The Significance of Commodity and Exchange in *Daniel Deronda*

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Abstract

Readers of George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* (1887) have long noted the mercenary nature of Gwendolen's marriage with Grandcourt. Pressed by the loss of her family fortune and her chilling prospect of becoming a governess, Gwendolen reluctantly accepts Grandcourt's suit. She has broken her promise to Lydia Glasher, Grandcourt's former flame with whom he has three children. Gwendolen is stricken by a guilty conscience and seeks to do penance in the course of the novel. This is the central event of the Gwendolen part of *Daniel Deronda*. Gwendolen has sold herself as a valuable commodity in exchange for comfort for herself and her family. Most commentators put the blame on the Victorian patriarchal society. Instead of taking this feminist stand, we will look at Gwendolen's choice from an economic point of view. For Gwendolen's time is the time when the capitalist society is beginning to form itself, and when Marx begins to call our attention to the roles commodity and exchange play in the emerging capitalist society. Gwendolen has not only transformed herself into a valuable commodity to be "auctioned" at the marriage market, but she has also turned herself into something worthy of what Baudrillard calls "sign-value," a significant object capable of arousing the attention of such an aristocratic "bidder" as Grandcourt. The language of commerce has been employed for many of the key passages in the novel. Many plot elements--such as gambling and Gwendolen's search for a vocation, and several conspicuous objects (images)--such as horses and diamonds, serve almost as stage properties enhancing the central idea that Gwendolen is a significant commodity.

Key Words: commodity, exchange, significance, Gwendolen, sign-value
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Readers of George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* (1887) have long noted the mercenary nature of Gwendolen's marriage with Grandcourt. Pressed by the loss of her family fortune and her chilling prospect of becoming a governess, Gwendolen reluctantly accepts Grandcourt's suit. She has broken her promise to Lydia Glasher, Grandcourt's former flame with whom he has three children. Gwendolen is stricken by a guilty conscience and seeks to do penance in the course of the novel. This is the central event of the Gwendolen part of *Daniel Deronda*. Gwendolen has sold herself as a valuable commodity in exchange for comfort for herself and her family. Most readers and commentators blame Victorian patriarchal society for the mercenary marriage. Ellen Rosenman, for example, considers Gwendolen a victim of her society, for she is one of the Victorian women who were "subordinated as objects of desire in plots of male agency," and who "are valuable commodities, that circulate among men, not subjects who perform transactions themselves." (238) Instead of taking this feminist stand, we will look at Gwendolen's choice from an economic point of view. For Gwendolen's time is the time when the capitalist society is beginning to form itself, and when Marx begins to call our attention to the roles commodity and exchange plays in the emerging capitalist society. Gwendolen has not only transformed herself into a valuable commodity to be "auctioned" at the marriage market, but she has also turned herself into something worthy of what Baudrillard calls "sign-value," a significant object capable of arousing the attention of such an aristocratic "bidder" as Grandcourt. The language of commerce has been employed for many of the key passages in the novel. Many plot
elements--such as gambling and Gwendolen's search for a vocation, and several conspicuous objects (images)--such as horses and diamonds, serve almost as stage properties enhancing the central idea that Gwendolen is a significant commodity.

Grandcourt is very rich, and everybody dear to Gwendolen--her mother Mrs. Davilow, her uncle the Rector Gascoigne--expects her, urges her to accept Grandcourt. Mrs. Davilow, in great awe of her daughter, dares not speak her mind. Mr. Gascoigne, as Gwendolen's elder, is straightforward in his effort to persuade Gwendolen when she seems to "hesitate" about Grandcourt's suit. Although a rector, Mr. Gascoigne does his persuasion in worldly terms:

"Then, my dear Gwendolen, I have nothing further to say than this: you hold your fortune in your own hands--a fortune such as rarely happens to a girl in your circumstances--a fortune in fact which almost takes the question out of the range of mere personal feeling, and makes your acceptance of it a duty."

