

## ANALYSIS OF USING MOTIFS IN THE DANIEL DERONDA BY GEORGE ELIOT

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### ABSTRACT

The novel Daniel Deronda is a literary fiction novel that encompasses other genres such as family drama and coming of age expanding peoples' overall psychology and thoughts. The author uses characters like George Eliot to show portray the positive manner and sensitivity of people.

**Key words:** Daniel Deronda, literary fiction, egoism, Victorian era, metaphor.

The novel was written in the 1870s which reflects its setting and its significance towards the present and the future; it was written in the actual time that she experiences the thought she expresses in the novel. The novel revolves around two main characters Mirah Cohen and Gwendolen Harleth a girl who loves gambling very much. The epigraph in the novel mainly tries to warn those people who prioritize their soul satisfaction without minding others. The novel explores the peculiar influences that get into those people as soon as they realize the pain of others. The novel warns people about their ego-centric activities, showing them that the soul never enjoys the gains they get from such actions. The author shows that people should fear their souls very much because they may make them have an irritation, decisions and later regret their actions.

Gambling is a recurring motif in the novel, which opens with Gwendolen gambling at roulette. She is winning, but when she sees Deronda watching her critically she begins to lose quite a bit of money. She gambles again when she marries Grandcourt and loses that bet as well. She thinks she will be able to rule him but learns in short order she is to be ruled by him. As time goes on, Gwendolen finds herself continually gambling with Grandcourt, hoping not to lose in their battle of wills: "It was all a part of that new gambling, in which the losing was not simply a *minus*, but a terrible *plus*." Gwendolen's gambling comes up several times in conversations with Deronda, and he explains to her why he dislikes gambling because one person's gain is another's loss. People should not create further occasions for pitting their winning against another's losing. Mrs. Glasher is one of those losers. She gambled by taking Grandcourt as a lover and thought he would marry her once her husband died, but he instead has married Gwendolen.

Other instances of gambling or the results of gambling occur in the novel. Gwendolen's family loses their money because of the irresponsible speculation of, which is either a bank or an investment firm. The narrator draws a parallel between Gwendolen's gambling and the fall of her family fortunes: "Gwendolen ... brought from her ... experience an impression that in this ... world it signified nothing what any one did, so that they amused themselves." The narrator here says that Gwendolen is under the impression the consequences or moral weight of her actions do not matter. Rather, what is important is to have a good time.

Mirah and Mordecai's father is also a gambler—a compulsive gambler who destroys his family with his bad habit, then comes back to his children in London and ends up stealing Deronda's ring. Grandcourt gambles by taking out a sailboat with Gwendolen, even though he most likely cannot swim, never thinking he might fall overboard and drown.

When the wayward Gwendolen gambles at roulette and marriage, she is made to suffer a heavy penance; yet when the author's darling Deronda risks his whole English inheritance for a visionary ideal, he is blessed. Gwendolen inhabits a deterministic world in which effect follows cause with relentless insistence, while Deronda, the flawless hero, inhabits one largely ruled by miracle and coincidence. These two gamblers receive very different treatment, and I probe this ambiguity under the rubrics of chance, play, and egotism. Eliot condemns chance because it substitutes luck for responsibility, yet she grants Deronda all the luck of a fixed game. He is her new savior, of a new faith at deep odds with any religion of humanity.

#### Serpent and Devil

Two related motifs in the novel are the serpent and the devil. When the reader first meets Gwendolen, she is dressed in a costume of green and silver that makes her look something like a serpent, according to people who are looking at her in the casino. Mr. Vandernoodt even opines that "a man might risk hanging" for such a serpent. Grandcourt is also referred to as a serpent. When Gwendolen finds herself imprisoned with Grandcourt on the yacht, the narrator says it was no use quarreling with him. Gwendolen "might as well have made angry remarks to a dangerous serpent ornamentally coiled in her cabin without invitation." Grandcourt is also referred to as a lizard on several occasions—his eyes are lizard-like, and he is cold-blooded like a lizard. Gwendolen is referred to as demonic on several occasions, and early on the reader learns she wrung the neck of her sister's canary because it was competing with her singing. Deronda tells Sir Hugo gambling brought out "something of the demon" in Gwendolen, and Lapidoth's obsession with gambling is later referred to as demonic. Deronda notices Gwendolen's "demonic force" again when she greets people after her marriage to Grandcourt, seemingly from inside a mask. He muses whether her demonic

force had come out to meet the one in her husband. Toward the end of the novel, Gwendolen's thoughts about killing Grandcourt are referred to as "demon-visits" and "demon-faces" in the clouds.

#### The Wanderer

The image of the wanderer recurs throughout the novel, which bears some relation to the story of the "Wandering Jew" said to be doomed to wander the earth until the second coming of Jesus Christ. The Wandering Jew symbolizes a judgment of Christians upon the Jews. But in real life Jews have been forced to wander, driven out of their homeland first by the Babylonians and then by the Romans. After their expulsion, the Jews populated almost every country in Europe. Their history of persecution also meant they were often driven from one country to another in search of acceptance and refuge. For example, Deronda's people on his father's side are Spanish Jews who were driven out during the persecutions of the Spanish Inquisition at the end of the 15th century and ended up settling in Genoa. Joseph Kalonymos—who calls himself a wanderer because he travels frequently around Europe and to the East—tells Deronda how the Jewish people in Italy were invited to Mainz, Germany, by Emperor Charlemagne.

Mirah is another wanderer, coming to London in search of her mother and brother and ending up at the river intending to drown herself. When Deronda first brings her to the Meyricks, he thinks of her as "a poor wanderer," and she gives herself the same name when she introduces her brother to Mrs. Meyrick. After Deronda meets Kalonymos, he feels he has been a member of the wrong tribe of wanderers and has now found the tents of his rightful people.

#### Prison of Egotism

The unhappy people in the novel are caught in the prison of their own egotism. They place themselves ahead of everyone else and think only of their own selfish pleasure, and yet they are unhappy. Gwendolen claims she wants nothing but her own way and to do what pleases her, and yet even before she becomes enslaved by Grandcourt she is unhappy. Her fear of being controlled by others prevents her from meaningfully connecting with anyone but her mother. Grandcourt is a portrait of a sociopath who has no feeling for anyone and seems unable to feel. The only thing that relieves his perpetual boredom is forcing others into submission. Gwendolen's suffering forces her to change, and after she trusts Deronda enough to connect with him she begins to move out of her own small circle of concern. By the end of the novel, the reader feels she has the capacity to learn how to be happy. Juxtaposed against the egoists are Deronda, who thinks mainly of what he can do for others; Mirah, whose life is dedicated to finding her mother and brother; and Mordecai, whose life has been

dedicated to a visionary quest to improve the lot of the Jewish people and unite them as a nation.

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