

GEORGE ELIOT AND HER LAST NOVEL “DANIEL DERONDA”

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ANNOTATION

The 19th century in England is commonly referred to as the Victorian. From the factual side, this is not entirely true: Queen Victoria ascended the English throne only in 1837 (and remained on it for more than sixty years). The century began with long wars with Napoleon, then came the years of political reaction. In literature, the beginning of the century was the era of the Romantics.

In 1798, two young poets, William Wordsworth and Samuel Coleridge, published a book of poems, *Lyrical Ballads*. Wordsworth wrote a preface to it, perceived as a manifesto for a new literary school. In England, the era of romanticism turned out to be shorter than in other countries - only three decades. But for the richness of talents, for the brightness of artistic accomplishments, it can hardly be compared with any other period in the history of English literature.¹

The Romantics heralded a new understanding of art. It had to become natural and unpredictable, like life itself, and discover the beautiful in the everyday, the enduring in the fleeting, the eternal in the elusive and instantaneous. Poetry provided an ideal opportunity to implement this idea. The Romantic era became the high point of English poetry: dreamy, warmed by lyricism, like the verses of Wordsworth and John Keats; visionary, philosophical, like Coleridge's ballads; rebellious, riddled with echoes of the terrible events of the time, like a poem by George Byron.

The life of all these poets corresponded to the spirit, the pathos of their work. For them, there was no gap between word and deed, artistic manifesto and real behavior, which very often also represented a poetic plot, but only embodied in the situations and circumstances of reality itself. Almost invariably, this plot took on a distinct tinge of

¹Wordsworth W. Coleridge S. “Lyrical Ballads”
1798//https://sitekid.ru/literatura/vsemirnaya_literatura/anglijskaya_literatura_xix_veka.html

drama. Romantics rarely met with sympathy in society, and the historical period allotted to them turned out to be short. Byron's death in 1824 heralded the decline of romanticism. Other times have come.

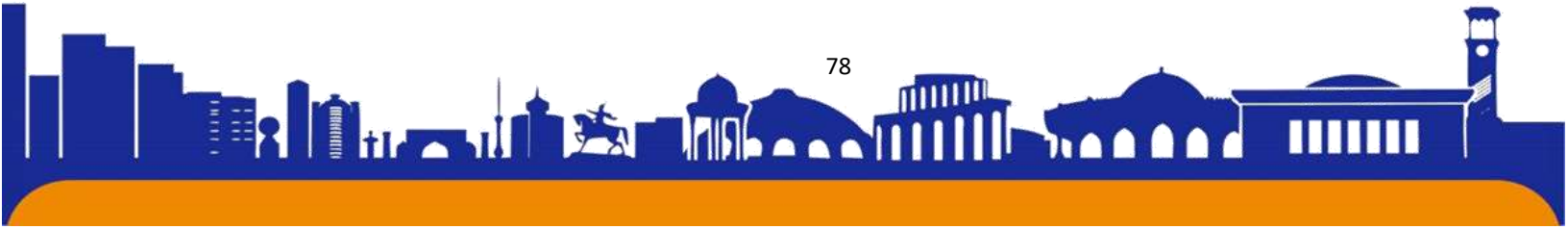
In Victorian England, a generation came to the fore, heralding its strong commitment to realism. He dominated English literature for decades and created a tradition that remains alive and alluring to this day. Victorianism is both a lifestyle, an ethical doctrine, and a worldview. At that time, the belief prevailed that there had never been such a happy era in the entire history of mankind. Those who said this talked about political stability and industrial growth, about the successes of science and education, about progress in all areas of life.

But there were also pessimists. For them, the spirit of Victorianism meant the triumph of flat materialism, when everything becomes vulgar: aspirations and beliefs, ideas and principles, customs and life. The outstanding historian and philosopher Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) wrote about the advent of the "mechanical age", which does not know what the soul is, because now they think only about profit and benefit. Many thought so. And languished in the dream of a vanished romance.

