Multiplicity of Spaces in *Daniel Deronda*

Alice Sukdolová

Abstract
The paper focuses on the multiplicity of spaces structuring the novel Daniel Deronda and attempts to demonstrate an understanding of space projected by George Eliot in the European context. This last novel of George Eliot was in this respect more revelatory than her previous works, as it moves the author's perception of space far from English regionalism. The paper further contrasts the use of space in Daniel Deronda with Eliot's previous novels using Deleuzoguattarian smooth and striated space as well as certain Romantic impulses in Victorian novels as defined by D. D. Stone. A significant aspect of the study is an analysis of water as space, namely interpreting the presence of the River Thames and the sea along the port of Genoa. Both of these water spaces contribute greatly to the development of the novel's plot towards a tragic mood. Heidegger's philosophical treatment of the spatial aspect of the bridge will be focused upon in the final part of the article.

Keywords
G. Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, space, water, Romantic, Victorian, European

Space Representation in George Eliot's Novels

Space is generally considered a constitutive element of narrative, while the effect of spatiality should be treated as a complex function of the text and not a mere device of literary representation. In contrast with previous studies in semantics and topology, spatial studies have observed dynamic strategies of narrative, namely in the category of a spatial turn which relies on the extensional sphere of space transformation from social to the literary space. The aim of this paper is to analyze the space representation in George Eliot's works as well as the construction of space, including its symbolic interpretations.

Many authors seem to have limited their fictional worlds within boundaries on a minor scale, especially in the course of the Victorian era. However, the philosophy of describing space in George Eliot's last novel is fairly different from regional perspectives given by other Victorian novelists as well as in Eliot's own previous works. Eliot gives the various points of view of the omnipresent narrator in her last novel, whereas for example in *The Mill on the Floss* and in *Adam Bede* the narrative perspective concentrates on the projection of an individual character and the environment. In all Eliot's works, however, spaces are constructed with respect to a fatalistic notion in which the signs of natural phenomena point towards the predestination of characters either to live or to die (e.g. Maggie Tulliver). Like Thomas Hardy, George Eliot treats the predestination of characters in an ironic way, confronting "the Fate" of characters with a reflection on the crisis of Victorian morals and values. In Eliot's last novel, Daniel is heading towards his Jewish roots, becoming the messenger of spiritual leadership of his nation in Palestine in the book's final scene. Donald D. Stone sees the theme of Judaism in *Daniel Deronda* as the triumph of a Romantic principle projecting "the survival of a nation through the

power of shared memories and feelings" through a focus on Darwinian principles.[1] According to Stone, Daniel's devotion to roots speaks for "Zionism as a movement of Romantic rather than religious significance."[2] The hero's final preference to base his future life on Jewish culture in Palestine can be interpreted as his abstraction from the Victorian world, disregarding its rules and morality. Deronda becomes gradually disinterested in English culture and society, becoming impressed by his own mysterious origin as well as idealistic visions of his future role.

In comparison with Eliot's earlier novels, fatalism and predestination do not seem to be reflected upon as intensively in *Daniel Deronda*; the plot is rather structured as the narrator's intention to arrange the meeting points of the main characters, with special emphasis put on the *place* of their meeting. In contrast, the fate of the characters in Eliot's earlier novels towards disaster seems inevitable, as in the case of Maggie Tulliver of *The Mill on the Floss* or Hetty Sorrel in *Adam Bede*. In some way both of these earlier characters share the destiny of other tragic heroines, similarly to minor characters in *Daniel Deronda*. In her regional novels Eliot emphasizes the interconnection of the concepts of space with the symbolism of bad omens reflected in nature, all of which seems to be of critical importance for the development of the plots of her novels.

Another aspect of confronting Eliot's previous works with *Daniel Deronda* is the attention Eliot pays in her last novel to describing interiors ranging from the luxurious halls of the upper-class country mansions to middle class settings, and periodically sinking to the lowest parts of society as the main hero visits the Jewish quarter of London. In comparison to Eliot's previous, regional novels, the author's aim seems to reflect the social strata of Victorian England while projecting the depth of space in connection with the social and religious aspects of the multicultural city as contrasted with the more unified, homogeneous life in the country.