(Bk.2, Chap. 13, 178-179)¹

He repeats the word "fortune" three times. He means "good luck" of course, but the word carries with it the obvious suggestion of wealth. He wishes his niece "parks, carriages, a title--everything that would make this world a pleasant abode," and tells Gwendolen directly that marriage with Grandcourt will give her "increasing power, both of rank and wealth, which may be used for the benefit of others" (Bk. 2, Chap. 13, 179-180). As soon as Gwendolen consents to this mercenary marriage, the Rector congratulates his niece and insists that "It has given you an opportunity of observing your future husband's delicate liberality" (Bk. 4, Chap. 28, 353). The same double meanings of certain terms again appear in his speech to Gwendolen: "A woman has a great debt of gratitude to a man who perseveres in making her such an offer" (Bk. 4, Chap. 28, 353; italics added).
The Rector's words sound jarring if considered in commercial terms. Underlining the Rector's language with reference to Gwendolen's marriage is the idea of exchange: Gwendolen will use her charm to trade for some material gains. She is used to making risky exchanges. Her love of gambling exemplifies this aspect of her character. In an article about *Middlemarch*, Jan B. Gordon notes that "Gambling is a metaphor that George Eliot seems to have been fond of, for she places Gwendolen Harleth at a continental gambling table at the commencement of *Daniel Deronda*" (104). But gambling in *Daniel Deronda* is, of course, a fact, a plot element in the first place. A beautiful woman at the roulette table is a striking scene by itself. There is no question that Gwendolen enjoys gambling. After the famous opening sentence "Was she beautiful or not beautiful?" in the first paragraph of the novel, the narrator in the next paragraph describes how Gwendolen is absorbed in the act of gambling:

She who raised these questions in Daniel Deronda's mind was occupied in gambling: not in the open air under a southern sky, tossing coppers on a ruined wall, with rags about her limbs; but in one of those splendid resorts which the enlightenment of ages has prepared for the same species of pleasure at a heavy cost of gilt mouldings, dark-toned colour and chubby nudities, all correspondingly heavy...

(Bk. 1, Chap. 1, 35)

Gwendolen even associates her luck at the gambling table with some kind of "male" fantasy: "She had begun to believe in her luck, others had begun to believe in it; she had visions of being followed by a cortege who would worship her as a goddess of luck and watch her play as a directing augury. Such things had been known of male gamblers; why should not a woman have a like supremacy?" (Bk. 1, Chap. 1, 38-39)². And the chief medium of gambling at the Lebrunn casino, the roulette wheel, emphasizes the idea
of exchange in gambling. Catherine Gallapher has pointed out the significance of this particular gambling machine: “The roulette game is a mystified, abstracted, and grotesquely passive war of all against all. The various players, as seen through Daniel’s eyes, see only the roulette wheel and do not see one another. The wheel seems to make money appear and disappear, but in reality, the players are only exchanging money...” (130).

Of course George Eliot means to use gambling as a metaphor. In gambling, one tries to offer something in exchange for something else; it is basically a kind of trading, although one relies more on one’s luck than on one’s ability. Deronda, whose first encounter with Gwendolen occurs in a gambling resort, is aware of this metaphor: when Gwendolen confesses to him her guilty conscience in marrying Grandcourt, it pains him to see her "after all hardened to another sort of gambling than roulette" (Bk. 6, Chap. 45, 624). Gwendolen herself is also conscious of this metaphor. After Grandcourt's drowning, she makes a long and sobbing confession to Deronda:

Because--you know--I ought not to have married. That was the beginning of it. I wronged some one else. I broke my promise. I meant to get pleasure for myself, and it all turned to misery. I wanted to make my gain out of another's loss--you remember?--it was like roulette--and the money burnt into me. And I could not complain. It was as if I had prayed that another should lose and I should win.

(Bk. 7, Chap. 56, 757)

The talk about gain and loss is of course the language of a gambler. In her decision to marry Grandcourt, she is a desperate gambler. Paradoxically, her gain is her loss: she gains wealth but loses her peace of mind. She is even confused with what is gained and what is lost. When she is waiting for the hated Lush to explain the property arrangement in Grandcourt's will,
the narrator reports her burning state of mind thus: "It was all a part of that new gambling in which the losing was not simply a minus, but a terrible plus that had never entered into her reckoning" (Bk. 6, Chap. 48, 659).

The commercial language of gain and loss is echoed in Grandcourt's courtship of Gwendolen. In contracting his marriage with Gwendolen, Grandcourt takes the position of the capitalist who invests handsomely in the marriage market. He has the capital to make any major investment, and he takes the best commodity available at the time. In a tete-a-tete with Gwendolen, Grandcourt cleverly uses the commercial language. He complains that he has not seen her for quite some time, and Gwendolen laughingly says it is only three weeks:

A little pause, and then he said, "That is a great loss of time."