INTRODUCTION

It is unlikely that these dreamers were always right in their claims to their time. The Victorians really trusted good judgment over inspiration, and adhered to rigid moral dogmas that often turned into hypocrisy. But it cannot be said that they did not know doubts and anxieties or remained deaf to the reproaches of conscience, embarrassed by the pictures of poverty and lawlessness of the social lower classes, cynicism and depravity of the successful, typical of England at that time. These anxieties and the underlying moral conflicts are constantly felt in the social novel, the best that nineteenth-century English literature has produced.

That era valued in art, first of all, the reliability of evidence of life, understood almost literally: the work had to resemble a file cabinet of facts, true and provable. The richness of fiction, irony, play, the grotesque - everything had to give way before a scrupulous study of social phenomena. A person was interested in this literature rather than in itself, as a person with his own unique world, but as a type that allows you to understand the life of a certain social environment, its psychology and the system of values adopted in it.



The writer was guided by the confidence that he could describe this environment and society as a whole with exhaustive completeness, create a completely clear and accurate picture, where there would be nothing mysterious or paradoxical left. Literature was meant to be useful in the truest sense of the word, as useful as the railroads or the new methods of pain relief that made the Victorians so proud. But creativity has its own laws, and the artistic heritage of the Victorian age did not turn out to be consonant with its ideas and requirements in everything.

This course work offers an overview of the life and work of George Eliot, as well as an analysis of the novel "Daniel Deronda" with an emphasis on its social and historical context and the influence of Jewish culture.

The actuality of the theme

The novel touches upon important issues of religious and national self-identification, which have not lost their significance. The image of the protagonist trying to find his own cultural identity turned out to be prophetic for an era of intense migration and globalization.

The work is devoted to ethical dilemmas that are still relevant today, related to the relationship of the individual and society, the moral choice between passion and duty. These questions never cease to excite readers.

Finally, the novel touches upon the theme of relations between Judaism and Christianity, which in the age of inter-religious conflicts acquires the significance of an inter-civilizational dialogue.

Analysis of the novel "Daniel Deronda"

George Eliot's last novel, Daniel Deronda, first published in 1876, caused a storm of controversy in the English press - of course: in it, for the first time in the history of British literature, George Eliot touched on the painful topic of the latent anti-Semitism of English society, full of secret xenophobia and national prejudices. But if the "national" theme of the novel today has already lost its acute relevance, then time has gone only in favor of its second line - the psychological one. The story of the complex, multifaceted relationship of young Daniel and the greatest love of his life - the selfish, arrogant, authoritarian and hopelessly married beauty Gwendolyn, far outstripped Victorian literature with its ambiguity and even now looks surprisingly modern.²

² Eliot, G. (1986). Daniel Deronda. Edited with introduction by Barbara Hardy. 903 p. London, Penguin. (In English

General plot and themes

Daniel Deronda contains two main plot lines, united by the name of the character. The novel begins in late August 1865 with a meeting between Daniel Deronda and Gwendolen Harlet in the fictional town of Leubronn, Germany. Daniel finds himself attracted to, but wary of, the beautiful, stubborn and selfish Gwendolen, who he sees lose all her roulette winnings. The next day, Gwendolen receives a letter from her mother saying the family is broke and asking her to return home. Desperate to lose all her money, Gwendolen pawns the necklace and discusses gambling again to make a fortune. However, in a fateful moment, the porter returns the necklace to her, and she realizes that Daniel saw her pawn the necklace and ransomed it for her. From this point on, the plot splits into two separate flashbacks, one giving us the story of Gwendolen Harlet and the other giving us the story of Daniel Derond.

