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Jennifer ChonghaileÅbacka

# The Superiority Complex of the English Gentry and the Lifting of the Jewish Other in Two Versions of George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*

Master's Thesis

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**Author:** Jennifer Chonghaile Åbacka

**Master's Thesis:** The Superiority Complex of the English Gentry and the Lifting of the Jewish Other in Two versions of George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines two central themes in *Daniel Deronda*, both the 1876 novel by George Eliot and the 2002 BBC film adaptation based on the novel. The two themes are interconnected and are defined as the superiority complex of the English gentry and the lifting of the Jewish subordinate Other. The dual statement which this study reads in the narrative is firstly: a critique of imperial attitudes of arrogance and prejudice amongst the English gentry, and particularly the English gentleman, which results in a dis-enthroning of the English gentleman as an iconic ideal; and secondly, a dignifying treatment of Jewish characters and Jewishness which lifts the Jews as a group from the position of marginalized subordinate Other which they held in 19$^{th}$ century European society. The study asserts that the public reception of the adaptation was more positive than the initial reception of Eliot's novel and examines whether or not the more positive reaction is the result of some mitigating change in the treatment of these two themes. The findings are that the controversial statement has not been softened in the adaptation, but slightly accentuated. The concluding discussion suggests that the statement of the narrative is less offensive today because of a widening of audience and a significant change in prevalent social and ideological attitudes in the early 21$^{st}$ century. The study adopts a postcolonial theoretical approach to the material.

**KEYWORDS:** George Eliot, Imperial, Postcolonial, Jewish Other, English Gentry

# 1 INTRODUCTION

*Daniel Deronda* was the last work of fiction written by 19th century novelist George Eliot. Eliot was born Mary Ann Evans in November 1819, in Warwickshire, England.She was considered plain and therefore without promising prospects on the marriage market, but since she showed early signs of marked intelligence and was a voracious reader, her father invested in a level of education for her that was not commonly prioritized for girls. Not wishing to be placed in the category of silly female novelists, and also in order to protect her gossip besieged private life, she began to write under the pen name George Eliot and became a popular and highly acclaimed novelist during her own lifetime, the Victorian era.

After the overwhelming success of her most celebrated work *Middlemarch,* which first appeared in serial form from 1871-'72, and then as a whole novel in 1876,George Eliot made an unforeseen and somewhat risky choice. Rather than resting on her laurels, or choosing to play to her audience with a safe sequel or second-rate imitation (as so many modern filmmakers have done), she revealed something of the artistic and intellectual integrity behind her work, as well as her own ideological leanings, in entering uncharted territory and attempting something new; fully aware of the possibility of a reception characterized by dissatisfaction, criticism and even outright rejection. In *The English Novel, An Introduction* (2005), Terry Eagleton describes Eliot's last novel as follows:

> *Deronda* is an extraordinarily original, risk-taking work, a finale which is also an audacious new beginning, a sudden leap into what for most contemporary readers was a disturbingly unfamiliar world of ethnicity, arcane symbolism, cosmopolitan culture,mysticism, mythology and aesthetics.(2005: 184)

The choice to embark on the project which became the novel *Daniel Deronda*(1876) was costly to Eliot, not least in terms of work load. The novel was meticulously researched at home and abroad, so that the Jewish elements, which constituted new subject matter in the context of her work, would be faithfully represented to quite a degree of complexity and nuance. Even within her choice of challenging subject matter,

she did not take an easy road – achieving the effect of authenticity required hard work in the area of research, as the novel refers to several religious and ideological streams of Judaism, besides including liturgical elements and Hebrew poetry sources. Although Eliot's English readership may have been too busy digesting their reactions to the message of *Deronda* to appreciate its craftsmanship, her investment paid off in the praise and gratitude of learned members of the European (and indeed worldwide) Jewish community.In a copyrighted introduction to the novel written in 1967, Eliot scholar Barbara Hardy (1967:14) recounts that an Austrian Jewish rabbi and contemporary critic, David Kaufmann, wrote a short book about the novel in 1878 which was translated into English. Kaufmann went as far as to assert that one had to be Jewish to fully appreciate *Daniel Deronda*–praise indeed from his standpoint, although such a prerequisite for appreciation of the novel can hardly have been Eliot's intention.

Although the concept of authorial intention is usually considered problematic, George Eliot's private correspondence points clearly to a personal mission behind the novel and to a desire to attempt to deliver a kind of social or ideological comment through the narrative.This is all the more noteworthy because of her expectation that the popularity of the work would be negatively impacted by of this attempt. *Selections from George Eliot's Letters* (1985) edited by G.S. Haight, and henceforth referred to as *Letters,* offers the reader insight into some of the author's convictions and processes in relation to her last novel.

Eliot's choice to embark on the *Daniel Deronda* project which had been "simmering" within her, as she used to say about the first ideas for a novel germinating inside(*Letters*: 421), proved to be costly on a personal level. She had bouts of illness and depression in conjunction with each book, but Barbara Hardy notes (1967:14) that she experienced doubts and mental struggle to a greater extent with *Deronda* than with any previous period of work. Her response to her publisher Blackwell's carefully worded initial doubts concerning "the Jewish part" is expressed by Hardy as follows:

> The author replies instantly with the nervous sensitive hope that he will see the bearings of Mordecai later, and the comment that she thought he might feel doubtful about this new material. She explains what she is trying to do: to aim at strength and complexity of character and a 'higher strain of ideas'. She says despondently that giving 'new elements' in sufficiently vivid forms is the most difficult thing in art. (Hardy 1967: 13)

Blackwood's hesitancy had what Hardy (1967: 13)calls a dampening effect on the author – "confirming her gloomy feeling that the presentation of the Jewish ideal would call out only imperfect sympathy". Eliot's choice to continue with the project belies not only her tenacity and diligence, but also the presence of an ideological motive behind it – or more than one. In her letters, she expressed uncertainty that she had managed to do what she wanted to do in the novel, and so hinted at an underlying purpose,which emerges in fuller clarity in the quotations below.

Two exclamations in her letters connect exactly to the two themes – actually deeply intertwined – which constitute the focus of this study. The themes are: First, the novel's *rebuke* of what I have called *the English superiority complex*. This is placed in opposition to an "inferiority complex" which is attributed to individuals who are chronically lacking in self-confidence, always placing themselves beneath others in value and abilities. The English gentry and particularly the English gentle*men* in the novel are consistently shallow, selfish, usually lazy and most of all marked by an attitude of arrogant belief in their intrinsic and cultural superiority to those of other classes and ethnic, religious or national origins. Many readers, critics and undoubtedly viewers too, have read a deliberate critique into Eliot's characterization. Barbara Hardy points out that the only English characters that seem to escape criticism and satire completely are the Meyricks. They are not snobbish, but genuinely warm and caring; rather than being vain and idle they are industrious and self-educated, earning a living with their hands in a respectable manner. But they are not considered to be fully English in the "pedigree" sense. The narrative voice informs us of their French and Scottish ancestry, and, perhaps equally significantly, they are not at the top of the social rank

(Hardy 1967:17). This seems to further reinforce the impression that it is the English *gentry*who are under critical scrutiny in *Daniel Deronda.*

Second, the novel's *dignifying of the Jewish subordinate Other.* The treatment of Jewish characters in the novel constitutes a lifting or dignifying of a group that was normally the subordinate Other of British and European society in the 19th century. The first aspect of this dignifying effect is caused by the fact that the Jewish characters are in the main more virtuous –deeper in thought-life and sentiment, more selfless, inspired and inspiring, generous and enduring– than the English ones. Secondly, the Jew is dignified by the very fact that Jewish characters are given space, interior worlds and agency – they are moved from the sidelines they usually occupied in English society, from the position of observed object, to the centre-stage position they share with the dramatic narrative centered on Gwendolen Harleth's fate and her redemptive journey. The third way in which the Jew is dignified – and this also completes the rebuke of the icon of the English gentleman – is in Daniel's choice to embrace his Jewish background as the missing piece in his life, against his father-figure's wishes and in spite of the ripples it is likely to cause in the upper class social circles in which he was raised.

The following excerpts from Eliot's correspondence with Harriet Beecher Stowe connect directly to these themes, and as I see it, reveal something of what we might call the author's conscious purpose behind the novel. In a letter dated October 9th, 1876, Eliot discusses reactions to *Daniel Deronda*. The letter clearly expresses her exasperation, even sense of shame, regarding the arrogance that characterizes English attitudes towards the non-English and particularly those she calls oriental peoples. It seems she felt that the Anglo-centricity of the English world view and evaluation system, at the time profoundly affected by the worldwide dominance of the British Empire, *needed* corrective rebuke.

> I therefore felt urged to treat Jews with such sympathy and understanding as my nature and knowledge could attain to. Moreover, not only towards the Jews, but towards all oriental peoples with whom we English come in contact, a spirit of arrogance and contemptuous dictatorialness is observable which has become a national disgrace to us. (*Letters*: 476)

In the same letter to Harriet Beecher Stowe, ostensibly counting herself as an outsider both to Christianity and Judaism, Eliot expresses her amazement at Christians' ignorant and prejudiced treatment of Jews, and pinpoints the absurdity of Christian anti-Semitism. Her perception had in all likelihood received fuel from her religious upbringing, from her observations of attitudes prevalent in polite society, and from her friendship with Emanuel Deutsch, from whom she had been learning Hebrew. Undoubtedly a source of inspiration for the character Mordecai, Deutsch died after a long battle with cancer in May 1873, when Eliot was planning the novel (*Letters*: 421). Eliot's view of anti-Semitism amongst professing Christians as a gross inconsistency is expressed as follows: "I felt that the usual attitude of Christians towards Jews is – I hardly know whether to say more impious or more stupid when viewed in the light of their professed principles... They hardly know that Christ was a Jew". (*Letters*:476)

In a tone similar to her expression of shame concerning English arrogance, she continues to derail Christian ignorance of their intimate relationship with Judaism:"Can anything be more disgusting than to hear people called "educated" making small jokes about eating ham, and showing themselves empty of any real knowledge as to the relation of their own social and religious life to the history of the people they think themselves witty in insulting?" (*Letters*: 476)

Culturally, she includes the whole Western world in a legacy of debt to the Hebrews and asserts that those who have been reared in Christianity have, consciously or unconsciously, "a peculiar debt, and whether we acknowledge it or not, a peculiar thoroughness of fellowship in religious and moral sentiment" to and with the Jewish people (*Letters*: 476).Clearly, Eliot felt justified in delivering, and it seems even

compelled to deliver, a message of correction to the arrogant, superior attitude which she deemed had become a national disgrace to the English; while simultaneously ennobling the subordinate Other of English (and indeed European) society at that time – the foreigner amongst them– the Jew. Naturally her vehicle for delivery was her established artistic medium and therefore her voice in society, the novel. The two-fold statement of *Daniel Deronda* with regard to these themes seems quite simply to constitute an even-ing out: the lowering of the one, accustomed to an exalted rank, and the lifting and dignifying of the other, accustomed to being relegated to a peripheral position of stigmatised inferiority.

The close correlation between what she writes and the central themes of the novel demonstrates that she was driven by something more than commercial or merely artistic motives in taking on a broad, heavy and awkward subject area that was unlikely to meet with total approval. In fact, she writes at the outset of the same letter that the negative reactions to the novel were less dramatic than she had anticipated:"As to the Jewish element in 'Deronda', I expected from first to last in writing it, that it would create much stronger resistance and even repulsion than it has actually met with. (*Letters*: 476)

## 1.1 Aim of the Thesis

The aim of this thesis is to study George Eliot's treatment of the two controversial central themes of *Daniel Deronda* – the rebuke of the English gentry's superiority complex and the dignifying of the subordinate Jewish Other of 19th century English society; to compare the treatment of these themes in the 2002 BBC film adaptation of the novel, and then to arrive at some concluding suggestions as to why the reception of the adaptation was markedly positive in comparison to the initial reception of the novel at the end of the 19th century.

In this study, an analysis of chosen key characters is conducted. The analysis examines the English gentry and the Jewish characters, as well as the key "bridge" character, Daniel, in the novel and in the BBC adaptation. I plan to analyze how the two central themes of this study are communicated through these characters: their attributes, inner worlds, conversations, relationships and choices. What can be derived concerning themes one and two? As the thesis statement outlines, the analysis will examine whether or not the treatment of the themes in the BBC adaptation, as represented by these characters, differs in any significant way from that of the novel. The concluding discussion will consider the findings and also consider social and ideological changes which must have affected contemporary reactions to both the novel and the film.

## 1.2 The Story of Daniel Deronda

*Daniel Deronda*, which from now on will be referred to as *D.D.,* is a vast novel, divided into eight "books". The Penguin English Library edition, published in 1967 and reprinted in 1974, is 885 pages long, including Barbara Hardy's introductory notes (7-30) and excluding the final explanatory notes. There is a wide array of characters and a somewhat complex plot, in which turns of events at several key moments are helped by a kind of divine intervention, the hand of destiny helping out, or *Deus Ex Machina.* The novel opens with the first encounter between Daniel and Gwendolen Harleth, the two most central characters. The scene is arresting both in novel and on film and a charged, if perhaps unconventional attraction between the two is established. Gwendolen is the beautiful young English woman at the centre of attention, doing well at roulette at gambling table in Leubronn, Germany. When she becomes aware of what she feels is Deronda's censuring gaze, she begins to lose. Gwendolen has fled England briefly to escape the proposal of a rich, cold aristocrat, Henleigh Grandcourt. She had meant to accept his marriage offer but then found out about his mistress, with whom he had four children. Gwendolen is shocked and promises the cast off mistress, Lydia Glasher, that she will not marry Grandcourt so that she does not stand in the way - Lydia wants Grandcourt to marry her and to make the couple's oldest son his heir.

But Gwendolen receives a letter after her encounter with Daniel in Leubronn announcing her family's plunge into (relative) poverty. She is proud and selfish and cannot imagine a life of deprivation or the degradation of becoming a governess to a bishop's daughters. She accepts Grandcourt, defying her conscience regarding her promise to Lydia Glasher, and also suppressing her slight sense of fear – Grandcourt is rich, sufficiently handsome and impeccably mannered, but he is also cold and lethargic and she has no genuine love for him. The novel takes on a slight gothic aspect, when Lydia tries to haunt the marriage that she is so bitterly disappointed by, by threatening Gwendolen with a secret letter on her wedding day, accompanying a parcel with the diamonds Grandcourt had once given to Lydia and then demanded back. She writes that Gwendolen will be cursed for breaking her promise and warns her that the man she has married "has a withered heart". Gwendolen throws the diamonds on the floor and the letter in the fire and burst into hysterical crying, horrified. The scene is effective both on the page and in the BBC adaptation, and has the desired effect of poisoning Gwendolen's marriage to Grandcourt from the very start.

Meanwhile, Gwendolen and Daniel's paths cross again, as Daniel's father-figure, Sir Hugo, is Grandcourt's uncle, and Grandcourt is unfortunately in line to inherit Sir Hugo's property, Daniel's childhood home, after his death. Daniel is assumed to be Sir Hugo's illegitimate son, but he has no acknowledged biological kinship to Sir Hugo and no official rights. Daniel and Gwendolen are strongly drawn to each other and although there is no clear acknowledgement of regret that they didn't have a proper chance to get to know and ultimately marry each other, Gwendolen seeks Daniel's company and he seems displeased with her engagement, although careful about how he expresses it. There is early on already a sense of Daniel as Gwendolen's redeemer – her lifeline, the recipient of her confessions and her source of instruction and moral guidance. Sir Hugo's unwelcome jokes warning Daniel against flirting with the beautiful gambler irritate him, but provide the reader and viewer with light relief and some upfront acknowledgement of attraction amidst all the suppression of social conventions and the understatement or fogginess of the narrative voice in this respect.

Daniel is unsure of his origin and identity and also longing for something better to live for than his own amusement. He is painted as compassionate, serious and deep. Gwendolen, by contrast is shallow, selfish and potently charming, so there is an opposition of character in this central relationship. Daniel is out rowing one day, singing to himself when he notices a young woman in black walking into the water. He turns his boat, guessing the worst, and actually saves her from suicide. Here the Jewish theme begins. The young woman is Mirah Lapidoth, she is perfectly pretty (at least by the next day), lonely and desperately sad. Her father kidnapped her from home when she was six and took her from England to Europe to use her singing talent to make a living on the stage. The young girl longed for her loving and religiously observant mother and finally dares to flee from her abusive father and from the frightening and wicked adults around her in the world of entertainment. She flees to London in the hope of finding the mother and brother she has not seen for over a decade. After Daniel rescues her from suicide, he places her in the care of the Meyrick family, who are practical and caring. Daniel sets out to help Mirah establish a respectable means of supporting herself. The renowned Jewish musician Julius Klesmer hears her sing and endorses the furthering of her career as a drawing-room singer and singing instructor in upper-class London society. Gwendolen becomes increasingly miserable as Grandcourt turns out to be not only cold and lethargic, but cruel and controlling too. She believes she is being punished for her mercenary choice and sees no way out, as a woman who left her husband would be a social outcast. When Daniel and Gwendolen's paths cross, such as when Mirah gives her first drawing-room performance in Klesmer's hearing, she seizes every opportunity to drop her mask and reveal her desperate sorrow and fear to him in the hope that he will not "abandon her cause", but will care about her and continue to give her advice.