"That your knowing me has caused you? Pray don't be uncomplimentary: I don't like it."

Pause again. "It is because of the gain, that I feel the loss."

Here Gwendolen herself left a pause. She was thinking, "He is really very ingenious. He never speaks stupidly." Her silence was so unusual, that it seemed the strongest of favorable answers, and he continued--

"The gain of knowing you makes me feel the time I lose in uncertainty. Do you like uncertainty?"

(Bk. 2, Chap. 14, 184)

This play on gain and loss delights Gwendolen and lulls her into believing that Grandcourt is the right man for her. The commercial language works so well on Gwendolen that Grandcourt uses it again in his proposal of
marriage:

"You will tell me now, I hope, that Mrs. Davilow's loss of fortune will not trouble you further. You will trust me to prevent it from weighing upon her. You will give me the claim to provide against that."

(Bk. 3, Chap. 27, 347)

As Gwendolen hesitates a bit, Grandcourt becomes more excited. The narrator comments, "The evident hesitation of this destitute girl to take his splendid offer stung him into a keenness of interest such as he had not known for years" (Bk. 3, Chap. 27, 347). Only a smart bidder in an auction sale can draw this perverse pleasure. When Gwendolen finally says "yes" with some difficulty, "her vision was filled by her own release from the Momperts [where she will be employed as a governess], and her mother's release from Sawyer's Cottage" (Bk. 3, Chap. 27, 348), all material gains for her future comfortable living. The momentous deal is made—to the satisfaction of both bargaining sides.

Gwendolen makes the deal at the expense of another woman, Lydia Glasher, the now discarded commodity of Grandcourt. Curiously, Gwendolen now feels that she is damnably identified with Lydia: "By knowingly taking the place of, allowing herself to be exchanged for, Grandcourt's mistress, Lydia Glasher, Gwendolen becomes a sign of the very thing she is not, the abandoned woman of passion, the mistress, the whore" (Gallagher 132). Grandcourt the invester, on his part, naturally expects something in return for this deal. He has bought an expensive commodity, and he wants thorough control of the spirited woman. As Gwendolen seems to show some interest in Deronda, meeting him "accidentally" from time to time, and--from Grandcourt's point of view--making a "fool" of herself, Grandcourt takes her for a yachting trip in Genoa. The narrator analyses Grandcourt's mind in commercial terms:
And Grandcourt might have pleaded that he was perfectly justified in taking care that his wife should fulfill the obligations she had accepted. Her marriage was a contract where all the ostensible advantages were on her side, and it was only one of those advantages that her husband should use his power to hinder her from any injurious self-committal or unsuitable behaviour. He knew quite well that she had not married him--had not overcome her repugnance to certain facts--out of love to him personally; he had won her by the rank and luxuries he had to give her, and these she had got; he had fulfilled his side of the contract.

(Bk. 7, Chap. 54, 732)

The commercial connotations of such words as "obligations," "contract," and "advantages" leave no doubt that Grandcourt considers himself a businessman involved in an act of transaction. Gwendolen, on her part, feels "that she had sold herself, and had been paid the strict price--nay, paid more than she had dared to ask in the handsome maintenance of her mother" (Bk. 7, Chap. 54, 733). In choosing Grandcourt, Gwendolen has made a "legalized prostitution" (Demaria 406). When they are alone on the sea, Grandcourt feels the satisfaction of being the sole owner of the valuable commodity: "Then Grandcourt would walk up and down and smoke for a long while, pausing occasionally to point out a sail on the horizon, and at last would seat himself and look at Gwendolen with his narrow, immovable gaze, as if she were part of the complete yacht. . ." (Bk. 7. Chap. 54, 735).

That Gwendolen is part of the complete yacht is typical of Grandcourt's attitude toward the people around him. From a capitalist point of view, everything and everybody is a commodity. Human feelings are excluded in his dealings with the world, especially in such a risky business as contracting a marriage. People are only instruments to help him achieve
his worldly pleasure. Lush is such an instrument to Grandcourt. When Gwendolen asks for the banishment of Lush as soon as they reach their marriage contract, Grandcourt kicks him off like a dog. When Grandcourt needs Lush to do explanations about his will to Gwendolen, he again summons him like a dog. Eliot uses a curious simile to explain the relationship between the two. Grandcourt hates writing, and he has long been accustomed to having all his writings done by Lush. Therefore, "To Grandcourt it did not even occur that he should, would, or could write to Gwendolen the information in question; and the only medium of communication he could use was Lush, who, to his mind, was as much of an implement as pen and paper" (Bk. 6, Chap. 48, 657).