In October 1864, shortly after the death of Gwendolen's stepfather, Gwendolen and her family move to a new area. It is here that she meets Henley Mullinger Grandcourt, a taciturn and calculating man, who proposes marriage shortly after their first meeting. At first she is open to his advances, then after discovering that Grandcourt has several children with his mistress, Lydia Glasher, she ends up escaping to a German town where she meets Deronda. This part of the novel portrays Gwendolen as a haughty and selfish yet affectionate daughter, admired for her beauty but suspected by many in society due to her satirical observations and somewhat manipulative behavior. She is also prone to bouts of terror that shake her calm and controlling exterior.

Deronda was raised by a wealthy gentleman, Sir Hugo Mallinger. Deronda's relationship to Sir Hugo is ambiguous, and even Deronda is widely believed to be Sir Hugo's illegitimate son, although no one is certain. Deronda is a smart, carefree and compassionate young man who can't decide what to do with his life and it's a sore point between him and Sir Hugo who wants him to go into politics. One day at the end of July 1865, while sailing in a boat on the Thames, Deronda saves a young Jewish woman, Mira Lapidot, from trying to drown herself. He takes her to his friends' house, where they learn that Mira is a singer. She came to London to look for her mother and brother after running away from her father, who kidnapped her when she was a child and forced her to work in an acting troupe. She eventually ran away from him after learning that he was going to sell her into prostitution. Inspired by her story, Deronda pledges to help her find her mother (who happens to have died years ago) and brother;

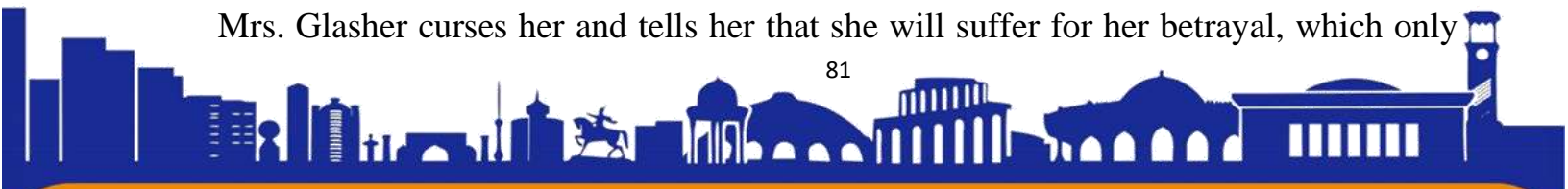


through this, he gets to know the Jewish community in London. Mira and Daniel bond, and Daniel, troubled by his growing affection for her, leaves for a short time to join Sir Hugo at Leubronn, where he and Gwendolen first meet.

From here, the story unfolds in "real time". Gwendolen returns from Germany in early September 1865 because her family has lost their fortune due to the economic downturn. Gwendolen is unwilling to marry, the only decent way a woman could achieve financial security; and she also doesn't want to become a governess, which is one of the few respectable ways for a woman of her lineage to work because it means her social status will be drastically downgraded from wealthy landed nobility to almost a servant (one of the problems of being a governess means that her status higher than the status of a servant, so the governesses rarely interacted with the servants, but at the same time, their status was much lower than that of their employers, so they could not communicate with them either). She comes up with the idea of pursuing a career as a singer or on stage, but a famous musician tells her that she has no talent. Finally, in order to save herself and her family from relative poverty, she marries the wealthy Grandcourt, despite promising Mrs. Glasher that she would not marry him and fearing it was a mistake. She believes she can manipulate him to keep her freedom to do what she pleases; however, Grandcourt showed every sign of being cold, insensitive, and manipulative.

Deronda, searching for Mira's family, meets a consumptive seer named Mordecai. Mordecai passionately proclaims his wish that the Jewish people retain their national identity and one day return to their Promised Land. As he dies, he wants Daniel to become his intellectual heir and continue to pursue his dream and be the protector of the Jewish people. Although he is strongly drawn to Mordecai, Deronda hesitates to devote himself to a cause that seems to have nothing to do with his own personality. Deronda's desire to accept Mordecai's vision grows stronger when they discover that Mordecai is Mirach's brother. However, Deronda does not believe he is Jewish and cannot reconcile this fact with his affection and respect for Mordecai/Ezra, which would be necessary for him to lead a Jewish life.

