

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Celebrity culture is part of a long history of fame, but the modern celebrity individual came into focus in the nineteenth century. The first part of this thesis distinguishes modern celebrity – including its morality – from other types of fame, explores the intersection of celebrity and gender through the figure of the female literary celebrity, and discusses George Eliot's desire to control her public persona in Victorian celebrity culture. Previous scholarship has paid little attention to celebrity in Eliot's fiction, so the second part of this thesis provides a close reading of Eliot's last novel, *Daniel Deronda* (1876), as a means of attending to the connections between fame, artistic endeavor, and morality. I use Tom Mole's three pillars of the celebrity apparatus (individual, industry, and audience) as a framework and reveal how the novel consistently relies on historically famed performers to help orient the reader. I read *Daniel Deronda*'s negative representation of pursuing art for the sake of celebrity as a reassertion of the same attitude that Eliot first established in her essay "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists" twenty years prior. However, those twenty years cover Eliot's increasing popularity as an author, thus necessitating her need to defend her motivation for continuing to write and publish. Therefore, *Daniel Deronda* also offers the additional assertion that renown is morally acceptable, a qualification that legitimizes Eliot's fame while allowing her to still critique celebrity.

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Reasserting Moral Boundaries: Representations of Fame in George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*

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I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

Emily S. Foster, Author

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Introduction

Today, the entertainment industry is at the forefront of producing and perpetuating celebrities. Such a proliferation of celebrity individuals makes it difficult to conceive of celebrity as a phenomenon that predates our current cultural milieu. However, there is quite a substantial amount of scholarship locating the rise of modern celebrity in the eighteenth century. Much of this scholarship also locates the origin of the term celebrity in reference to an individual, rather than a condition, in the nineteenth century. The current OED entry for a celebrity individual, “a well-known or famous person; (now chiefly) *spec.* a person, esp. in entertainment or sport, who attracts interest from the general public and attention from the mass media,” lists 1831 as its earliest textual example (“celebrity, n.”). The most frequently cited definition of a celebrity individual in the literature is “a person who is known for his well-knownness” (Boorstin 7). The entertainment industry was as much a part of celebrity culture during the nineteenth century as it is today. The stage – for actors, singers, and musicians – and the page – for novelists, poets, essayists, and playwrights – figured prominently in the creation of celebrities by providing platforms from which the entertainer could become known and subsequently celebrated. George Eliot, one of the foremost authors of her time, garnered much attention for both her writing and her unconventional personal choices, which forced her to engage with contemporary celebrity culture.

Reading George Eliot’s final novel, *Daniel Deronda* (1876), one cannot help but notice the presence of the entertainment industry, on both a private and public scale. Five characters in particular exemplify a wide range of involvement with professional performance in music and theater. However, little attention has been paid to making the connection, in the novel, between entertainment and celebrity. Granted, celebrity culture is not a recurring theme throughout Eliot’s

fiction. In Eliot's first four novels, the terms celebrity, celebrities and/or celebrated appear only three times total: twice in reference to a pike and once to a person in *The Mill on the Floss* (1860). In *Felix Holt, the Radical* (1866), there are five uses.

However, *Middlemarch* (1872) and *Daniel Deronda*, her final two novels, both published in the 1870s, show significant increase in usage of those terms. There are sixteen uses in *Middlemarch* and eight in *Daniel Deronda*.¹ Though *Middlemarch* has twice the usage as *Daniel Deronda*, and thus seems the more logical case study text, many of the people referenced in it seem to have fame only within limited public circles, rather than with the general public, or are recognized for certain talent, rather than recognized for being famous.² This is likely because, though published in the early 1870s, *Middlemarch* is set at the end of the 1820s, a time when the celebrity culture that was ubiquitous by the 1870s was still emerging. On the other hand, *Daniel Deronda* is set in contemporary Victorian society and, as her last novel, was published after Eliot's own fame was readily established. Therefore, *Daniel Deronda* is most likely to reflect late Victorian celebrity culture. Furthermore, *Daniel Deronda* is the most productive novel through which to illuminate Eliot's commentary on that culture; just because the novel is not densely populated with famous individuals does not mean that commentary is not present.

The term celebrity carries a connotation of moral inferiority that is grounded in selfish motivation. Prior to the rise of modern celebrity, people became famous because they had

¹ For *Middlemarch*, the breakdown is five uses of celebrity (two for people, three for the condition), one use of celebrities (for a person), and ten uses of celebrated (eight for people). For *Daniel Deronda*, it is four uses of celebrity (one for a person, three for the condition), two uses of celebrities (both for people), and two uses of celebrated (both for people).

² A few examples of these include the "celebrated principal" one character had studied under and "the celebrated Guydo, the greatest painter in the world, the chief of the Old Masters" (Eliot, *Middlemarch* 408, 599). The former likely has a very narrow circle of reputation and the latter clearly relies on talent in painting for recognition, referencing his contribution to the field rather than his self-image.

performed great deeds (e.g. won an important battle) or had contributed significantly to their profession (e.g. made a scientific breakthrough). These deeds and contributions typically benefitted people other than the performer or contributor. Should that person achieve fame because of their actions, their fame was morally superior because it was the result of dedication to and excellent execution of one's duties or calling. Celebrity, on the other hand, is more self-centered. Being known for "well-knownness" does not reflect any benefit for others and is often a result of someone performing a deed or pursuing a project as the means to their fame. It is this selfish motivation that makes celebrity morally inferior to other types of fame. It is also possible that fame can degrade into celebrity – once fame has been experienced – should the motivation for work shift from excellence in that work to enjoying the limelight because of that work.

Fundamental to my work is Tom Mole's celebrity apparatus, which I use as an entry point into *Daniel Deronda's* exploration of and argument about the moral boundaries between different types of fame. In his exploration of Lord Byron's celebrity, Tom Mole puts forth three pillars of celebrity culture that he believes are key to the analysis of that culture. Mole understands "celebrity to be a cultural apparatus, consisting of the relations between an individual, an industry and an audience" and that "modern celebrity culture begins when these three components routinely work together to render an individual personally fascinating" (xi, 1). Given this conception of modern celebrity culture, Mole argues that Byron is one of the earliest modern celebrities. Establishing that this celebrity apparatus is at work early in the nineteenth century provides a framework for scholars who focus on celebrity culture later in the century.³

The industry, according to Mole, "arranges the available technology, labour and skill in order to produce and distribute multiple copies, in large numbers, of a commodity which need

³ Ann Hawkins and Maura Ives also use Mole's celebrity apparatus in *Women Writers and the Artifacts of Celebrity in the Long Nineteenth Century* (2012).

not refer back to any ‘original’” (3). Mole further differentiates between primary and secondary industries, both found in the celebrity apparatus: the former produces the celebrity’s work (e.g. a publisher) and the latter promotes and distributes it (e.g. newspapers, engravings, photography) (3). For example, John Blackwood, George Eliot’s publisher, is part of the primary industry involved in Eliot’s celebrity, and *Wise, Witty, and Tender Sayings in Prose and Verse* (1875), which are selections from her work, is an example of the secondary industry.

In order for industries to be considered complicit in the celebrity apparatus, they need individuals to commodify and circulate. The growing ease with which people could promote themselves increased the number of individuals who chose to do so (Braudy 13); consequently, “in order to boost the celebrity individual’s visibility over that of other aspirants, the celebrity apparatus turned his or her proper name into a brand name” (Mole 16). The name George Eliot, a pen name, is an example of a brand name. The branding of an identity was a process of multiple mentions in the print media, the circulation of images and personal information (or speculation) about the individual, and social appearances; this process potentially culminates in the identity taking over the role of shaping the celebrity from the celebrity shaping their identity (Mole 17-20). Mole explains, in his analysis of Byron, that “the mechanisms for branding identity were wonderfully effective, but they also left Byron committed to a logic of celebrity which could be constraining. Having risen to public prominence, he felt the burden of public expectation” (20). Eliot was also subject to public expectations as a result of her successful literary career.

The public, accordingly, is the final element without which the celebrity apparatus would not exist. The industry promotes an individual to an audience, which consumes what is promoted and, if they like it, demands more. The audience within the celebrity apparatus, “massive, anonymous, socially diverse, geographically distributed – consumes and interprets celebrity,

often in creative ways. These responses are unauthorized by the celebrity individual or the industry, and beyond their control, although the industry may attempt to police them in various ways” (Mole 3). Essentially, though an audience is necessary to the continued celebrity of an individual, the individual must be prepared for an audience’s demand for a particular image of the individual to differ from what the individual or industry intended to promote.

In explaining the defining elements of the celebrity apparatus, I have made brief connections to Eliot’s own experiences in order to provide concrete examples of its different elements as well as to introduce a few specifics about Eliot’s connection to the celebrity apparatus. In the two chapters that follow, I elaborate on Eliot’s relationship to nineteenth-century celebrity culture and investigate how she represents celebrity in *Daniel Deronda*. In Chapter 1, I situate nineteenth-century celebrity culture in a longer history of fame. Defining other types of fame, such as renown and notability, helps distinguish celebrity. I then turn to the intersection of celebrity and gender, highlighting the conflicting expectations for the female celebrity with particular attention to female literary celebrities. Segueing to an overview of George Eliot’s own experience with celebrity culture, I demonstrate Eliot’s desire to control her position in that culture despite the inherent unpredictability of the celebrity apparatus audience. Reviewing Eliot’s private musings on and public involvement with celebrity culture is important for understanding Eliot’s relationship to Victorian celebrity. However, we must not neglect the ways in which her published fiction also reflects aspects of and reveals attitudes about Victorian celebrity culture. Attending to her commentary on the relationship between artistic endeavors and fame, within her own writing, allows for a more holistic sense of Eliot’s relationship to celebrity culture.

In Chapter 2, I undertake a close reading of four of the performing characters in *Daniel Deronda* as a means of attending to the connection between art and fame. I employ Mole's celebrity apparatus as a framework for analyzing how celebrity culture is both present and absent within the pages of *Daniel Deronda*. I approach my reading through this particular apparatus because its inherent celebrity helps establish that Eliot represents celebrity culture in the novel. This needs to be established because there are no characters who are celebrities in the narrative time of the novel.⁴ It is only after reading *Daniel Deronda* through the celebrity apparatus lens that I can illuminate the moral boundaries between different types of fame, including celebrity, that are constructed by the characters throughout the novel. Ultimately, I read *Daniel Deronda*'s negative representation of pursuing art for the sake of celebrity as a reassertion of the same attitude that George Eliot first established in "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists" (1856) twenty years prior. However, those twenty years cover Eliot's increasing popularity as an author, thus necessitating her need to defend her motivation for continuing to write and publish. Therefore, *Daniel Deronda* also offers the additional assertion that renown is morally acceptable, a qualification that legitimizes Eliot's fame while allowing her to still critique celebrity.

⁴ Because one of the characters was a celebrity in her past and does discuss it in the novel, I feel it is more accurate to say that there are no celebrity characters in the "narrative time of the novel" (rather than simply "in the novel"), because narrative time refers to the time when the story actually happens.

Chapter 1: Locating George Eliot in Celebrity Culture

Celebrity is one of the many paradoxes of nineteenth-century British culture. The celebrity individual is at once exceptional and relatable – an intimate stranger who blurs the boundary between public and private.⁵ This boundary stretched across the nineteenth century with various degrees of permeability. Compelled by the Industrial Revolution's domination of working life, Victorian Britons, particularly the growing middle class, idealized a life that was divided into separate spheres: the masculine public sphere of work and trade and the feminine private sphere of home life and domesticity (Flanders 4-5). Within each sphere, men and women had certain behavioral roles. For instance, within the domestic sphere, the woman's role was that of wife, mother, and moral compass. However, Brenda Weber reminds us that this notion of separate spheres was much more an ideal than reality, though an ideal not to be dismissed. She writes that, "although we are aware that binary arrangements (public/private, man/woman, masculine/feminine) are social mythologies rather than descriptive realities, it is equally true that their ideological appeal held (and often still holds) a particular coercive authority" (7). These prescriptive "social mythologies" existed alongside, arguably even fostered,⁶ a preoccupation with celebrity culture and the celebrity individual that collapsed those separate spheres.