The Structure of Space in Daniel Deronda

As for arranging the meeting points in *Daniel Deronda*, some spaces are of crucial importance.[3] George Eliot's last novel is undoubtedly treated on a larger scale, far from the notion of English regionalism. In the European context of the novel Daniel's first contact with Gwendolen occurs in Leubronn in Germany as he watches her playing roulette. Gwendolen loses all the money she has with her, only to learn consequently that her family has squandered her inheritance and she is to travel back home to face the difficult economic situation. The initial scene of *Daniel Deronda* supports the symbolic displacement and destabilization of the main heroine, whose movement in the fictional space would trace, to some extent, the parallel to Daniel's movement. Ironically enough, however, Daniel's dislocation does not follow Gwendolen's turn back to the traditional Victorian roots in the novel's conclusion. Gwendolen oscillates between the surface level of Victorian material existence and the spiritual harmony and understanding of Daniel's mind. Nevertheless, she can never reach even the fringes of Daniel's inner consciousness and thought, since he focuses on the context of a space much larger than Gwendolen's, following the trace of his Jewish ancestors.

1 Donald D. Stone, *The Romantic Impulse in Victorian Fiction* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), 173.

2 Stone, *The Romantic Impulse*, 243.

3 The places are listed here in the chronological order as they appear in *Daniel Deronda* (1876).

Another place significant for the development of the plot of the novel is Whispering Stones, where Gwendolen is arranged to meet her potential husband's mistress Lydia Glasher and her children. In this scene a hint at Eliot's fatalism in her treatment of characters becomes apparent. The heroine feels "the shadowy omnipresence" of the woman related to her husband, "the fatal power over her" and "the poisoning skill of a sorceress."[4] The symbolic meeting of the two women among the standing rocks functions as an enduring warning to Gwendolen. The stone-like figures of Lydia and her children in turn represent the moral decadence of Mr. Grandcourt, whom Gwendolen is to accept as her future husband. Nevertheless, the potentially strong symbolic warning image does not prevent the heroine from the economically advantageous marriage, which ensures her a relatively safe existence. Nevertheless, the way the bad omens are associated with space is ironic. There is little fatalism in the Standing Stones scene, since the meeting was arranged by Mr. Grandcourt's friend and Gwendolen freely chooses her future existence, being limited only by the economic circumstances of her family.

The space of the River Thames represents the core of the space of the city of London. It becomes the place of Daniel's contemplation on his way towards reaching the absolute dimension, and, moreover, while rowing his boat two of important encounters with Jewish characters occur. On the first occasion Daniel saves Mirah from a suicide attempt by drowning in the river.[5] Later on Daniel meets Mordecai while rowing a boat on the Thames as Mordecai waits for him on the bridge. The symbolic and mystical appearance of Mordecai above Daniel enlarges the vertical dimension of the space of the river as well as the spiritual depth of space of the whole novel, an effect supported by Mordecai's prophetic speech to Daniel. The River Thames functions later on as the gate towards the open sea as the main hero sails for Palestine. Nonetheless, Daniel's desires to reform the world remain rather uncertain, as is suggested in the open ending of the novel in which Daniel leaves the decentralized space of the city, becoming a part of the smooth space of the sea.[6]

The space of water becomes a strong impulse for Daniel's inner world, evoking the visions of Jewish history in which Daniel sees himself as a saviour of the Jewish nation predestined to help others. His thoughts become closely associated with water also in connection with music, as in the visions evoked by his excited feelings when Daniel listens to Mirah's song: "It was as if he had a vision of himself besought with outstretched arms and cries, while he was caught by the waves and compelled to mount the vessel bound for a far-off coast."[7] The hero's visions associated with water allude to his future message and the prophetic role Daniel takes over from Mordecai after his death.

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4 George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda* (London: Everyman's Publishers, 2000), 613. All subsequent quotes are from this edition.

5 The motif of drowning and the overall symbolic aspect of death in water is treated similarly in other Eliot's works as well as in Thomas Hardy's Wessex novels, namely in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* and *The Return of the Native*.

6 In their Treatise on Nomadology in *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze and Guattari define the category of smooth space as representing the dynamics of forces. Smooth space is related to the aesthetic expression of space, i.e. how a space is perceived by the narrator or character. The sea is considered the smooth space *par excellence* by Deleuze and Guattari.

7 Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, 624.