Gwendolen, meanwhile, was emotionally overwhelmed by her cold, self-absorbed and manipulative husband. She is consumed with guilt over disinheriting Lydia Glasher's children by marrying their father. On the day of Gwendolen's wedding, Mrs. Glasher curses her and tells her that she will suffer for her betrayal, which only





deepens Gwendolen's sense of fear and horror. During this time, Gwendolen and Deronda meet regularly, and Gwendolen pours out her problems to him at every meeting. While on a trip to Italy, Grandcourt is knocked off the boat into the water, and after some hesitation, Gwendolen jumps into the Mediterranean in a futile attempt to save him. After that, she is overcome with guilt, because she has long wanted him to die, and is afraid that her hesitation caused his death. Coincidentally, Deronda is also in Italy. He learned from Sir Hugo that his mother lived in Italy and he was going there to meet her. He consoles Gwendolen and gives her advice. In love with Deronda, Gwendolen hopes for a future with him, but he encourages her to take the path of righteousness, encouraging her to help others ease her suffering.

Deronda meets her mother and learns that she was a famous Jewish opera singer with whom Sir Hugo was once in love. She tells him that her father, a doctor and a strictly devout Jew, forced her to marry her cousin, whom she did not love. She did not like the harsh piety of her childhood. Daniel was the only child of this union, and after her husband's death, she asked the devoted Sir Hugo to raise her son as an English gentleman, never to know he was Jewish. After learning of his true parentage, Deronda finally feels comfortable with his love for Myra, and on his return to England in October 1866, he talks about this Myra and instructs himself to be Ezra/Mordecai's disciple. Before Daniel marries Myra, he goes to Gwendolen to tell her of his lineage, his decision to go to the "East" (at Ezra/Mordecai's wish), and his betrothal to Myra. Gwendolen is devastated by this news, but it becomes a turning point in her life, inspiring her to finally say, "I will live." She sends him a letter on his wedding day, telling him not to think of her sadly, but to know that she will be a better person once she gets to know him. The newlyweds are all ready to go to the "East" with Mordecai when Mordecai dies in their arms and the romance ends.

Characters and their development

Daniel Deronda - Ward of the wealthy Sir Hugo Mallinger and the hero of the novel, Deronda has a penchant for helping others for pay. At the beginning of the novel, he failed to win a scholarship to Cambridge due to his focus on helping a friend, traveling abroad, and just starting to study law. He often wonders about his birth and whether he is a gentleman or not. As he moves more and more among the world-within-the-world of the Jews of the novel, he begins to identify himself with their cause in direct proportion to the unfolding revelations of his ancestors. Eliot used the story





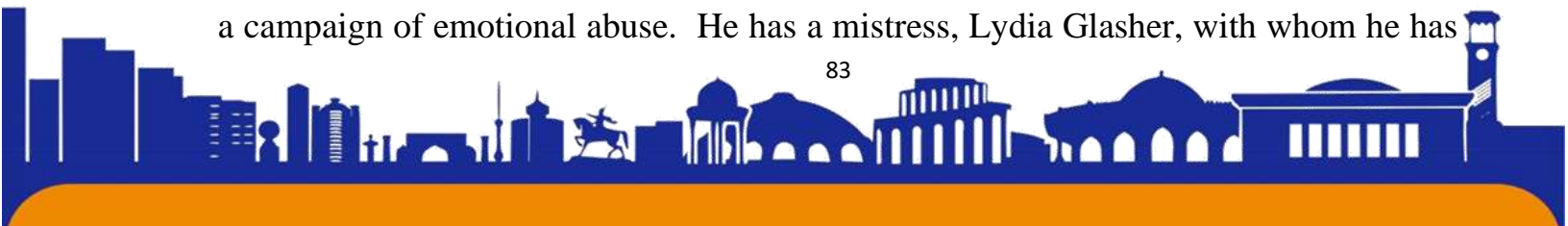
of Moses as part of his inspiration for Deronda. Just as Moses was a Jew raised as an Egyptian who eventually led his people to the Promised Land, so Deronda is a Jew raised as an Englishman who ends the novel with the same plan. Deronda's name probably indicates that his ancestors lived in the Spanish city of Ronda before the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492.