Furthermore, against this background of idealized gender roles, the female celebrity was particularly disruptive because living one's life in a manner that led to fame meant that a woman was disregarding her domestic duties. As Weber notes, nineteenth-century female authors "functioned as cultural flash points for debates about separate spheres, since their work and their sexed identities put them in direct proximity to clashes between ideologies and actualities" (7).

⁵ The term "intimate stranger" is from Richard Schickel's *Intimate Strangers: The Culture of Celebrity* (1985).

⁶ The Victorian individual could live vicariously through the celebrity, enjoying their exploits without having to sacrifice personal or public standards.

George Eliot, one of the foremost (and therefore quite publicly visible) female authors of the Victorian period, is one such example. Given the “cultural flash point” potential, any conversation about nineteenth-century female celebrities, including authors like George Eliot, should consider how celebrity and gender overlap, what space that overlap creates for the famous female to navigate, and how she navigates it.

Indeed, the scholarly conversation on George Eliot and Victorian celebrity has traced her private musings on and public involvement with celebrity culture in light of the boundary between public and private. The gender dynamics on either side of and across that boundary are a recurring theme in the conversation. However, if we are to work towards a more holistic sense of George Eliot’s relationship to celebrity, we must move beyond the public/private and masculine/feminine binaries. My contribution to this bigger picture of Eliot and celebrity is an exploration of how moral boundaries between different types of fame are portrayed in Eliot’s last novel, *Daniel Deronda*. In order to cover the background for my exploration, this chapter walks through the history of celebrity, nineteenth-century gender dynamics as they relate to fame, and the scholarship that brings both together in studying George Eliot.

Nineteenth-Century Celebrity, Its Antecedents, and Its Contemporaries

In his preface to *Byron’s Romantic Celebrity: Industrial Culture and the Hermeneutic of Intimacy* (2007), Tom Mole presents his book as “one case study in a history that has yet to be written of a phenomenon that has yet to be adequately theorised”: the history and phenomenon of celebrity (xi). Mole and others have rightly pointed out that the ubiquity of the celebrity in current culture, perpetuated relentlessly through digital mass medias, somewhat obscures the fact that modern celebrity culture dates back prior to the twentieth century. As Simon Morgan points

out, much of the celebrity scholarship coming out of the fields of sociology, cultural theory, and media studies has been “dominated by the assumption that celebrity is essentially a product of late modernity, specifically the twentieth and twenty-first centuries” (95). Mole specifically argues for its origins in the Romantic period and for Lord Byron to be “understood as one of its earliest examples and most astute critics” (xi). But the origins of celebrity have their own history.

Leo Braudy’s *The Frenzy of Renown: Fame and its History* (1986) is considered a seminal work in the study of fame and celebrity. In tracing the history of fame from Alexander the Great to figures of the twentieth century, Braudy necessarily leaves out some particulars. However, such an extensive timeline provides historical context and lays the groundwork for elaborating on the “changing ways by which individuals have sought to bring themselves to the attention of others” and on the “shifting definition of achievement in a social world” (3, 10). Fame, as defined by Braudy, “is made up of four elements: a person and an accomplishment, their immediate publicity, and what posterity has thought about them ever since” (15). Braudy asserts that

the true history of fame begins, not with the grandly repeated names of Egypt or Persia or China or Yucatán, but with a self-naming that steps out of the bounds of dynasty, beyond even the stature of the Egyptian god-king, and into a status simultaneously unique and yet suffused with the atmosphere of human possibility.
(29)

For the Greeks, fame was about the “pursuit of an honor that will allow a man to live beyond death ... which can be achieved only in a war ... and contains a strong element of class status and class obligation” (30). Mapping this onto Braudy’s definition, heroic greatness highlights the accomplishment and emphasizes posterity, particularly because the hero is joining other heroes in posterity. Braudy locates the shift away from the battlefield as the sole space for heroism in

the figure of Alexander the Great, who had a “constant awareness of the relation between accomplishment and publicity” and sought to be “beyond time, to be superior to calendars, in essence to be remembered not for his place in an eternal descent but for himself” (32). Thus Alexander’s fame relies on all four elements of fame.

Stephen Greenblatt’s book, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (1980), addresses how the individual presents to the world “a distinctive personality, a characteristic address to the world, a consistent mode of perceiving and behaving” in a narrower historical timeframe than Braudy (2).⁷ Greenblatt observes that

in the sixteenth century there appears to be an increased self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity as a manipulable, artful process. Such self-consciousness had been widespread among the elite in the classical world, but Christianity brought a growing suspicion of man’s power to shape identity. (2)

For a while, Christ was the model after which people fashioned themselves, but eventually self-fashioning acquired

a new range of meanings: it describes the practice of parents and teachers; it is linked to manners or demeanor, particularly that of the elite; it may suggest hypocrisy or deception, an adherence to mere outward ceremony; it suggests representation of one’s nature or intention in speech or actions. (3)

Greenblatt’s focus on sixteenth-century notions of constructing a persona and of the awareness of its construction establishes the existence of some of the key elements of celebrity long before the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The phrase “an adherence to mere outward ceremony” implies superficiality, which certainly resonates with how we think of some celebrities today.

The rise of modern celebrity culture, which highlights the person and emphasizes immediate publicity, was catalyzed by the circumstances of the eighteenth century. As Braudy

⁷ Greenblatt’s concept of self-fashioning compliments that of self-naming (Braudy 29).

notes, the “new-minted industrial age set the scene for individuals to make their way relatively unhampered by the traditions and restrictions of the past. . . . new standards for achievement had to be defined” (7). Braudy further argues that during this period there was a particular preoccupation with “the question of fame in the modern sense – as a way of defining oneself, making oneself known, beyond the limitations of class and family” (14). Indeed, the political and economic changes that accompanied the Industrial Revolution in the mid-eighteenth century “encouraged the transformation of the classic idea of personal honor,” particularly due to the huge population growth, the expansion of literacy, and the introduction of cheap methods of printing and engraving (13). Braudy goes on to say that “in this world acting and self-promotion abounded. The proliferation of new modes of communication, the breakdown of hierarchy, and the careers now open to talents made it easier to author oneself” (13). In other words, individuals without a family name and high social status now had an easier time fulfilling their urge for public fame because there were more opportunities to achieve something notable and more accessible means of making achievements known.

Fred Inglis, in *A Short History of Celebrity* (2010), also singles out the eighteenth century as the period when celebrity began to replace “the archaic concept of renown” (4). Renown, Inglis offers, “was once assigned to men of high accomplishment in a handful of prominent and clearly defined roles. . . . Renown brought honour to the office not the individual, and public recognition was not so much of the man himself as of the significance of his actions for the society” (4). Renown’s focus on accomplishment and obscuring the individual is reminiscent of the Greek hero Braudy describes. To be clear, renown as a type of fame to aspire to did not entirely disappear. George Eliot, for example, was at pains to distinguish her fame, attached to

her achievements in literature, from celebrity, which was too much “an ambiguous indicator of talent” (Wah 375).

Prior to Braudy and Inglis, Daniel Boorstin, in “From Hero to Celebrity: The Human Pseudo-event” (1962), had also distinguished fame earned by greatness and heroism from celebrity. The hero is someone who “has shown greatness in some achievement. He is a man or woman of great deeds” (Boorstin 74). This definition aligns well with Inglis’s definition of renown. Boorstin’s description of a celebrity, “a person who is known for his well-knownness,” has been a standard and oft cited definition in celebrity studies (79). However, unlike Braudy and Inglis, Boorstin locates this shift to celebrity in the rise of American mass media in the early twentieth century, asserting that between the 1860s and 1960s, “and especially since about 1900, we seem to have discovered the processes by which fame is manufactured” (73). More recent scholarship – like Mole and Inglis’s – has sought to counter this and locate the rise of modern celebrity prior to 1900. Claire Brock, for instance, notes that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, “actively to capitalize upon one’s place under the glare of media attention, to manipulate the forces of fame, becomes a new achievement in its own right” (10). Brock’s use of “capitalize upon” and “manipulate” strongly suggests that the manufacturing of fame occurs much earlier than Boorstin argues.

Nicholas Dames has contributed to the study of nineteenth-century celebrity by elaborating on distinct types of fame in that period. He identifies three “‘figure[s]’ of fame common to mid-Victorian discourse” that can be found in William Makepeace Thackeray’s writing:⁸ the notable/notability, the lion/lionized, and the celebrity (28). According to Dames,

⁸ Thackeray was born in 1811, began publishing in the 1830s, and died in 1863. This places Thackeray, and these terms of fame, before the earliest time that Boorstin offers for the rise of modern celebrity (the 1860s).

“notability and the public fame it offers remain limited to a particular circle, and since each circle has its own small set of notabilities, to be a ‘notable’ is to subject oneself to a deeply relativistic sense of fame. To be popular, in other words, is always to be popular to some defined group” (28-9). The lion is “more august than notability,” a “quasi-celebrity” that is the “distorted, inflated, comically and frighteningly toothsome image of public notoriety” that Thomas Carlyle outlined in *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (1841), a text Thackeray was clearly aware of (Dames 30). Finally, citing the notable and the lion as precursors to the celebrity, Dames defines celebrity by way of comparison to those other figures of fame:

celebrity is a term that is absolute (in contrast to the relativism of popularity) and expressive of a certain passiveness (as opposed to the active quality of “lionizing”). Someone who is a celebrity to one person or group is, within a mass culture, a celebrity to all ... Once one becomes a celebrity, from whatever field, then one’s membership in that field is less relevant than one’s status *as celebrity*. (33; italics in original)

This description of celebrity does not contradict Boorstin’s; rather, it serves to locate it earlier than 1900. Of further note is that Dames is not just imposing these distinct forms of fame onto distinctions he sees in the Victorian period, but that these forms were in use, as evidenced by their appearance in Thackeray’s writings.

The works of Boorstin, Braudy, and Inglis, which focus broadly on fame and celebrity, and the works of Dames and Mole, which focus on individuals within celebrity culture, are all part of what is now known as celebrity studies. There was a smattering of work in the twentieth century, including Rosemarie Bodenheimer’s work on George Eliot and ambition, but it was really in the twenty-first century that celebrity studies gained momentum.⁹ Much of the output

⁹ The increased scholarly attention and output in the 2000s led to the creation of the journal *Celebrity Studies* in 2010.

focuses on historicizing celebrity, and one area that has garnered much study is the relationship between gender and celebrity.

Nineteenth-Century Celebrity Culture, Literary Celebrity, and Gender

In his study of famous women of nineteenth-century France, Lenard Berlanstein insists that “historicizing celebrity culture ... requires special attention to gender because sexual difference was one of the most important lines along which the culture developed” (65-6). While the broader investigations of “who was allowed to become an intimate stranger, by what means, and how audiences related to the people who fascinated them” are revealing, “these questions become even more intriguing when posed about women because of their ambiguous and contested status as individuals” (67). Berlanstein explains that for “the relatively few women who found a place in the public sphere ... the fame the public allowed them to incarnate changed fundamentally over the course of the nineteenth century” (66). For most of the century,

the evident fascination with public women, so at odds with the need for gendered separate spheres as the foundation of the social order, produced the obligation to censure them. ... After 1880, though, the gender order evolved in a direction that was liberating for women in some important ways,

like the weakening of the association between public women and sexual promiscuity (83).

Despite the acknowledgement of positive change, one of the key concepts here is the power of the public in perpetuating the celebrated status of the famous, which Brock also attests to in her work on literary celebrity: “the writer had to maintain an equilibrium between flattery and condescension, between courting and alienating the mass of unknowns” (9). Just as for other famous women, this was also true for the female writer.

In *The Feminization of Fame, 1750-1830* (2006), Brock extends the work of Inglis and Braudy. Like them, she locates the cultural shift from renown to celebrity in the eighteenth century. She, however, highlights how gender aligned with this shift by focusing on the figure of the author in celebrity culture.¹⁰ Brock's work desires to "readdress th[e] critical marginalization of the famous female writer and suggest that women were actively embracing the new forms of public self-representation," which resulted from "not only a more democratic modernization of celebrity, but also a feminization of a classical concept" (1-2). Brock suggests this was in part because of "the shift in authorial representation from a writer patronized by the privileged and disinterested few, to an author gaining contemporary fame by courting a vast reading public" (7). This opening up of the literary marketplace leads Brock to conclude that the feminization of fame took place because "the concentration upon the contemporary allowed those previously excluded from masculine heroics to make an impact upon their peers and be instantly rewarded with a reputation built upon present exertions" (14). In other words, because masculine fame was traditionally associated with posterity and ancestral legacy, the space contemporary fame provided was something that women could more easily claim for themselves.

