Group Destiny in George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*

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In this paper, I will interrogate the idea of destiny in George Eliot's novel *Daniel Deronda* (1876) and analyze it from the perspectives of phenomenology and generative anthropology. I will argue, firstly, that group destiny (destiny common to a group of people that define themselves as a community) is an originary anthropological concept that allows the participants on the scene of representation to construct its collective identity by symbolically re-enacting the moment of origin. Secondly, I will show that Zionism is paradigmatic of group destiny in that it possesses the indispensable characteristics of scenicity, authorial voice, and ethical renunciation that, at the same time, establish a territorial claim.

The notion of destiny is thematically central to *Daniel Deronda*, reappearing under various guises throughout the story. Insofar as the novel narrates the discovery by the main character of his heritage and his subsequent decision to join his destiny with that of his people, this theme forms a major plot element. But it is relevant, as well, to several other characters, who try to descry and comprehend their destiny in order to know what is awaiting them and what they should do. Destiny has a double connotation of being a mandatory pre-charted course of events that is planned by some higher power, on the one hand, and a future that has been selected for the subject by providence as his proper inheritance, on the other. The first meaning is restrictive, while the second is empowering, and the story line plays with both of them. In either case, destiny manifests itself as something external that a characters awaits, looks forward to (whether with dread or anticipation), and rightfully expects to be conferred on him. Conceived in this way, destiny is construed as one's lot in life, and is consequently associated with games of chance. Thus, in the opening casino scene, Gwendolen Harleth's idea of herself as "a goddess of luck" is overturned after the "Faites votre jeu" announcement by "the automatic voice of destiny" (10-11)(1) presages a reversal that sets the plot into motion. To Deronda, destiny presents itself "in the shape of Mephistopheles playing at chess with man for his soul, a game in which we may imagine the clever adversary making a feint of unintended moves so as to set the beguiled mortal on carrying his defensive pieces away from the true point of attack" (455).

Destiny means different things to different characters. For Gwendolen, it symbolizes a dream of a brilliant future in high society. Even though she comes from a family in reduced circumstances, she has an “implicit confidence that her destiny must be one of luxurious ease, where any trouble that occurred would be well clad and provided for” (16). It is her beauty, graceful manners, and accomplishments that entitle her to the rightful possession of her brilliant future: “About her French and music, the two justifying accomplishments of a young lady, she felt no ground for uneasiness; and when to all these qualifications . . . we add the spontaneous sense of capability some happy persons are born with . . . who can wonder if Gwendolen felt ready to manage her own destiny?” (40). After she is married for a while to a tyrannical husband, however, her arrogant attitude of mastery vis-à-vis her destiny is reversed, while her self-image suffers a serious blow: “Her confidence in herself and her destiny had turned into remorse and dread; she trusted neither herself nor her future” (432). Thus, from Gwendolen’s perspective of entitlement, destiny is seen as a right to a legacy.

But legacy is not just a right: it exacts duties and imposes responsibilities. And it is not just social class, privilege, and money that can constitute a legacy. It can also be construed as a fellowship of talent, which combines the sense of being greatly favored by fate with the future rigors it imposes on the luckily endowed. When Miss Arrowpoint challenges her parents’ opinion that Klesmer is an unsuitable match, she argues that the ideas they hold dear are nothing other than “a ridiculous mish-mash of superannuated customs and false ambition” (247). The true measure is men’s intrinsic worth. By this standard, Klesmer “is of a caste to which I look up–a caste above mine” (243). The reason for her elevated judgment is that he is a great genius, a true artist and, as such, cannot be measured by any common yardstick. This singular status gives him the right of an “ancestor” (in Sir Hugo’s words). Klesmer himself applies this criterion first to Gwendolen, then to Mirah, the young woman rescued by Deronda from suicide. To Gwendolen, whom he wants to support in her struggle to become an artist, despite his critical verdict, he says “Where there is duty of service there must be duty of accepting it” (260). As for Mirah, after listening to her sing, he puts out his hand, saying “Let us shake hands: you are a musician” (484), in a way that suggests that their shared talent implies a special communion that can chart its own destiny. Such is also the reasoning of Leonora Alcharisi, who resorts to a similar argument when she justifies her decision to abandon her son to become a singer. “Had I not a rightful claim to be something more than a mere daughter and mother?” she asks him, “Whatever else was wrong, acknowledge that I had a right to be an artist, though my father’s will was against it. My nature gave me a charter” (664).

The most prominent significance of destiny in the novel, however, is that of heritage. Heritage is broader than class and occupation. In a sense, it combines

both. According to Martin Heidegger, opening oneself up to one's heritage "involves *handing oneself over* to traditional possibilities" that one inherits, "although not necessarily *as* traditional ones."(2) These possibilities are not just professional ones–they can also unfold in the arena of politics, domestic life, and religion, among others. Thus, Alcharisi, a talented Jewish singer who feels constricted by her heritage and religion, wants a different, better fate for her son Daniel that will open up to him a great many opportunities she never had. Knowing that Sir Hugo Mallinger loves her and will refuse her nothing, she asks him to bring Daniel up with all the advantages of an English peer. At first, the boy, who is aware of his uncertain status and parentage, is eager to accept the heritage that is handed down to him. When it is first discovered that he has a beautiful voice and suggested that he train as a singer, he rejects this suggestion indignantly, offended that his guardian has "thought of a career for him which was totally unlike his own, and which he knew very well was not thought of among possible destinations for the sons of English gentlemen" (168-169). As he matures, however, he grows indifferent to the opportunities of this ready heritage, telling Sir Hugo: "I want to be an Englishman, but I want to understand other points of view. And I want to get rid of a merely English attitude in studies" (183).