Gwendolen Harlet is the beautiful, spoiled daughter of a widow. mother. Wooed by men, she is flirtatious but ultimately narcissistic. At the beginning of the novel, her family is in financial crisis and she has to become a governess to support herself and her family. Seeking an escape, she explores the idea of becoming an actress and singer, but Herr Klesmer tells her that she started too late, that she doesn't know the meaning of hard work, training, and sacrifice. Gwendolen marries the domineering and cruel Henley Grandcourt, although she does not love him. Desperately unhappy, she turns to Deronda for help, who offers her understanding, moral support, and a way out of her guilt and grief. As a psychological study of an immature egotist trying to gain greater understanding of himself and others through suffering, Gwendolen is for many Eliot the novelist's crowning achievement and the true core of the book. F. R. Leavis believed that the novel would benefit from the complete removal of the Jewish section and its retitling "Gwendolen Harlet". It is true that although the novel is named after Deronda, more of it is about Gwendolen than about Deronda himself.

Mira Lapidot is a beautiful Jewish girl born in England but taken away by her father at a young age to travel the world as a singer. Realizing as a young woman her father planned to sell her as a mistress to a European nobleman to get money for his gambling addiction, she flees from him and returns to London to look for her mother and brother. When she arrived in London, she found her old house destroyed and no trace of her family. Giving in to despair, she tries to commit suicide. Rescued by Daniel, she is cared for by his friends in search of her family and a job so she can support herself.

Sir Hugo Mallinger is a rich gentleman; Sir Hugo fell in love with opera diva Maria Alharici when she was young, and out of love for her agreed to raise her son, Daniel Deronde.

Henley Mallinger Grandcourt is Sir Hugo's nephew and heir presumptive. wealthy, manipulative, sadistic. Grandcourt marries Gwendolen Harlet and then begins a campaign of emotional abuse. He has a mistress, Lydia Glasher, with whom he has





several children. He promised to marry Lydia when her husband died, but instead reneged on his promise to marry Gwendolen.

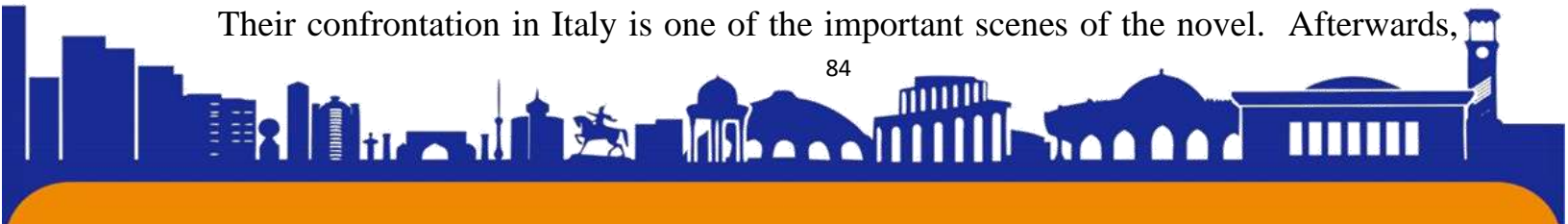
Thomas Cranmer Lash is a slave associate of Henley Grandcourt. He and Gwendolen take an immediate dislike to each other.

Lydia Glasher is Henley Grandcourt's lover, a fallen woman who abandoned her husband at Grandcourt and bore his children. She confronts Gwendolen, hoping to convince her not to marry Grandcourt and protect her children's inheritance. To punish both women, Grandcourt takes the family's diamonds, which he gave to Lydia, and gives them to Gwendolen. He forces Gwendolen to wear them despite her knowledge that his mistress previously wore them.