In *Literary Celebrity, Gender, and Victorian Authorship, 1850-1914* (2011), Alexis

Easley takes up the study of literary celebrity and gender in the nineteenth century about where

¹⁰ Criticism of nineteenth-century literary celebrity abounds: see Linda M. Shires, "The Author as Spectacle and Commodity: Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Thomas Hardy" (1995); Richard Salmon, "Signs of Intimacy: The Literary Celebrity in the 'Age of Interviewing'" (1997) and *Henry James and the Culture of Publicity* (1997); Ghislain McDayter, "Conjuring Byron: Byromania, Literary Commodification and the Birth of Celebrity" (1999); Nick Frigo, "Oscar's Wild(e) Year in America" (2008); *Romanticism and Celebrity Culture, 1750-1850*, ed. by Tom Mole (2009); Ghislain McDayter, *Byromania and the Birth of Celebrity Culture* (2009); Eric Eisner, *Nineteenth-Century Poetry and Literary Celebrity* (2009); Charlotte Boyce, Paraic Finnerty, and Anne-Marie Millam, *Victorian Celebrity Culture and Tennyson's Circle* (2013); Timothy Spurgin, "'Notoriety is the Thing': Modern Celebrity and Early Dickens" (2014); Whitney Helms, "Performing Authorship in the Celebrity Sphere: Dickens and the Reading Tours" (2014).

Brock leaves off. Easley highlights the balance between visibility and obscurity that Victorian women writers were compelled to maintain. She characterizes the extremes and their consequences thus: “too little exposure could mean invisibility in a fiercely competitive literary marketplace, yet too much exposure could mean being cast aside as the latest vulgar literary fad” (12). Though Brock identifies society’s “obsession with instantaneous, multi-media forms of representation” as something that female authors could take advantage of (2), Easley tempers this with its averse affect on canonization: “as women were featured in interviews and profiles, they were increasingly associated with the ephemerality of the popular press and were often excluded from emerging narratives of British literary history, which defined great literature as having timeless appeal” (12). Literary tourism is one area in which Easley identifies women’s exclusion from, or at least diminished impact on, narratives of British literary history.¹¹

Literary tourism links “literary texts to specific biographical and geographical details that could be experienced virtually, through reading periodicals and other texts, or in actuality, by handling personal relics or viewing literary shrines” (Easley 13). Easley establishes that, “while the lives and works of male writers, particularly Charles Dickens, were closely associated with the topography of London, women were more difficult to ‘locate’ on the literary map of the city” because “in a culture informed by domestic ideology, women’s participation in London’s literary marketplace, let alone their physical presence on the streets of London, was viewed as potentially compromising” (49). In one of her chapters, “The Haunting of Victorian London: Christina Rossetti, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and George Eliot,” Easley elaborates on the “ghostly invisibility” of women writers that was perpetuated through the rhetoric of the spectral in literary

¹¹ For more on literary tourism and its origins, see Nicola Watson’s edited collection, *Literary Tourism and Nineteenth-Century Culture* (2009), and Paul Westover’s *Necromanticism: Traveling to Meet the Dead, 1750-1860* (2012).

guidebooks (49). This spectrality endures today, for “although there are many blue plaques marking literary women’s homes in London, there is no literary shrine devoted to a woman writer equivalent to Keat’s House, Carlyle’s House, or Dickens’s House,” despite important women writers like George Eliot having lived and worked in London (50).

This is not to say that Eliot was left completely off the map, for during the 1870s, when she lived in London, “her homes were unofficial stops on literary tours of London. Literary pilgrims from England and America flocked to the Priory at St. John’s Wood to visit the sage writer” (Easley 63). But the descriptions of her homes in memoirs and guidebooks are “often carefully focused away from Eliot’s urban context,” instead locating her in natural or rural environments like her novels often depict, which were “seen as a necessary antidote to literary labor and urban life” (Easley 63). This tension between the urban and rural Eliot is but one of the many tensions Eliot had to contend with as she navigated Victorian celebrity culture.

George Eliot, Victorian Celebrity Culture, and Control

One of George Eliot’s foremost issues with navigating celebrity culture was that she was not always in control of how the public perceived her. For instance, her status as an acclaimed, popular author was complicated by her scandalous personal life, a situation that rendered her personally, rather than professionally, fascinating to the public. This situation also exemplifies the blurring of boundaries between public and private spheres, a common theme throughout Eliot criticism. The current scholarship on George Eliot’s relationship to celebrity culture touches on one or more of the following: her position in celebrity culture, how her position was achieved and cultivated, and both public and private perceptions of her position. This scholarship reveals

Eliot's desire to control her presence in the public sphere, in spite of the usually uncontrollable nature of celebrity, in order to uphold certain social and personal boundaries.

Columns and articles in Victorian media are one means of illuminating George Eliot's position in society from a public viewpoint. In 1881, a few months after Eliot's death, Janet E. Ruutz-Rees wrote a column on Eliot in *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly*. The opening lines are as follows:

Materials for a biography of Marianne C. Evans, better known by her pseudonym of George Eliot, are not plentiful. It is always pleasant, in reviewing the life of a celebrity, to trace a sort of connection between the life and the efforts of the genius we are considering; and very often our interest in an author's books is doubled and trebled, because we find reflected in them so much of the life-history of the individual. But in the case of the author of "Adam Bede," we have to lay aside all such consideration, and centre our thoughts rather upon the work done than upon the worker. (484)

Ruutz-Rees's lines are particularly revealing, not only about nineteenth-century celebrity culture, but also George Eliot's relationship to that culture. The choice of the phrase "always pleasant" suggests a cultural habit of looking into the personal lives of those who were considered celebrities, which, in turn, indicates that Eliot was considered a celebrity as far as Ruutz-Rees, and likely the larger public, was concerned. Furthermore, the passage hints that allowing public knowledge of the details of one's "life-history" would only be logical for an author such as Eliot, for it would increase interest in her work. However, for reasons unexplained here, details of Eliot's life are sparse, which suggests that Eliot was able to maintain the boundary between her public and private lives that celebrity culture threatened to dissolve. I even detect a subtle admonition of Eliot for such a dearth of "life-history" in the way Ruutz-Rees chooses to speak of Eliot only hypothetically and referentially after the first sentence. This admonition illuminates

yet another aspect of Victorian celebrity culture, one that emphasizes the ways in which celebrity status could get beyond the control of the individual: once a celebrity has gained an audience, there is some degree of obligation to follow through with audience expectation. The literary celebrity is no exception. Indeed, Brock notes that “as the new hero the author assumed public responsibility to a contemporary readership” (9).

Sarah Wah notes that the public’s expectations regarding George Eliot’s personal life were indeed thwarted. She writes:

although Eliot’s efforts to retreat from public gaze appear to reflect her wish to dodge lionization, they worked, paradoxically, to fuel public desire to ‘know’ the ‘real’ George Eliot. In this respect, one can understand why, after Eliot’s death in 1880, the public was expecting her bereaved husband, John Cross, to publish a biography that not only would make Eliot more ‘available’ but also reveal the sort of intimate details that people had come to look for in a celebrity *Life*. (376)

Cross did not publish such a biography; instead, “*George Eliot’s Life* represents Cross’s dedicated effort to preserve Eliot’s high professional reputation by emphasizing her distance from contemporary celebrity culture and her status as a female sage” (371). In other words, Cross did his utmost to reassert the boundary between Eliot’s public and private lives that she tried to maintain during her life, which logically would require distancing her from the celebrity culture that incessantly demanded details of personal life. Yet, ironically, he chose to do so through a genre, the biography, which had become a key component of perpetuating celebrity culture because it seemed to “promise insight into the private lives of the famous” (Hawkins and Ives 5). However, perhaps it was the most effective means to present Cross’s desired image of Eliot to the public, as it used the power of a current trend to its own ends.

Turning to Eliot's personal thoughts on her reputation, Wah highlights that Cross's efforts to present Eliot as completely separate from celebrity culture ignored how ambivalent Eliot actually felt about her celebrity status. Eliot's letters and journals indicate that she "relish[ed] evidence that confirmed her popular appeal," whether those were book sale numbers or positive responses from her readers (375). What did bother Eliot were the "blurred boundaries between different levels of professional status and reputation ... especially when her own reputation seemed undermined by readers who at times failed to distinguish her achievements from the merits of other celebrities" (371). In other words, Eliot desired something closer to renown, rather than celebrity, for she feared celebrity would downplay her contributions to literature.

However, "the cultural preoccupation in the late nineteenth century with celebrity" was such that "not even the sibylline Eliot could completely escape," even if she had wanted to without reservation (Wah 373). Wah uses Dickens as a benchmark against which to judge Eliot's immersion into celebrity culture. If we accept that Dickens's celebrity is based on his "status as a cultural commodity, on his involvement in the promotion of his work, as well as on the closeness he maintained throughout his career to his audiences," then Eliot, "by the 1870s – if partly only by her failure to evade fully the publicity which Dickens so unabashedly courted – inhabited the fringes of celebrity culture" (373). Quoting Lizzie White, Maura Ives points out that the "key issue [for authors] was not [...] whether or not to participate in the commodification of the self, but how to control that commodification (206)" (Hawkins and Ives 9-10). White's analysis reiterates Wah's assertion that Victorian society's preoccupation with celebrity left little room for a celebrated individual, such as Eliot, to choose to be part of celebrity culture. However, it

clarifies that Eliot could still have some control over how her name and persona were circulated and what those representations included.

Just as Cross's biography of Eliot was a means of controlling the public's perception and knowledge of Eliot after her death, the *George Eliot Birthday Book* offered a means for Eliot to control her image during her life. This birthday book is one of the many artifacts that Ann Hawkins and Maura Ives investigate in *Women Writers and the Artifacts of Celebrity in the Long Nineteenth Century* (2012).¹² Their edited collection argues that "to understand women's participation within early celebrity culture ... it is necessary to examine the printed and visual artifacts ... through which women's literary celebrity was manifested" (2). Though the original birthday book was populated with quotes from the Bible (95),¹³ other publishers took up the idea:

birthday books composed entirely of quotations from contemporary writers soon became a staple of celebrity infrastructure. In spite of the growth of women's literary celebrity in the late nineteenth century, women writers were rarely featured within them, both because 'the status of women as literary celebrities ran unprofitably counter to the idea of women as *consumers* of celebrity goods' ([Hawkins and Ives] 102), and because women writers who were the subject of a birthday book risked being seen as *mere* celebrities rather than writers of substance and standing. George Eliot – the second contemporary, and the first woman writer to be featured in a birthday book – expressed anxiety about both the content and the ornate presentation of her book. (8)

As Ives indicates, though the birthday book was a popular genre from the public's point of view, it also conflicted with some of the boundaries regarding women in society: if women were the

¹² See Rachel Teukolsky's "Cartomania: Sensation, Celebrity, and the Democratized Portrait" (2015) for an exploration of the carte-de-visite, another artifact of celebrity culture.