Daniel sets out to look for Mirah's mother and brother. He is somewhat disgusted by the Jewish "ghetto" of London and afraid of what kind of people he might find. He stumbles quickly on Mordecai, in a bookshop. Mordecai is a consumptive Jewish visionary who believes Daniel is the answer to his prayers. He has had a dream or vision in which a man like Daniel comes to take his torch – even to be infused with his soul; a man who will take on Mordecai's ideas and work wholeheartedly for the Jewish cause.

Daniel is ambivalent, feeling strained and also intrigued by these claims. Mordecai is perhaps brilliant and perhaps bordering on insane, still, he is passionate and driven by a cause greater than himself and in that so utterly unlike anyone Daniel knows. He begins to study Hebrew and to learn about Jewish history, faith and various strains of Jewish thought.

Mordecai turns out to be Mirah's brother and Daniel has the joy of reuniting them, after he has provided better living quarters for the impoverished Mordecai. The next dramatic event is that Daniel's mother, Leonora Charisi/Halm-Eberstein suddenly writes to Daniel via Sir Hugo, requesting a meeting with him in Genoa, after having left Daniel in total ignorance about her all his life.

Grandcourt's grip on Gwendolen has become by this stage a form of psychological torture. After apprehending her in an intimate discussion with Daniel at the Grandcourt's home, he decides to take her abroad on a yachting tour. Her sense of imprisonment is total and she has wild fantasies about murdering him and is horrified at the dark places of her mind. They leave almost at the same time as Daniel. Daniel has a dramatic encounter with his mother in Genoa. She is proud and cold, not at all what he had hoped, but because she is dying she feels compelled to reveal the truth of his origin to him and to meet him at least once. She tells Daniel that he is Jewish, a fact that he receives with joy, having been somewhat prepared for the news by his unusual friendship with Mordecai and Mirah. She thought that she had done the best thing for him when she gave him away to Sir Hugo to be raised in England, where he could escape what she considered to be the curse of being born a Jew, and be granted the privilege of being an English gentleman instead.

*Deus Ex Machina*is at work again when Gwendolen and Henleigh Grandcourt have to stop at Genoa because of bad weather at sea. When they meet Daniel at their hotel, Grandcourt is incensed, suspecting Gwendolen of arranging the meeting though he

knows it to be impossible, unless she is operating in the realm of divination. Grandcourt takes Gwendolen out alone in a small boat – a tortuous experience for her – and he is knocked overboard and drowns. Gwendolen is shocked and frightened, believing that she is to blame because of her desperate prayers and murderous thoughts, and because she hesitated to throw her husband the rope. Daniel is with her afterwards and can contact family in England and hear her anxious confessions. The distance between them widens, Gwendolen feels she is beholding a life she has sinned herself away from when she is with Daniel, and he has realized more fully that he loves Mirah. He promises nonetheless not to forsake Gwendolen, although the exact meaning of the promise is unclear and he fears he is promising too much.The novel and adaptation both conclude with the wedding of Daniel and Mirah, Daniel's last meeting with Gwendolen, and Mordecai's death. Mirah and Daniel plan to sail East, but the novel and film versions portray this somewhat differently. Mirah and Daniel have been united in cause and in love, while Gwendolen is left to become a better person in the ashes of everything that has gone wrong for her. Her redemption is slow and painful but both novel and film end hopefully, communicating Gwendolen's sense of gratitude for Daniel's influence on her life.

### 1.3 The Novel: Reception and Criticism

According to the editor's commentary in *Letters* (1985: 421), the critical reception of the Jewish theme in the novel was hostile and it proved to be unpopular with readers, just as Eliot and her publisher Blackwood had anticipated. The readership of *Daniel Deronda* must have been limited to the (at least fairly) privileged classes. The volume and complexity of the novel meant that readers were likely to be well educated and to have some money and leisure time at their disposal. The fact that several English characters come across as superficial, vain, arrogant, idle and self-centered might have passed more or less unrecognized as any kind of stab at members of the novel's readership, or the English gentry in general, had it not been for the contrastingly positive treatment of the Jewish characters. Threaded all throughout, albeit subtly, as I see it, there is a message of rebuke related to the English characters' treatment of the

Jews; and as well as the bias in favour of Jewish characters in the distribution of virtues and admirable qualities, there is a dignifying of Jewish culture and faith and a non-sarcastic presentation of Jewishness and the Jewish cause. Ultimately, these emerge as the substance of a desirable identity; a context which provides a sense of connection to history and a sense of belonging, as well as a legitimate life-calling for Daniel.

None of these elements of the novel's message could have been *selbstverständlich*– these were not by any means accepted views of reality for the bulk of Eliot's readership, and her apprehension of criticism was therefore most natural. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that Eliot attempted subtlety and variety in her characterization, perhaps for the very purpose of getting her point across, though most certainly also for the purpose of the quality of her art. There are several indications that she wished to avoid an anti-English and pro-Jewish bias that was so obvious that it became both unpalatable and unconvincing, as we shall see in the analysis section. In her 1967 introduction to the novel, Barbara Hardy expresses the novel's rebuke or critique of the English upper class, which I have called theme one in this study, as follows:

> …all the general social portraiture of English life is highly critical. The county society of a corner of Wessex, presented and represented entirely through its gentry…is very satirically drawn. The scenes of high society are no mere renunciations of the fashionable "silver fork" novels of Disraeli and Bulwer Lytton which she had criticized in her earlier writings, but strong satires of superficial culture, insincerity, mercenariness, triviality, and marriage-trading. (1967:15)

Barbara Hardy (1967: 16) proceeds to call Eliot's portrayal of the aristocratic English social scene "violent criticism", which includes some "gentle, but damaging portraits" of English characters, particularly Sir Hugo Mallinger and his wife. Hardy (1967: 17) asserts that contemporary readers met the novel with hostility because of the bias against English society and towards Judaism and notes that critics "from Leslie Stephen to F.R. Leavis have continued what Eliot resentfully called the 'cutting-up' of the novel". That is, those who for ideological or (at least allegedly) artistic reasons found the Jewish "part" of the novel distasteful or inferior to the "Gwendolen part" advocated a separation of the two narratives. In *The Great Tradition* (1948), Cambridge scholar

F.R. Leavis does not mince words in his criticism of the weaknesses of the novel, which he places firmly on the Jewish theme. He calls it "a mass of fervid and wordy unreality" and considers it unfortunate that it has "absorbed most of the attention the book has ever had" (1948: 97). He goes on to say that the 'good half' has not been sufficiently acclaimed: "…so magnificent an achievement as the good half of *Daniel Deronda* could not have failed to compel an admiration that would have established it, not least because of the astonishing badness of the bad half, among the great things in fiction". (1948: 97)

In *The Realist Novel in England* (1975), Ioan Williams notes Henry James' distaste for the whole Jewish element, including Daniel as central character; James would have preferred a novel named *Gwendolen Harleth*. Williams (1975: 183) disagrees with James and Leavis' rejection of the "Jewish part", asserting that Eliot's essential aim as a novelist lies in the balance between the two characters' stories and in the fact that they are intimately connected. Although the handling of two complex themes causes some difficulties and what Barbary Hardy considers to be the novel's mixed success artistically (1967: 9), I must agree with Williams that the Jewish part of the novel is an integral part of its whole structure and, chiefly, but not exclusively through Daniel's connection to Gwendolen, it is deeply interwoven into the English part of the narrative. It could not be cut out without total distortion. Gwendolen's redemptive journey, reliant on Daniel, is what gives her narrative depth and interest; it is the departure from genre norms (she doesn't get the guy and live happily ever after) that makes her story poignant and memorable. At other places too, such as the connection between the Arrowpoints and Klesmer, and Mirah as a London drawing-room singer, it is the intersection between upper-class English society and the Jews which lifts the novel out of the parameters of its genre and into the realm of questioning and social, even ideological, comment. Terry Eagleton (2005) writes:

> In *Daniel Deronda* it is as though the tables have been turned, and history itself has become a work of art. But this is a very special history indeed, one far from both Hayslope and Grandcourt's upper-class world. In the end, Eliot's

> determination to keep the faith forces her writing beyond England, as well as beyond the limits of realism. (2005: 186)

1.4 The BBC Adaptation: General Introduction

The BBC adaptation of *Daniel Deronda* was aired in 2002 as a television mini-series or serial in two parts, with a total running time of 3 hours 22 minutes. The "2 entertain" DVD of the mini-series is dated 2011. When cited in the text of this study, the adaptation will be referred to as BBC and then followed by the minute and second count of each specific reference. Up until the 2002 production the remarkable lack of film versions of *Deronda* was conspicuous, considering the number of adaptations that have been made of Eliot's other novels as well as of the novels of other 19th century writers such as Dickens and Austen. Apart from a silent film in 1921 which took a lot of liberty with the material and an obscure television series version in 1970, there has been no other film version. When contemporary filmmakers finally chose to take on the challenge of adapting *Daniel Deronda,* it was done thoroughly, although the choice to opt for a BBC series format meant a budget of a "mere" £5 million.

An article in *The Telegraph* (2001) by Chloe Fox offers background information about the production, including interviews from the set. The adaptation had a strong production team, with Louis Marks as producer (it was Marks' last production, before his death in 2010), Andrew Davies as screenwriter and Tom Hooper directing. All three, at the time particularly Davies, had a string of successes behind them. Before adapting Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* in 1995, Davies was the screenwriter of the highly successful 1994 BBC adaptation of Eliot's *Middlemarch,* a production which in the estimation of Louis Marks brought the period drama back into fashion. They were planning to take a break from the "bonnet drama" (Fox: 2001), but the commercial success of *Middlemarch* led them to review that intention. At the early stages a film version of *Deronda* was planned, but the difficulties of casting (about which particularly Hooper was meticulous) led them to opt for a BBC television production which would give them more time and the freedom not to have to have a star to pull audiences. Davies cites the motivation of a challenging text, whereas Marks' driving motivation was more commercial. Tom Hooper was notoriously thorough in casting and shooting,

and had 100 hours of film to edit down at the end of the filming process. The cast of the adaptation included many well established actors, but Hooper clearly aimed for quality over commercial box-office thinking, choosing actors with academic backgrounds, notably Hugh Dancy to play Daniel and Jodhi May as Mirah, both of whom had studied English Literature at Oxford. Romola Garai was a model who had dropped out of university and had never been to acting school when she was chosen to play Gwendolen. She was only nineteen in 2002 and with that in mind the poise and maturity of her acting are remarkable.

Although this study does not include a reception analysis, it seems reasonable to assert that the BBC production was a success, and in this respect differs in a significant way from the novel, which was a mixed success commercially as well as in terms of critical reviews.Noting the positive public response the BBC adaptation met with is relevant to this study, since it considers the adaptation's treatment of the two themes that were controversial at the time of the novel's publication, seeking to examine if any significant changes were made in the film adaptation which could have mitigated the critique of the English gentry in the novel and/or toned down its positive, dignifying treatment of Jews thereby rendering the film version less likely to cause offense.

In 2003 the adaptation of *Deronda* received awards for best sound and best editing from BAFTA (British Academy of Film and Television Arts. It was also nominated for the awards for best photography and lighting and best make-up and hair design. At the BANFF television festival in 2003 it won the Banff Rockie award for best mini-series. It also received the 2003 Broadcasting Press Guild Award for Best Drama Series. The production was later nominated for the 2007 Satellite Award for best DVD release of a television show. The Digital Journal (www.digitaljournal.com) mentions the adaptation of Daniel Deronda as an established past success: "Jamaica Inn is the latest period drama to sweep audiences off their feet in the UK, following the success of *Downton Abbey*, *Daniel Deronda* and *Sense and Sensibility."*

# 2 POSTCOLONIAL THEORETICAL APPROACH

I believe that Eliot was, in a way, "writing back" to her readership over a century before the important postcolonial work *The Empire Writes back* was published (1989, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin).*Daniel Deronda* reflects back aspects of Englishness and challenges Anglo-centricity from behind the balustrades of Imperialism, from within English society, in a way that foreshadows postcolonial writing and theory and could therefore be deemed *pre-postcolonial*. In *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*(1995), Elleke Boehmer lays down the definition of "postcolonial" as a matter of content and purpose, rather than as a genre which is located in, or born of, a particular era: "Rather than simply being the writing which 'came after' empire, *postcolonial* literature is that which critically scrutinizes the colonial relationship". (1995: 3). Declan Kiberd's *Inventing Ireland,* also published in 1995, offers a similar definition of postcolonial literature as something that is not dependent on a place in time, but is rather a matter of the purpose and effect of what is written: "In my judgement, postcolonial writing does not begin only when the occupier withdraws, rather it is initiated at that very moment when a native writer formulates a text committed to cultural resistance". (1995: 6)

At the outset, it is important to acknowledge that in my reading of *Daniel Deronda,* the novel and its film adaptation communicate a statement which is a foreshadowing of postcolonial writing and thought in two particular ways, which will be highlighted in this study, but that it does not coincide with some strains of postcolonial theory in two other ways. I see the statement of the novel with regard to its treatment of what I have chosen to call theme one: the English superiority complex, and theme two: the dignifying of the Jewish subordinate Other within English society, as (pre-) postcolonial for the following reasons: *Firstly*, because it constitutes an obvious challenge to Anglo-centricity; it criticizes the iconic type of the English gentleman and attacks assumptions concerning the cultural and racial inferiority of just about anyone "non-British" (or more specifically, non-English); and *secondly* because it offers a group of people who, at the time, were widely considered inferior (less-than-European, less-than-white, less-than-Christian) a dignified position in its plot and characterization, in which they

become subjects and agents rather than the observed object, the exotic, part-despised and part-threatening aliens of the white man's gaze.

Considering that *Daniel Deronda* was written over fifty years before the most decisive phase of the dissolution of the British Empire, these statements render it forward-reaching and clear-sighted enough, as I see it. In *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature* (1995), Boehmer refers to the novels of Charles Dickens and the travelogues of Anthony Trollope as $19^{th}$ century literature which "contributed to the complex of attitudes that made imperialism seem part of the order of things" (119: 3). By contrast to these, George Eliot's last novel uprooted the order of things, rather than affirming and further embedding perceptions of 'how things are and should be'. It did so by challenging the iconic concept of the English gentleman as the most "right", the most desirable identity; by critiquing the idleness, indifference and selfishness of several English characters, as well as their derogatory treatment of others and in particular the Jewish Other (in spite of their impeccably rehearsed social manners); and by inviting the reader into an alternative, de-stigmatizing, dignifying, "insider" view of a people who at that time were the untouchables of European societies.

Still, it is important to acknowledge that the narrative of *Daniel Deronda* cannot be seen to correlate with the following two specific elements of postcolonial theory: Firstly, contemporary postcolonial theory is anything but essentialist on the subject of ethnic, national and religious belonging. Eliot's novel, by dramatic contrast, presents Daniel's discovery of his connection to the Jews and Judaism as the discovery of a deep, intrinsic part of who he is and as something that has a right to define his identity and shape his future; although it must be noted that the element of choice is not wholly absent, when his inward processes in reaction to the revelation about his birth are portrayed. Secondly, some postcolonial theory views the modern state of Israel as a kind of colony of oppression (see Young 2003: 66) which of course stands in opposition to, jars against, the vague, but nonetheless important Zionist vision of the novel.

Since the Jews were a dispossessed and scattered people before the establishment of the state of Israel, and since the state was established by a United Nations vote in 1948, the middle-eastern situation does not fit the definition of a colony, in spite of the complex challenges involved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. However, since it is not the aim of this thesis either to analyze the essentialist stance the novel takes on concepts of ethnic, religious and national belonging, or to take on the political polemic battle surrounding modern Israel (the actualities of which were of course unknown to Eliot, at the time of writing), these aspects of postcolonial theory remain peripheral to this study.

It is also worth noting that although I claim that the novel has a "pre-postcolonial" message, the Jews in 19th century Europe were not by definition a colonized people; they were during the almost 2,000 years of the *diaspora* what Robert J.C. Young (2003: 52-53) calls a nomadic, homeless people, a landless people with a migratory identity. Many Jews living in Europe at that time had fled from the systematic persecution in Russia known as the *pogroms.* They existed in subcultures in the societies of those who generally considered them to be outsiders, in spite of the various degrees of assimilation that were reached. During the 19th century, they were the established subordinate other of English society; the foreigner amongst them, and clearly the position they were given in society was marked by the Imperial mindset – the deep-seated belief in British and English superiority over everything deemed to be foreign.

In *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature* (1995: 80), Elleke Boehmer claims that 19th century imperial projects were built on "powerful strategies of exclusion and repression" – and the mindset of the English towards the Jews in 19th century Britain was clearly marked by the same: stigmatization, exclusion, repression. In *Race and Nation,* (1998: 124) Clive J. Christie comments on the nature of Jewish life during the *diaspora*: "Thereafter, the history of the Jewish people is a story of obstinate survival, despite relentless discrimination and persecution." It is also relevant to note that the Jews constituted George Eliot's only close-up study material for the purpose of what seems to have been a quest to issue a rebuke to the attitudes of arrogance and ignorance

which she believed were prevalent in English evaluation and treatment of "all oriental peoples" (*Letters*: 476). For these reasons, I feel that the central themes of the novel and its film adaptation are highly relevant to postcolonial theory and literature, and in this sense "pre-postcolonial"; I propose that the novel's most important statement, as I read it, foreshadows some key elements of postcolonial thought.