Ezra Mordechai Cohen is Mira's brother. A young Jewish seer suffering from consumption, befriends Daniel Deronda and teaches him about Judaism. A cabalist and proto-Zionist, Mordecai sees Deronda as his spiritual successor and inspires him to continue his vision of establishing a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Named after the biblical character Mordechai, who delivers the Jews from the wiles of Haman in the Book of Esther

Herr Klesmer - German-Jewish musician in Gwendolen Harlet's social circle; Klesmer marries Katherine Arrowpoint, a wealthy girl with whom Gwendolen befriends. He also advises Gwendolen not to try to live on stage. Believed to be based in part on Franz Liszt.

Princess Halm Eberstein is the mother of Daniel Derond. The daughter of a physician, she suffered under her father's rule; he saw that her main goal was to produce Jewish sons. To please him, she agreed to marry her cousin, knowing that he adored her and would allow her to do whatever she wished after her father's death. When her father died, she became a famous singer and actress. After her husband's death, she gave her son to Sir Hugh Mallinger to be raised by an English gentleman, free from all the faults she felt she had as a Jew. Later, when her voice did not seem to sound, she converted to Christianity in order to marry a Russian nobleman. Her voice was restored, and she bitterly regretted that she had parted with the life of an artist. Now that she has fallen ill with a terminal illness, she begins to fear retribution for foiling her father's plans for his grandson. She contacts Daniel through Sir Hugo, asking him to meet her in Genoa, where she is traveling under the pretense of consulting a doctor. Their confrontation in Italy is one of the important scenes of the novel. Afterwards,



she tells Deronda where he can find a chest full of important documents related to his Jewish heritage, collected by her father.

Significance of “Daniel Deronda” in the work of George Eliot

The latest novel by J. Eliot occupies a special place in the work of the writer due to her appeal to contemporary reality and to the problem of overcoming national and moral egoism, the spiritual impoverishment of English life in the 1860s, the search for a new type of hero aimed at tolerance, effective compassion, ethical creation and active social position.³

Writers' opinion of the novella

P. Nestor believes that the image of Daniel Deronda is “the physical embodiment of the Neoplatonic idea”. In particular, the idea that the mind is the true human “I”, the highest part of his soul, realizing itself as part of the World Mind, that true freedom for a person is a passionate desire for the common good. Eliot, being, like most Victorian thinkers, a progressive, saw the promise of this progress in the mind, in its inevitable victory. One of the heroes of “Daniel Deronda”, a member of the philosophical club “Hand and Banner” Miller, is endowed by the author with the following thought: “... I spoke about the power of ideas, which I consider to be the main transformative cause”. A. Vengerova saw a similarity between the novels of J. Meredith and J. Eliot in the type of realism (especially the late Eliot), in which “the predominance of thought over fiction” is obvious and attention to the “intellectual side of any phenomenon” dominates. Another Russian researcher of Eliot’s creativity, P. D. Boborykin, wrote: “... in the entire history of the new novel, George Eliot is perhaps the only example of such a harmonious fusion of mental, moral qualities, ideas and hopes.”⁴

Through an intellectual analysis of what is happening to him and around him, through a deliberate rejection of his “Englishness” in favor of “Jewishness”, Daniel Deronda, as befits the hero of a classic upbringing novel, comes to the stabilization of his own inner world, its harmonization with external circumstances - the coming struggle for the embodiment of the ideals for which Mordecai lived. He says to

³Eliot, G. (2000). Selected Critical Writings. Edited with Introduction and Notes by Rosemary Ashton. 383 p. Oxford, Oxford University Press. (In English)