¹³ A birthday book format featured short quotations from the Bible or famous authors. These quotations functioned as devotionals or meditations, which were printed next to blank spaces (for each day of the year) for writing birthdays or other memoranda (Hawkins and Ives 8). For a more detailed description of the original birthday book's content, function, and physical appearance(s), see Hawkins and Ives, pages 95-7.

celebrities quoted in the books, then they had crossed from the domestic sphere, associated with consumption, to the professional sphere of production. As if that were not enough, once women writers like Eliot were accepted as having professional reputations, they were at pains to maintain that status, essentially trading one boundary for another. As Ives notes, and as we saw in Wah's analysis, Eliot was aware of the potential dangers of how celebrity and its artifacts could easily warp that status. Ives elaborates on such dangers:

the single-author birthday book ... rendered authors vulnerable to market demands and to the constraints, conventions, and manipulation of authorial text and image peculiar to the birthday book format. The birthday book's overt commercialism and its mechanisms for creating a sense of the celebrity's personality and private self endangered the celebrity author's personal privacy, artistic control, and position among the cultural elite. These risks were compounded for women writers who had to manage the blurring boundaries between public and private without transgressing cultural norms of domesticity and propriety, while also meeting the conventions of the birthday book genre ... without compromising literary reputation. (Hawkins and Ives 97)

Given such an extensive list of the ways in which contributing to the birthday book phenomenon could actually diminish an author's control over their personal life, work, and professional status, it is a wonder that Eliot consented to her own birthday book. In fact, Eliot's attempts to remove herself from celebrity culture made her more vulnerable to it, for she was not familiar with the birthday book when it was first presented to her, so, to paraphrase Eliot herself, she referred the matter to her publisher's judgment (Haight 6: 423). So Eliot might have unwittingly subjected herself to the risks of the birthday book. However, at least she had the opportunity to give input to the compiler of her book (Hawkins and Ives 105). Rather than relinquish total control to celebrity culture by refusing to sanction the production of her birthday book, Eliot did what was in her power to control as much as she could.

Though George Eliot's negotiations for the *George Eliot Birthday Book* "amply demonstrate the dilemma birthday books presented for living authors, who weighed financial gain and the opportunity for wider recognition against the possible loss of status from participating in an overtly commercial product," for Eliot, such weighing of options was not limited to artifacts of celebrity (Hawkins and Ives 103). Rosemarie Bodenheimer, drawing on Eliot's letters and journals like *Wah*, shows how Eliot's own ambition and writing were sources of anxiety for her, particularly as they related to how she could position herself as something other than a publicly performing woman.

Bodenheimer begins her study early in Eliot's life, when she is still just 19-year-old Mary Ann Evans. The article begins with Mary Ann's own voice: "I feel that my besetting sin is the one of all others most destroying, as it is the fruitful parent of them all, Ambition, a desire insatiable for the esteem of my fellow creatures (Eliot, *Letters* 1: 19)" (7). Bodenheimer immediately acknowledges that Eliot's "active desire to repress her own ambition is not in itself surprising; if anything it was over-conditioned by her gender, her religion, and her position as daughter and housekeeper in a provincial, ambiguously middle-class family" (7). In other words, a conflict between ambition – associated with achievement and perhaps even recognition for that achievement – and social boundaries had been occupying Eliot for years before she was caught up in celebrity culture.

Furthermore, the sustained ideas that Bodenheimer extracts from Eliot's declaration about ambition are that Eliot's "separation of ambition from the work to which it aspired was fueled by a deep self-consciousness activated by the image of performance to an audience. In the letters it was to remain a characteristic feature of George Eliot's self-representation" and that, "by separating her ambition from her achievement and transforming it into suffering, George

Eliot could feminize and conceal it, both to her own satisfaction and for the benefit of her audiences and admirers” (7, 8). The separation mentioned in each passage indicates the creation of boundaries that gave Eliot a sense of control over not only her own desires but also the way her “audiences and admirers” perceived her.

These personal boundaries were compounded by other, more public, boundaries both breached and created by her choice to live with George Henry Lewes, an already married man. Eliot’s letter to her friend Charles Bray, dated October 23, 1854, illuminates some of her thoughts on the beginnings of her relationship with Lewes:¹⁴

It is possible that you have already heard a report prevalent in London that Mr. Lewes has ‘run away’ from his wife and family. ... Of course many silly myths are already afloat about me, in addition to the truth, which of itself would be thought matter for scandal. I am quite unconcerned about them except as they may cause pain to my real friends. If you hear of anything that I have said, done, or written in relation to Mr. Lewes beyond the simple fact that I am attached to him and that I am living with him, do me the justice to believe that it is false. ... I am quite prepared to accept the consequences of a step which I have deliberately taken and to accept them without irritation or bitterness. The most painful consequence will, I know, be the loss of friends.
(Haight 2: 178-9)

The social boundary that George Eliot crossed was living with a married man. The letter even indicates that Lewes came under scrutiny for breaching a different social norm by apparently

¹⁴ This letter was sent from Weimar, Germany, where George Eliot and George Henry Lewes (GHL) had been together since July. A letter, dated October 4, from Thomas Woolner to William Bell Scott – two artists well-acquainted with Dante Gabriel Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelites – provides one outside perspective on this trip to Germany: “By the way—have you heard ... blackguard Lewes has bolted with a ----- and is living in Germany with her. I believe it dangerous to write facts of anyone nowadays so I will not any further lift the mantle and display the filthy contamination of these hideous satyrs and smirking moralists—these workers in the Agepemone—these Mormonites in another name—stink pots of humanity” (Haight 2: 175-6). Haight’s accompanying footnote is also noteworthy because it states that Woolner changed his opinion of Lewes after meeting him and that it would “be interesting to have the reply from Scott, who was one of GHL’s oldest friends” (Haight 2: 176).

abandoning his family. However, Eliot was aware that choosing to live with Lewes would potentially create new boundaries between her and her friends or family. That she was “quite unconcerned” with the scandalous “silly myths” about her that arose as a result of her social impropriety suggests one way in which she distanced herself from celebrity culture by refusing to respond to the gossip. Eliot’s “desire to avoid the public gaze,” especially after her relationship with Lewes began, “was responsible for stringent rules of social behavior” aimed to control the public’s perception and knowledge of her (Bodenheimer 14). Such a withdrawal served, paradoxically, to increase the public’s interest in her, which in turn reemphasizes the uncontrollable nature of celebrity culture and the lack of choice it gives to those that have come into contact with it (Wah 376).

Beginning in the mid-1860s and “continuing through the writing of *Middlemarch* and *Daniel Deronda*, the letters express a new phase of anxiety about her own writing ... Because she had achieved financial success, she now had also to defend herself against the idea that she wrote only for fame and fortune” (Bodenheimer 19-20). Bodenheimer’s comment echoes that of Ives on how the birthday book could indeed bring fame and fortune, but potentially at the cost of the writer’s professional status as a serious contributor to quality literature (Hawkins and Ives 103). Perhaps Eliot’s published words can reassure us of her goals in the pursuit of publishing. In her 1856 essay “Silly Novels by Lady Novelists,”¹⁵ Eliot expresses that superior literature is based on moral standards:

For it must be plain to every one who looks impartially and extensively into feminine literature, that its greatest deficiencies are due hardly more to the want of intellectual power than to the want of those moral qualities that contribute to literary excellence—patient diligence, a sense of the responsibility involved in

¹⁵ Published anonymously, like all the contributions to the *Westminster Review* (Beer 30).

publication, and an appreciation of the sacredness of the writer's art. (322-3)

Armed with the publicly professed standards of “responsibility” and “sacredness,” Eliot began her career as a novelist having identified boundaries between different types of fame. Based on this essay, her goal was to reside in the morally superior realm of renown, achieved by contributing significantly to literature, while the rest of the literary marketplace was flooded by the “foolish vanity of wishing to appear in print” (Eliot, “Silly Novels” 323). However, “Silly Novels by Lady Novelists” was published before Eliot had begun writing her first novel.¹⁶ Therefore, it behooves us to examine her later work, after her fame as a novelist was firmly established. In my next chapter, I turn to *Daniel Deronda* to further investigate how, twenty years after the publication of “Silly Novels by Lady Novelists,” Eliot reasserts the moral boundaries between renown and celebrity – particularly as they relate to artistic pursuits – in her fiction.

¹⁶ *Adam Bede*, her first novel, was begun in 1857 and published in 1859.

Chapter 2: *Daniel Deronda* and the Moral Boundaries Between Celebrity and Renown

The last chapter established that scholarship on celebrity is particularly interested in the intersection and reciprocal influences of gender and celebrity. As a famous female, George Eliot was certainly subject to the (often) contrary expectations of Victorian celebrity culture and gender role ideals. Though gender is a constant undercurrent in discussions of Eliot's celebrity and important to acknowledge, it alone does not constitute her full relationship to and conception of celebrity. For instance, her writing, both the content and publication of it, participates in celebrity culture. Her essay "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists" establishes a position against the "foolish vanity" encouraged by celebrity culture, while the popularity of her subsequent publications thrust her into that culture (Eliot 323). I argue that contending with celebrity culture throughout her successful literary career prompted Eliot to publicly reassert the moral boundaries between various types of fame – renown, celebrity, and notability – in relation to artistic endeavors. The standards for the artistic endeavors are based on the key terms Eliot uses to describe the "moral qualities that contribute to literary excellence": diligence, responsibility, and sacredness (Eliot, "Silly Novels" 323). Though she initially uses them in relation to writing, versions of them surface in relation to music and theater in *Daniel Deronda*, which I turn to now.

Tracing the relations between Tom Mole's three pillars of the celebrity apparatus, the individual, the industry, and the audience, I examine how and why key performing figures in *Daniel Deronda* are located within the apparatus, focusing particularly on how the novel consistently relies on historically famed performers to help orient the reader (xi). While the lack of celebrity characters in the narrative time of the novel supports Eliot's conception of celebrity as an inferior type of fame, her use of comparisons to a variety of famous individuals and other characters allows for more than a critique of celebrity. This chapter ultimately aims to show that

celebrity's inferiority in *Daniel Deronda* is defined through the comparative superiority of other types of fame whose adherence to the moral standards of artistic endeavor signal their superiority. The simultaneous validation of renown and discrediting of celebrity in *Daniel Deronda* allows Eliot to defend her own fame in a way that is not contrary to her assertions in "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists."

"Divided among characters": Acknowledging the Celebrity Apparatus in *Daniel Deronda*

Over the past fifty years, critics of *Daniel Deronda* have built a conversation around Klesmer, Gwendolen, Mirah, the Princess, and Daniel regarding their musical and theatrical abilities, their relationships with the industry and their audiences, the cultural boundaries they maintain or blur, and how some of these elements are representative of Eliot's life or larger cultural trends. What is missing from this critical conversation is a piecing together of these components in a way that recognizes these characters as part of the celebrity apparatus, an exploration of the how and why these characters are located on the spectrum of celebrity. Only by acknowledging the celebrity apparatus at work in the novel can we understand the ways in which celebrity is being compared to other types of fame.

Before attempting to understand the ways in which the celebrity apparatus is presented within the novel, an overview of the novel's complex plot is necessary. One plot line of *Daniel Deronda* follows Gwendolen Harleth, a young Englishwoman, fond of being admired, with mediocre singing and acting talents that she nevertheless proudly displays in the drawing rooms of her social circle. Her family loses their fortune in bad speculation, and the burden of bringing in income falls to Gwendolen, for she is the oldest of all her sisters and is without a father or brothers. She considers falling back on her amateur enjoyment of singing and acting to try and

earn a living on the stage, calling on Herr Julius Klesmer's professional opinion to guide her. Klesmer, a Jewish musician and composer, is the in-house musician for Gwendolen's wealthy neighbors, the Arrowpoints. Klesmer quickly disabuses Gwendolen of the notion that she would ever be celebrated, let alone moderately successful, on the public stage. Detesting the idea of becoming a governess, she marries the wealthy Henleigh Grandcourt.