Other than the human instrument, Grandcourt is not short of instruments of transportation and entertainment: hence the image of the horse running throughout the novel. Gwendolen, at the beginning, loves nothing so much as the exhilaration of horseback riding. The initial strategy of Grandcourt's courtship is to ask leave to have a beautiful horse of his brought for Gwendolen to ride. As she accepts Grandcourt's proposal, she is thrilled by looking out the window and seeing Grandcourt's two beautiful horses being led around slowly outside, according to his orders. To Gwendolen these two horses seem to be "symbols of command and luxury, in delightful contrast with the ugliness of poverty and humiliation at which she had lately been looking close" (Bk. 3, Chap. 27, 349). Gwendolen is deluded by this parade of rank and wealth. Before marriage, we see Gwendolen, and she sees herself, as a rider of horses, a person in control of an instrument, but all that changes with her marriage. Grandcourt sees her not as the rider but as the horse he will ride:

From the very first there had been an exasperating fascination in the tricksiness with which she had--not met his advances, but--wheeled away from them. She had been brought to accept him in spite of everything--brought to kneel down like
a horse under training in the arena, though she might have an objection to it all the while. On the whole, Grandcourt got more pleasure out of this notion than he could have done out of winning a girl of whom he was sure that she had a strong inclination for him personally. (Bk. 4, Chap. 28, 365)

Soon Gwendolen also sees herself in this way. When she first puts on the diamonds in obedience to Grandcourt's demand, she says to herself, "He delights in making the dogs and horses quail: that is half his pleasure in calling them his. . . It will come to be so with me; and I shall quail" (Bk. 5, Chap. 35, 482). Grandcourt then observes to himself that she "answered to the rein" (Ibid). Gwendolen, so to speak, is a spirited horse, an instrument of pleasure for Grandcourt, and the more excited the girl becomes, the greater his pleasure.

The horse image of Gwendolen's and Grandcourt's relative positions is used again in the boating incident in which Grandcourt drowns. As they are about to go boating, Gwendolen warns him that it would be better for him to leave her at liberty, but Grandcourt "had the courage and confidence that belong to domination, and he was at that moment feeling perfectly satisfied that he held his wife with bit and bridle" (Bk. 7, Chap. 54, 744). Once again she is the instrument of his perverse pleasure.³

In this circle of worldly men and women, jewels and diamonds are also instrumental in serving as the best commodity for exchange. From an economic point of view, these shining objects are valued for their readiness for exchange. In the continental gambling resort, we see Gwendolen uses her necklace in exchange for ready cash so that she can go on gambling. Deronda redeems (also an act of exchange) the necklace and returns it to Gwendolen, thereby making himself the lost woman's mentor and confessor.

But the jewels and diamonds in the novel are used more for what Jean Beaudrillard calls "sign-value" than for their exchange-value. Inspired by
Marx's theory of commodity and exchange, Baudrillard in one of his early writings—*Pour une critique de l'économie politique du sign* in particular—proposes adding the further feature of sign value. According to Baudrillard, "the object assumes respectively the status of an *instrument*, a *commodity*, a *symbol*, or a *sign" (Kellman 22). In other words, "the capitalist mode of production thus produces a system of fetishized exchange values, use values and sign values through which commodities are displayed in consumption" (Kellman 22). Admittedly, Baudrillard applies his theory of a commodity's sign-value to the contemporary society, but as capitalism was taking shape in the late nineteenth century, his theory may apply as well to the society of Gwendolen and Grandcourt. Take the horses for instance. In addition to their exchange value, they attain, like certain types of modern cars or perfumes, prestige through signifying the rank, social position and status of their owners or consumers. Both Grandcourt and Gwendolen are conscious of what the horses signify.