## 2.1 The Mentality and Justification of Empire: The Doctrine of Superiority and the Paradoxes of Imperial Theory and Practice

The elements of postcolonial theory most relevant to this study are those quite central elements which explore and explain the mentality of imperialism and those that focus on colonial/imperial treatment of those that were believed to be inferior races, groups and individuals, as well as the aspects that give voice and agency to the experience of those subordinate others. In *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature* (1995), Elleke Boehmer establishes that a widely held and deep-seated belief in the intrinsic superiority of the European, and most especially the English, as well as the superiority of their culture, education and society was one of the most important foundation stones of the whole enterprise of colonialism and of the British Empire – giving birth to it and also feeding and sustaining it during its golden age in the 19$^{th}$ century. In fact, the Englishman's alleged two-fold superiority, racial/intrinsic and cultural, in relation to the people that were subjected in the colonies, was the chief argument for the moral justification of the existence of the Empire and the excuse most widely used for its often morally questionable methods of acquisition and rule.

Literature had a self-defining role in colonialism and in the British Empire, just as postcolonial literatures have played an important role in self-definition - redefining and giving voice to marginalized peoples. Boehmer (1995: 3) asserts the following regarding the role of *colonialist* literature, which constituted important imaginative fuel for the fire of expansion and dominance:"Colonialist literature was informed by theories concerning the superiority of European culture and the rightness of Empire. Its

distinctive, stereotyped language was geared to mediate the white man's relationship with colonized peoples." Besides informing the British self-image, literature also played an important part in representing Britishness as something worth aspiring to – the absolute standard on what and how to be – amongst the colonized. Boehmer (1995: 51) notes that the study of English literature was promoted in the colonies in order to inspire loyalty in their imperial subjects; a loyal native is simply less troublesome. The excerpt below from the patriotic colonialist poem "England, My England" by William Ernest Henley (1849-1903) offers an example of the glorification of imperial dominance in literature and the claim to a God-given right, even mandate, to rule other peoples:

They call you proud and hard,
England, my England:
You with worlds to watch and ward,
England, my own!
You whose mail'd hand keeps the keys
Of suchteemingdestinies,
Chosen daughter of the Lord,
Spouse-in-Chief of the ancient Sword,
There 's the menace of the Word
In the Song on your bugles blown,
England—
Out of heaven on your bugles blown!

*The Oxford Book of Victorian Verse* (1922: 1023)

The English gentleman, an exalted category of being, an icon which will later be addressed in the analysis section of this study, was held by definition to be, besides cool-headed and active, also morally irreproachable, humane and gentle. Therefore, if and when his conscious mind, or muffled soul, discovered some discrepancy between his own professed moral standards and the practices and methods of the empire, some mitigating or explanatory "truth" must be called in to justify and absolve. There were, of course, weighty reasons *not* to allow the voice of moral objection to prevail and potentially upset the lucrative and gratifying progress of the empire. This "truth" that was summoned to fill a need was the doctrine of superiority, both racial/intrinsic and

cultural – in the areas of education, religion, lifestyle, social structures, manners etc. With the belief in European, and here most relevantly British and English superiority, came of course the coin's flip-side – the inferiority of everyone else. As Elleke Boehmer (1995: 80) expresses it: "Time and again the derogation of other cultures was used to validate the violence of invasion".

A very striking, even downright disturbing example of the use of the doctrine of superiority to excuse unjust treatment of others is a citation of Winston Churchill in Young (2003). Churchill, who at the time was the new colonial secretary of Iraq, argues in favour of the use of poison gas in Iraq, on the grounds that one must sometimes use decisive methods to achieve one's aims when dealing with inferior civilizations: "I do not understand this squeamishness about the use of gas… I am strongly in favour of using poison gas against uncivilized tribes" (2003: 37). An Iraqi scholar, Sadiq, who recounted the history of Britain's dealings with Iraq to Young, comments in a tone of bitter irony on the predictability of the outcome of Churchill's methods – "The rebellious Iraqis were also successfully 'pacified'." (2003: 37)

This is a style of rhetoric which in recent years echoed loudly from the think-tanks of the American "war on terror", during George W. Bush's office. Apart from the many and weighty reasons there are to object to these claims to superiority, this kind of logic is inherently contradictory. According to this kind of reasoning, peoples considered less civilized may, because of their inferiority, and if deemed necessary, be treated in a manner that loudly and obviously contradicts the colonial or oppressive power's self-defining claim to superior morality.The absurdity of this reasoning might be compared to the element of anti-Semitism which derails the Jews as "Christ-killers". Even the most rudimentary understanding of Christian theology makes such an accusation completely illogical, since according to scripture, the sacrificial death of Christ was divinely ordained as the atonement for human sin, and therefore not a mistake or a crime in the ordinary sense, for which the Jewish people should be held accountable.

Young (2003: 56) recounts an example of French brutality which also involves the justifying of violent methods based on the doctrine of superiority. The incident involves a General Bugeaud who was in charge of the challenging task of subduing Algerian resistance; ten years after the French invasion, the Algerian people were proving to be unwilling subjects, distressingly "unruly". In Young's words (2003: 56), Bugeaud's method is "*razzia*, scorched earth, slash and burn". On one particular occasion, he chased a band of troublesome tribesmen, driving them into a cave which he then sealed up, killing the imprisoned Algerians by asphyxiation. The entry in Bugeaud's journal, which Young quotes directly, reveals the mentality of supremacy, and the absurdity of the justification which is based on it, very clearly: "I have all the exits hermetically sealed and I make a huge cemetery. The earth will cover the corpses of these fanatics for all time… No one, other than myself knows that there are 500 brigands under there who will no longer cut the throat of Frenchmen". (2003: 56)

Far from the high ideals of the official doctrines of imperialism, the message is that we must slaughter the savages before they slaughter us, and there is even a sense of exultation over this secret achievement. Robert Young (2003: 57) adds the comment that French methods seemed to have changed very little by the 1950s, when they were still "cheerfully burying Algerians alive" – then with the help of bulldozers. Young (2003: 43) gives voice to Sadiq, the Iraqi scholar who once shared his experience of Britain's treatment of Iraq with Young at a Baghdad café: "Yet all we have ever wanted to do was to live our own lives without them". He exposes the irony of Britain's belief in its divine destiny to rule and reign, as well as the corruption caused by the veiled motivation to gain control over Iraq's oil resources.

Elleke Boehmer(1995: 64) addresses the same dichotomy. He discusses how the character Marlow in Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim* reflects on the fundamental hypocrisy of the colonial dream, in the face of its rhetoric connecting the agenda of dominance with notions of the improved general welfare of the colonized. In his discussion of the work of Frantz Fanon, Robert J.C. Young (2003) also stresses the centrality of recognizing

juxtaposition at the heart of imperial thinking and colonialist writing. He argues that it is a fundamental part of the reorientation of postcolonial criticism to recognize the disjunction in "the articulation of the aesthetic life of the west with the brutal military power that has sustained its wealth and interests". (2003: 58)

## 2.2Race, Eugenics and the Jews in 19th Century Europe

The belief that Europeans (and of course especially the English, in the case of British Imperial thinking) were intrinsically superior to their colonized subjects was based on ideas about race that had their roots in the Enlightenment period and in Darwinism. In *Postcolonial Theory and English Literature: a Reader* (1999, ed. Peter Childs), Childs analyses D.H. Lawrence's *England my England* and the belief in "the pure-blooded Englishman, perfect in race" (1999: 20). The close relationship between this view of the English "race" as pure, even perfect, and the 20th century Nazi ideology of an Aryan race is unmistakable. The heavily charged irony in this chapter of Nazi ideology is that Adolf Hitler himself did not possess the qualifying characteristics to be a member of the pedigree race the Aryan doctrine sought to recruit. This is a potent example of the colonialist pattern Elleke Boehmer(1995: 64) describes: "Pride and self-delusion fed ideas of racial superiority".

In *Race and Nation* (1998), Clive J. Christie establishes the fact that the concept of race in the rhetoric of nationalism has rarely had any foundation in real scientific research. The case is rather that those who wish to believe in racial distinctions as a kind of hierarchy, because this belief supports their ideology and/or their political ambitions, are happy to exploit whatever scanty evidence that they can find to patch together an argument which undergirds or "proves" their views. Christie (1998: 121) notes that while the word "race" became somewhat sensitive in the wake of the Second World War, it was thrown around rather indiscriminately in many cases before that and patriotic politicians and writers often boasted of the achievements of the English "race."

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Moreover, not only was the concept of race used to establish national distinctions, it was also used in the service of reinforcing class differences. An early example of this application of concepts of racial hierarchy was the French Comte de Gobineau (1816-1882). Sometimes called the "father" of modern racism, the Comte attempted to entrench the division between the French aristocracy and the rest of the population, *le people,* through the assertion that there was a physical, racial distinction (and therefore an inherent value difference) between the Aryan aristocracy and the rest of the population, whom he claimed were "Gallo-Roman" (1998: 121).

In *Postcolonial Theory and English Literature, a Reader* (ed. Childs, 1999) the same idea emerges in connection with English claims to racial purity. Sally Ledger (1999: 21) notes that the notion of the pure-blooded English "race" was a category which did not encompass the English lower classes, or if so, just about, and unwillingly. This view gave rise to anxieties about the reproduction statistics amongst the poorer classes in late Victorian England, compared to the middle and upper class birth rate: it was feared that by reproducing and multiplying their own "lower" strain of the "race", they were dragging down the standard of purity – sullying the overall genetic pool and weakening the status, even threatening the future, of the English. Indeed, the conviction that the high birthrate amongst the lower classes was a threat to evolutionary progress was a recurrent feature of eugenics. Hierarchical categorization of colonized peoples in relation to *one another* was similarly a mark of imperial mentality. Elleke Boehmer writes:

> Rather than being an undifferentiated entity, the Other was based on multiple distinctions. Depending on context and imperial interest, certain categories of people or cultures were deemed to be closer to the European self than others. Within the Empire, as *Kim* makes clear, the Irish were rated as superior to Indians while in India itself warlike Sikhs and Pathans were ranked above Bengalis. (1995: 82)

Clive Christie (1998: 122) recounts something of the many attempts to divide the main European language groups along racial lines, for example Germanic and Slavic. However, not even the Nazis, who made zealous attempts to establish racial segregation along the lines of a hierarchy, managed consistency in their treatment of the complex relationship between language, culture and ethnic roots. Germans with "manifestly Slav ethnic origins", as Christie expresses it, were not discriminated against in Nazi Germany, if they were considered to be fully German as regards language and culture. Christie notes that the "Germanic" nations have never formed a natural block, and similarly, the complex, strained relations between Poland and Russia ultimately contradicted notions of the existence of a "pan-Slavic" sense of mutual belonging. Christie (1998: 122) affirms the theories stated earlier about the use of the doctrine of European superiority for the justification of colonial expansion, but also establishes the fact that *within* Europe, before the mass immigration that resulted from the dissolution of the British Empire (alongside that of other European colonial relationships), the difficulty of asserting racial distinctions within Europe increased the focus on the identity and status of the Semitic or Jewish community.

## 2.3 Projected Images: Qualities Ascribed to Subject Peoples

In *Inventing Ireland,* Declan Kiberd gives a thorough account of the historical, literary and psychological relationship of the English to their most troublesome colony – Ireland. In his account, in which he draws on Matthew Arnold's *The Study of Celtic Literature* (London, 1891) and the idea of the "feminized Celt", he exposes the Imperial tendency to project certain polarized attributes onto the subordinated colonial other, which served to support the doctrine of superiority and the Imperial argument for the necessity to rule.

Kiberd (1995: 29) calls Ireland "England's unconscious" and notes that English policy as regards the governing of Ireland was marked at times by a kind of "bafflement." While Irish reactions to British rule tended to range from insurrection to constitutional

methods of resistance, English governing policy, as if reacting rather than acting, "oscillated crazily from coercion to conciliation". But Kiberd asserts that these fluctuations were not merely political in nature, rather, governing policy was affected by a deeply rooted psychological ambivalence within English people towards their Celtic "Other". "The stereotypical Paddy could be charming or threatening by turns". Kiberd(1995: 30) also wryly remarks that Arnold was an outstanding example of those experts who had set themselves up as such "without the indignity or inconvenience of first-hand experience" Although Arnold believed that he was working towards a noble understanding of the Irish and a kind of reconciliation (he called for a chair of Celtic studies at Oxford and a 'Union of Hearts' policy), his depiction of the Celt was in essence derogatory, deeply coloured by the established view of Ireland as England's shadow image, or simply, "not-England". Declan Kiberd asserts that Victorian Imperialists projected generic national traits or attributes onto the Irish which the harsh codes of the recently industrialized society they lived in had led them to suppress in themselves:

> Thus, if John Bull was industrious and reliable, Paddy was held to be indolent and contrary; if the former was mature and rational, the latter must be unstable and emotional; if the English were adult and manly, the Irish must be childish and feminine. In this fashion, the Irish were to read their fate in that of two other out-groups, women and children; and at the root of many an Englishman's suspicion of the Irish was an unease with the woman or child who lurked within himself.(1995: 30)

The analogy found in this projection of particularly femininity onto the subordinate colonized Other has certainly been considered in depth in feminist criticism and women's studies, and strikes me again here: The Imperial condescension to inferior subjects, mixed with a fearful fascination with the unfathomable and exotic, can easily be seen to parallel chauvinistic or patriarchal concepts of women. That is – the Other is inferior but tantalizing; necessarily weaker in order to justify my rule; different in a charming way that *decorates* me; incomprehensible and complex so as to bemuse,

entertain and irritate at turns; the negative, opposite image that defines who I am, as I stand in the arena of action.

This feminizing of the Irish Other, as well as the projecting of attributes such as laziness and passivity, exotic charm, childishness and creativity, carried over onto Imperial stereotypes of Africa and India too; with the added dimensions of mystery and fear that the geographical vastness and far more marked cultural differentness of these continents inspired. That these larger colonies gave rose to a sense of the somewhat threateningly unfathomable is evident across the board in colonialist and postcolonial literature and literary theory. The European Jew was by no means as threateningly different as most of the colonized peoples, but was perhaps uncomfortably close, and therefore pushed into the position of subordinate Other. Jews who physically passed as European and spoke the national language fluently remained outsiders, members of a group that was stigmatized and stereotyped. Rather than being feminized and exoticized, the Jew was allowed a kind of masculinity, of activity, but it was a kind that was disliked and resented. For example, business success amongst Jews was often attributed to calculating and miserliness and they were suspected of using various means to usurp wealth that should rightfully have belonged to the "real" Europeans.

In *Postcolonial Literature- A Reader's Guide to Essential Criticism* (2008), Justin D. Edwards gives a valuable account of Mary Kingsley's *Travels in West Africa* (1897), which reveals some of the difficulties posed by the strangeness of African culture. According to Edwards, Kingsley exemplifies those 19th century travelers who did not oppose imperialism or colonization as such, but who spoke out against its injustices. Edwards relates how Kingsley expressed sympathy for the peoples of West Africa and wrote in defense of aspects of African culture which had shocked the English, including polygamy. She denounced European intervention and civilizing missions which she believed would result in social chaos. She also argued against the perception of black people asa less developed version of human being, asserting that one might as well call a rabbit an undeveloped hare – her conviction was that African people were "different,

but equal”. Still, her struggle to understand and in practical terms*cope* with the differentness of African behaviour becomes apparent in an account of a trading incident with the Fan tribe in West Africa.

Owning that she feels very nervous, she recounts the beginning of the transactions and then adds that she is likely to be killed as part of the trading process, because she is short of money. Edwards comments that her description of this aggressive, intimidating tribe: “runs counter to her more progressive critique of European conquest” (2008: 78). He asserts that she is pandering to the expectations of her readers that she present the native peoples as uncivilized. This seems an overly layered interpretation. The fact that Kingsley was progressive does not in any way guarantee that she was consistent either in her perceptions or evaluations. Edwards (2008: 78) asserts: “In this, she disseminates the same discourses as those put forward by Stanley, suggesting the African is pre-modern, animalistic and, above all, threatening to the European traveler”. Following the account of her fear is a humorous account of how the fan warriors then put their new garments to use: a ladies stocking afloat on a warrior’s head. Edwards sees this as an undermining of the ferocity depicted previously, but it is also possible to read it as mockery of native ignorance. The dual reaction of fear and ridicule often typifies human reactions to peoples and behaviors that we are ill-equipped to understand, even when, as in Mary Kingsley’s case, there is a conscious effort to move past the superiority complex of the imperial mind-set.

Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) is a work that has been prolifically adapted, intertextualized, criticized and analyzed, not least with regard to the relationship between the protagonist and his personal slave, the dark-skinned native Man Friday. In *Postcolonial Literature: A Concise Companion,* C.L. Innes (2010: 61) considers *Robinson Crusoe* to be “the founding creation of English character, and a paradigm of English imperialism”. In *Literature through Film* (2005), Robert Stam compares adaptations of the novel to versions of Don Quixote. Firstly, he presents the novel as a milestone in imperial imagery, mentioning James Joyce’s view of the book as a

"prophecy of the empire". In this sense, *Robinson Crusoe* might be called pre-colonialist literature, as I consider *Daniel Deronda* to be pre-postcolonial. The shipwrecked Crusoe himself is seen as perfectly symbolic of the colonist:

> He is the true prototype of the British colonist, as Friday…is the symbol of the subject races. The whole Anglo-Saxon spirit is in Crusoe: the manly independence, the unconscious cruelty; the persistence; the slow, yet efficient intelligence; the sexual apathy; the practical, well-balanced religiousness; the calculating taciturnity. (2005: 67)

The second aspect of Robert Stam's analysis that is significant here addresses what has by now been established in literary and postcolonial theory as the ultimate, if subconscious, fear of the colonizer: cannibalism. The sense is that the white man's deepest fear is that the dark, suppressed strength of the native will rise in rebellion and prevail, literally consuming the white man. Stam asserts that Defoe's narration is unstable, even that a "barely contained hysteria boils beneath the bottom-line 'realism' " (2005: 70). Stam writes that Crusoe is "profoundly paranoid" and imagines horrors at every turn. He is obsessively fearful of cannibals, and in spite of his glee at the prospect of having a servant, finds that his fears almost materialize when Friday reveals that his people are cannibals in war time. Within this fear of cannibalism, some of the aforementioned dichotomies or double moral standards of imperial thinking also emerge, in Stam's reading: "At times, Crusoe excites himself into self-righteous, quasi-genocidal rage over native cannibalism, yet elsewhere he censures the cruelty of the Spanish who slaughtered Indians without any justification. (2005: 74)

Stam asserts that the role of cannibalism is to differentiate the European, Crusoe, from the natives. Stam quotes the novel directly: "I gave God thanks that… I was distinguished from such creatures as these" (2005: 74). One is struck by the similarity of Crusoe's arrogant words to those of the, self-righteous, hyper-religious Pharisees of the New Testament, condemned by Jesus for removing themselves from the people and offering them no genuine enlightenment or help (*The Gospel of Luke*, chapter 18:11). It

is somewhat surprising that Defoe could put these words in Crusoe's mouth, since they seem to be "spoken" without ironic intent; that is, it is unlikely that Defoe had a layered, against-the-grain reading in mind, according to which he could critique English arrogance by this association with the Pharisees. Furthermore, Stam (2005: 74) notes that Crusoe's portrayal of the barbaric natives ignores the existence of highly developed indigenous populations such as the Incas, Mayas and Aztecs. Strangely, Crusoe teaches Friday to eat animal meat as if to wean him off cannibalism, and as if eating animal flesh would be a novel idea to them. Also, Defoe has Robinson Crusoe teach Friday two skills which Europeans in reality had learned from native peoples – in fact, the words barbecue and canoe are of Arawka extraction.

Some critics interpret the colonizers' fear of the native as a suppressed fear of their own darker selves. Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899) has been extensively analyzed in postcolonial theory, and Elleke Boehmer (1995: 61) notes the following elements of duplicity in white writers' readings of themselves: "Like Robert Louis Stevenson in his 1890s tales of the South Seas, and also in Dr. Jeckell and Mr.Hyde (1886), Conrad suspected a primitive and demoralizing Other to reside within the white". This possibility of a fear of darkness within the white self which resembles the physical and cultural "darkness" of the colonized Other is also evident in Chinua Achebe's reading of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*: "It is not the differentness that worries Conrad but the lurking hint of kinship…the Thames too "has been one of the dark places of the earth". It conquered its darkness, of course, and is now in daylight and at peace"(1999: 208). It should nonetheless be noted that the imperial differentiation of the white self from the colonial native and the exoticizing of the colonized Other also encompassed positive aspects. Some writers began to consider the philosophies and value systems of the East a necessary antidote to the materialism and coldness of the Western world under the accelerating changes of industrialization. Elleke Boehmer (1995: 127) recounts Gandhi's condemnation of mass production and Western materialism and attitudes in the West which echoed his: "But D.H. Lawrence, too, struggled to avoid what he saw as the strangulating grip of industrial Europe…he sought in distant – to him more primitive and hence more vitalistic – societies impulses

for Western regeneration." With regard to these relatively positive aspects of exoticizing, Edward Said's groundbreaking *Orientalism* (1978) pushed comprehension, or perhaps decoding, of Western constructions of the East onto a new level. David Richards discusses Said's work in *A Concise Companion to Postcolonial Literature*, 2010). In Richards' account of Said's analysis, Orientalism was positioned in a discourse which continued to express and undergird unequal power relations between East and West. Orientalism was in effect just another "ism" which "supported global colonial hegemony" (Richards 2010: 18).

Jews in 19thcentury Europe were also stereotyped and certain derogatory attributes were projected onto them as they were onto colonial subject peoples. Rather than being seen as weak, chaotic, creative and effeminate (like the Irish), Jews were perceived to be a kind of social parasite, profiting from others, but never really contributing; never quite belonging. They were believed to be miserly and calculating and often any successes they achieved were begrudged and resented -considered a kind of usurping of European wealth. Clive J. Christie recounts the anti-Semitic philosophy of Edward Drumont (1844-1917) in *Race and Nation* (1998). Drumont was a French politician and journalist well-known for his dedicated anti-Semitism. He perceived the Jew as an active threat to all European nations and in his *The Jewish Conspiracy* ascribed qualities such as "pragmatic, imitative, calculating and exploitative" to the Jew, as opposed to the Aryan qualities "inherently spiritual, creative, generous, naïve, but – if provoked – warlike" (1998: 134).The chief role of Jews in 18th and 19th century Russian society was that of *scapegoat*; the Jews were always conveniently at hand when it was comforting or useful to blame someone for a social evil or communal difficulty. A late, severe wave of pogroms took place in Tsarist Russia from 1881 to 1882, a few years after the publication of *Daniel Deronda*

2.4 Fin de Siècle Anxieties: The Psychological Climate of Late 19thCentury Britain

It seems to be of importance to this study to place *Daniel Deronda* in the historical context of the time of its production and publication. Some key aspects of the psychological climate of this period of Imperial Britain, the late 19th century, are relevant; firstly in order to support a reading of the novel as (pre) postcolonial and secondly, in order to approach an adequate understanding of influences that affected contemporary responses to the novel, which will then be compared to the social context which must have affected the reception of the 2002 film adaptation.

The British self-image of the Empire era, though deeply affected by the doctrine of superiority, was not without its ambiguities and vulnerabilities, and these began to emerge towards the end of the 1800s, like cracks previously covered by now peeling paint. Questions about the moral *rightness* of Empire may have been stifled under claims of divine election to rule and poems that glorified England's brave sons and her green fields, but they existed; and along with the anxiety that the dominion of Britain in its colonies might prove unsustainable for more practical reasons (such as repeated problems with insubordination and uprisings), they began to shake the psychological foundations on which the empire had been built.

In *Postcolonial Theory and English Literature, a Reader* (1999: 216-224), Sally Ledger examines the psychological climate of Britain around the turn of the century: "The twin specters of degeneration and apocalypse haunted the final years of the 19th century" (Ledger: 216). Partly due to increased market competition from abroad, the economic boom of the mid-Victorian era ended in the 1880s, around the time of *Daniel Deronda*'s publication, shaking the mentality of victory and dominance that had characterized the age of the Empire. Ledger asserts that the "trinity" of modern criticism, race, class and gender, was in fact born during this period. It was on these three fronts that England's status quo, and specifically the position of the English (gentle) *man,* began to be threatened. She summarizes the three-fold shaking as follows: "Britain was perceived to

be losing control of its colonial subjects, just as it was losing control of its working class subjects, and its women, at home". (1999: 219)

In the realm of racial supremacy, there was also a clash with scientific theories, when Darwinian ideas of the survival of the fittest proved ill-fitting to middle and upper class notions of superiority, perceiving themselves, as they did, as the purest race within the pure race. Confusions arose between notions of species, race and nationality and concerning the political implications of Darwinism. Political upheaval resulted from the fears surrounding "the perceived decline of the British Empire; the fear of working-class disorder and…the resurgence of the bourgeois women's movement" (Ledger: 219).On the class front, the appalling working and living conditions of factory workers in the early stages of the industrial revolution had slowly given birth to unions and the Marxist workers' movement, which by the end of the century had gathered momentum and began to represent a foreboding cloud of change. The English gentleman, proud of his non-earned wealth and scorning the *nouveau riche* as vulgar, something less than blue-blooded, was in fact a species threatened with extinction. In the area of gender relations and structures, early expressions of feminism embodied in the suffragette movement were stirring up yet more threatening change. Politically active women might not so easily acquiesce to uphold the family and social structures that gave their husbands and fathers an unquestioned position of rule. These three areas, race, class and gender might also be positioned geographically – there were threats of upheaval for the English gentleman's position on the international front, on the level of English politics and society, and on the domestic front, inside the family.

In an article by Caitlin Ehman (The Albatross 2011), the insecurity or *angst* that marked the fin de siècle period is similarly attributed to unnerving developments on the three fronts described above. In Ehman's analysis, the turbulence of this period became a crisis of masculinity and she presents the contrasting constructions of masculinity in two turn-of-the-century works of British literature, *Peter Pan* and *Prince Alberic*. According to Ehman, both Lee and Barrie engage with the undercurrent of British social

change affecting three spheres in which the British male had held the reins: The British Empire, the political arena and the family. For some, the effeminate male aesthetic became the scapegoat – the emblem and cause of the downfall of the British male and hence British society.  Ehman analyzes Barrie's Peter Pan as a manifesto for the restoration of the crumbling ideals of British masculinity. It seems that some "stiff upper lip" was being called for to prevent catastrophe, but this would prove to be an insufficient measure to ward off impending change. A similar sense of threat to the role and reign of the British male can be read in *Mary Poppins,* set in 1910 (the novel, by P.L. Travers was published in 1934, and the Walt Disney film came out in 1964).

George Eliot's *Deronda* was delivered into an English society that was defined by its position of worldwide supremacy, but was also beginning to show signs of cracking in the ways outlined above. A degree of awareness of this "backdrop" landscape, shaken by pre-earthquake tremors, will be helpful in approaching an understanding of the novel's statement regarding English attitudes of superiority as well as the distaste that content met with. It is at times of our most racking self-doubt that we are likely to defend ourselves most staunchly against the onslaught of criticism.

# 3 THE ENGLISH GENTRY IN DANIEL DERONDA: AN ICON CRITIQUED

It is through the character of HenleighGrandcourt, through his attributes, behavior and relationships, that *Daniel Deronda* most clearly wages war on the iconic ideal of the English gentleman. The Dickensian, rather theatrical name “Grandcourt”, with its over-obvious aristocratic connotations, seems almost beneath the maturity of Eliot’s characterization as it subsequently unfolds. HenleighGrandcourt is used to embody several unattractive and morally reprehensible qualities which undermine the elevated ideal, especially since a number of these qualities, such as supercilious arrogance, idleness and utter selfishness, also appear in varied forms in other characters in the same category in the novel: those who share Grandcourt’s position as more or less blue-blooded, materially privileged, educated and impeccably socially trained English gentry.

In *The English Novel, An Introduction* (2005), Terry Eagleton asserts that *Daniel Deronda* delivers “a stinging criticism of conventional English society, which is represented in the novel by Gwendolen’s repulsive husband Grandcourt” (2005: 183). At the outset, he is established as the definition of a gentleman – appropriately born and suitably raised, impeccably groomed, favoured by patriarchal inheritance patterns to inherit yet another property after Sir Hugo’s death. There is even a substantial rumor that he is likely to be granted the title of baron, if the right uncle obliges by dying at the right time. Gwendolen notes on first acquaintance with him that he is “the most aristocratic-looking man she has ever seen” (*D.D*: 146).Grandcourt also upholds the icon of the English gentleman with his words. It is as if the category surpasses all other claims to worth and value, it even surpasses otherwise generally accepted criteria for moral or admirable behaviour, on the domestic front, as well as in the colonies. Aware of Grandcourt’s belief in his intrinsic superiority, Gwendolen takes an opportunity to suggest to him in private that he might even be looked down upon by Daniel: “He is too clever and learned to care about us”. Grandcourt’s reply upholds the gentry’s absolute definition of quality: “I never saw that make much difference in a man. Either he is a gentleman, or he is not” (*D.D*: 475). That an English gentleman can do as he likes and

still be pardoned by society, as long as he conceals his sidesteps gracefully and follows the rules outwardly, is established in the triangle drama surrounding Grandcourt's extra-marital children with Lydia Glasher. There is also a feminist statement baked into the narrator's reflections on this score, which, although it cannot be analyzed in detail here, should be mentioned: It is the women in Grandcourt's life who are the losers at every turn, while he is considered a prize catch, utterly untarnished by past entanglements.

Grandcourt is repeatedly described as almost stifled by *ennui.* He wears chronic boredom like a heavy grey garment, swept around him with a kind of graceful, aristocratic sneer. In fact his *ennui* is in itself a sneer at the inferiority of everyone and everything around him. He endures people; he endures his privileged life. The message that emerges, however, is not one of his intrinsic superiority to those around him, but rather a strong statement proclaiming the emptiness of a life with no perceived needs, no tasks and no purpose - propelled forward only by the whims of selfishness and the designated routine of the day. Placed by his birth into a station which does not require work of any kind, he finds that "most things are bores" (*D.D*: 171), gracing both people and events with his presence as an act of necessary but tiresome condescension. Even an inanimate object of pleasure, a cigar, is considered an annoyance if it causes him any exertion: "Grandcourt pushed Fetch down without speaking…began to look at his cigar, and found, with some annoyance…that the brute of a cigar required relighting" (*D.D*: 161). There is something reptilian about his cold-blooded presence; in fact he is described in one instance as looking indifferent as an alligator. He does not even waste his energy on speech, but expresses himself sparingly in "a refined drawl" (*D.D*: 171). Because of the absence of narrative comment in the film version, the actor Hugh Bonneville's facial expressions and movements are the main vehicle for the communication of this cold, lazy arrogance and also the of the arrogant air – the English superiority complex – which stems from a belief in one's intrinsic right to rule, to be obeyed. In his first interview with Gwendolen, Grandcourt is drawn to her social power and mastery: he is used to people "missing and simpering" in archery contests; seeing her prowess revives his interest in the pastime. He proceeds to remark that he has left off archery, but still hunts, simply because "one must do something" (*D.D*: 147; BBC

disc 1, 0:20:59). Elsewhere, this characteristic of laziness, of a sort of languid chilliness, is unambiguously transferred by a narrative comment onto the English gentleman as a species:

> But a great deal of life goes on without strong passion; myriads of cravats are carefully tied, dinners attended…And a man may make a good appearance in high social positions – may be supposed to know the classics, to have his reserves on science, a strong though repressed opinion on politics, and all the sentiments of the English gentleman, at a small expense of vital energy. (*D.D*: 194)

But lying beneath the superficial perfection, yet emptiness and arrogance of Henleigh Grandcourt's social veneer, a more dramatic darkness in his character begins to unfold as the novel, and also the adaptation, progresses. It is shown most clearly at first in his relationship to his gentlemanly "dogsbody", Mr. Lush; then, in an almost macabre foreboding of his relationship with Gwendolen, in his feeding, fondling and kicking of his dogs; and finally and most fully in the obsessive, coldly cruel control that characterizes his handling of Gwendolen after she becomes his wife.

Mr. Lush is quite clearly a convenience to Mr. Grandcourt. He is a tolerated and almost constant presence at Grandcourt's side because he is useful to him, and although he is admitted into polite society, there is more a sense of his being an acknowledged appendage to Grandcourt than a sense of his actually belonging in his own right to the highest circles. Lush is in fact a servant in gentlemen's clothing, who is able to remain more conveniently at hand because of the superficial lack of intrusive social distinction between the ranks of the two. Although beneath Henleigh Grandcourt, Lush carries a sort of faded stamp of the English gentleman. He would once have passed for a scholar, the narrative voice notes, and now, years later, "he had the odour of departed learning" (*D.D*: 165). He reflects some of the traits recurrent in the novel's English (and especially male) characters: laziness, selfishness, narrowness, love of money and luxury. He is content to be Grandcourt's personal assistant since it provides him with an

easy income; he isn't burdened with so much self-respect as to find Grandcourt's treatment of him insufferable, his self-love, however, is stout – he is glad to lap up the cream that his master has spilled. Their relationship is mutually convenient – to Grandcourt, Lush "was as much of an implement as pen and paper." (*D.D*: 657)

Since Gwendolen takes a strong, instinctive dislike to Lush (to which he responds with a petty enjoyment of her mental anguish with regard to Lydia Glasher), Grandcourt promises Gwendolen during their engagement that he will get rid of Lush after they are married. The narrative voice later comments on the things people promise to give up when they are courting, such as cigar smoking, and then slowly reintroduce once they have caught their bait: "Lush was, so to speak a very large cigar" (*D.D*: 486).The analogy strengthens the sense that Lush is an object which exists (almost solely) to save Grandcourt from necessary but unpleasant tasks. Even within the privileged sector, there is a hierarchy of relationships based more on power than on compatibility or affection.