In *Daniel Deronda* the poetic aspect of the space of London becomes essential for the narrator's Romantic concept in which place functions as an impulse evoking a flow of feelings:

> *"[...] the river, with its long vista half hazy, half luminous, the grand dim masses or tall forms of buildings […], the oncoming of boats and barges from the still distance into sound and colour, entered into his mood and blent themselves indistinguishably with his thinking, as a fine symphony to which we can hardly be said to listen makes a medium that bears up our spiritual wings."*[8]

In the treatment of the space associated with water Eliot focuses on a variety of symbolic aspects. In connection with the main hero water brings purification and regeneration to Deronda's spiritual world and helps him find intuitive wisdom. Nevertheless, as will be described later female characters in Eliot's works face difficulties in contact with the space of water.

The Mystic Space

The most complex and mystical space of the novel is closely associated with the Jewish character of Mordecai. According to Frye's anagogic symbolism, Mordecai offers mystical interpretations of the world, pointing to God and referring to allusions to heaven and the afterlife. Another aspect of his space perception is related to existential symbolism, which projects his life as a journey towards death.

According to the narrator Mordecai himself bears the physiognomy of "the prophet of the Exile"[9]. Traditional concepts of space in Victorian novels are transcended by Mordecai's hallucinatory, dreamy, illusory world. The "inner" space of his thought, which concerns most intensively his "long-wandering soul", will depart from the mortal region to join others in perfection. Heading towards death, the space of his thought moves symbolically backwards into his memories joining those of the vision of the future:

> *I feel myself back when my life was broken. The bright morning sun was on the quay – it was at Trieste – the garments of men from all nations shone like jewels – the boats were pushing off – the Greek vessel that would land us at Beyrout was to start in an hour. […] I said, I shall behold the lands and people of the East, and I shall speak with a fuller vision. […] and standing on the quay, where the ground I stood on seemed to send forth light, and the shadows had an azure glory as of spirits become visible, I felt myself in the flood of a glorious life, wherein my own small year-counted existence seemed to melt, so that I knew it not; and a great sob arose within me as at the rush of waters that were too strong a bliss.*[10]

This passage reflects Romantic feelings of character, focusing on the flow of energy of the ocean, producing an impulse for the journey eastward to meet great ideals.[11] The function of light in the scene becomes essential as a metaphor of the

8 Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, 524.

9 Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, 424.

10 Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, 597.

11 In a search for Romantic aspects in George Eliot's work, D. D. Stone sees Mordecai as displaying a Romantic faith in visions which may have been inspired by Shelley. Mordecai's conviction follows the function of "the creators of the world" (Mordecai in Book II, 335) and can be traced in affinities in Keats and other Romantics. As Stone further points out, Daniel Deronda is rich in quotations from English Romantic poets

visionary future. The exotic settings to be seen, the mixture of nations joining for the voyage, spiritual movement, abstracting from earthly existence and the feeling of religious exultation support a Romantic concept of space. Water further functions as an element connected with the mighty potential of feelings in which the character's body desires to be "mingled with the ocean of human existence, free from the pressure of individual bondage."[12]

The content of Mordecai's visionary speech relies on symbolic spatial images, focusing on the metaphorical, imaginary spaces: "I had done as one who wanders and engraves his thought in rocky solitudes"[13]. This is generally based on the connection with natural elements: "I speak not as an ignorant dreamer – as one bred up in the inland valleys […] never having stood by the great waters where the world's knowledge passes to and fro"[14]. The focus of the narrator hints at confronting various concepts of inland space and the ocean with the symbolic aspect of water as the source of wisdom and knowledge. Thus the superficiality and meagre prospects of the inland inhabitants of Victorian England is stressed in contrast with a Romantic vision of the open space of the sea.

The focus on historical context is further supported by Daniel's visions connected with his presence in Genoa and his rambles through London. Through the inner space of his thought Daniel enters the space of Jewish consciousness. In this dimension of space, Jewish mysticism becomes essential as the hero takes on the symbolic role of the Wandering Jew.

Nevertheless, Daniel's tendency on the one hand to approach the Jewish nation seeking a sense of belonging, and on the other his sympathy for Gwendolen, who represents the displaced members of the Gentile world, cause a split in Daniel's personality. The clash of the two worlds leads to the inevitable and painful resolution of leaving the space in which he grew up in order to join the space newly discovered. Now however, he is to face the crisis of the Jewish nation, in which existential space has become decentralized and dispersed. Consequently, the hero's life becomes bitterly "determined by the historical destiny of the Jews"[15] as he is able to perceive through the inner space of historical visions the tragic character of the past of the Jewish nation. These visions are repeatedly evoked by the water element, with the main character frequently situated in a boat, either on the Thames or in Genoa. Through a painful vision evoked by the presence of the sea or river Daniel's messianic complex becomes developed, producing his deeper association with the fate of the Jewish nation heading into exile.

