite of Arthur's. Adam is an upright man with inflexible moral sense. He starts by seeking for the right. He believes that he can thus avoid causing pain, which, in his mind, is associated with vice. ('it's a poor look-out to come into the world to make your fellow-creatures worse off instead o' better.') He carries out this determination through considerable self-denial and is impatient with those who cannot do the same thing. And his clear-cut professional logic of causes and effects makes him think emotional affluence is superfluous and remote. This clear-sightedness is combined with his spiritual pride as an artisan and both qualities contribute to his expressed hardness towards others.

Adam Bede certainly praises the Wordsworthian simple men in Hayslope; their uncomplicated way of life is at once proud and

full of vitality. At the same time, George Eliot is not blind to a certain brutality which this simple human nature is capable of. Her final objective is to present both the glory and the terror of simple human nature. Adam's hardness diminishes his capacity for love and cuts him off from being loved in turn. He is respected rather than loved. In his unwavering determination to do only what is morally right, he is as ruthless as Arthur is in his single-minded pursuit of pleasure. Even the good-natured Poyster household is culpable for their final hardness toward Hetty; they turn their backs toward her when she needs loving kindness most. Thus, the morality of Arthur's epicurism, Adam's stoicism, and Hayslope pragmatism fails in the end. What is lacking in Hayslope morality is feeling for others. Particularly the major moral deficiency of three central characters springs from their incapacity for sympathy. And this incapacity for feeling is linked with incapacity for communication. Adam in his pride, Hetty in her vanity, and Arthur in his moral evasiveness, fail in some degree or other to express themselves. Adam's is an exalted position in his society but human love rarely pierces through this lonely eminence. Arthur can seduce Hetty simply because he cannot feel in her place. Hetty is indifferent to anything around her but herself. The varying degree of their isolation is determined by their unsusceptibility to feeling. Hetty must confront the cruelest destiny—the final deprivation because of her constitutional incapacity for all love except self-love. All three are, like everyone else in Hayslope, normal types of Christians. But something is wrong with their morality; vague and undemanding Christian ethical codes fail just as do rigorous and demanding ones. What we must discern is that *Adam Bede* is a study of varieties of egotism, and the moralities of epicurism, stoicism, and pragmatism are insufficient because all three are primarily based on self-interest.

In this connection, Dinah's large capacity for selfless love represents what the prosperous morality of Hayslope lacks.²⁰ She can grasp the basic condition of humanity as alienation and is willing

to offer help to anybody in this deprived situation because her 'inspiration' orders her to do so—her inspiration is a spontaneous feeling for others. In this aspect, she represents a revitalized Christian morality which is the opposite of the decayed one of Hayslope. How passionately George Eliot approves Dinah's ethical conducts is known by how effectively they work; her large capacity for feeling alone can draw out Hetty's confession of infanticide because only Dinah can understand and reach her in her loveless isolation. At this point of discussion, we can say thus; in Eliot's vision, the sublimest quality in human nature is this spontaneity of feeling, this highly developed moral sensibility as distinct from moral sense.

George Eliot's attitude toward provincialism is very complicated. As for pragmatism, she seems to approve it with certain reservations. She rejects its callousness when applied as the basis of judgement in moral experience, but, she says, it is not without redeeming virtue. Its positive side is that it brings into a community the remarkable spirit of independence; the pragmatic and common-sense democracy of conduct which provincial Hayslope enjoys because of its isolation. And she regards local rootedness as an essentially healthy phenomenon; nature is beneficent and provides people with sustaining force. When she describes the shared reverence for nature among Hayslope people, her touch is warm and sympathetic. Adam and Arthur feel tenderness and joy in the surrounding nature, which alleviates their isolation and because of this capacity, their fate is much better than Hetty's. She is alienated not only from human nature but also from nature. However, George Eliot is equally clear about the negative side of cultural isolation. Isolated culture tends to produce emotional tenuousness. Above all, what is most culpable is obtuseness to moral experience; the callousness of provincialism to the predicament of one's fellow human being. Similarly her religious attitude is complex. She came to abandon her adolescent background of Evangelicalism in her maturity, but religious concern remains with her. She can criticize religious ritualism and complacency in codified Christian morality

in this novel, but she does not forsake its possibility of regeneration. For her, Christianity can only be accepted in privately reinterpreted ways and subsequently must be abandoned as dogma and convention. And her personal version of Christianity is a private religion of sensibility.

Notes

- 1) George Eliot, *Adam Bede* (New York: New American Library, 1961), II, 18, p.138.
- 2) About the bankruptcy of Hayslope Christianity, see Jerome Thale, *The Novels of George Eliot* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959) pp.20-22. Thale suggests that the whole story should be regarded as a dramatic search for new ethical values.
- 3) *Adam Bede*, II, 18, pp.193-194.
- 4) *Ibid.*, I, 2, p.39.
- 5) *Ibid.*, I, 8, p.98.
- 6) An analysis on symbolism in *Adam Bede* is made by George R. Creeger in "An Interpretation of *Adam Bede*" in *George Eliot: A Collection of Critical Essays* ed. George R. Creeger (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1970) pp.86-106.
- 7) For a detailed study of this rootedness, see Henry Auster, *Local Habitations: Regionalism in the Early Novels of George Eliot* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970) pp.101-134. Thale also discusses this aspect especially in relation to Hetty's rootlessness. See Thale, pp.30-35.
- 8) Creeger proposes a view that George Eliot idealizes Mr. Irwine as the symbol of mental maturity. See Creeger, p.102.
- 9) *Adam Bede*, I, 5, pp.75-76.
- 10) *Ibid.*, I, 1, p.21.
- 11) Most critics agree that Adam's moral flaw is his spiritual pride. See Joan Bennett, *George Eliot: Her Mind and Her Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1948) pp.109-110; Creeger, pp.101-102; Bernard J. Paris, *Experiments in Life: George Eliot's Quest for Values* (Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 1965) pp.151-156; Barbara Hardy, *The Novels of George Eliot: A Study in Form* (London: The Athlone Press, 1959) pp.37-43; Thale, pp.24-29.
- 12) *Adam Bede*, V, 42, p.405.
- 13) *Ibid.*, V, 48, p.440.
- 14) *Ibid.*, I, 4, p.59.
- 15) *Ibid.*, I, 7, pp.126-127.
- 16) *Ibid.*, I, 7, pp.127-128.
- 17) William J. Harvey points out that Arthur's moral perception is

perverted by his excessive concern for respectability which is not supported by any real sense of social responsibility. See William J. Harvey, *The Art of George Eliot* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1961) pp. 166-168.

- 18) *Adam Bede*, I, 16, p. 170.
- 19) *Ibid.*, V, 48, P. 442.
- 20) Adam and Dinah marry at the end of the story. Very few critics justify their marriage as the fulfilment of complementary personalities. See Creeger, pp. 103-106; Neil Roberts, *George Eliot: Her Beliefs and Her Art* (Pittsburgh: Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 1975) p. 69.

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