Intersecting with Gwendolen's narrative is that of the eponymous Daniel Deronda. Daniel is brought up as an English gentleman under the care of Sir Hugo Mallinger, Grandcourt's uncle, and without any knowledge of his true parents. Early in the novel, Daniel rescues a young Jewish woman, Mirah (Cohen) Lapidoth, from a suicide attempt. He places her in the care of his friends, the Meyricks, and subsequently takes on the role of her guardian. As part of this role, Daniel makes it his business to help locate Mirah's mother and brother, from whom she was taken at a young age by her father and for whom she returned to London. Under her father, Mirah received quality singing and acting lessons, lessons she desires to use to earn a living as soon as she has recovered. Therefore, Daniel uses his high society connections to get Mirah performance and teaching engagements in the wealthy homes of London, beginning by having Klesmer listen to her sing. Eventually, Daniel's dying mother, the Princess Leonora Halm-Eberstein, sends him a letter through Sir Hugo. Upon meeting up with her in Genoa, Daniel learns that both his parents were Jewish and that his mother had been a famed lyric actress, known as Alcharisi, about twenty years prior.¹⁷

This plot overview exposes music as a recurring theme in the novel that has been much explored by critics. The scholarship that focuses on music in *Daniel Deronda* ranges from brief

¹⁷ Other critics seem to arbitrarily choose how to refer to Daniel's mother. However, given that the lens of celebrity recognizes these names as distinct personas, Alcharisi is a stage name after all, I will be using the Princess to refer to the actual character we meet and Alcharisi to refer to the Princess's celebrity persona/branded identity.

studies within surveys of Victorian novels to more sustained studies exclusively focused on Eliot's work or *Daniel Deronda* specifically.¹⁸ For instance, Alison Byerly reserves her focus for Eliot's corpus, arguing that music throughout Eliot's writing represents a "pure, authentic expression of self: it does not count as an 'art' at all" (2). She positions the musical voice as the moral standard against which characters can be evaluated and, in her reading of *Daniel Deronda*, Byerly points to Klesmer as the adjudicator of both Gwendolen and Mirah's musical taste and its associated moral purity. Discussing music as self-expression distances it from the discussion of music as a profession and, in turn, any connection to the celebrity apparatus. Despite not framing the musical profession in terms of celebrity, this scholarship provides foundational analyses of the various ways that music and musical characters function in *Daniel Deronda*.

Other critics have chosen to explore Eliot's incorporation of the theater and acting. These studies, like those on music, include surveys of nineteenth-century novels as well as *Daniel Deronda*-specific readings.¹⁹ In her book chapter, "Hellenist Heroines: Commerce, Culture and the Jewess" (2007), Nadia Valman focuses on the "relationships among artistry, commerce and gender" (171). She uses Mirah and the Princess as examples of the artistic Jewish female that "reveals and transcends the degradation of Jewishness" that is portrayed through the

¹⁸ See D.J. Smith's "Music in the Victorian Novel" (1963), which argues that contemporary musical attitudes are reflected in Victorian novels such as *Daniel Deronda*. See Shirley Frank Levenson's "The Use of Music in *Daniel Deronda*" (1969) for an analysis of how music reveals Gwendolen's character flaws, often through her relationships with the other musically inclined characters.

¹⁹ For surveys on the actress that include *Daniel Deronda*, see John Stokes's "Rachel's 'Terrible Beauty': An Actress Among the Novelists" (1984) and Julie Hankey's "Body Language, the Idea of the Actress, and Some Nineteenth-Century Actress-Heroines" (1992). For studies on actresses and statues, see Gail Marshall, "Actresses, Statues and Speculation in *Daniel Deronda*" (1994) and Chapter 3 in *Actresses on the Victorian Stage: Feminine Performance and the Galatea Myth* (1998); and Rebecca Rainof, "George Eliot's Screaming Statues, Laocoon, and the Pre-Raphaelites" (2014). See Carol de Saint Victor's "Acting and Action: Sexual Distinctions in *Daniel Deronda*" (1987) for an analysis of theatrical and social performance.

individualistic and capitalism-focused Jewish male of nineteenth-century literature (131).

Valman's triumvirate, especially with the inclusion of commerce, comes closest to the celebrity apparatus's triangular relationship between artist, industry, and audience. These studies have created a solid foundation regarding theater in *Daniel Deronda*, particularly in relation to the actress, from which I can take the next step to connecting theater and theatricality to celebrity.

The overlap between music and theater, namely opera and the figure of the prima donna, has been another avenue for critics. Grace Kehler carries out an extensive exploration of the ways in which opera and the prima donna "nudge wider the boundaries of the family and social conceptions of the meritorious" in *Daniel Deronda*, drawing on the lives of several female opera singers of the nineteenth century and locating opera in the larger culture milieu (114). Julie Buckler and Phyllis Weliver also examine the figure of the prima donna in *Daniel Deronda*: Buckler in a survey of Western and Russian novels and Weliver in a history of the prima donna narrative of the nineteenth century, a narrative which she applies to Eliot's own life. Weliver's analysis acknowledges that the novel's exploration of the prima donna script is complex because the elements are "divided among characters," which is how I perceive the novel's exploration of the celebrity apparatus (112). The language used in discussing the prima donna and her relationship with her audience and to society is similar to that which is used to describe the individual and the audience within the celebrity apparatus and, therefore, the critical work on the prima donna provides a solid base from which I can develop the connection between the prima donna and the celebrity.

Professional fields within the entertainment industry are only one component of the celebrity apparatus, so other qualities complicit in the creation of the celebrity must also be taken into account. For instance, Rosemarie Bodenheimer explores ambition and illustrates how Eliot

renders the dangers of ambition in *Daniel Deronda* by analyzing the contrasts between the tormented souls of the ambitious Princess and Gwendolen with the comparatively happy lives of the unambitious Daniel and Mirah (26). Ambition is part of Nadia Valman's argument too: she sets up Mirah as the unambitious, feminine, and nationalistic counterpoint to the Princess's artistic ambition and rejection of family and national identity (146-59). For the individual within the celebrity apparatus, ambition and other personal motivations could play a role in maintaining relationships with the industry and audience, and these existing explorations of ambition will prove beneficial groundwork for my own discussions of the performing figures in the novel and their varied connections to celebrity.

Celebrity as a distinct concept in the novel has only been addressed in Henry Alley's book chapter "Celebrity, Anonymity, and the Heroic Voices of *Daniel Deronda*" (1997). Despite the foregrounding of celebrity in the title, the chapter actually focuses on the eschewal of celebrity, on the ways in which Eliot encourages anonymous heroism by linking it to "esthetics and morality" (150). Alley analyzes Gwendolen, one of the "anonymous heroes of Eliot's making" that have "distinct characteristics, which might be best understood by invoking the classical and Renaissance hero or heroine who precedes and the modernist hero or heroine who follows" (17). Alley puts true heroism and celebrity in opposition, like Boorstin did a few decades earlier. However, while Alley defines true heroism through the analysis of Gwendolen and a few other characters, he never defines the term celebrity and uses the term interchangeably with other terms like prestige, thus rendering his contribution to the exploration of celebrity in *Daniel Deronda* largely ineffective.

As the literature indicates, *Daniel Deronda* boasts several characters with varying degrees of association to the profession of performance artist and, I will argue, to the celebrity

apparatus. Though there are many performers – singers, actors, and musicians – none of them has celebrity status within the narrative time of the novel. Klesmer, Gwendolen, and Mirah are in various stages of pre-celebrity; the Princess is living in the post-celebrity void; and Daniel represents the industry through the managerial role he plays on Mirah’s behalf. Taken together, however, these performers create a complete representation of the celebrity apparatus of the late Victorian period.

My focus in the rest of this chapter is to recognize and examine the connections between individual, industry, and audience by performing close-readings of Klesmer, Gwendolen, Mirah, and the Princess in order to acknowledge the representation of the celebrity apparatus in the novel. Reading these characters through the lens of celebrity then illuminates the ways in which Eliot sets up comparisons between different types of fame through which Eliot asserts the relative inferiority of celebrity. While such an assertion generally aligns with Eliot’s assertions in “Silly Novels by Lady Novelists,” we must take into consideration the twenty years of Eliot’s literary success between the publication of the essay and of *Daniel Deronda*. In light of Eliot’s success and fame, *Daniel Deronda* extends Eliot’s previous critique of celebrity by also legitimizing renown (fame based on substantial accomplishment). This qualification allows Eliot to defend her own fame while maintaining her original stance on celebrity.

“Not yet a Liszt”: Herr Klesmer, Audience, and Excellence

Herr Klesmer,²⁰ the performing character closest to obtaining celebrity status, best represents the complex relationship that a performer has with his or her audiences. Looking at Klesmer through the celebrity apparatus lens reveals that he lacks both the necessary audience

²⁰ Shirley Frank Levenson notes in “The Use of Music in *Daniel Deronda*” that Klesmer’s “very name means ‘musician’ in Yiddish” (317).

and industry presence to propel him to celebrity. This close reading is supported by Eliot's use of historically celebrated musicians – Franz Liszt, Franz Schubert, and Felix Mendelssohn – to situate Klesmer within celebrity culture. Though critics have typically discussed Eliot's engagement with celebrity culture in relation to the moral boundary between masculine and feminine behavior, Klesmer introduces a new boundary grounded in the pursuit of artistic excellence. Through Klesmer's distinction from Liszt, his likeness to Schubert and Mendelssohn, and his advice to Gwendolen, Eliot begins to define the moral boundary between celebrity and renown. Renown is portrayed as morally superior because it is linked to the pursuit of art for its own sake, which leads to fame based on significant achievement and contribution to one's field.

One fine July day, Klesmer appears at the Archery Meeting at Lord Brackenshaw's in the company of his patrons, the Arrowpoints. His presence prompts the following commentary that includes the novel's first use of the word celebrity:

Many present knew Klesmer, or knew of him; but they had only seen him on candle-light occasions when he appeared simply as a musician, and he had not yet that supreme, world-wide celebrity which makes an artist great to the most ordinary people by their knowledge of his great expensiveness. It was literally a new light for them to see him in—presented unexpectedly on this July afternoon in an exclusive society... (85)

This passage helps situate Klesmer in society while hinting at the ambivalence of his position. He is simultaneously known and unknown, depending on the audience in question. He is known to the “exclusive society” of the Archery Meeting but not to the “ordinary people” of the wider world. This smaller circle of recognition suggests Klesmer has attained notability, fame “limited to a particular circle” (Dames 28). Moreover, Klesmer's notability at the Archery Meeting is further divided between those who “knew” him in person and those who “knew of him.” Yet even when he is known in person, he “is a person set apart, not only as his musical talent

becomes manifest, but even from birth because of his non-English background” (Smith 527). As D.J. Smith explains, “in the Victorian novel the musician does not enter the scene or leave it as one of the crowd; he is on a different social level, usually a lower one than that of the rest of the company” (527). This conception of social status is evident in the relationship between Klesmer and the close circle of upper-class society for whom he performs. Referring to Klesmer as “simply” a musician implies a certain inferiority and lack of integration into that society.

However, he is also an “artist” with the potential, as indicated by the “yet,” to be considered great in the eyes of the world and is already great enough to be employed by the wealthy. The use of “that” to introduce “supreme, world-wide celebrity” suggests readers are familiar with a particular type of celebrity that would be applicable here, which in turn presumes that worldwide celebrity was not unheard of in the 1870s. This comes with the caveat that the term “world-wide” might reference a narrower audience than is connoted. “World” could very well mean the Western or civilized world or even just Europe, which would scale back the difficulty of achieving and maintaining celebrity status through the audience-performer relationship. Mole’s celebrity apparatus defines audience as “massive, anonymous, socially diverse, [and] geographically distributed” (3). The terms “world-wide” and “most ordinary people” reflect such a definition.