The space-time relations of Daniel Deronda become surprisingly elaborated towards the end of the novel with the critical turning point of the characters' stay in Genoa. The personal, inner space of the main character becomes closely associated with a European historical consciousness including a vision of the Austro-Prussian war in 1866 reminiscent of the Battle of Sadowa[16]. The scene contrasts this crucial historical

(Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, Shelley) as well as from poets admired by the Romantics (Dante, Shakespeare, Milton). Stone, *The Romantic Impulse*, 369.

12 Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, 597.

13 Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, 549.

14 Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, 550.

15 Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, 604.

16 Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, 686.

moment with the inspiring and meditative atmosphere of the seaside resort. The description of the course of the day changing into the night based on the perception of the sounds, air and lights seems to border on impressionism. Historical time gives way to a subjective reflection of the present through the course of the hours based on natural cycles in which the space of the city is perceived as the whole universe sunk in solitude:

> *[...] all strong colour melted in the stream of moonlight which made the streets a new spectacle with shadows, both still and moving, on cathedral steps […] and then slowly with the descending moon all sank in deep night and silence, and nothing shone but the port lights of the great Lanterna in the blackness below, and the glimmering stars in the blackness above.*[17]

The most interesting aspect of these inner spaces is suggested in the main character's approach towards Mordecai's "spiritual exile" - the space into which Daniel is trying to penetrate. Daniel felt "his imagination moving without repugnance in the direction of Mordecai's desires" when the space of thought becomes shared by two individuals. In contrast to Mordecai and Daniel's shared inner space of thoughts, Gwendolen's mind turns toward isolation; she is painfully misunderstood by all the male characters, notwithstanding her reliance on Deronda's empathy.

The Jewish quarter of London where Daniel is taken in search for Mirah's family finally becomes the symbolic location for the search for his own identity. In contrast with the radial space structure of *Daniel Deronda*, the London Jewish environment now becomes the novel's central point. As a Romantic hero Daniel is now moving toward the core of the mystery of his origin, an impulse which leads him away from the country of his forefathers. Conversely, from the character's point of view, the meaningful existence which seems to begin in the novel's conclusion is very likely to end up in more uncertainties, as it is caught up in Deronda's illusions of the promised land of the Jewish nation. In that respect *Daniel Deronda* offers neither a rational solution as a way out of the social crisis of the Jewish minority nor a personal solution regarding Deronda's search for his identity. Daniel's rambling continues in spite of his idealistic visions of the future.

Finally, the port of Genoa appears to be the place of symbolic decisions for the main character as well as an ambivalent turning point for the heroine. In Genoa Daniel discovers the Jewish identity he was uncertain of. Simultaneously, Gwendolen's life is strongly influenced by the boat accident near Genoa in which her husband dies. She is now free to meet Daniel and express her love clearly. Nevertheless, Daniel's essential life decision heads him toward his Jewish roots and he decides to marry Mirah. As mentioned before, Eliot relies again on the ironic treatment of fatalism in the novel as the two main protagonists never come together with respect to the future and their meeting in Genoa becomes mere paradoxical coincidence.

Romantic and Victorian Aspects of Daniel Deronda

Commenters have placed George Eliot's novels as a part of the climax of Romantic impulses in Victorian fiction. According to D. D. Stone, *Daniel Deronda* reflects the earlier period's enthusiasm for aliens and outcasts, following the Romantic "need to believe in the power of will to translate visions into facts"[18]. Accordingly, a contradictory sense of

17 Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, 686.

18 Stone, *The Romantic Impulse*, 244.

stoicism and fatalism can also be traced which towards the end of the 19th century threatened to turn into nihilism as a reflection of the social crisis and collapse of moral values in the Victorian era. The projection of the novel's main protagonist into the open space of the river Thames or into London streets could focus on the Romantic theory of perception, extracting a higher truth from the actions of Deronda's individuality.