Certainly jewels, much more than the horses, are treasured for their sign values. Gwendolen's necklace, the one redeemed by Deronda, becomes a sign of communication and understanding between them. Gwendolen uses it to signal to Deronda her contrition and her need for help. Grandcourt, though deliberately overlooking certain "foolish" acts by Gwendolen, is keenly aware of what the necklace signifies. As Grandcourt sees Gwendolen put the necklace-bracelet on her wrist, Grandcourt says in disgust:

"I suppose there is some understanding between you and Deronda about that thing you have on your wrist. If you have anything to say to him, say it. But don't carry on a telegraphing which other people are supposed not to see. It's damnably vulgar."

(Bk. 5, Chap. 36, 502-503)
Gwendolen responds by trying to tell him the story of the necklace, but Grandcourt disdains to know it. Gwendolen asks if he objects to her talking to Deronda, thereby provoking "insulting admonitions" from Grandcourt:

"You put that thing on your wrist, and hid it from me till you wanted him to see it. Only fools go into that deaf and dumb talk, and think they're secret. You will understand that you are not to compromise yourself. Behave with dignity. That's all I have to say."

(Bk. 5, Chap. 36, 503)

Grandcourt's "telegraphing" and "deaf and dumb talk" indicate that he is quite aware of the signifying power of the necklace--it is structured like language that communicates something.

Another, more expensive jewel--Grandcourt's mother's diamonds--is used as a significant stage property in the drama of the love triangle of Grandcourt, Gwendolen, and Lydia Glasher. Before Grandcourt and Gwendolen's wedding day, he goes to Gadsmere to get from Lydia his mother's diamonds, which long ago he has confided to her and wished her to wear. Formerly he had asked Lydia to put them into his keeping again, but Lydia refused, promising only that if he ever marries another woman, she will give the diamonds up to her. Lydia knows very well the symbolic and sentimental values of the diamonds. She knows also that she can use them as a tool of revenge for Gwendolen's broken promise. She therefore refuses to hand them to Grandcourt right away; instead, she offers to deliver them to the bride on the wedding day. Her strategy works terribly well. When Gwendolen receives the package containing the diamonds and a letter of curse from Lydia, she "screamed again and again with hysterical violence. . . He saw her pallid, shrieking as it seemed with terror, the jewels scattered around her on the floor" (Bk 4, Chap. 31, 407). The narrator tells
us what these diamonds signify: "Truly here were poisoned gems, and the poison had entered into this poor young creature" (Bk. 4, Chap. 31, 407). Diamonds signify different things on different occasions--much as a word changes its meaning in different context. As the diamonds change hands, they also change their meanings. Gwendolen is stickeen with remorse for the rest of her life.⁴

Horses, necklaces, and diamonds are obvious commodities treasured for their exchange-value and sign-value. If Gwendolen offers herself as a commodity in the marriage market, she is also treasured for her sign-value. In fact, Gwendolen's greatest aim in life is to shape herself into a prominent signifier at all cost; she would attempt to cut a striking figure in the world. What frightens her most is to fall into "insignificance; one of the recurrent key words used in reference to Gwendolen. In her small circle she has often being compared to Catherine Arrowpoint, her social rival at Offendene. Gwendolen believes that Catherine does not deserve the attention she is getting. Catherine's figure is slight, her features small, her eyes tolerable and her complexion sallow; but because of her musical accomplishments, and her advantage of being an heiress, Catherine threatens to steal the show. To Gwendolen, Catherine is nobody but an "insignificant-looking young lady of four-and-twenty, when any one's eyes would have passed over negligently if she had not been Miss Arrowpoint" (Bk. 1, Chap. 6, 80). Gwendolen has always striven to make herself a successful society lady, a "significant-looking" young woman. This perpetual desire to put herself in the limelight, this paranoic fear of mediocrity, is vividly illustrated in a social gathering in which Deronda is conversing with a host of ladies. Deronda is recommending Mirah's exceptional singing to the ladies. He tells Gwendolen that if she had heard Mirah she would perhaps revoke her resolution to give up singing. "I should rather think my resolution would be confirmed," says Gwendolen, half-seriously. "I don't feel able to follow your advice of enjoying my own middlingness." When Deronda says that "excellence encourages one about
life generally,"

"But then if we can't imitate it?--it only makes our own life seem the tamer," said Gwendolen, in a mood to resent encouragement founded on her own insignificance.