Grandcourt's psychological makeup, as it is revealed in his dealings with Gwendolen, corresponds very well to the modern definition of a psychopath. Once he has won her with his perfect manners and promises to fulfill her every wish, his tyranny begins to reveal itself – although it is a reign marked by the calm dignity of the ruler, as was the colonial ideal. His personality shows no traces of empathy, or indeed any form of affection besides self-interest. He is not only unmoved by others' pain, he even delights in dominance to the extent that the wriggling of the squashed worm enhances the pleasure of conquering. At first, Gwendolen's beauty and physical and social grace attract Mr. Grandcourt; these are automatic prerequisites for anything or anyone chosen to accompany or adorn him (he remarks about another woman whom he does not want Lush to include on an invitation list: "She spoils the look of the room" (*D.D*: 162)). But, as the citation below shows, he is equally satisfied by the element of enslaving or imprisoning her, and is not at all perturbed by the awareness that she did not marry him out of affection:

> He had not repented of his marriage; it had really brought more of aim into his life, new objects to exert his will upon; and he had not repented of his choice. His taste was fastidious, and Gwendolen satisfied it…but fewer perhaps may follow him in his contentment that his wife should be in a temper which would have disposed her to fly out if she dared, and that she should have been urged into marrying him by other feelings than passionate attachment. (*D.D*: 645-646)

So it becomes evident that chiefly, on a deeper level than vanity or physical attraction (which is not mentioned explicitly apart from his reference to her "power" and the importance of her beauty), his motivation in choosing Gwendolen is the tantalizing challenge of "mastering a woman who thinks she can master me – and who could master any other man but me" (BBC disc 1, 1:28:48), as he admits without even feigned scruples to Mr. Lush in the adaptation. In the novel, this content is conveyed by the narrative voice. After Gwendolen and Grandcourt's wedding, Gwendolen's strong attraction to Daniel becomes apparent to Grandcourt and it irks him decidedly although he will not stoop to admit it. The narrative voice establishes clearly that his jealousy has none of the redeeming features of a lover's jealousy, that is, it is not based on the thwarted right to the exclusive intimacy of the loved one. In some instances it is based on his social pride, but the bottom line, the driving force of his psyche, is affirmed to be the need to control and dominate: "Grandcourt himself was not jealous of anything unless it threatened his mastery – which he did not think himself likely to lose". (*D.D*:427)

In the adaptation, this form of jealousy, which is driven not by possessive love, but the love of possessing, is effectively communicated in spite of the challenges posed by the lack of narrative voice as a vehicle to provide commentary. The effect is achieved through Grandcourt's exaggerated indifference to Deronda in public and his cold, controlling rebuke of Gwendolen's behavior behind closed doors. After a ball at Diplow, where there was an important exchange of confidence between Gwendolen and Daniel, there is a kind of showdown in the Grandcourt bedroom. Henleigh Grandcourt will not admit to conventional jealousy of Gwendolen's obviously strong interest in

Daniel, but he expresses his disgust at her behavior, putting her firmly in her place. His words in the BBC adaptation are: “I don’t give two straws for Deronda or any other conceited hanger-on, but you are to understand that you are to behave with dignity, as befits my wife!”(BBC disc 1, 0:22:30) There is a horrible irony in Gwendolen’s fate which pivots on Grandcourt’s despotism – but also on the vanity and selfishness which at the outset were the driving winds of Gwendolen’s own sails. She accepts his advances at first because marrying him would give her riches, social status and expensive pleasures, and because he might be “less disagreeable…than other men, and not likely to interfere with his wife’s preferences” (*D.D*: 147). Her superficial and limited observation of the lives of married women had left her convinced that the married state would usher in her reign – grant her an increased freedom to do just as she pleased.

Later, when she has recoiled after the discovery of his mistress, Mrs. Glasher, and Grandcourt’s children by her, and has again reconsidered because of her family’s plunge into poverty, she chooses him in spite of her conscience in order to avoid sinking in the world, in order to be master of her own destiny, rather than a victim of circumstances. She is soon stunned by the realization that she has become the victim of something much worse than adverse financial circumstances or the degradation of becoming a governess – she has become the private property of a tyrant.

The portrayal of Grandcourt’s cruelty and Gwendolen’s experience of psychological torture is heightened in the adaptation because of the inclusion of references to sexual abuse or coercion. There are three specific scenes which point clearly to this aspect of the marriage. The first scene, which takes place after Gwendolen has received the diamonds and frightening letter from Mrs. Glasher on the day of her wedding, implies sexual coercion and ownership. When she recoils from his caresses, still sobbing out of shock, Grandcourt coldly sneers: “It’s my turn now, Gwendolen. Come” - leading her to the bedroom (BBC disc 1, 1:49:55). Later, a second scene makes the implication even clearer. Gwendolen says that she would prefer if Grandcourt didn’t come to her

bedroom and he replies: “I’m afraid I must disappoint you – Come!” (BBC disc 2, What the viewer then sees is a shot of Gwendolen weeping bitterly; face down on the bed with her dress pulled up around her knees 0:34:45 - 0:35:10). In the third scene which communicates coercive physical intimacy, Gwendolen is submitting with difficulty to Grandcourt forcing her to wear the diamonds that remind her of his mistress and her broken promise to her. He slides them on to her neck with a kind of sensuous declaration of ownership and the adornment of royalty becomes a sign of slavery, like a dog collar or a prisoner’s chains. She recoils from his first attempt to kiss her, after admiring her in the diamonds in the mirror, and then when she has relaxed, thinking he has given up, he dives into her neck like a vampire. The scene changes rapidly to triumphant ballroom music and we see them dancing, cold as statues in a row with others, perfectly drilled like soldiers, perfectly behaved (BBC disc 2, 0:15:06). The social mask covering domestic misery is powerfully communicated by this abrupt shift of scene – the change to routine behavior is so sudden, heightened by the musical accompaniment, that there is a sense of the couple having stepped from their own reality in the wings to their on-stage role in public. These scenes are reticent enough for a modern production and certainly an interpretation of the reality of the marriage that fits with the novel’s descriptions, although there are no references to their physical relationship after marriage in the novel. The inclusion of these scenes in the adaptation has the effect of making Grandcourt’s tyranny even more palpable.

## 3.1Grandcourt, the Gentry and Colonialism

Eliot’s portrayal of Grandcourt’s psychological makeup is convincing and also increasingly chilling; Barbara Hardy (1967: 19) refers to him as an example of the simplest, most monolithic character to be found in a Victorian novel, but nonetheless a “horrifyingly real presence”: The communication of his psychological make-up is carefully crafted, as are Gwendolen’s struggles with her desperate craving for escape – her inward debates and her often-reverted-to sense of powerlessness to affect her situation. Because of the craftsmanship and the choices of Eliot’s characterization, an anti-colonial statement emerges: the perfect English aristocrat of the story is also a

perfect despot, a cold, systematic oppressor. The anti-colonial statement is also explicitly stated in certain places, in an almost by-the-way kind of analogy:

> Every slow sentence of that speech had terrific mastery in it for Gwendolen's nature…He knew the force of his own words. If this white-handed man with the perpendicular profile had been sent to govern a difficult colony, he might have won reputation among his contemporaries. He had certainly ability, would have understood that it was safer to exterminate than to cajole superseded proprietors, and would not have flinched from making things safe in that way.(*D. D*: 655)

The dichotomy at the heart of colonialism, the juxtaposition between the professed high ideals of the British Empire and the brutality of its methods, at least at times, is reflected in Grandcourt's behavior and person. One comment about his treatment both of his dogs and of Mr. Lush exemplifies the mirroring of this colonial paradox very well. Like the citation of Winston Churchill on his policy towards Iraq, the message seems to be that what would otherwise be considered moral or just treatment is not strictly necessary in the case of inferiors, if disciplinary action is needed to maintain the current order. Here it is noted that the messiness of brute force should be avoided by a gentleman:

> I cannot say that the same lengthened habit had intensified Grandcourt's want of respect for his companion since that want had been absolute from the beginning, but it had confirmed his sense that he might kick Lush if he chose – only he never did choose to kick any animal, because the act of kicking is a compromising attitude, and a gentleman's dogs *should be kicked for him.*(*D.D*: 164 – my italics)

Something of both the arrogance and the ignorance of the English towards their (distant) colonial subjects comes across very directly during a dinner party at which all the central English characters are present. As part of a social conversation which the narrative voice refers to as "polite pea-shooting", one ignorant, biased comment follows another, with Daniel going against the grain in tending towards empathy and towards challenging the prevailing perspectives. The conversation revolves around

Jamaica and the West Indies; Grandcourt, perfectly in character, considers the Jamaican negro to be “a beastly sort of Baptist Caliban”. It finishes as follows, with an astute, critical observation from Deronda’s mouth: “Mrs. Torrington was sure she should never sleep in her bed if she lived among blacks; her husband corrected her by saying that the blacks would be manageable enough if it were not for the half-breeds; and Deronda remarked that the whites had to thank themselves for the half-breeds” (*D.D*: 376). The passage exposes not only on ignorant, biased perceptions, but also something of the eugenics of imperialism and on the fear of inter-racial relations often referred to in postcolonial analyses of the imperial mind-set. In another incidental kind of narrative comment, a domestic conversation touches on colonial relationships. Gwendolen’s cousin, Rex, in his restless attempts to recover from his thwarted love for her, tries out a plan which reveals what comes across as the average level of ignorance concerning colonial realities:“ ‘I’ll tell you what I’m thinking of, Nannie. I will go to Canada, or somewhere of that sort’. (Rex had not studied the character of our colonial possessions.)” (*D.D*: 117)

It is in the above instances that the critique of the English superiority complex and what I consider to be the pre-postcolonial message of *Daniel Deronda* is at its most overt. These sparse, but very specific and somewhat caustic references to colonial relationships are not represented at all in the BBC adaptation. While no conclusion regarding motivation can be drawn with any certainty, it has to be admitted that the BBC did not use the opportunity offered by the material to critique colonialist relationships directly. Although the adaptation shows no attempt to spare the English gentry from the criticism to be gleaned from the novel, and one could perhaps read a reflection of colonialist oppression into Grandcourt’s dealings with both Lush and Gwendolen, it does not include these brief comments which criticize the ignorant prejudice of imperialism in the specific ways noted above. By contrast, the 1999 adaptation of Jane Austen’s *Mansfield Park* seems to have chosen to highlight the oppression and abuse of natives which was necessarily connected to the wealth behind the Mansfield Park property and lifestyle – a connection glossed over lightly in Austen’s text - in a deliberately disquieting way. In this detail, the adaptation must be

said to be less *pre-postcolonial* than the novel, although the adaptation's representation of attitudes born of the imperial superiority complex are not otherwise at all lessened.

### 3.2 Gwendolen Harleth

Gwendolen is, according to Eliot scholar Barbara Hardy (1967: 25), widely considered George Eliot's most brilliant heroine. She is the pivotal character of the "English part" of the novel (if a division were feasible) and also the focus of its *bildungsroman* thread; that is, her story, within the rather broad scope of the novel's landscape, is a story of a painful, almost ascetic, road to personal redemption. She is introduced to us as a spoiled girl, a depiction which requires no powers of interpretation, since Eliot gave Book One the unambiguous title, The Spoiled Child. Gwendolen's contribution to the novel's critique of the English superiority complex begins with the depiction of her as over-indulged, living in a narrow, self-centered universe:

> Having always been the pet and pride of the household, waited on by mother, sisters, governess and maids, as if she had been a princess in exile, she naturally found it difficult to think her own pleasure less important than others made it, and when it was positively thwarted, felt an astonished resentment. (*D.D*: 53)

Her selfishness and vanity are products of not only an absent father and a soft mother, who yields to the wishes of her regal and demanding daughter, but also of a society that has led her to believe in her right to be served, pandered to and generally pleased. When her family's fortune is ruined, and her uncle does not immediately "fix things" to her satisfaction, Gwendolen consults a wonderfully subjective universe according to whose logic the whole situation is most unjust. Perfectly in keeping with the imperial mentality of intrinsic superiority, Gwendolen never questions the justice of the order of things which gave her family the initial position of idle luxury from which it has fallen, nor does she consider that such a position might be dependent on the

existence of very different levels of injustice than the kind she believes herself to be suffering:

> "Don't be unreasonable, dear child. What could he have done?" – "That was for him to find out. It seems to me a very extraordinary world if people in our position must sink in this way all at once", said Gwendolen, the other worlds with which she was conversant being constructed with a sense of fitness that arranged her own future agreeably. (*D.D*: 310)

But Gwendolen is not only a porcelain product of the right birth and breeding, and in her vanity, selfishness and desire for power and luxury an unappealing example of its faults; she is also a victim of the class norms she was born into. As is the case with many of Jane Austen's heroines, being born into a station that placed a woman "above" working for a living, often placed her in a worse predicament; that is, a position involving only certain carefully designated kinds of freedom and an almost inescapable pressure to marry for economic reasons and to appease the expectations of relatives and society at large. The fact that these social structures could turn the marriage contract into nothing short of a socially approved and publicly visible form of prostitution is made very apparent in Gwendolen's case - the analogy being even clearer in the BBC adaptation than in the novel, because of the addition of allusions to sexual abuse.

Gwendolen's marriage to Grandcourt was without the expectation of love on either side; the subsequent, increasing agony of her soul in what is referred to as her "painted gilded prison" (*D.D*: 651) is all the more acute because she entered into it as into a binding contract whose conditions were generous, and without illusions, except concerning the extent of Grandcourt's ability to control her and the extent of his coldness and cruelty. As if by an educative twist of destiny or a force of poetic justice she finds herself double-crossed, outdone in force of will and ability to dominate: "What was she to do? Search where she would in her consciousness, she could find no plea to justify a plaint. Any romantic illusions she had had in marrying this man had turned on her power of using him as she liked. He was using her as he liked". (*D.D*: 659)

Gwendolen's relationship to Judaism is scanty throughout and characterized by superficial stereotypes at first. In Leubronn, her luck at the roulette table runs out at rather a bad time – just before she receives her mother's letter communicating the family's plunge into relative poverty. She resolves to take a turquoise necklace to a Jewish pawnbroker, whose monetary compensation seems unsatisfactory. Her reaction betrays not only prejudice but also an unattractive kind of misplaced self-pity, the pouting of the over-indulged: "...these Jew dealers were so unscrupulous in taking advantage of Christians unfortunate at play!" *(D.D*: 48). Later on, more specifically, when Judaism comes up close in connection with the man who means most to her, it is not so much a question of prejudice – for she would have accepted anything in Deronda, rather than have him separated from her – but rather there is a sense that it is simply beyond her scope. When Gwendolen briefly and superficially reflects on Daniel's relationship to Mirah and Mordecai, this separateness of worlds is apparent in the figurative image of the narrative voice:

> ...her imagination was little occupied with Mirah or the eulogised brother. The one result established for her was that Deronda had acted simply as a generous benefactor and the phrase "reading Hebrew" had fleeted unimpressively across her sense of hearing, as a stray stork might have made its peculiar flight across her landscape without rousing any surprised reflection on its natural history. (*D.D*: 655)

She cannot reach or even faintly understand the attraction of this world of larger ideas, of politics, religion and great causes. Ultimately, this becomes a kind of confirmation of the rightness of Daniel's choice of Mirah, although Gwendolen has been left available to him by the stroke of *Deus ex Machina* which left Henleigh Grandcourt drowned within a year of their wedding. When Daniel comes to tell Gwendolen that he has proposed to Mirah and that he will perhaps never see her again, the importance of their differences begins to dawn on Gwendolen with a sense of foreboding (although there is a tint of humour in the wording of the narrative description), before it is actually declared to her that she is to be "abandoned", as she ultimately feels she is: "Great ideas

in general which she had attributed to him seemed to make no great practical difference, and were not formidable in the same way as these mysteriously shadowed particular ideas". (*D.D*: 874)

Notwithstanding, the romantic sweep of the narrative, and probably the hope of many a reader and viewer, is left somewhat unsatisfied by Daniel's choice. The attraction between Daniel and Gwendolen is communicated strongly both on the page and on film, in spite of the adaptation's disciplined adherence to the novel's reticent portrayal of the physical and romantic element in the attraction (the adaptation features two near-kisses in their most intensive conversations, which are not described in the book; the novel describes kissing on the cheeks at their last parting, which is absent in the film version). When Gwendolen is freed of Grandcourt through one of the novels key instances of *Deus ex Machina* the way seems clear for Gwendolen and Daniel to be united. In the adaptation the possibility is voiced clearly both by Hans Meyrick and Sir Hugo, Sir Hugo saying outright to Daniel "Now the road to Mrs. Grandcourt is clear, if you care to take it". In both book and film, Daniel's friend Hans Meyrick (who is infatuated with Mirah) reacts to the news of Grandcourt's drowning with flippant remarks about Daniel and "the duchess" (as he calls Gwendolen) being able to marry now, which upsets Mirah, belying her own attachment to Daniel. Daniel has, however already embraced his Jewish heritage and acknowledged to himself and his mother that he is in love with Mirah; he replies to Sir Hugo simply that he does not intend to woo Gwendolen. Although many may find this outright declaration of Daniel's choice a disappointment, even an indulgent imagining of the alternative ending or sequel can see the initial passion of a realized relationship between Daniel and Gwendolen subsiding into stale disappointment. It seems probable that they would find that he cannot be her redeemer and her lover simultaneously and that she is ill-equipped to be his soul-mate and fellow crusader in virtuous causes. Even without indulgent imaginings, Daniel and Gwendolen'smutual attraction comes across as strong, although it remains painfully under-expressed in the novel, and somewhat surprisingly, almost as much so in the adaptation. But they belong to different worlds and breathe different air –perhaps most importantly because of Daniel's discovery of and choice to embrace his Jewishness, but

also because she simply cannot expand her horizons enough to enter into the most important strains of his nature.