Daniel Deronda is based on two parallel plots centred around the meetings of Daniel and Gwendolen. Nevertheless, the Jewish aspect of the novel pervades over the prospect of marriage of the main characters. In other words, Daniel's "Victorian" interests of an English gentleman give way to his Jewish identity and origin. Daniel becomes gradually projected as a wanderer (more specifically as the Wandering Jew) searching for his and Mirah's origin, finding the prophet Mordecai when walking through the streets of London. The Romantic aspect of Daniel's character is reflected in his perception of space: the motives of Daniel's search for contemplation when rowing the boat, his search for identity as well as his visions of changing the prospect of the Jewish nation all speak for him as a Romantic character. He frequently looks for solitude in the open space of the river, perceiving the colours of the sunset and freedom of the open space which stimulates his feelings and influences his visions of the future. His rambling through the Jewish quarter leads him to the recognition of Jewishness, which stimulates his further actions towards his idealistic visions of changing the Jewish fate. The symbolic aspect of the space of the river in relation to Daniel's perception of space is most apparent in the scene in which he meets his female Jewish counterpart. Daniel's Romantic female partner Mirah is beginning to live on the brink of disaster, having thought of ending her desperate existence. She is wandering through London looking for her family, having escaped from America where she was driven by her father.

As pointed out by the critics, Daniel's relation to the past is suggested by the symbolic origin of his surname, whose form is derived from the Spanish town of Ronda, a place with historical consequences related to the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492 on the basis of the Alhambra Decree. Daniel's movement in the space of the novel focuses on the spiritual depth of the secret bind to his origin. As the main hero concentrates on getting closer to the knowledge of his ancestry, he penetrates into the core of the Jewish community inside London, which functions as an isolated space within space. Daniel's impulsive search finally reveals more secrets than he may have expected. However, the main character's identification with his Jewish ancestry does not focus on the spatial level of his existence; the London Jewish environment is initially perceived by Daniel, limited by his Victorian prejudice, as repulsive and low. He nevertheless gradually becomes affected by the influence of the Jewish environment, intuitively perceiving a spiritual affinity to the Jews living on the lowest rung of the social ladder. As has been pointed out before, Daniel's discovers his origin in another part of Europe, in a place totally dislocated from any relation to the place of his birth, childhood or present stay. For Daniel, Genoa represents a historically remarkable city with the function of the place of revelation. Thus the hero moves between places related to his life and places whose relation to his life is first uncertain. The discontinuity of space stands in contrast to the problematic and partially fictitious continuity of the hero's life.

In the course of the novel, Daniel's fate might be paralleled with the story of Moses, who was also brought up in a country rather unrelated to his real origin. Having found his roots, Moses will lead his nation to the Promised Land, at least on the symbolic level. The space of the novel thus can be interpreted through another aspect, one based on cultural and religious affinities with the Old Testament.

In spite of the plot shift into various settings in *Daniel Deronda*, in the context of her complete works George Eliot, similarly to Thomas Hardy, seems to prefer the space of the country, which seems to be a more natural alternative in 19th century England. Along this line of inquiry, the space of *Daniel Deronda* seems to be decentred, or rather fragmented, as the main heroes look for their roots and stability. Both Daniel and Gwendolen represent uprooted characters having a particular sense of home, and subconsciously following Victorian norms and moral values. However, at the same time they are not able to find the balance between their position in life and their desires. In contrast with Daniel, Gwendolen has to face economic difficulties and thus embodies the Victorian emphasis on a financially rewarding marriage for women, an attitude connected with her personal unhappiness and unfulfilled desires. Daniel's existence becomes more complex in his search for a personal identity bound to his concealed Jewish origin. Nevertheless, both the main hero and the heroine comment upon the problematic existence of the modern 19th century man and woman, with both becoming subjects of a nomadic way of life. The sense of displacement becomes very intensive during the course of the novel. Her family's expectation of Gwendolen obtaining a higher position on the social scale causes her feelings of estrangement. This becomes clear through the example of the heroine's father, whose wealthy family was centred in the West Indies; the heroine's lifestyle in turn becomes affected by the elusive sense of home. The space of the colonies, which is occasionally referred to in the course of the novel, reflects the roles in Victorian society. Gwendolen's longing for an adventurous life and her Romantic desires are suppressed by the simple fact that she is a woman: "We women can't go in search of adventures – to find out the North-West Passage or the source of the Nile, or to hunt tigers in the East. We must stay where we grow, or where the gardeners like to transplant us. We are brought up like flowers, to look as pretty as we can, and be dull without complaining."[19] The heroine's comparison clearly illustrates the position of women in a Victorian society which prefers for women mental passivity and care for family values to an independence of spirit.