The narrator’s commentary on Klesmer also includes comparisons to celebrated musicians of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which provide readers with a real-life scale of renown or celebrity against which to understand Klesmer. We are informed that “Klesmer was not yet a Liszt, understood to be adored by ladies of all European countries with

the exception of Lapland” (200).²¹ Oliver Hilmes describes Liszt’s fame with language that aligns with the celebrity apparatus:

Franz Liszt was a superstar, a genius and a European celebrity – he was utterly exceptional. Even as a child prodigy he cast a spell on audiences ... The popular press of the time reported at length on his concerts and at even greater length on the numerous escapades that fuelled their feverish interest in him. There were times when the enthusiasm triggered by his public appearances bordered on delirium, and he became a figure on whom contemporaries projected all manner of erotic fantasies and secret desires. (ix)

Hilmes further notes that, “Liszt’s music is no less fascinating than the man himself” (xi). While Hilmes’s use of the term celebrity certainly announces Liszt’s status, it is the language of these passages that confirms that status, for the language mirrors what Mole and Boorstin have to say about celebrity. The references to Liszt’s “fascinating” musical and personal life, to his audiences, and to the popular press coincide with the three components of Mole’s celebrity apparatus that “routinely work together to render an individual personally fascinating” (1). Additionally, the references to the popular press and Liszt’s contemporaries resonate with how Boorstin describes the creation of the celebrity: “The celebrity ... is always a contemporary. ... is the creature of gossip, of public opinion, of magazines, newspapers ... The celebrity is born in the daily papers” (82). This awareness of Liszt’s celebrity enables us to read the narrator’s comparison between him and Klesmer in a way that clarifies the extent to which Klesmer occupies a pre-celebrity status and perhaps even suggests that the “world-wide celebrity” is

²¹ In Chapter 3 of their book *The Northern Utopia: British Perceptions of Norway in the Nineteenth Century*, Peter Fjagesund and Ruth A. Symes acknowledge that nineteenth-century British travelers to Norway were never “under any illusion about the significant ethnic differences between the majority of the population and the minority Sami population (known to the British as the Lapps or Laplanders) living within Norway’s northern extreme” (196). In the accounts that Fjagesund and Symes study, “the Sami emerge ... as creatures somewhere between the animal and the human kingdom,” and therefore would not have been considered cultured enough to appreciate Liszt (203).

confined to Europe, given that both Eliot and Hilmes limit Liszt's celebrity to that geographic region. Note that the novel's comparison focuses solely on Liszt's relationship with audience. The importance of this detail is that these "ladies" are from "all European countries." Such an audience appears to fulfill Mole's definition of audience, given above. If Liszt has such an audience, and Klesmer is not yet a Liszt, then it follows that Klesmer does not have such an audience. Thus, in terms of the celebrity apparatus, it is Klesmer's lack of a relationship with a mass audience that factors into preventing his rise to celebrity. Furthermore, as Hilmes's description suggests, a mass audience is maintained through extensive press reporting, which in turn suggests that Klesmer lacks in that area as well.

Shortly after the narrator's distinction between Klesmer and Liszt, similarities are drawn between Klesmer and Mendelssohn. Klesmer's musical talent is described as, "as in Mendelssohn, finding expression for itself not only in the highest finish of execution, but in that fervour of creative work and theoretic belief which pierces the whole future of a life with the light of congruous, devoted purpose" (201). Here, instead of focusing on Liszt's adoring European ladies and Klesmer's lack thereof, the focus is on more substantial topics: Klesmer and Mendelssohn's "execution" of their compositions and the creativity of their work. This equivalency is elaborated upon when Miss Arrowpoint, Klesmer's music student and soon-to-be fiancée, intercedes on behalf of Klesmer with a guest: "He is a great musician in the fullest sense of the word. He will rank with Schubert and Mendelssohn" (203).²² Mendelssohn's early reception by the British was as follows: "a high plateau reached during his lifetime and reinforced by a cult of hero worship after his early death" (Todd xxii). It was not until "the

²² As Mendelssohn biographer R. Larry Todd notes, even after "Richard Wagner's anti-Semitic critique at mid-century," "the British continued to celebrate the life and music of a composer who had visited London ten times between 1829 and 1847, and placed an indelible stamp on Victorian musical culture" (xx, xxiii).

closing decades of the nineteenth century [that] increasingly disparaging English voices were being heard” (Todd xxiv), so Eliot’s readership and the world of the novel are still operating within this “cult of hero worship” (xxii), thus allowing a comparison between Klesmer and Mendelssohn to recuperate Klesmer from his position as “simply” a musician (Eliot 85) and elevate him to “a great musician” (203). Though “there never was a time when ‘fame’ was precisely the same thing as ‘greatness’ ... great men, like famous men, came into a nation’s consciousness only slowly. ... The past became the natural habitat of great men” (Boorstin 72-3).²³ This idea that the passage of time and the death of men helped imbue them with greatness is hinted at in Miss Arrowpoint’s use of the future tense: “He will rank with Schubert and Mendelssohn.”²⁴ Schubert died in 1828 and Mendelssohn in 1847, so from the vantage point of the 1870s, they belonged to the past, and the equivalency between them and Klesmer suggests his fame is likely to come after his death as well, or at least after a longer stint on Earth. Though Klesmer lacks all of Mole’s necessary components for celebrity, he does have qualities that, according to Boorstin, may still grant him some sort of fame.

As the similarities between Klesmer and Mendelssohn begin to suggest, the audience Klesmer does command knows him not for a brand name, such as Mole outlines, but for his musical talents and achievements (Mole 16-20). Upon Gwendolen’s first visit to the Arrowpoints, Klesmer is mentioned to her prior to their in-person introduction. Gwendolen’s

²³ At the aforementioned Archery Meeting, the description of Klesmer’s eclectic appearance and demeanor prompts the narrator to declare that “one sees why it is often better for greatness to be dead, and to have got rid of the outward man” (85). While this might be somewhat in jest, it actually aligns remarkably well with Boorstin’s conclusions on greatness.

²⁴ According to Scott Messing, Schubert was “a composer whose reputation was principally founded upon musical genres that both the public and professionals in the nineteenth century construed as most suitable for private performance” (6). This aligns with Klesmer’s seeming proclivity for private performance and employment, a proclivity that is the opposite of garnering public attention to become a celebrity.

initial small talk with Mrs. Arrowpoint centers around Gwendolen's various interests, including music, which prompts Mrs. Arrowpoint to say, "We have a first-rate musician in the house now—Herr Klesmer; perhaps you know all his compositions" (36). Given that "to have a first-rate musician in your house is a privilege of wealth," Mrs. Arrowpoint might just be trying to impress Gwendolen (Eliot, *Daniel Deronda* 199). However, even if the intent was to impress, the comment also illuminates Klesmer's specific type of fame. The way Mrs. Arrowpoint structures both parts of her comment emphasizes not the man but the music. She has to preface Herr Klesmer's name with his occupation, which suggests that his name is likely not as widely known as his music. The casual comment, "perhaps you know all his compositions," strengthens the earlier implication that if Gwendolen were familiar with Klesmer, then it would be for his work. Klesmer appears to have a fame that is distinct from celebrity in that it is centered on his achievements rather than his own "well-knownness" (Boorstin 79). Renown, which "brought honour to the office not the individual, and public recognition was not so much of the man himself as of the significance of his actions for the society," is perhaps the best designation of fame here (Inglis 4). This is particularly so if one considers Klesmer's touted potential to be a Schubert or Mendelssohn. In this, Klesmer perhaps best reflects Eliot's own take on celebrity versus other types of fame: "like her fashioned composer, Eliot is only interested in those artistic quests that precede recognition by the outer world" (Alley 146). In other words, it is acceptable to be admired for one's achievements whether in music or literature, but unacceptable to let the fame become the motivating factor for "artistic quests."

Thus far, my reading has located Klesmer within celebrity culture. It is not until Klesmer's conversation with Gwendolen that he explicitly declares the moral bankruptcy of celebrity, elaborating on Eliot's brief stab at it in "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists." Not long

after moving into the neighborhood, Gwendolen's family loses all its money. This crisis prompts her to consider becoming an actress or singer on the stage as a means to earn money, and she approaches Klesmer for his professional opinion. Klesmer declares the life of an artist to be the most honorable vocation, but that "the honour comes from the inward vocation and the hard-won achievement: there is no honour in donning the life as a livery" (214). Without saying it in so many words, Klesmer reveals that the rewards attached to the life of an artist are from the artist and the art, not created by outside forces or merely for show. To this, Gwendolen feels compelled to respond, "I am quite prepared to bear hardships at first. Of course no one can become celebrated all at once. And it is not necessary that every one should be first-rate—either actresses or singers" (215). The temporal phrases "at first" and "all at once" suggest Gwendolen's (mis)conception of the artist's life is one that begins with hardship but always eventually ends in comfort, if not luxury. In using "celebrated," Gwendolen hints that in addition to earning money for her family, she would not mind becoming publicly admired, as she has been privately. "Celebrated" is distinct from "first-rate," like celebrity from renown, the one having to do with blanket admiration and the other with talent and achievement. That Klesmer is "first-rate" and not a celebrity solidifies such a distinction. Gwendolen's reply to Klesmer conveys her preference for or willingness to settle for dubiously earned celebrity over hard-earned renown.

Either way, Klesmer is too passionate about his vocation and his art to allow Gwendolen to adopt such an attitude should she choose the artist's path. He counters with the following, directly calling out Gwendolen for thinking of celebrity:

It is all one, so far, what your goal may be—excellence, celebrity, second, third rateness . . . I know. You have exercised your talents—you recite—you sing—from the drawing-room

standpunkt. My dear Fräulein, you must unlearn all that. You have not yet conceived what excellence is: you must unlearn your mistaken admirations. . . . For you must not be thinking of celebrity: put that candle out of your eyes, and look only at excellence. (215)

Once more celebrity is at odds with excellence, which is equivalent to first-rateness or achievement-based fame. Klesmer is clear about his priorities as a musician: striving for excellence in one's art is a superior goal to attaining celebrity because of one's art. His reference to the drawing-room viewpoint is a reference to Gwendolen's amateur mindset regarding art and performance; because of that, he suggests, she has never been called upon to be truly excellent. With Klesmer's position in celebrity culture reinforced by differences to Liszt and similarities to Schubert and Mendelssohn, Klesmer's manifesto on excellence, and the dedication it takes to achieve it, becomes the first line of moral distinction Eliot draws between renown and celebrity.

“No objection to being adored”: Gwendolen's Desire for Admiration

Unlike Herr Klesmer, Gwendolen Harleth is constantly thinking about how she can display her body and perceived talents. However, as a female who (at one point) hopes to perform for money, Gwendolen becomes morally suspect because voluntary public display of the female body was associated with prostitution. In thus linking the spectral image of the prostitute with Gwendolen's desire for celebrity and her plan to provide mediocre entertainment to achieve that status, Eliot is able to reaffirm and strengthen the moral boundary between celebrity and renown. Gwendolen's lack of training, talent, and work ethic is emphasized by comparisons to various queens of the stage who did have these qualities: Jenny Lind, Giulia Grisi, Rachel Félix, and Mrs. Elizabeth Billington.

As we are informed early in the novel, “in Gwendolen’s habits of mind it had been taken for granted that she knew what was admirable and that she herself was admired” (7). Indeed, “Gwendolen was apt to think rather of those who saw her than of those whom she could not see” (59). These descriptions help establish Gwendolen’s self-assurance regarding how others perceive her, her self-centeredness, and her focus on the immediacy of her surroundings. These qualities are apparently developed through “her inborn energy of egoistic desire” as well as her education (33); it seems that “having passed two years at a showy school, where, on all occasions of display, she had been put foremost, had only deepened her sense that so exceptional a person as herself could hardly remain in ordinary circumstances or in a social position less than advantageous” (17). In other words, both internal and external factors legitimated her opinion of herself as exceptional and worthy of admiration. Her desire to be admired and her determination to evoke admiration in each encounter with people certainly make her a prime candidate for celebrity, at least as concerns an individual’s part in the apparatus.

Gwendolen’s celebrity potential is elaborated on further through comparisons to historically celebrated actresses and singers. As Kehler argues:

Gwendolen’s utter misreading of the voice of the prima donna and her uninformed discursive correlation of her self-willed social supremacy in a small community with the queenliness of a prima donna are most explicitly exposed by her references to Lind and Grisi. Both women were dedicated artists for whom the musical public created new, honorary titles. Jenny Lind was known world-wide as the ‘Swedish Nightingale,’ while Grisi was the first female singer to be distinguished by the appellation of ‘diva’... (130)

In some cases, the narrator provides the references to these prima donnas: “[Gwendolen’s] voice was a moderately powerful soprano (some one had told her it was like Jenny Lind’s), her ear good, and she was able to keep in tune” (38). The reference to Lind is meant to supplement the

description of Gwendolen's singing by providing a known standard against which to rank Gwendolen. But unlike in Klesmer's comparisons, the narrator displaces the judgment onto a "some one," thereby casting doubt on the reliability of the assertion and suggesting Gwendolen uses this anonymous comment as one of her artificial external validations. It is these polite, but probably inaccurate, compliments that the upper-class amateur performers circulate among themselves that have helped give Gwendolen a false sense of her abilities.