Gwendolen's world is narrow, her ignorance and disinterest in the lives of those far removed from her sphere forming part of the narrative's critique of the English gentry. Her only contact with greater things comes to her by a kind of spiritual breast-feeding from Deronda, whom she willingly submits to as her moral guide and even clings to desperately, nourishing her fragile attempts to escape complete despair on small fragments of advice from their sparse, but intensive conversations. Daniel has influence over her because of the largely implied, but strong, attraction between them. What is most clearly stated is that he has won her devoted respect because he has impressed her as her superior, rather than her admirer; he is set apart from the worshipful men who seem ridiculous to her, because he dares to disapprove and correct and admonish her, making her aware of a standard above her own. He seems to dwell in a spiritual and intellectual sphere she can only faintly touch, to which she turns for help to endure her life and to escape the consequences of her lower nature, her wild fantasies about murdering her husband.

It emerges that Daniel's role is that of redeemer, and the fact that he does not choose her and plans to spend most of his future life geographically distant from her is perhaps an integral part of that role. She is fed by his moral superiority to her, but only sparingly; then she must go out and exercise – put his theories into practice and learn the beauty of being denied something and of removing the self, at least a little, from the centre of existence. Gwendolen does achieve that redemption, that conquering of self-indulgence and self-pity, and writes to Daniel on his wedding day:

> 'Do not think of me sorrowfully on your wedding day...I have remembered your words – that I may live to be one of the best of women, who make others glad that they were born...If it ever comes true, it will be because you helped me. I only thought of myself and I made you grieve. It hurts me now to think of your

> grief. You must not grieve any more for me. It is better – it shall be better with me because I have known you'. (*D.D*: 882)

In the adaptation we hear the words of the letter voiced-over in Gwendolen's/RomolaGarai's voice. We also see her outdoors on a sunny hill, more simply adorned than was her wont, and as if looking ahead to the future. Finally, she happily joins in the play of her younger half-sisters, whom she previously considered superfluous and invariably irritating (BBC disc 2, 1:35:55).This seems to be a significant part of the completion of the narrative's, or George Eliot's, lifting of the Jew. The "peculiar indebtedness" of Christian cultures to the Jews which she wrote of in her letters is reflected here, as Daniel is placed above Gwendolen spiritually and intellectually and fills the position of priest or moral guide in her life.

## 4 THE JEWISH OTHER IN DANIEL DERONDA: DIGNIFIED AND LIFTED

The interaction between the Jewish musician Klesmer and the wealthy Arrowpoint family provides one of the narrative's important intersections between the English gentry and the Jewish subculture of European society. Julius Klesmer is a Jew who takes up space. Although he is not a major character, he is of importance, as his part of the story provides us with an opportunity to observe the gentleman and the Jew sharing the social space of dinners and recitals in upper-class society. In Barbara Hardy's analysis (1967), he is an important part of Eliot's critique of English society and her lifting, what I have called dignifying, of the Jew: "Klesmer...represents real culture as against bourgeois shams and superiority, and European (and Semitic) imagination as against political dullness" (1967: 16).

Klesmer is a musical genius, a perfectionist who is infamous for his outspokenness - his blatant honesty about the mediocrity of those who are not "true musicians". Mirah qualifies for his approval; Gwendolen, hoping to make a living on the stage rather than break her promise to Lydia Glasher and marry Grandcourt (or worse, become a governess), has her hopes shattered by Klesmer's sober judgement of her chances of success. Klesmer is something of a caricature at first, but he manages, as a character, to step out of the box initially allotted to him. He does so by buying into the prejudice he supposes to exist around him, and even by playing the part with a tendency to almost camp provocation: "I am Elijah, the Wandering Jew' he said, with a flourish of brilliant piano playing". (*D.D*: 284)

Through Klesmer, and particularly his marriage to the somewhat plain heiress who is his soul-mate, Eliot exposes the hypocrisy of Imperial snobbery on more than one level. Klesmer is a prize possession - if not owned, at least leased by the Arrowpoints, to gild their lives and their social events with his brilliance. In the adaptation, Gwendolen remarks "imagine being rich enough to keep one of Europe's best musicians as a pet". The belief in social and racial segregation and the hierarchical division of people along

racial lines inherent in Imperial thinking is exposed in the double standard the Arrowpoints display in the novel. Their treatment of Klesmer expresses their profound respect for his musical genius; they are the grateful consumers of his art. But not only had it never occurred to them that Catherine could have feelings for a Jew, when she expresses her intention to marry Klesmer they are absolutely outraged. He is above them in culture and artistic achievement, but too decidedly beneath them in the social and ethnic hierarchy to be an acceptable son-in-law.

But while the Arrowpoints look down on Klesmer as inherently inferior, both in the novel and the adaptation it becomes apparent that there is a vantage point in the social hierarchy from which not even the Arrowpoint family qualifies as truly aristocratic. The thinking that the comments about "blood" (meaning aristocratic family ties or "blue blood") connect to Sally Ledger's account of late 19$^{th}$ century eugenics and the upper-class English fear of contamination from the lower classes (1999: 21). The adaptation relies mainly on one scene to express the Arrowpoints' dissatisfaction with the marriage, as well as the reaction of the English gentry to it which are both more fully covered in the novel. As the newly-weds Klesmer and Catherine enter the drawing room, whispers ensue regarding the "mésalliance" (mismatch), and the surprising liberality of the Arrowpoints in admitting "a member of the chosen race" into their circle and their family. A middle-aged lady of high rank remarks that actually there is no real "blood" on either side, so perhaps they are not so mismatched after all (BBC disc 2, 0:07:54). Deronda, standing close by, retorts in the adaptation's abbreviated version of the scene with barely restrained impatience expressing that if there is a mésalliance, he considers it to be Klesmer who has stooped - "He will be remembered and revered long after the rest of us have been forgotten. Excuse me!" (0:08:08) Daniel's words are almost exactly as in the novel (*D.D*: 460).

The value of talent, and of excellence which has been attained through both raw talent and long years of dedicated hard work is also lifted forth through Klesmer. It comes across as a kind of antidote to the English aristocratic doctrine of the inferior nature of

anything earned – the idea that inherent superiority is the privilege of the right circumstances of birth. Klesmer is unashamedly arrogant in his comments and manners, but the narrative voice is careful to note that "his foibles of arrogance and vanity did not exceed such as may be found in the best English families" (*D. D*: 282). Klesmer also voices some direct criticism of the English gentry around him. An uninspiring gentleman called Mr. Bult socializes with the Arrowpoints for a time in the capacity of eligible suitor to Catherine. Klesmer cannot restrain his estimation of the man when he has the freedom to express it to Catherine: "You find no difficulty in tolerating him..? - you have a respect for the political platitudinarian as insensible as an ox to everything he can't turn into political capital? You think his monumental obtuseness suited to the dignity of the English gentleman?" (*D.D*: 285)

He is also proud of his achievements in a way that emerges as a positive form of pride – the dignity of the individual who defends his own worth and, in this case, also thereby refutes a standard according to which only the right circumstances of birth coupled with inherited wealth can give true distinction; in fact, by this standard, "high" birth and inherited wealth were the keys to a kind of universal superiority, which carried a sense of racial distinction. Klesmer's defense of the value of his earned position is not communicated in the adaptation with any clarity, which seems to me an unfortunate omission. The excellence of the production and the quality of the acting mean that a few sentences exchanged would have sufficed to communicate this content.

In the novel, the Arrowpoints, in outrage at the engagement of Klesmer and Catherine, threaten to disinherit her – assuming her wealth has attracted him, rather than her person. They argue with Catherine, lamely and vaguely, after their first anger has subsided. Mr. Arrowpoint's words seem to echo the rhetoric of the Empire, but they resonate weakly, as ignorant, ill-founded prejudice: "He won't do at the head of estates. He has a deuced foreign look – is an unpractical man.... We must do as other people do. We must think of the nation and the public good" (*D.D*: 290). In another utterance from Catherine's father, the ubiquitous faith in the icon of the English gentleman is

proclaimed, and strategically, ironically coupled with one of the unappealing qualities attributed to most of the English gentlemen in the novel, laziness: " 'I am a gentleman, Cath. We expect you to marry a gentleman', said the father, exerting himself" (*D.D*: 289). Catherine responds by questioning the established practices of the English gentry in a highly articulate and brave manner. Her words sparkle as an example of the progressive social comment embedded in the novel: "Why is it to be expected of an heiress that she should carry the property gained in trade into the hands of a certain class? That seems to me a ridiculous mish-mash of superannuated customs and false ambitions. I should call it a public evil." (*D.D*: 290)

What follows reveals the more sharp-edged social, racial and perhaps religious prejudice behind their rejection of Klesmer. Catherine's mother retorts that just because she doesn't want to marry a member of the nobility, it does not follow that she has to marry "a mountebank or a charlatan". Catherine cannot see how the definition is applicable. Klesmer replies to the Arrowpoints' threat to disinherit Catherine with sterling dignity. It is a wonderful turning of tables – those who have everything can give him nothing he lacks.

> 'Madam... certain reasons forbid me to retort. But understand that I consider it out of the power either of you or of your fortune to confer on me anything that I value. My rank as an artist is of my own winning and I would not exchange it for any other. I am able to maintain your daughter, and I ask for no change in my life but her companionship'. (*D.D*: 291)

The BBC adaptation's reduces the novel's communication of the Arrowpoints' outrage and deep-seated snobbery. This could be interpreted as a reduction of the expression of anti-Semitism from the English gentry, but I do not read it as such. Since anti-Semitic feeling is expressed more clearly in at least two or three other places in the adaptation than it is in the novel, this reduction must be a matter of time and space, and also the choice to keep the Arrowpoint couple as peripheral characters.

Instead of voicing prejudice as clearly as the novel in this exchange between Catherine and her parents, the adaptation inserts a brief exchange between Gwendolen and Klesmer. He breaks the news to her that he is engaged to Catherine and Gwendolen replies with astonishment: “But you are…” Klesmer helps her express her thoughts: “- A Jew, and a foreigner. Yes. The family aren’t happy about it. But she loves me, you see” (BBC disc 1, 0:44:35). Also, as regards distaste for inter-racial marriage or simply another expression of anti-Semitism, the adaptation depicts Sir Hugo as outraged and angry when Daniel says he has asked Mirah to marry him, much more than the novel does: “The devil you are! – Is this some sort of perverse response to what you’ve learned from your mother?!” (BBC disc 2, 1:29:22-38) A third example of anti-Jewish feeling which is not explicitly in the novel is Gwendolen’s mother remarking on Klesmer: “I don’t know why anyone would want such a creature around them” (BBC disc 1, 0:08:53).

## 4.1 Mirah Lapidoth

Mirah Lapidoth is the central female Jew of the narrative comes across as a strong contrast to Gwendolen. Gwendolen’s selfishness, vanity and superficiality are juxtaposed to Mirah’s patient endurance of suffering and her sensitivity to duty and the needs of others, as well as her capacity to love the mother she holds in memory better than Gwendolen loves her present, indulging Mama. Gwendolen stamps and snarls at the prospect of moving down in the world, specifically to Sawyer’s Cottage: “I won’t submit to it!”(BBC disc 1, 0:41:08), while Mirah accounts for how she dealt with her painful experiences as follows: “But I set myself to obey and suffer: what else could I do?” (*D.D*: 255) She declares to Daniel that her family’s current social standing is of little importance, as long as they receive and welcome her (BBC disc 1, 1:31:08). Mirah’s virtue is thorough.

Barbara Hardy (1967: 15) asserts that the psychology and style of Mirah’s speech in the novel is “simplified, idealized…and in every way sentimental.” She might be considered too good to ring true. This does not hold, for me, however. Gwendolen is

described as serpent-like and even demonic on several occasions in the beginning of the novel and this echoes at least as much as a kind of caricature as does Mirah's goodness. Furthermore, in this era when the entertainment industry both in novel and film depicts many empowered, angry women – the stereotypical Hollywood "bitch"- a virtuous character can be a welcome contrast. The only point at which the narrative's descriptions of Mirah lose credibility is perhaps in her perfect prettiness – one wonders at the ubiquitous requirement of beauty – and especially when she is described as sitting demurely with her dainty feet crossed. But certainly these are no less convincing than Gwendolen's tossing of the head and biting of her lips**.** Actress Jodhi May gives the character gravity and credibility.

Mirah's contacts with the English gentry expose the ignorance and prejudice that colours their attitudes. She is referred to as Daniel's Jewish protégée and "his little Jewess" as if she were a small, charming pet. "Are you thinking of inviting her here?...Isn't she some sort of professional entertainer?" In the BBC adaptation (BBC disc 1, 1:08:47) Sir Hugo's wife, Lady Mallinger asks carefully, insinuating that Mirah must be from unrespectable circles, not qualified for aristocratic society. Daniel replies indignantly: "She's a very remarkable young woman and quite fit to be received anywhere". Lady Mallinger notices the rebuke and replies to the effect that she trusts his judgement.

Both in the book and the adaptation there are suggestions and suspicions that because Daniel is supporting Mirah financially until she can make a living, she must be his mistress. The allegation is very clear in the book, with a confused, jealous and fearful Gwendolen visiting Mirah to find out the truth. The adaptation conveys exactly the same content, with Grandcourt happy to convince Gwendolen that Daniel is not a saint, but it also adds a rather distasteful aside comment from the lady who seems the definition of grandeur at evening gatherings: she whispers in Daniel's ear with a wink and a nudge "I'm sure she's very *grateful*..." (BBC disc 2, 0:32:30).This has the effect of accentuating the novel's suggestions of how Jewish women, especially those who were performing artists, were perceived by non-Jewish men in 19$^{th}$ century Europe. An important detail which testifies to Eliot's attempt to nuance the pro-Jewish statement of

the novel is that she has Mirah declare that the Meyrick family are kinder to her than any of her own people ever have been (*D.D*: 420). This is absent from the BBC adaptation, although her gratitude and affection for them are clearly communicated.

The development of the plot which has virtuous Jewish Mirah being chosen over Gwendolen by the protagonist Daniel could be interpreted as a message that virtue belongs with virtue; or, alternatively, that Jew belongs with Jew, which would affirm imperial fears of interracial relations - although this is clearly not the case in the Klesmer/Arrowpoint marriage. It might be argued that Eliot's advocacy of the Jews is non-confrontational on this point: they marry within their group in the most important case in the narrative; and also their cause, culture, beliefs and ideology become physically removed from England. This could be read as a kind of judgement on what Terry Eagleton (2005: 183) calls "spiritually arid England" – that is, people who are driven and inspired and wish to live larger lives simply move on. Ultimately, since Jewish Mirah represents virtue and selflessness as opposed to English Gwendolen's vanity and self-centredness, Daniel's choice for Mirah is also a central element in the narrative's two-fold statement, lowering the iconic identity of the English gentry and dignifying the Jewish Other.

## 4.2 Mordecai

Mordecai is the novel's Jewish visionary, the torch-bearer, the keeper of the faith. His character also carries connotations of the stereotypical artist starving in a garret: he is poor in the physical realm, but rich in spirit; he is living for something greater than himself and is so intense that his flame is literally self-consuming – he is dying of consumption. He is highly sensitive and has had prophetic dreams of a man to whom he will be able to impart his vision and the calling he cannot fulfil because of his current physical frailty and impending death. In accordance with the Kabbalah mystic tradition of Judaism (which is implied in the narrative and is mentioned in the notes of the book), he will even fuse his own soul with that of his successor. Daniel's initial reaction to being the chosen and sent answer to Mordecai's prayers is polite scepticism. He is

unsure how far Mordecai's dreams and longings are a kind of spiritual delusion, affected by the desperation born of his knowledge of impending death. With his characteristic sensitivity to people in need, Daniel is afraid to shatter the hopes of this intensive stranger. He is also both alarmed and confused by Mordecai's hope that he is a Jew, but must nonetheless admit that he has no real knowledge of his birth or who his biological parents really are. He is glad to ease Mordecai's physical discomfort by using his superfluous means to have him better housed and he becomes gradually more and more interested in his ideas, in the study of Jewish history and of the Hebrew language. These seem to provide him with something of the broadening of education and experience he has been longing for.

There is a strong sense of destiny, or *Deus ex Machina*, at work when Mordecai turns out to be Mirah's long lost brother and Daniel turns out to be of Jewish descent as Mordecai had hoped, even prophesied. Mordecai is faithfully portrayed in the adaptation of the novel, with a few small adjustments, some of which are significant. The first difference noticeable in the BBC adaptation is the ever-present element of reduction and the limitations on the communication of interior which the medium of film imposes, at least whenever the tool of a voiceover narrator is not used, as in this case.The second noticeable difference, although of minor significance, is a slight reduction in emotional outbursts. The Mordecai of the adaptation mutters in Hebrew only very sparingly, and his physical expressions of pain, spiritual fervour or emotional agitation are far more sparingly translated into film than they are conveyed in the book. Instances of him falling back in his chair and stretching forth his hands are minimally expressed, if at all. However, this is also the case with some of Gwendolen's gestures. There are some instances in which the descriptions of the narrative voice are unconvincing to the modern reader, and these are conspicuous because of the brilliance and depth of her writing otherwise. An example of this is Gwendolen expressing despair by stretching her arms straight upwards and crying out and shrieking, which is described in several cases. These melodramatic, perhaps Gothic descriptions are conspicuous and unconvincing to the modern reader. Since a similar reduction of dramatic physical gestures exists in the case of these two very different characters, the adjustment cannot

be interpreted as an attempt to make Mordecai more "sane", modern or palatable a character. Rather, these changes area slight modernization of storytelling style and a choice for overall credibility.