The Sense of Home: Victorian Values in Relation to Space

Gwendolen's experience from her travels around Europe reflects the feelings of a modern 19th century woman who is to face displacement and annihilation symbolized by the long frequent waits at railway stations and the dirt of the city, which are contrasted to the heroine's consequent looking for escape to the country but finding no comfort in more open spaces: "Here the very gleams of sunshine seemed melancholy, for the autumnal leaves and grass were shivering, and the wind was turning up the feathers of a cock and two croaking hens which had doubtless parted with their grown-up offspring and did not know what to do."[20] Here hints of naturalism can be traced in the female perception of the space with respect to human needs reflected in the lives of animals. The space at this point reflects the hopeless existence and poverty of the heroine, offering no prospects and supporting the feeling of displacement and a lost home. From a Victorian perspective, Gwendolen has to face the course of events that leads her to the reflection that "a human life should be rooted in some spot in a native land."[21] This frequently quoted passage of *Daniel Deronda*, however, remains a mere theoretical

19 Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, 144.

20 Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, 247.

21 Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, 20.

precondition in the lives of both main protagonists. Gwendolen becomes a displaced character, whereas her male counterpart embodies an outcast with a rich and steady intellectual background which is paradoxically of no use since the hero decides to seek his real origin, risking the total collapse of his situation in a search for a new start. In his case, the Victorian notion of an English gentleman is categorically displaced in favour of a search for the homeland of the Jewish nation, meaning in fact continuous exile. A crisis of Victorian values is reflected both in Deronda and Gwendolen's fate, since the death of Gwendolen's husband exacerbates her search for identity and economic stability.

In comparison to the intellectually and even philosophically rich dimension of the Jewish environment and the way the Jewish characters perceive space, the space associated with the Gentile aristocracy remains dull and superfluous with the exception of the educated and well-situated character of Sir Hugo, the closest person to Daniel. Even the references to art and music are mostly related to Herr Klesmer. The German-Jewish musician prefers the talented Mirah over Gwendolen, whom he advised not to seek a career on the stage, although both female characters in fact find themselves in economically difficult situations in which they might earn their living by singing. Nevertheless, the spirituality and devotion to "real" art is ascribed exclusively to the Jewish temperament.

The space associated with the aristocratic outlook reflects Victorian preferences and values. Sir Hugo's estate, "whose place was one of the finest in England, at once historical, romantic and home-like: a picturesque architectural outgrowth from an abbey, which had still remnants of the old monastic trunk"[22], represents a place where the main character can feel the sense of home, sitting on the window-sill, observing a park with old oak trees, witnessing the rain "gradually subsiding with gleams through the parting clouds."[23] Nevertheless, the spiritual visions that create the inner space of Daniel's thoughts do not correspond with Victorian ideals; the main character abandons his social and cultural background in favour of the newly-found Jewish aspects of his origin and character. He seems to empty the space of his past in search for a land of a new beginning. His spatial context thus becomes decentralized by an instinctive decision guided by an impulse of his own free will.

The Empty Space of the Sea

In the open space of the sea off the coast of the port of Genoa the image of a yacht as a "tiny plank-island" moving in the "dreamy do-nothing absolutism, unmolested by social demands"[24] becomes a part of the Romantic concept. The vessel is ironically misused by Gwendolen's husband Grandcourt, functioning as a prison in which he can hold his wife far from the reach of the influence of the city. Grandcourt's aim at his wife's displacement here can be put in perspective if we consider his consistent effort to uproot Gwendolen from her native locality. With yet another coincidence the heroine is bound to meet Deronda, whom Grandcourt tries to avoid and restrict from contact with his wife. Paradoxically enough, fate brings the lives of Deronda and Gwendolen together again in Genoa. This event intensifies Grandcourt's will to limit his wife's existence to the minimal space of the yacht, which becomes the site of Grandcourt's death.

22 Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, 179.

23 Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, 184.

24 Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, 739.

During the course of her marriage with Grandcourt, Gwendolen becomes closed up in her inner space of thought, with her sensuous perceptions gradually becoming blurred. In the final tragic scene of the voyage near Genoa, the heroine finds herself paralyzed by her imprisonment, displaying only limited reactions and completely ignoring the glory of the sea and sky during sunset, which seems to have no particular effect on her. The heroine's perception of space seems to reflect a paradoxical treatment of Romantic imagery, as Gwendolen becomes absolutely indifferent towards space and finding all places alike and undesirable. This limited perception seems to be caused by the imprisonment in her unbalanced marriage. Gwendolen's thinking in symbolic spatial terms projects her husband as "an immoveable obstruction in her life, like the nightmare of beholding a single form that serves to arrest all passage though the wide country lies open"[25]. Contemplating her escape in symbolic terms, Gwendolen formulates the desire to "run away" from her "worst self" for a few hours, longing for a spiritual freedom restricted by the conventions of Victorian marriage.