Furthermore, Gwendolen favorably compares herself to the queens of the stage, a move Klesmer would never make. For instance, in her conversation with Klesmer, we know Gwendolen sets her sights on high status: "to sing and act too, like Grisi, is a much higher position. Naturally, I should wish to take as high a rank as I can" (212). Such a comparison to Grisi involves the bold assumption that Gwendolen could attain Grisi's status, which of course is part of the illusion that Klesmer shatters. She makes herself more ridiculous by starting off other self-comparisons by admitting she lacks the training, only to go on to presume success should she choose to pursue a stage career:

She had never acted—only made a figure in *tableaux vivants* at school; but she felt assured that she could act well, and having been once or twice to the Théâtre Français, and also heard her mamma speak of Rachel, her waking dreams and cogitations as to how she would manage her destiny sometimes turned on the question whether she should become an actress like Rachel, since she was more beautiful than that thin Jewess. (44)

This passage indicates Gwendolen's confidence is such that some charades at school, experience visiting the theater, hearsay about Rachel, and beauty would be sufficient for her to take the stage successfully and perhaps even surpass Rachel. However, given "that Rachel Félix was the greatest actress of her time was beyond dispute," it seems unlikely (Stokes 771). Whereas the comparisons between Klesmer, Schubert, and Mendelssohn help locate him fairly close to their

achievements and fame, what we know of Gwendolen creates distance between her and these famous women. It is not enough for her to desire to be admired; she must provide something that the industry can then present to the public in order to begin the journey to celebrity.

Yet beyond desire for admiration, Gwendolen lacks not only the talent, but also the work ethic that is essential to achieving artistic excellence, not to mention celebrity. Part of Gwendolen's fancies appear to go beyond the human: "I will be Saint Cecilia: some one shall paint me as Saint Cecilia" (19). Saint Cecilia is the patron saint of music (Eliot 690), but as Kehler points out, the reference to the saint alludes to Mrs. Elizabeth Billington, who "was known to critics for her unceasing industry in her endeavours to hone her vocal techniques and to the public for her apotheosis into Saint Cecilia in the portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds" (129). As Kehler continues, "voice and industry, the two primary traits which enabled Billington's transformation into the national symbol of music, are conspicuously absent from Gwendolen's own attempt at symbolic representation" (129). Industry here refers to hard work, rather than one of the pillars of Mole's celebrity apparatus, and nothing better represents Gwendolen's disinclination to work than her marriage to Grandcourt.

Rather than put herself through the trials of the artist's life or become a governess, Gwendolen chooses marriage as the means to her and her family's financial security.²⁵ Even though she leaves the realm of entertainment, Gwendolen still has dreams of celebrity, and hopes a wealthy marriage will get her closer to that dream. Mrs. Gwendolen Grandcourt is in a state of excitement as she arrives at her new home, which begs the question, to what is her excitement owed: "Was it at the novelty simply, or the almost incredible fulfilment about to be given to her

²⁵ Though I use Gwendolen's decision to highlight her lack of work ethic, I also acknowledge that society offered her very few options for securing her future and providing income for her family.

girlish dreams of being ‘somebody’,” of being “in short the heroine of an admired play without the pains of art” (298)? This idea of being “somebody” is reflected in Vivian Sobchack’s concept of the personified body, in which a “‘Somebody’ with a capital ‘S’” is usually associated with celebrity, given that the body in question is one that transcends any one aspect of the individual (439-40).²⁶ Gwendolen’s marriage to Grandcourt thus represents not only an avoidance of the purely motivated artistic endeavor, but is also an explicit search for a position that provides her with both an industry (upper-class gossip and social engagements) and an audience (the upper-class) for her celebrity ambitions.

Furthermore, though Gwendolen abandons the idea of a professional stage career, the narrator continues that strain in Gwendolen’s life by summing up her desire for admiration in a theatrical metaphor. To really emphasize that Gwendolen has no desire for the “pains of art,” she is compared to the “heroine of an admired play” rather than an admired heroine in a play. The former allows Gwendolen to benefit from association with an already admired play instead of having to put in the work to become admired for her own talents. Through Gwendolen we can see the characteristics of an individual that might hinder promotion to celebrity (not to mention renown): the lack of training, talent, and work ethic. The references to the great women of the stage that possessed these characteristics allow training, talent, and work ethic to be placed alongside Klesmer’s pursuit of artistic excellence for its own sake. Together these qualities further distinguish morally superior renown from selfishly desired celebrity.

²⁶ Granted, Gwendolen’s “somebody” is not capitalized, but it is offset by quotation marks, and given the relatively early period of celebrity history we are dealing with, I believe equivalence here is appropriate.

“I will keep the name I have been called by”: Mirah’s Resistance to the Industry

Unlike Gwendolen, Mirah (Cohen) Lapidoth has extensive training of high quality and has been on the public stage in America and Europe. This training allows Mirah to feasibly rely on professional performing when she falls on hard times. However, Mirah’s motivations to perform are framed as unselfish whereas Gwendolen’s are framed as selfish. Because Mirah withdraws from the relationships with the industry and the audience that could lead to celebrity, any fame she earns from her talent is best described as notability, fame “limited to a particular circle” (Dames 28). The concept of notability is more ambiguous in terms of its moral superiority, since it could be either a scaled-down version of celebrity or of renown. But even if Gwendolen is also considered a notable, I assert that Eliot represents Mirah’s notability as superior to Gwendolen’s based on their differing motivations for performing. Mirah’s containment of her musical profession to teaching – one of the more acceptable professions for women – and private performance diminishes her public presence enough to avoid criticism for publicly displaying her body. This contrasts sharply with Gwendolen’s (morally suspect) desire for the largest possible audience.

Mirah’s unselfish motives are explicitly laid out in a conversation with Daniel. As she informs Daniel on one of his visits to the Meyricks’s home, “now we think I can use [my singing] to get my bread. I have really been taught well. And now I have two pupils ... I should want to get money for [my mother]. And I cannot always live on charity” (312-13). Mirah turns to performance, despite her negative experience with it, to earn her living so she can care for her mother, should she find her, and so she is not a burden to others. Gwendolen, on the other hand, turns to performance hoping for an easy means of financial support and garnering praise, immediately rejecting it when she is faced with how difficult it will actually be.

Mirah's distance from the industry and audience of the celebrity apparatus is influenced by her previous experience with the entertainment industry. In telling her history to Mrs. Meyrick, Mirah exposes her fraught relationship with both her father and the stage: "it was painful that he boasted of me, and set me to sing for show at any minute, as if I had been a musical box. ... the clapping and all the sounds of the theatre were hateful to me; and I never liked the praise I had, because it all seemed very hard and unloving" (177). Her father, essentially her manager, exercised his paternal authority over young Mirah to the extent that she grew to dislike the performance aspect of her art because she felt like a plaything rather than an artist. Smith touches on this concept of the performer as object: "To many Victorians, musicians were little more than mechanical toys, to be taken out of their boxes, wound up, allowed to perform, and thrust conveniently out of sight until they were wanted again" (527). Though Smith connects this with Klesmer's experiences performing at private parties, it is also applicable to Mirah's dehumanizing public stage appearances, particularly through the parallel of mechanized entertainment. These dehumanizing experiences, in turn, affected Mirah's relationship with the audience, for the praise and applause seemed artificial given that she had grown to dislike performing. This is quite opposite to Gwendolen's experience of such plaudits, which Klesmer points out, in his manifesto, are unrealistic. Thus, Mirah's more realistic stage experience is lent more credence.

Even when discussing her more recent experiences, Mirah continues to describe her relationship with performing and audience as negative:

The plays I acted in were detestable to me. Men came about us and wanted to talk to me: women and men seemed to look at me with a sneering smile; it was no better than a fiery furnace. Perhaps I make it worse than it was—you don't know that life: but the glare and the faces, and my having to go on and act and sing what I

hated, and then see people who came to stare at me behind the scenes. (181)

As Smith notes, “when those in polite society notice musicians at all, it is typically with a sneer” (527), and Mirah’s experience being looked and stared at “with a sneering smile” reflects that practice and, furthermore, reinforces the nineteenth-century notion of acting as prostitution (Eliot, *Daniel Deronda* 181). Hankey describes the rise of such an equivalency as coming from “the blurring together of all women who received money and independence for displaying themselves for other people’s gratification – prostitute or actress, it made no difference,” and that in “Victorian England this prejudice received extra stimulus from the almost sacred significance attached to Home, and to . . . Woman, as its guardian. It wasn’t just that the actress became a public person, but that in doing so she abandoned her private office” (227). And though Mirah may not have been old enough to be married when her father first put her on stage, it is only a matter of time before he does try to sell her off to a count. “Moral stereotypes held that theatrical work generally attracted or produced debased women,” and in Mirah’s case, association with the theater produced a version of her that was debased in the eyes of the public and herself (Kehler 109). The audience-performer relationship has become so toxic to Mirah that she likens it to hell, “a fiery furnace,” and it is no wonder that she wishes to keep her distance from that relationship as she begins her life anew in London (Eliot, *Daniel Deronda* 181). Though Klesmer also does not court an audience relationship, it is Mirah’s specifically negative experience of audience on a global scale that further adds to the degradation of celebrity as a desirous type of fame and to the positioning of Gwendolen as morally inferior for desiring such fame.

After fleeing her father’s attempts to marry her off for money, Mirah finds herself in London searching for her mother and brother. Mirah refuses to have an ad placed in the papers to aid in her search for she fears it would enable her father to find her, for “he saw everything in the

papers” (187). Though this does not directly relate to her performance career, it acknowledges the power of the press to spread information. It also suggests that Mirah will not be placing an ad in the paper about giving singing lessons. By staying out of the press and relying on the Meyricks and Daniel’s connections, Mirah tries to distance herself from the mass media industry of the celebrity apparatus.

However, as Daniel effectively acts as Mirah’s manager, she is not entirely removed from the industry. At a gathering of several upper-class ladies, Daniel makes one of his first moves as Mirah’s manager:

“I think I had better take the opportunity of mentioning our songstress,” he added, looking at Lady Mallinger—“unless you have done so.”

“Oh, the little Jewess!” said Lady Mallinger. “No, I have not mentioned her. It never entered my head that any one here wanted singing lessons.”

“All ladies know some one else who wants singing lessons,” said Deronda. “I have happened to find an exquisite singer,”—here he turned to Lady Pentreath. “... She was on the stage at Vienna; but she wants to leave that life, and maintain herself by teaching.” ...

“There are swarms of those people, aren’t there? ... Why did she leave the stage?” said Lady Pentreath. “I’m too old to believe in first-rate people giving up first-rate chances.”

“Her voice was too weak. It is a delicious voice for a room ... I imagine she would not object to sing at private parties or concerts. Her voice is quite equal to that.”

... “I suppose she’s past her best, though,” said the deep voice of Lady Pentreath.

“On the contrary, she has not yet reached it,” said Deronda.

(367-9)

In his managerial role, Daniel must not only introduce Mirah, but also promote her in such a way that her leaving the stage is not a negative attribute. He does so by being brief but accurate about why she left, saying “her voice was too weak,” before elaborating on her potential as a teacher and drawing room performer. His comment that “all ladies know some one else who wants

singing lessons” indicates that he knows there is a market for Mirah’s skillset and he intends to use his connections to get her into that market.

But he does not always have control of how Mirah is discussed; once he introduces Mirah to the public, even if it is the rather small one of Lady Mallinger’s upper-class social circle, they are free to discuss her however they choose, as illustrated by the rest of the conversation:

“And very pretty,” interposed Lady Mallinger, with an amiable wish to help Deronda. “And she has very good manners. I’m sorry she is a bigoted Jewess; I should not like it for anything else, but it doesn’t matter in singing.”
 ... Sir Hugo entered ... [and] said—“What imposition is Deronda putting on you ladies—slipping in among you by himself?”
 “Wanting to pass off an obscurity on us as better than any celebrity,” said Lady Pentreath—“a pretty singing Jewess who is to astonish these young people. You and I, who heard Catalani in her prime, are not so easily astonished.”
 Sir Hugo listened ... and then said, “Well, you know, a Liberal is bound to think that there have been singers since Catalani’s time.”
 “Ah, you are younger than I am. I dare say you are one of the men who ran after Alcharisi. But she married off and left you all in the lurch.” (369)

The conversation, which began with Daniel introducing and promoting Mirah, shifts to a discussion of personal details that even Lady Mallinger recognizes do not “matter in singing.” From there, the now familiar move to comparisons to historically celebrated performers occurs, this time focusing on Catalani, an Italian soprano gracing the stage between 1797 and 1819 (“Angelica Catalani”). As is the case elsewhere with musicians and actresses, this interweaving of a historically celebrated singer into the story of Mirah informs her position on the celebrity scale. While Lady Pentreath’s reference to Catalani does not negate Mirah’s potential to become a celebrity, it does signal the difficulty she will have to “astonish” audiences. However, the difficulty is perhaps lessened because, by referring to “Catalani’s time” and referencing age in

relation to knowing Alcharisi, Sir Hugo and Lady Pentreath are hinting at the time-bound nature of the celebrity. Since Catalani's time has passed, there is space for Mirah to step into.