The most important adjustment is a notable clarification of Mordecai's ideology in the adaptation compared to the foggier and rather vast reflections in the novel. In an intensive exchange by candlelight Daniel is somewhat frustrated, feeling pressured by Mordecai's claims on him and asks: "Chosen by whom, for what?!" Mordecai replies: "Chosen by God to be a leader of our people…You will take the sacred inheritance of the Jew" (BBC disc 2, 0:04:40). Mordecai never says that Daniel has been chosen by God in the novel, although he does imply that Daniel's divine destiny is with the Jews. Also, and perhaps more surprisingly, his dreams are more specifically Zionist in the adaptation's rendition of the meeting at the Jewish philosophers' club, to which he takes Daniel on one occasion. He speaks fervently of the re-populating of Israel with Jews, "One handful is a village, two handfuls is a town…Our people can become a nation, with a voice among the other nations of the world…And it will come, be sure of it!"" (BBC disc 2, 0:43:12-44).

### 4.3 Mirah and Mordecai's father –Lapidoth

The most notable instance of omission from the BBC adaptation of an element in the novel is the total omission of Lapidoth's appearance in London. In the novel, his character has the effect of balancing what Barbara Hardy (1967: 17) calls the "unmistakable bias" in favour of the Jewish characters. In both novel and adaptation he is remembered, forming an important part of Mirah's reminiscence of her past and the explanation behind the despair which led her to the edge of suicide. He is the centre of the worst injustice she has suffered – kidnapping her from her mother and from England at an early age, using her stage talents to earn money, letting her voice be strained and damaged, and finally planning to more or less sell her to a friend of his, an old duke, who finds her charming. Whether she is to be forced into a marriage entirely against her

will or to be given the status of kept woman – a luxury prostitute - remains unspecified in the adaptation, perhaps intentionally in order to highlight that the distinction may be a nicety. Mirah tells Daniel and Mrs. Meyrick: "He tried to sell me" (BBC disc 1, 1:01:24).

In the adaptation, Lapidoth is only referred to and never physically appears. The episode which features him towards the end of the novel is absent completely. In the novel, he appears one night on a London street, following Mirah and finally revealing himself to her, fulfilling her worst fears, in a manner strongly reminiscent of a Dickensian villain returned from exile abroad to seek justice or revenge. Although Barbara Hardy (1967: 15) found him to be "a splendid creation", my reading of him is less appreciative. He is a stereotypical substance abuser/gambler, selfish and manipulative:

> …he was much interested in the fact of his children having a beneficent friend apparently high in the world…Lapidoth…was behaving with such amiability, and trying in all ways at his command to get himself into easy domestication with his children… He was too acute to venture any present remonstrance against the refusal of money, which Mirah told him that she must persist in as a solemn duty promised to her brother. He was comfortable enough to wait.(*D. D*: 850 - 851)

The adaptation's omission of the father's on-the-scene appearance may merely have been a choice of economy in terms of film rolls and viewing time. The novel is long and weighty and the adaptation does not seem to lose anything vital in terms of narrative fullness by omitting this episode. However, there is no doubt that he is a negative portrayal of a Jewish character and as such he provides the novel's portrayal of several virtuous Jews with some balance. Therefore this choice to seriously reduce his place in the plot has the effect that the adaptation's portrayal of Jewish virtue is even more marked than the novel's is. Lapidoth is a Jew who probably fulfilled some 19$^{th}$ century European Jewish stereotypes and he is a morally putrid character, who is the biggest single cause of Mirah's sufferings. The subtle exclusion and arrogant condescension of

some of the English characters towards Mirah is a small discomfort compared to the abuse and injustices she suffered at the hands of her own Jewish father.

It could perhaps be argued by the cynical analyst that Mirah becomes “too good to be true” when she patiently accepts the burden of her father’s claims on her because she considers it her duty, in spite of the fact that he neglected and ill-treated her on several levels during her childhood. In the same vein of argument, Daniel becomes even more insipidly virtuous when he asks Mirah to let him share all of her life, to carry her burdens with her – including this thieving, unstable, abusive father: “Mirah, let me think that he is my father as well as yours – that we can have no sorrow, no disgrace, no joy apart. I will rather take your grief than I would take the brightest joy of another woman” (*D.D*: 863). This level of virtue was possibly avoided for the sake of credibility. Nonetheless, the reduction of Lapidoth’s presence removes one of the balancing factors in the novel, which alleviates what Barbara Hardy considered a virtue-laden group of Jewish characters.

## 4.4 Daniel and his Mother: Escaping and Choosing Jewish Identities

Daniel is the “bridge” character of both novel and adaptation. He is the most important link between the Jewish and English characters of the story, ultimately embodying both identities. In his person, and in his struggle to define his identity and his life-task, lies the pivotal point, the fulcrum of the narrative, and here we find a kind of kernel of Eliot’s critique of the English superiority complex and her dignifying and lifting of the Jewish Other.

Daniel has been handed the “perfect” identity - according to both British and international definitions prevalent during the 19th century. He has been raised with every material comfort provided and given the social and academic education of an English gentleman, during the golden age of the British Empire surely the most desired and

idealized of all positions. But he is left with a gnawing sense of insecurity, a sense of not quite belonging where he has grown up, because the circumstances of his birth are kept from him and he can only assume, through the inferences of the people around him, that he is Sir Hugo Mallinger's illegitimate son. Beneath Daniel's calm and deferential manners, there is a restless energy. He struggles between loyalty and gratitude to Sir Hugo and the strong desire to leave the path assigned to him and to broaden his understanding of those who differ from himself. Not only this, but the bent of his nature causes him to yearn for some greater purpose to live for, something beyond the empty pursuits of his contemporaries, which seem to mainly revolve around structuring the day to include pleasurable pastimes, maintaining appearances in polite society, and the ubiquitous marriage market. His daily struggle with the futility of this lifestyle stands in contrast to (the nonetheless kindly) Sir Hugo's shrinking from grand motives, even at times when he might be "guilty" of them himself:

> Hardly any man could be more good-natured than Sir Hugo; indeed in his kindliness, especially to women, he did actions which others would have called romantic; but he never took a romantic view of them, and in general smiled at the introduction of motives on a grand scale, or of reasons that lay very far off. This was the strongest point of difference between him and Deronda, who rarely ate his breakfast without some silent discursive flight after grounds for filling up his day according to the practice of his contemporaries.(*D.D*: 418)

Daniel is Grandcourt's opposite, as Mirah is Gwendolen's, in that his nature is driven by active compassion rather than lazy contempt, and in the place of the desire to dominate and control, Daniel displays the desire to counteract prejudice and injustice wherever he finds them; satisfying his own needs seems to be low on the agenda. He desires to rescue rather than to possess. He is also Grandcourt's opposite and the opposite of the bigoted stereotype of the English gentleman in the novel in that he longs to understand other people's perspectives and to have contact with a larger, more stimulating world than that of the English gentry. There are strong connotations of a priestly or even a messiah or saviour role, especially in his relationship to Gwendolen, but also towards Mirah, whom he literally rescues from suicide by drowning, then provides for and helps, and finally marries. There seem to be attempts to balance this strongly virtuous

characterization with human brushstrokes, such as Sir Hugo's repeated, unwelcome teasing of Daniel about his rescuing of young ladies in distress, present in both novel and film, and his friend Hans Meyrick's comments about him having "something of the knight errant in his disposition" (*D.D*: 370). Daniel's earnestness and tendency to observe and evaluate causes not only Gwendolen at the gambling table in Leubronn, but also his father figure, Sir Hugo, to refer to fearing his disapproval (*D.D*: 462). As if to mitigate this loftiness of character, the narrative includes other minor weaknesses which seem to aim away from two-dimensional characterization at character depth and realism. Early on in their acquaintance, Gwendolen asks Daniel if he will join the hunting on the following day. When he replies that he plans to do so, she wonders that he does not disapprove of hunting (like gambling), and his reply is: "I find excuses for it. It is a sin I am inclined to, when I can't get boating or cricketing."(*D.D*: 377)

From Daniel's character we can derive the statement that privileges such as material wealth, "connections", perfect social grooming and even the best of formal education, do not give life real content or meaning. Instead of hiding gratefully amongst this class, suppressing his questions concerning his origins and the rightfulness of his place there, he reaches for a broader understanding of life and a greater purpose than the fulfillment of social requirements and the satisfaction of personal whims, the two guiding forces apparent in the lives of those around him. Direct criticism of narrow-minded prejudice comes from his lips on several occasions, both in the novel and in the adaptation. His compassion for outsiders is made credible by the plot arrangement by which he himself is an outsider. In a society where the right birth was a matter which decided a person's value and affected their choices dramatically, his birth circumstances are left in the shadows. A narrative comment in the novel which relates to Daniel's position as an outsider, someone perhaps not-quite-English, serves as an ironic rebuke of the English imperial superiority complex - that deep-rooted disdain for anything foreign: "Mr. Deronda was a familiar figure regarded with friendliness; but if he had been the heir, it would have been regretted that his face was not as unmistakably English as Sir Hugo's" (*D.D*: 497).

The inheritance laws of the time favoured Sir Hugo's nephew Henleigh Grandcourt over him, so that he who had so much was to be given even more: Grandcourt, and by marriage also Gwendolen, is to inherit Daniel's childhood home Diplow from Sir Hugo upon his death – an ousting reminiscent of the relationship of the Bennett girls to Mr. Collins in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. In Gwendolen and Grandcourt's first conversation about Deronda, Grandcourt describes him as follows: "He thinks a little too much of himself… A sort of ward of Sir Hugo Mallinger's. Nothing of any consequence" (*D.D*: 374). Later, an example of the many gems of observation in Eliot's narratives sparkles briefly when Gwendolen inwardly refers to Grandcourt's estimation that Daniel thinks too much of himself. She notes that comments of that kind are often "a favourite way of explaining a superiority that humiliates." (*D.D*: 376)

Daniel's level of identification with the English gentry and his relationship to Judaism change dramatically through the course of the novel and the adaptation. In spite of his liberal mindedness and his compassionate nature, Daniel recoils at Mordecai's initial suggestion that he might be a member of the Jewish race. Much later, when he finally meets his biological mother, he accepts the news of his Jewish birth with joy – his relationship to Jewishness has gone full circle through the influence of new relationships and the course of events connected to them. Another important example of the communication of initial prejudice is Daniel's disdain for the London Jewish "ghetto", the subculture which he enters in the hope of finding out something about Mirah's mother and brother, and where he first meets Mordecai. This is portrayed in the adaptation by Daniel grimacing slightly and coughing into his handkerchief while passing primitive outdoor butcher shops, a soup kitchen, a prostitute, Hebrew writing on a wall. Coupled with the effect of increasingly intensive Hebrew music, building from melancholy violin sounds, the camera work manages to convey a sense of overwhelmed dizziness at the strange sights and smells by abrupt changes of perspective, returning repeatedly back to Daniel's face fixed in a state of distaste or mild shock. (BBC disc 1, 1:17:00 – 1:19:00)

Neither is the snobbishness which would have been a natural by-product of Daniel's upbringing omitted. Believing at first that the Ezra Cohen who owns the antique shop must be Mirah's brother, he hesitates to tell her. He agonizes over the possibility that all Mirah's hopes will descend into an awful sense of shame when she discovers that her only living relative is part of an underclass, the kind of people society looks down on. Mirah is accustomed to being looked down on and has a different way of evaluating her relatives' worthiness. In the adaptation, Mirah (actress Jodhi May) hesitates slightly, but responds warmly: "…If they were good and they welcomed me and wanted to know me…" (BBC disc 1, 1:31:08).By the end of the novel, Daniel's own evaluation of these socially lowly Jews has changed to the extent that they are invited to his wedding.

The many steps along Daniel's journey from class-typical snobbery, which he displays at least to a minimal extent, to embracing his own Jewishness, centre on his relationship to Mordecai and Mirah. When he has saved Mirah from her suicide attempt, the two begin to question each other cautiously. Mirah declares that she is Jewish and wonders if Daniel will despise her for it. Daniel's response reflects the generosity of his mind and the soundness of his logic: "Why should I?" said Deronda. "I am not so foolish". – (*Mirah*:) "I know many Jews are bad". –"So are many Christians. But I should not think it fair for you to despise me for that"(*D.D*: 234). The adaptation script simplifies this exchange slightly and has Mirah refer directly to the prejudiced treatment she expects from the English. "Do you despise me for it?" – "Why should I?" – "*Many Englishmen do*" (BBC disc 1, 0:56:32).

In Terry Eagleton's analysis (2005), the very fact that Deronda's fulfilling destiny is physically, ideologically and culturally removed from England is part of Eliot's criticism of "spiritually arid English society". Eagleton notes that it is impossible for Deronda's Jewish heritage or the values he represents to be fully expressed in England, and so the novel "splits down the middle, in a formal reflection of this ideological divide" (2005: 183). Furthermore: "A politically barren England must be abandoned for the cultural or ethnic politics of Zionism, which can infuse spirit and passion into public

life" (2005: 184). Deronda breaks away from the sterility of Englishness, but Eagleton points out that he does so in order to enroll in another cultural tradition. Therefore "rebellion and integration" can merge in *Daniel Deronda* in a way that was not possible in Eliot's previous fiction (2005: 184). In these ideological reachings of *Daniel Deronda,* Eliot is at her most mystical, entering a realm that was larger and more challenging than that of her previous works. In *Shadowtime: History and representation in Hardy, Conrad and George Eliot*(1993), Tim Reilly discusses the novel's reaching for some kind of hidden unifying element in life, expressed through Daniel's attraction to the binding history of Judaism. He discusses the work of Georg Lukács, asking whether the realist artist attempts "to uncover and construct the concealed totality of life." (1993: 57)

Daniel's mother has a small part both in the novel and in the adaptation, but she is nonetheless an important character. She as a not sweet Jew – and her presence and the way her character is constructed is a strong testimony to Eliot's attempt to present a nuanced, many-faceted and not wholly positive picture of Jews and Judaism. Leonora Charisi, later Leonora Halm-Eberstein, and in the adaptation *Maria* Charisi, is a dramatic *tour de force* kind of character. She is consciously constructed as larger than life, as a stage personality. In the novel, the narrative voice refers to her acting out the emotions that she had decided in advance she would be feeling: "…this woman's nature was one in which all feeling - and all the more when it was tragic as well as real – immediately became matter of conscious representation: experience immediately passed into drama, and she acted her own emotions". (*D.D*:691)

Leonora is an anti-stereotype of the cozy Jewish mother – placed at the centre of a large, noisy family, lovingly scolding others while she serves meals and bakes bagels. She is somewhat of a feminist rebel; anti-maternal, selfish and proud, she plainly tells Daniel that she gave him away because she did not want a child at the peak of her career and had no love to give him. She also refers to loving as a talent which she simply didn't have. She straightforwardly admits to Daniel that she did not wish him to be born and

that she parted with him willingly – even "I was glad to be freed from you" (*D.D*: 691) - far from the feelings normally attributed to motherhood and far from the pictures conjured up by Daniel's yearnings in his youth for his unknown mother. She had been a world-renowned singer, actress and a celebrated beauty and knew something of the agony of having "a man's force of genius and yet to suffer the slavery of being a girl" (*D.D*: 694; in the adaptation: BBC disc 2, 1:08:39). She rises up against the constraints placed on women and that their happiness is to be made according to a certain recipe, like cakes. Jewish women are all the more in bondage than others, having to endure "teaching, teaching for everlasting…long prayers in the ugly synagogue" and being pressed into patriarchal systems and family norms according to which they only have value as mothers, sisters, wives and daughters: "But such men turn their wives and daughters into slaves. They would rule the world if they could; but not ruling the world they throw all the weight of their will on the necks and souls of women". (*D.D*: 694)

Her rejection of her Jewish background and her father's teachings and influence is bitter and vehement and reflects the complexity of Jewish identity as "chosen"; that is, she would rather not have been. Nonetheless she feels compelled, in hours of pain and weakness caused by the illness she is dying of, by some haunting memory of her dead father. She went against his wishes and his convictions in giving Daniel away and leaving him in ignorance of his Jewish birth and she feels she cannot go "into the darkness" without satisfying his will. Daniel, in keeping with the compassionate and sensitive nature Eliot gave him, makes every effort to forgive his mother and to offer her his affection, although her confessions shake and hurt him. Still, he does not disguise his disappointment at her choice and does not pretend to approve of it or agree with it. He asks directly, confronting her: "How could you choose my birthright for me?" (BBC disc 2, 1:05:17)

The most important content of their meeting and the pivotal point of what I have called the novel's two-fold message is the clear declaration of Daniel's Jewish background, his

reaction to it, and his mother's inability to comprehend his glad acceptance of the news, considering he has been given an adoptive identity which in her estimation is perfect:

> "And the bondage I hated for myself I wanted to keep you from. What better could the most loving mother have done? I relieved you from the bondage of having been born a Jew" - "Then I *am* a Jew?...My father was a Jew and you are a Jewess?.. I am glad of it." "Why do you say you are glad? You are an English gentleman. I secured you that" (*D.D*: 689–690 / BBC disc 2, 1:04:50 - almost identical wording).