Inner Spaces of the Mind

The search for identity and stability becomes the main aspect of existence of female characters as well as Daniel. The Jewish outcast Mirah Lapidoth seems to be more existentially disadvantaged in comparison to Mrs. Grandcourt or Daniel Deronda. Mirah has never experienced any sense of home, having spent her childhood rambling around American and European cultural centres with her father, supporting him by singing and acting, finally revolting against him by escaping from Prague and making her way through Europe to London.[26] The space in Mirah's first person narrative perspective becomes as fragmentary as her memories of the long journey in search of the rest of her family. Prague is generally associated with darkness, lit only by "the strange bunches of lamps" where "it was difficult to distinguish faces"[27]. As in the novels and short stories of Gustav Meyrink, the space of Prague is surrounded by mysticism; there a strange meeting with a prophet gives Mirah the impulse to escape. Mirah's movement round Europe represents the symbolic fate of the Jewish nation expelled from their original home, looking for roots and experiencing loneliness, hunger and poverty. Mirah is saved symbolically by Daniel Deronda, whose origin and life concerns are similar to Mirah's aside from his favourable economic situation. She is offered a place to stay within a Christian community that does not ask for anything in return. As a part of the author's main theme of eternally wandering around Europe, Eliot offers a merciful projection of Christians helping Jews find what they seek.

The indefinite vision of reaching an illusionary home rooted in Mirah's childhood memories turns into a shock as she reaches the London address of their formal residence to find out the streets have been pulled down. Her feeling of displacement becomes very intensive, pushing her very close to suicide, representing the Jewish sense of exile: "I was afraid of all places where I could enter. I lost my trust. I thought I was forsaken."[28] She feels betrayed by the mysterious appearance of the prophet whose figure she spotted in Prague. However, there was no rational ground for her escape to London. All her behaviour relies on the subconscious impulse of seeking

25 Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, 752.

26 Eliot herself visited Prague briefly in 1858.

27 Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, 237.

28 Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, 339.

her mother which is evoked by the atmosphere of Prague. The action of characters associated with their Jewishness then relies generally on an instinctive perception of space that influences their future existence.

In her utter despair, the heroine turns instinctively to the space of water, which could have symbolic qualities of the maternal aspect on the one hand, but also becomes tempting in connection with Mirah's suicide attempt.[29] The image of a character standing on the bridge looking down on the river seems to be the central point in the radial structure of *Daniel Deronda*, both in the sense of the spiritual reflections of Jewish characters who seek further direction of their unstable existence and in the sense of meeting points. In one example Mordecai waits for Daniel on the bridge to announce he is the prophet. For Eliot the bridge thus plays the role of a mystical point in space, the philosophical dimension of which could be related to Heidegger's dwelling in space. As Heidegger points out, the bridge belongs to "the domain of our dwelling"; however, "it is not limited to the dwelling place" since it "extends over the buildings."[30]

Similarly to George Eliot's thematic occurrence of the bridge in *Daniel Deronda*, Heidegger ascribes to the bridge the philosophical potential of creating a site out of a location: "The bridge gathers the earth as landscape around the stream", creating an assembly gathering the fourfold of the human existence.[31] "Only something that is itself a location can make space for a site" where "a location comes into existence only by virtue of the bridge. [...] By this site are determined the localities and ways by which a space is provided for."[32]

Heidegger distinguishes two categories of understanding space: with the bridge, space is made by position, represented as *spatium* (a mere object at a position). Dimension (height, breadth, depth) can be abstracted from space as intervals, represented as the topological manifold of the three dimensions. A room made in this way is no longer determined by distances, i.e. does not relate to *spatium* but *extensio* (space as extension), which contains no spaces or places (space as time interval).

With respect to Heidegger's philosophy, Eliot's use of the concept of the bridge can be classified as *extensio*, since it contains no spaces, being mainly used for philosophical, mystical revelations through which the bridge bears symbolic meanings in the context of Jewish culture.

Thus the heroine standing on the bridge in *Daniel Deronda* contemplates the basic question of human existence before entering the boat. Using the thematic concept of the river for contemplation, as in other novels Eliot relates the water element to the theme of death. Eleazar M. Meletinsky sees the mythological concept of the river as a boundary between life and death, the general character of the river in its relation to space being further projected as cosmic.[33] In many respects, George Eliot relies on this concept of the symbolic treatment of space. On the brink of collapse, Mirah's existence seems to be heading into a spiral whose movement could be stopped by the prophetic intervention of Deronda. The desperate heroine sees no point in taking any direction,

29 Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, 339.