(Bk. V, Chap. 35, 491)

For a woman in the nineteenth century, the most convenient way to get out of insignificance is through a splendid marriage. Grandcourt courting represents an opportunity to gain "a brilliant position she had longed for, the imagined freedom she would create for herself in marriage, the deliverance from the dull insignificance of her girlhood" (Bk. 4, Chap. 28, 356). If she refuses Grandcourt, she will have "no choice but to endure insignificance and servitude" (Bk. 4, Chap. 28, 360). For Gwendolen, nothing is more dreadful than taking the situation of the governess and thus becoming obscure for the rest of her life. For this reason, she puts aside her conscience and accepts Grandcourt.

To avoid insignificance Gwendolen decides to act a magnificent part in the theater of life. For some time, she even considers pursuing the career of acting. She loves to put on acts in real life. It is an effective way to increase her sign-value. Any place could serve as the setting of her acting. When Gwendolen and her mother move to Offendene, Gwendolen, seeing an organ in the house, tells her mother that she will be Saint Cecilia. She then "acts" like Saint Cecilia: she throws off her hat and gloves, and seats herself before the organ in an admirable pose, looking upward. Her mother calls her pose "a charming picture;" Gwendolen laughs with delight. The narrator says that "All this seemed quite to the purpose on entering a new house which was so excellent a background" (Bk. 1, Chap. 3, 55).

Gwendolen's favorite background for acting is the drawing rooms, where she can "perform" significantly for a larger audience. She gets a
chance to outshine the "insignificant-looking" Catherine Arrowpoint in the archery meet at Brackenshaw Park. No other sports can put Gwendolen in a more advantageous pose: "Who can deny that bows and arrows are among the prettiest weapons in the world for feminine forms to play with? They prompt attitudes full of grace and power, where that fine concentration of energy seen in all marksmanship is freed from associations of bloodshed" (Bk. 1, Chap. 9, 133-134). As expected, Gwendolen's archery pose is much admired: every one is obliged to admit her surpassing charm in her attitudes and movements. When she actually gets the chance to act a part in a charade with Rex Gascoigne, she chooses to play Hermione of The Winter's Tale in a statuesque pose in her favorite costume. This tableau of Hermione is "doubly striking from its dissimilarity with what had gone before" (Bk. 1, Chap. 6, 92). The archery pose and the Hermoine tableau both suggest Gwendolen's desire to be a woman of significance.

The amateurish acting gives Gwendolen some confidence in becoming a professional actress. She consults Herr Klesmer on her prospect on the stage. Klesmer's analysis is cruelly true: "In sum, you have not been called upon to be anything but a charming young lady, whom it is an impoliteness to find fault with" (Bk. 3, Chap. 24, 297). Of course it is not Gwendolen's fault to turn herself into a charming young lady, for every other young lady has been brought up that way in the nineteenth century. If she insists on pursuing an acting career, Klesmer continues, she will have to bear "a glaring insignificance," and she will "hardly achieve more than mediocrity" (Bk. 3, Chap. 24, 303). Klesmer's talk about "insignificance" and "mediocrity" deals Gwendolen a deadly blow, for this is exactly what she tries hard to avoid in life.

Before her marriage Gwendolen has done everything she can to make herself a significant woman. A striking person in the first place, she adds to her charm some artistic accomplishments in singing and acting. Throughout the novel she is associated with such significant objects as
horses and jewelry. She has gradually built up her exchange-value and sign-value. This valuable commodity is picked up by a man with a liberal capital to spend. Ironically, as soon as the exchange is made, Gwendolen "gets her choice" (title for Book IV) but lives an insignificant life with a languid and easily bored husband. Her insignificance comes out most strongly when she is bypassed in Grandcourt's will and when she is isolated in the Mediterranean cruise ship. Yet Gwendolen seems content to play an insignificant role after Grandcourt's death. Perhaps Deronda's interference at the gambling table and at various stages of Gwendolen's life has produced some desired effect. After all, Gwendolen has transformed herself from a valuable commodity to a human being with conscience.


3 Deronda's mother feels the same way about her father. She tells Deronda, "I tell you, he never thought of his daughter except as an instrument" (Bk. 7, Chap. 53, 726). Mirah's father Lapidoth also uses his daughter as an instrument for making money: "Treated as a commodity and nearly sold into marriage, she is in some ways Gwendolen's counterpart" (Rosenman 242).

4 Ellen B. Rosenman notes that "Mirah appears to Deronda as an 'onyx cameo,' one of the many pieces of jewelry that circulate in the novel's economy of exchange" (244).
Works Cited