This is the crux of the toppling of the icon of the English gentleman. Daniel's mother had assumed she was giving him the best; the most desirable identity and position on every level; he disagreed. Not only because she had deprived him of her affection and of the emotional security of being raised by his mother, but he also rejected her judgment of the rightness of the choice, "You did not know *what* you secured me" (*D.D*: 690).In the BBC adaptation, the exchange is almost word for word the same as in the novel. He had always felt that something was missing, even besides a mother's love, and chooses to embrace the Judaism she had loathed.

Her reaction is that he has the spirit of his grandfather in him and that she could not have known that he would love what she had hated. Although there is a strong influence of essentialism in the portrayal of Jewish identity which could be contended, it must be noted that Jewishness, not least in the years coming up to the Second World War, was an identity or a categorization that tended to stick hard; that is, even those who consciously wished to escape it and its implications, rarely managed to do so. In Daniel's case the element of choice is nonetheless still clearly present. When his mother asks him how he will proceed with his life, and if he intends to become just like his grandfather, Daniel replies that it would be impossible – that the influences of his upbringing will remain with him, "the Christian sympathies in which my mind was reared can never die out of me" (*D.D*: 724), but that he intends to identify with his

hereditary people as far as possible and to find the purpose of his life in giving his hand and soul to helping them.

Barbara Hardy (1967: 12) asserts in her introduction that the handling of satire and sympathy in the novel is “understandable but undiplomatically blatant”. If one accepts that the narrative’s bias comes across as blatant, it is important to also acknowledge Eliot’s many marked attempts to balance the “pro-Jewish” statement. The above is one of these cases. Faithfully conveyed from novel into film is Daniel’s clear declaration that it would be impossible for him to turn his back on, or cease to be influenced by, his English (Christian) upbringing. His Zionist dreams, like Mordecai’s for most of the novel at least, are largely vague, and rather liberal and intelligent. They become clearly nationalistic only in his last talk with Gwendolen, as if in his attempt to simplify and clarify the contours of his future.

Leonora/Maria is a character who enriches the story’s portrayal of Jews and Judaism. Having her voice such strong anti-Jewish feeling, as well as an anti-patriarchal, anti-maternal, feminist perspective, must be seen as good grounds to reject F.R. Leavis’ assertions that Eliot’s pro-Jewish bias is a “lapse of her mature intelligence” and “a mode of self-indulgence” (1948: 100).However much one dislikes the bias, it cannot accurately be deemed to be totally black-and-white; rather, many attempts at balance, complexity of character and nuance of message are apparent.

The BBC adaptation includes all the key elements of the encounter between Daniel and his mother, with Barbara Hershey as an effective interpreter of the emotionally cold, but intensive character. The only notable differences are the effects of reduction and the obvious difficulties with communicating interior in the medium of film whenever voice-over narrative is not used. The communication of emotional anguish is in conjunction with this encounter repeatedly left to the nuances of eyebrow movement and facial tension. Hugh Dancy attempts to infuse these with inflections of meaning, but at times

all that is communicated to the viewer is that it is a meaningful, emotionally charged moment, but to have any chance of understanding the nuances of *what* it means to each character, the viewer must refer to the book. Dancy commented humorously in an interview for the previously mentioned article in *The Telegraph* (2001) about the intimidation he experienced caused by his thorough knowledge of the novel, as well as the difficulty in transposing Eliot's extensive coverage of Daniel's interior world to the medium of film. Reflecting on the fact that there is a whole chapter in the novel dedicated to "the inside of Daniel's head", he remarked: "Fair enough, George… but what on earth am I supposed to do with that?" (Fox: 2001)

In these character analyses it is evident that Jew, the subordinate Other of both novel and film, is dignified, given agency, sympathy and a considerable amount of virtue. Still, some European stereotypes of the Jews seem also to be reflected in the characterization: Klesmer the flamboyant musical artist; Lapidoth the cheating low-life stage entertainer; Cohen the antique dealer; Mordecai the religious visionary. This could either be because Eliot believed them to carry some truth (consciously or otherwise), or because she expected that her readership upheld such stereotypes, and by affirming their prejudice to an extent on the one hand, she hoped to all the more effectively disarm it on the other, when the full landscape of the novel came into view.

# 5 CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

A comparison of the novel and BBC film versions of *Daniel Deronda* shows that the creators of the adaptation chose, at least on a general level, to faithfully convey the most important plot and character content of Eliot's novel. The most important differences that can be noticed are related to firstly, *genre*: the visual medium allows little conveyance of the characters' emotions and thought worlds in comparison to the book's coverage of "interior", expressed through narrative comment, focalization, direct recording of the thoughts of central characters and far more extensive coverage of conversations. The second important difference, and perhaps the most striking one, is the considerable degree of *reduction* involved in communicating the content of an 886 page book - which translates into something in the region of 60 hours of reading - into 302 minutes of film. The third result of the comparison between novel and film, and the one of specific importance to this study, is that the twofold ideological message of the novel – its critique of the superiority complex of the English gentry (especially the English gentleman) and its dignifying, ennobling treatment of the Jew - is *not at all softened;* there seem to have been no significant attempts to slant it in a particular direction in order to make it more politically correct or culturally relevant for the benefit of modern audiences or for the sake of the film's commercial success.

Rather, what we see in a few subtle but unmistakable instances is a slight heightening of this message. On the front of the English superiority complex, the slight increase in criticism, or at least in the negative portrayal of English characters, is clearest in the case of Henleigh Grandcourt.Grandcourt's arrogance, coldness, even psychopathic make up is faithfully portrayed but with the *addition* of clear inferences of sexual abuse – from the vampire kiss to the shot of Gwendolen weeping, face down on the bed, her clothes and emotional state, together with the scene that has preceded, clearly pointing to coercion, abuse, rape. The sense of psychological and physical abuse, cruelty, ownership, even slavery is driven home with even more vehemence in the film version because of this addition, which, as previously stated was not a far-fetched modern dramatization of the words of the book, but rather a filling in of what can be imagined

"between the lines" – a logical assumption within the dynamics of the relationship Eliot portrays. Imperial arrogance is rebuked in the person of Grandcourt and the icon of the English gentleman is questioned. In the BBC treatment of the novel, Grandcourt is all he is in the book - or a little worse.

Regarding the Jewish element, I feel that the core of the pro-Jewishness of the novel is not that the Jewish characters are so virtuous compared to the English ones, as, although the imbalance exists, their levels of virtue vary widely – but rather that Jews and Jewishness are given a central position in which their experience is validated and their position lifted or, as I have said, dignified. Also the central fact of Daniel's choice to embrace his discovered Jewishness, against his biological mother's and his adoptive father's wishes, is highly significant.

The adaptation does not move the Jewish characters aside to prioritize the Gwendolen-centred part of the narrative and does not change any of the significant details, for example regarding Daniel's choices. Had they wished to do so, a simple device would have been to make the attraction between Gwendolen and Daniel more overtly expressed and more physical. Barbara Hardy wrote already in 1967 that the novel's "muted" mention of their feelings for each other would "almost certainly have to come out as more sexual in a modern novel". 21$^{st}$ century viewers are likely to be accustomed to more overt sexuality, so such a choice would not have seemed strange and would have most certainly pushed Gwendolen and Daniel's relationship more fully into the centre of focus and in so doing made a more mainstream romance of the complex narrative.

Not only did the BBC adaptation team choose not to lessen the novel's Jewish focus, but I find that at least three details in the adaptation serve to heighten what I have called the dignifying of the Jewish subordinate other and what might be called the pro-Jewish bias of the novel. One of these, as related in the analysis, is the removal of any on-scene

appearance of Mirah's father. Barbara Hardy claims that there is an unmistakable imbalance in the distribution of virtues in the novel – the bulk of the obvious virtues being awarded to the Jewish characters. This is certainly true of Mirah, Daniel, and to an extent Mordecai, who is nonetheless also so intense a visionary that the suggestion is that he is only just within the category of the sane. Daniel's mother can certainly not be considered an over virtuous character in the traditional sense of displaying unselfish goodness. Apart from giving Daniel away at the age of two because he hampered her career and she did not feel what mothers are supposed to feel (p.691), she voices a strong rejection of her own Jewishness, a strong reaction of rebellion against her father's leadership, teachings and wishes. She also becomes somewhat of a voice for feminist frustration – she has a man's genius trapped inside a woman's body and must endure the slavery of being female. But even more than Daniel's mother, Mirah's father in the novel is a character who balances the portrayal of Jews as virtuous – he is basically *all bad*. The choice to omit him almost entirely has the effect of removing a significant of what I consider to be Eliot's endeavor to provide artistic and ideological integrity - balance in characterization that would lend credibility to the pro-Jewish elements.

The other two important details through which the adaptation seems to heighten the novel's pro-Jewish message relate to Zionism, and this is perhaps the most surprising discovery. In the novel, Mordecai's ideology is a vision of a Jewish awakening – some kind of renaissance which brings Jews worldwide together and lends them a new sense of value, dignity, purpose and mutual belonging. The adaptation condenses and simplifies but also clarifies Mordecai's vague, if fervent, ideology**.** Although, as noted previously, Daniel does make Mordecai's longings more sharp-edged and more specifically Zionist in the novel in his last conversation with Gwendolen when he attempts to explain his new direction to her (*D.D*: 875).

There is one other marked clarification of the novel's sometimes misty Zionist vision. In this context, it must be noted that George Eliot wrote *Daniel Deronda* twenty years

prior to the publication of Theodore Herzl's *Der Judenstaat*, and the contours of Zionism were at the time probably still forming in the minds of its most avid supporters – that is to say, Eliot was possibly as specific as she could be. Barbara Hardy asserts that Eliot kept Daniel's political future vague for the same reason she had kept Will Ladislaw's political career lightly sketched and removed from focus in *Middlemarch* – she did not want to enter too deeply into territory she could not cover with informed understanding and therefore artistic integrity. Hardy (1967: 29) notes that any attempt to be very clear about the future of Zionism would have taken Eliot "beyond the rendering of politics into the rendering of prophecy".

The choice in the BBC film version which I feel reinforces the novel's Zionism is the adaptation's last scene, depicting Daniel and Mirah sailing to Palestine/Israel, holding each other and looking purposefully at the coast as it becomes gradually clearer in the haze of warm air. All storytellers agree that the opening and closing of a story are of the utmost importance; it is the last scene which will leave viewers with a sigh of satisfaction, a question mark or sense of having been cheated; or perhaps downright annoyance. This choice of final camera work makes the Zionist content of the story more specific and more overt than a close rendition of the novel's final scene would have. In the light of modern European public opinion regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it is a choice that is surprising and also rather brave. One could argue that this was simply a choice for good cinema. The novel's closing scene was perhaps considered too morbid – or perhaps too religious - to provide an exhilarating ending. It describes Mordecai dying in Mirah and Daniel's arms after reciting the Jewish declaration of faith, known as the "Sh'ma". Still, it was undeniably a brave, even a commercially risky choice to end the adaptation with the shot of Daniel and Mirah sailing to "Zion" and the decision *not to avoid* connotations of Zionism or a pro-Jewish bias is most apparent.

So, the somewhat surprising result is that the popularity of the BBC film version of *Daniel Deronda* certainly cannot have resulted from a change in treatment of the

material and themes that were offensive to George Eliot's late 19th century readers, and even some more recent literary critics, since a comparison of the novel and film versions shows no such mitigating change of treatment of the two central themes outlined in this study.

So, why, then does the adaptation seem to have met with unmixed appreciation, at least if one can judge by a number of key reviews and the British film awards statistics, when the novel it was based on, although it sold well, was met with mixed praise and a heavy dose of displeasure and criticism? The most important considerations seem to be connected to the changes in audience and ideological climate into which the adaptation was delivered. Firstly, Eliot's readership was far more limited than the adaptation's potential and actual audience. Writing in the English language in England at the end of the 19th century meant that her audience was limited to educated English speakers, which at that time implied a far, far narrower audience then than these criteria would create today. The establishment of English as the current global lingua franca - caused by the effects of the British Empire and the postcolonial era, the cultural dominance of the United States and the internet revolution- means not only that English literature is on the curricula of countless schools and universities worldwide, but also that the "period drama" now has a fan base in practice without national, cultural or linguistic barriers. The existence of for example You Tube, where I first came across the BBC adaptation of *Daniel Deronda*, and the speed and relative accuracy with which films are subtitled, means that the adaptation's audience was and is practically limitless. George Eliot wrote her critique of Englishness, if one accepts it as such, largely to the English of the imperial era, edging towards the *fin de siécle*. The adaptation "wrote" to a multicultural modern audience.

Nonetheless, the BAFTA and other British film and television awards speak of specifically British appreciation of the adaptation. Britain today is a markedly multicultural country, one of the after-effects of the dissolution of the empire. In fact, the effectiveness of the imperial doctrine of superiority meant that droves of colonized

peoples looked to England as the ideal standard, a kind of cultural mother, which undoubtedly affected immigration statistics in the twentieth century. Although British, and particularly English, society today is still affected by class distinctions, including for example hierarchical thinking regarding regional accents compared to the standard "received pronunciation", the identity of a modern English man or woman is not usually intertwined with a belief in imperial superiority in the way that it was in George Eliot's time. Britain today has seen both rising and falling, has struggled and redefined itself on many levels, and as stated, has incorporated many ethnic and language groups in the wake of the disintegration of the Empire. Therefore, not only was the adaptation's initial audience far from exclusively English, even the viewers who were English and the British film award committees who most certainly were, were and are unlikely to feel themselves personally included in Eliot's rebuke of the English gentry and their treatment of the Jews. The political reality of Britain's far-reaching imperial dominance is over; and its related doctrine, the English belief in intrinsic English superiority and even a God-given destiny to reign, is also for the most part a thing of the past.

As regards late 19th century distaste for the novel's dignifying treatment of the Jews, a number of factors affect the different reaction of modern viewers, as far as we can chart them (as has been stated, the reactions of individual viewers are for obvious reasons almost impossible to record adequately).The Jews that Eliot's original readership watched her exalt were the accepted underdogs of English and European society. Today, that is not at all the case. Anti-Semitism in post Second World War Europe is an acknowledged evil. Indeed any form of discrimination based on ethnic, religious or national distinctions is officially politically incorrect amongst educated Europeans and indeed in the greater part of the Western world. This is of course not the same as asserting that such discrimination does not exist in practice, along the lines of the cliché: "I'm not a racist, but…". Still, the Jewish people are clearly no longer the eyesore of English society. There is a small pocket of Jewish Britons who are outwardly assimilated and neither seen nor heard very much in modern British society. In postcolonial Britain, the integration challenge lies elsewhere.

Thus, because of over a century worth of change in prevailing ideological frameworks, *both* upper-class Imperial arrogance and anti-Semitic attitudes are likely to be distasteful to modern British and European viewers, and therefore Eliot's critique is unlikely to cause offence. One could say that because the dual rebuking and dignifying statement is less topical or less necessary in its specifics today, it is also less controversial. The adaptation team –producer Marks, director Tom Hooper and screenwriter Andrew Davies - were naturally aware of these ideological climate changes. Also, and not less significantly, Eliot was, according to her letters, moved to deliver this two-fold message of rebuke and of ennobling – she carried it on a personal level and was responsible for it, and therefore was likely to bear the brunt of negative reactions to a very different extent than the adaptation team could have been likely to, in the event of a similarly mixed reception. Their relationship to the narrative was artistic, professional and commercial. It was and is her story, which they re-told.

Nonetheless, the adaptation's choice to be overt about the novel's Zionist vision is a surprising element. Although anti-Semitism is not considered politically correct in modern Europe, one might assert that the opposite is true regarding (anti-) Zionism. Here, I am left to the realm of possibilities, of guessing. It is possible that the adaptation team had Zionist sympathies and therefore slanted the novel's Zionism slightly in the direction of clarity and openness, in spite of the weight of prevailing public opinion. This seems, however, unlikely in the case of two established mainstream filmmakers, Hooper and Davies.

I am left to the following conclusions: The choice was affected by the benefit of retrospect: Firstly, made over 50 years after the establishment of the modern state of Israel, the adaptation states simply what was already known. The ideology of real men whose philosophies resembled those of the character Mordecai was headed in this direction. Also, potential viewers had the benefit of retrospect, and the adaptors knew that – with the publication over a century in the past, they had every chance to avoid the adaptation carrying its name if the content was likely to disgust them. Secondly, as has

been considered, the adaptation team had not given birth to the main content of the story and in that sense potentially negative reactions to its subject matter could be re-directed to Eliot. Their job was to achieve a high standard of film art and the most definitive motivating force for them was perhaps simply to succeed at that. This approach to a complex, intriguing novel, vast both in imaginative scope and in sheer length, is perhaps best expressed in the words of the actor who played Henleigh Grandcourt, Hugh Bonneville: “At the end of the day, it’s just a ripping good yarn”. (Fox: 2001)

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