30 Martin Heidegger, "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," in *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1971), 142.

31 Heidegger's basic concept of philosophy of space relies on the fourfold of human existence which comprises the sky, the earth or water, the divinities and mortals.

32 Heidegger, Building, Dwelling, Thinking, 152.

33 Eleazar M. Meletinsky, *The Poetics of Myth* (New York and London: Routledge, 2000), 193.

heading towards suicide: "I got up and walked and followed the river a long way and then turned back again. There was no reason why I should go anywhere. The world about me seemed like a vision that was hurrying by while I stood still with my pain."[34] Mirah's romantic rambling along the river and her belief in her predestination to die in water at a certain point of her existence expresses her "terror of the world", where death is associated with the elements of both water and fire.[35] As part of the spatial construction of the inner space of the heroine, water in association with fire seems to be in line with Gaston Bachelard's poetics of space.[36] As Mirah reflects upon her perception of the world on the verge of suicide "[t]his life seemed to be closing in upon me with a wall of fire – everywhere there was scorching that made me shrink. The high sunlight made me shrink. And I began to think that my despair was the voice of God telling me to die."[37] In this respect the scene of the heroine approaching death can be found in other novels by Eliot, e.g. *The Mill on the Floss*, in which the heroine dies during a flood. Yet Mirah's contemplation of death displays other symbolic connotations. Her personal crisis develops into a metaphorical image of the wandering of Jews: "Then I thought of my People, how they had been driven from land to land and been afflicted, and multitudes had died of misery in their wandering – was I the first?"[38] The sacrifice to the nation should then justify her suicide, as Mirah reaches the point of becoming a martyr.

In *Daniel Deronda* Eliot emphasizes the historical relevance of the symbolic use of space categories in other ways. The character's visions associated with their inner spaces have more allegorical meanings than in Eliot's previous novels. Death is in Mirah's thoughts metaphorically associated with the space of hell through motifs of heat and fire which in Frye's terms[39] correspond with mythical apocalyptic imagery. In her painful inward perspective, the heroine finds herself enclosed in the space of "the sky and the river and the Eternal God" in her soul.[40] With respect to the aforementioned imagery, Eliot here uses the basic elements of Heidegger's existential philosophy of the fourfold, relying on the symbolic aspects of existence in space.

George Eliot thus sets new parameters in the use of the space, limiting both the potential of the Romantic projection of space into the characters' feelings as well as the realistic concept in which the space descriptions focus on illustrating the social milieu of the characters. The author's use of space relies on the symbolic quality of elements (like the sea) which withdraw the spatial concept into the inner space of the character's mind (the dream space). The way space is felt or perceived depends on the particular character (Gwendolen on the one hand, Mordecai and Mirah who represent the Jewish

34 Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, 239.

35 This notion of natural elements is very close to Hardy's treatment of the same aspect of space construction of *The Return of the Native* (1878) and *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874).

36 Bachelard's major work *The Poetics of Space* (1958) combines philosophy with the psychological processes related to the irrational parts of the human mind. In his analysis of space Bachelard employs the power of imagination and dreams over human consciousness, concentrating on the power of natural elements over the human mind, claiming that natural elements constitute space in terms of stimulating imagination and penetrating knowledge, namely in *Water and Dreams. An Essay on the Imagination of Matter* and *The Psychoanalysis of Fire*.

37 Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, 240.

38 Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, 240.

39 Northrop Frye, *The Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays.* 1957. 10th ed. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990).

40 Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, 240.

environment on the other and finally Daniel Deronda standing in between the two). Consequently, all aspects of the space representation seem to be bound by the symbolic quality of water, as can be found in numerous examples in Victorian novels.

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Alice Sukdolová received her Ph.D. from the Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague. Her dissertation at the Department of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures focused on the concepts of space in Victorian novels. She teaches at the Department of English Language and Literature at the faculty of Education, University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice, specializing in 19th and 20th century English literature. In 2012 she published the monograph *Concepts of Space in Victorian Novels* and has written several articles and reviews dealing with space in the works of Thomas Hardy, George Eliot and Emily Brontë. Her research interests include the development of various concepts of spaces, especially with respect to images of landscape in Victorian novels.