⁴ Arkush, A. For George Eliot, To Appreciate Jews Was To Save England. Mosaic: Advancing Jewish Thought. URL: <http://mosaicmagazine.com/observation/history-ideas/2017/03/for-george-eliot-to-appreciate-the-jews-was-to-save-england> (accessed: 02.06.2019). (In English)

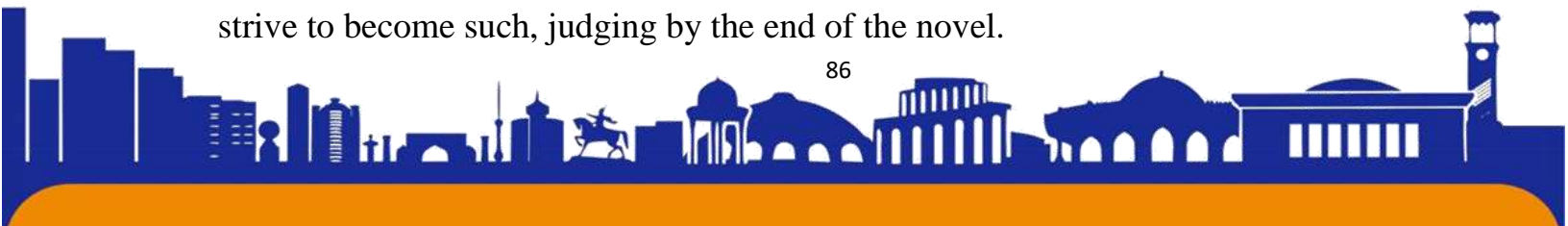


Mordecai and Mira: “Thanks to your inspiration, I saw the task of my life. It was you who gave the image to what I think was a hereditary desire - the action of the still ardent thoughts of many of my ancestors.

In the works of J. Eliot, all the characters, no matter how intellectually "specified" they are (remember Adam Weed, Maggie Tulliver, Felix Holt, Romola di Bardi, Tertius Lydgate, Dorothea Brooke), are necessarily placed in a situation of purely personal - love, family and other nakedly human experiences, the reproduction of which psychologizes the basis of the novel. In Daniel Deronda, the protagonist is placed in a romantic situation of "saving" two women: Mira in the literal sense - from physical death (suicide), and Gwendolen - figuratively, from moral death. He acts as a kind of moral reproach/beacon for Gwendolen, who is entangled in her own desires, actions, internal struggles, and contributes to the preservation of her humanity. That is what she means when she says: "Life is sad for lack of purpose." At the end of the novel, having already experienced the drama of moral violence on the part of Grandcourt and the tragedy of his death, secretly long desired by her, Gwendolen reflects alone with herself: “The future, to which she constantly aspired, seemed to her one where she would always try to get closer to the ideal, which he [Daniel Deronda - B.P. will point out to her." Congratulating Daniel and Mira on their wedding with a note, she writes: “I remembered your words - so that I can become one of the best women who make others rejoice that they were born”

Nestor sees the plot unity of the novel for the most part in the parallelism of female images - Mira and Gwendolen, in the theme of love, marriage, complex relationships between the world of women and the world of men. We think, and here we agree with J. Levin, R. Hollander and other researchers, that one of the main sources of the artistic unity of the novel is the idea of tolerance, the idea of condemning violence in all its manifestations, the idea of overcoming prejudice against any Other, in which Daniel is strengthened in the situation of finding an identity, and on the threshold of which at the end of the novel Gwendolen finds himself. In other words, as A. Fleishman rightly notes, in the novel both on the problem-thematic and on

On the plot and narrative levels, the Feuerbachian idea - “the other is my thou” (“the other is my you”) is realized and “human nature freed from the limitations of the individualist” triumphs. This is exactly Daniel Deronda, and Gwen Dolen will also strive to become such, judging by the end of the novel.