Another example of how the individual and the industry are subject to the whims of the audience is displayed through Mirah's name in the conversation. Instead of calling her by her name, her potential audiences, and employers, refer to her as the Jewess. Throughout this conversation (though not quoted above), Daniel refers to Mirah as Miss Lapidoth, yet no one else does, instead preferring to call her "the little Jewess," "a bigoted Jewess," and "a pretty singing Jewess" (367-9). So despite Mirah and Daniel's later conversation on what her stage name would be, this conversation suggests that a stage name is irrelevant if the audience has already chosen an identity for her.

The conversation between Mirah and Daniel on her stage name reveals that she, like Eliot, cannot entirely escape the celebrity apparatus:

"I am a little frightened of being called Miss Lapidoth ... Might I be called Cohen?" ...

"I assure you, you must not be called Cohen. The name is inadmissible for a singer. This is one of the trifles in which we must conform to vulgar prejudice. We could choose some other name, however—such as singers ordinarily choose—an Italian or Spanish name, which would suit your *physique*." ...

"No. If Cohen will not do, I will keep the name I have been called by. I will not hide myself." (395-6; italics in original)

Though Mirah just wants to change her last name for the same reason she refuses to put an ad in the paper, fear of her father, Daniel turns the discussion into one about a stage name, with an eye toward both the obvious Jewishness of the name Cohen and an earnest desire to see Mirah be successful. Daniel's amateur status as a manager comes through in his comment on "conform[ing] to vulgar prejudice" because choosing the appropriate stage name could hardly be considered a "trifle" within the celebrity apparatus. If Mirah were to choose an Italian or Spanish

name that suited her physique well,²⁷ it could easily create a particular identity for her audience, one more about the name and her appearance than her musical talent.²⁸ In refusing such options, in suggesting that such options would “hide” her, Mirah exposes the distinction between the celebrity persona and the individual behind that persona. In addition to even discussing a stage name, Daniel’s use of a collective pronoun, “we must” and “we could,” serves to tighten the connection between the individual and the industry, by making both himself and Mirah part of such decisions. Comments about what singers “ordinarily” do expose the paradox of the celebrity as at once ordinary and extraordinary: though the goal of creating a celebrity is uniqueness, there are formulated ways of going about it, such as name branding.

Additionally, refusing to “hide” herself behind a stage name and preferring to have her music define her is another way in which Mirah’s potential notability is positioned as morally superior to that of Gwendolen’s. Placing one’s art above oneself reinforces Klesmer’s earlier assertions and pursuing performance for unselfish motives (rather than seeking to be in the limelight and desiring the limelight purely for pleasure) adds a new quality to the list that distinguishes morally superior fame from celebrity.

“I felt my greatness sinking away”: The Rise and Fall of Alcharisi

For most of the novel, Daniel is unaware of his true parentage, but his mother turns out to be the only character who has achieved celebrity status. However, she no longer holds that status and her history is reflective of the fragile nature of the celebrity apparatus if one element stops functioning cohesively with the others. The selfish motivations for both her pursuit of fame and

²⁷ Upon Daniel first meeting Mirah, he thinks to himself that, “any one who had seen delicate-faced Spanish girls might simply have guessed her to be Spanish” (162).

²⁸ This is what Gwendolen hopes the name Mrs. Grandcourt will do for her in her pursuit of becoming “somebody.”

her return to obscurity reinforce the moral boundary between celebrity and other types of fame that I have argued Eliot is defining throughout the novel. Additionally, as a post-celebrity figure, Daniel's mother strengthens the direct critique of celebrity by displaying the consequences of going against the socially idealized gender norms. Her unhappiness as a wife and mother both before and after her years of fame implies that celebrity ruins a woman's ability to dedicate herself fully to her feminine duties, further casting celebrity as immoral.

On their first meeting, Daniel's mother, Princess Leonora Halm-Eberstein, explains why she gave Daniel up: "I wanted to live out the life that was in me, and not to be hampered with other lives. ... I was a great singer, and I acted as well as I sang. All the rest were poor beside me. Men followed me from one country to another. I was living a myriad lives in one. I did not want a child" (527). This declaration reveals the Princess's previous vocation as a widely known and admired performer. The statement that men followed her "from one country to another" recalls a similar, though gender-reversed, description of audience that accompanies a reference to Franz Liszt, who was "understood to be adored by ladies of all European countries" (200). In both audience-focus and multi-country scope, this parallel description provides a link between the Princess and a historically celebrated musician, which in turn helps establish her own celebrity. So too did the discussion of her in relation to Catalani (369). Furthermore, that she was followed from "one country to another" suggests that during her career she had attained at least a component of the "supreme, world-wide celebrity" that Klesmer has not yet attained (85). So in addition to establishing her own prior celebrity status, the Princess corroborates Klesmer's lack thereof.

As the Princess continues to tell her story to Daniel, she further establishes her former place in the celebrity apparatus. The individual, the industry, and the audience were all at work:

“I was the Alcharisi you have heard of: the name had magic wherever it was carried. Men courted me. Sir Hugo Mallinger was one who wished to marry me. He was madly in love with me” (534). The Princess’s presumption that Daniel would have heard of her by the name of Alcharisi signals how the Princess is clinging to the past in the hopes that her name still has enough “magic” to be circulated. There are only three mentions of her stage name in the whole novel and only once prior to this meeting (369, 534, 537),²⁹ which paints the Princess’s hope as both vain and in vain. As Boorstin argues, “the passage of time ... destroys the celebrity,” and indeed it has been many years since the Princess was on stage, thus rendering Alcharisi all but obsolete among the contemporary celebrities (82).

The stage name Alcharisi represents the celebrity industry at work, especially its capacity to create a brand identity. Recall that, “in order to boost the celebrity individual’s visibility over that of other aspirants, the celebrity apparatus turned his or her proper name into a brand name” (Mole 16). The Princess began the process when she created the stage name Alcharisi out of her father’s family name Charisi (537). Though we lack the details of exactly how the branding process occurred, it worked, because “the name had magic wherever it was carried” (534). Clearly the Princess was the individual functioning within the celebrity apparatus, and though she associates herself with the stage name, “I was the Alcharisi,” she still presents the name as somewhat detached from herself by using “the name” instead of “my name.”³⁰

By following her comment that her stage name had a captivating quality with the phrase “men courted me,” the Princess furthers the detachment between her and her representation as a celebrity. It was the name Alcharisi that drew audiences, and clearly a memorable portion of the

²⁹ Daniel is present when the name Alcharisi is mentioned on page 369, but there is no indication that he heard that portion of the conversation or had heard the name previously.

³⁰ This affirms my own reasoning for using the Princess and Alcharisi to refer to two different identities attached to one person.

audiences were men who were likely not after appreciation of artistic talent but after a fulfillment of romantic or sexual desire. This comment is also a reiteration of the earlier one that men followed her to different countries, emphasizing the role of audience alongside the individual and the industry in maintaining celebrity.

It is not until the final moments of this first meeting between Daniel and his mother that she reveals what went wrong in her career; how she, like so many others in the celebrity apparatus, quickly found herself outside of it:

“For nine years I was a queen. I enjoyed the life I had longed for. But something befell me. It was like a fit of forgetfulness. I began to sing out of tune. They told me of it. Another woman was thrusting herself in my place. I could not endure the prospect of failure and decline. It was horrible to me. . . . It drove me to marry. I made believe that I preferred being the wife of a Russian noble to being the greatest lyric actress of Europe; I made believe—I acted that part. It was because I felt my greatness sinking away from me, as I feel my life sinking now. I would not wait till men said, ‘She had better go.’”

She sank into her seat again, and looked at the evening sky as she went on: “I repented. It was a resolve taken in desperation. That singing out of tune was only like a fit of illness; it went away. I repented; but it was too late. I could not go back. All things hindered me—all things.” (538)

Bodenheimer would point to this as revealing the dangers of ambition, but this passage also illustrates the delicate balance of each component of the celebrity apparatus (26). Alcharisi’s fall from celebrity occurred because she “could not endure the prospect of failure and decline” and “would not wait till men said, ‘She had better go.’” After nine years as a queen on the stage, it took only a moment of pride, stubbornness, and “desperation” for her reign to end, for in that moment, “another woman was [already] thrusting herself in [Alcharisi’s] place.” She tried to return to her career and found that “all things hindered” her, which likely included the other woman, her husband, and probably even her audiences. Kehler reveals the collective power of

the industry and the audience over the celebrity by noting that Alcharisi is “an anomalous woman of its own construction, the prima donna whom it has elevated to the public sphere, applauded and regaled as an opera queen, and returned to the private realm” (122). In other words, it is possible that even though her voice had returned, the audience had moved on and decided to return Alcharisi to her life as the Princess. What seems to pain the Princess the most is what Boorstin acknowledges: “there is not even any tragedy in the celebrity’s fall, for he is a man returned to his proper anonymous station. ... Yesterday’s celebrity ... is a commonplace man who has been fitted back into his proper commonplaceness not by any fault of his own, but by time itself” (82). The fall of Alcharisi acts as Eliot’s final warning against seeking the morally inferior fame of celebrity. Crossing the moral boundary and abandoning the pursuit of art for its own sake, driven by selfishness to use one’s talents for personal gain, puts one at the mercy of the celebrity apparatus.

Conclusions

Through these close readings of Klesmer, Gwendolen, Mirah, and the Princess, we find that an account of the Victorian celebrity apparatus subtly suffuses *Daniel Deronda*. The fictional representations of the celebrity apparatus rely heavily on comparisons to historically celebrated artists and other characters to help orient the reader and build a case for the immorality of celebrity. Eliot’s disapproval of celebrity began early in her career before she herself had become famous. In “Silly Novels by Lady Novelists,” she claims that “where there is one woman who writes from necessity, we believe there are three women who write from vanity” and that “the foolish vanity of wishing to appear in print” makes it so that “the average intellect of women is unfairly represented by the mass of feminine literature” (323). However,

the next twenty years after these assertions saw Eliot contribute frequently to the “feminine literature,” and, I contend, her own involvement with celebrity culture – albeit often unwilling or skeptical – created the need to publicly legitimize her own motivation to keep writing and publishing. I propose that *Daniel Deronda*’s simultaneous critique of celebrity as morally inferior and approval of renown or unselfishly motivated notability as morally superior does just that: publicly legitimizes Eliot’s own fame while allowing her initial stance on celebrity to stand.

In exploring George Eliot’s celebrity, I wanted to unpack the representations of celebrity in her fiction rather than her experience as a famous female author. Of course I needed to analyze and acknowledge her real-life experience in order to make sense of her fictional portrayals, but often celebrity studies stops after analyzing those real-life components. There is a difference between how a celebrity is represented (e.g. what images of Marilyn Monroe were/are circulated) and representations of celebrity (e.g. how celebrity is presented in the fictional world of *Daniel Deronda*). Although there may not be as many representations of celebrity as there are celebrities, when there are fictional representations – and particularly when those representations are produced by someone within celebrity culture – it is our responsibility to look at them so that we can work towards a more holistic view of that individual’s relationship to celebrity and a more nuanced understanding of celebrity culture as a whole. Further study of representations of celebrity will provide opportunities to compare the different ways in which celebrity culture is constructed within fiction – need representations always rely on real-life figures, as in *Daniel Deronda*? – and also help realize the role fiction can play in celebrity studies.

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