Renowned researcher of English literature of the XIX century. Bernard Paris in a work with the remarkable title "Rereading George Eliot. Changing Reactions to Her Life Experiments" rightly writes that Daniel Deronda belongs to those Eliot heroes who are guided by the principle that living for others is a way to give meaning to your own life. In addition to Deronda, Paris sees such heroes in Maggie Tulliver, Dorothea Brooke, Felix Holt, Romola di Bardi. It is quite clear that the fact that the fate of Jewry is accepted with gratitude, the specification of the noble goal of the revival of the Jewish nation on the land of Palestine have an important, but not the only meaning from the point of view of the pathos of the novel. Much more important is the universal content of the image of Daniel, the generalized humanistic message that is revealed in it. That is why Eliot endows his protagonist with a conscience based on "an extraordinary sensitivity", besides "an increased early habit of imagination to transfer oneself to the place of another", "an innate ability to love" and an invariable desire to analyze everything. And here it is impossible not to recall the thoughts about this hero of one of the first domestic researchers of this wonderful novel, J. Eliot, that Daniel is distinguished by "a happy combination of such two world engines as feeling and reason", and it is this unity that becomes the basis for his renewal in the end of the novel, renewal in the name of serving the great goal of serving people, according to the deep conviction of the writer, so necessary for contemporaries.

CONCLUSION

In this course work, the work of George Eliot and her latest short story "Daniel Deronda" were analyzed. Eliot, real name Mary Ann Evans, is one of the most important writers in the history of English literature. Her prose is characterized by psychological depth, social poignancy and moral seriousness.

Daniel Deronda (1876) is Eliot's last and most ambitious novella, which differs from her previous works in that it emphasizes intercultural relationships and national identity. The main characters of this work are the young aristocrat Daniel Deronda and the beautiful Gwendolen Harle, both of whom are in search of their place in life and society. The plot of the story develops in England and on the continent, which creates an atmosphere of constant movement and change.

During the study, it was found that "Daniel Deronda" is striking in its depth and complexity of the topics, issues and problems that the author touches on. The most important theme of the novel is the issue of national identity and self-knowledge.



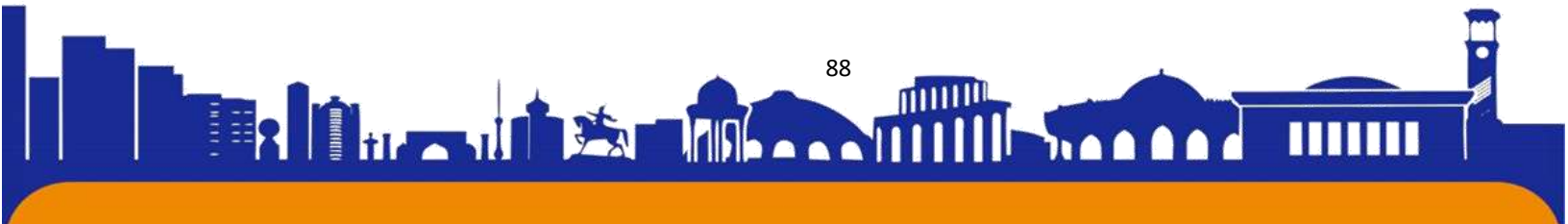
Deronda, experiencing an identity crisis, discovers her roots in Jewish culture and decides to devote herself to serving her people. At the same time, Gwendolen Harle is faced with a cruel world in which her usual ideas about herself and her abilities are being seriously tested.

Eliot also draws attention to social issues such as women's education, women's rights, anti-Semitism and nationalism. She emphasizes the importance of morality, kindness and humanity in a cruel and indifferent society. At the center of the novel is the idea of responsibility to one's own life and the fate of other people, as well as the understanding that each person can and should make a choice in favor of goodness and love.

Thus, "Danielle Deronda" is a kind of apotheosis of George Eliot's work and testifies to her deep understanding of human nature, social processes and cultural diversity. This work deserves a special place in English literature and remains a topical research object for the modern reader.

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ISSN (E): 2181-4570 ResearchBib Impact Factor: 4.9 / 2023

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