It is true that, as Sir Hugo Mallinger's ward, and not his legal heir, Deronda cannot inherit the title and the land–a fact of which he is acutely aware and which makes him slightly resentful of the landed gentleman Grandcourt, who can afford to chase brilliant Gwendolen. But Sir Hugo presents him with another idea of destiny. An exceptional and talented individual does not have to inherit–he can create his own inheritance. He can carve his own path in life and thus become an originator of a new tradition and be crowned with the laurels of the founder. "You remember Napoleon's *mot–Je suis un ancêtre*," he tells Deronda, to which the other replies: "I am not sure that I want to be an ancestor . . . . It doesn't seem to me the rarest sort of origination" (163).

Deronda's rejection both of his English destiny and a destiny as "an ancestor" foreshadows his eventual embrace of a more comprehensive notion of destiny. This wider meaning of destiny is communal. In fact, for Heidegger, the very term "destiny" implies "the occurrence of the community, of a people" (352). In Eliot's novel, the idea of group destiny and the protagonist's discovery of it occupy a central place. What is group destiny? At its heart, according to the novel, lies an organic metaphor of cooperation and common purpose. Organic thinking is directly relevant to the national idea that dominates the Deronda narrative. When Daniel meets Mordecai, he does not know him to be the brother of Mirah for whom he has been searching, yet his responsive and empathetic nature responds strongly to what he perceives as the other's need for him. Mordecai tells him of receiving a call from the "voices of the past" that announced his spiritual destiny–working on

bringing his people home. Mordecai takes Deronda with him to a local pub, where his debate club is holding a meeting, discussing the issue of nationalities and, particularly, that of the Jewish return to Palestine. On the one side of the spectrum, there is the view of Pash, the watchmaker. He believes in and expounds the idea of progress. According to that idea, nationalities are a thing of the past. They are slowly dying out, and anyone who clings to this idea is retarding progress. The middle-of-the-road view belongs to Gideon, the optical instrument maker. Gideon concedes that "[t]here is no reason now why [Jews] shouldn't melt gradually into the populations [they] live among" (527). However, as long as they exist in the form of a self-identified national consciousness, he will continue to worship and keep the traditions of his forefathers. Mordecai's position belongs to the other side of the spectrum. He is a strong believer in the preservation of the Jewish nation by giving it its national home. His argument builds on a series of organic metaphors that have to do with soil, planting, growth, coming to fruition, but also with invisible, tentacle-like blood ties. While Gideon's self-acknowledged motto is that a "man's country is where he is well off" (527), Mordecai articulates his predicament of exile to Deronda by saying: "England is the native land of this body, which is but as a breaking pot of earth around the fruit-bearing tree, whose seed might make the desert rejoice" (497). To the group, he says:

I believe in a growth, a passage, and a new unfolding of life whereof the seed is more perfect, more charged with the elements that are pregnant with diviner form. The life of a people grows, it is knit together and yet expanded, in joy and sorrow, in thought and action; it absorbs the thought of other nations into its own forms, and gives back the thought as new wealth to the world; it is a power and an organ in the great body of nations. (526)In the "great body of nations," the role of the Jewish people will be central, according to the messianic vision. Geographically, it will be "a new Judea, poised between East and West–a covenant of reconciliation" (537). As a "community in the van of the East which carries the culture and the sympathies of every great nation in its bosom," it will be "a land set for a halting-place of enmities, a neutral ground for the East as Belgium is for the West" (535). The restored homeland will be a spiritual center as well; its pioneers will "found a new Jewish polity, grand, simple, just like the old–a republic where there is equality of protection, an equality which shone like a star on the forehead of our ancient community, and gave it more than the brightness of Western freedom amid the despotism of the East" (535). Finally, it will be an affective center–an organic source from which the transformation of the world will begin. Several metaphors convey this idea. Citing Yehuda Halevi (Jehuda-ha-Levi), Mordecai claims that "Israel is the heart of mankind, if we mean by heart the core of affection which binds a race and its families in dutiful love" (530). Therefore, "our race shall have an organic centre, a heart and brain to watch and guide and execute; the outraged Jew shall have a defence in the court of nations, as the outraged Englishman or American" (535). He

also uses vegetative imagery–the root, from which everything grows, and the interconnected branches–to underscore the idea of a people that are conjoined by multiple blood, cultural, historical, and religious ties and linked all together to a common heritage. It is entirely rational, he insists, “to see more and more of the hidden bonds that bind and consecrate change as a dependent growth–yea, consecrate it with kinship: the past becomes my parent, and the future stretches towards me the appealing arms of children” (528). Consequently, to spur growth and to enable the generational transmission of culture, it is necessary to “[r]evive the organic centre: let the unity of Israel which has made the growth and form of its religion be an outward reality” (532). Mordecai also frequently resorts to the metaphor of fire, which, strictly speaking, is a chemical, not an biological phenomenon, but which evokes organic associations in the way it is experienced as a living thing, originating at one point and spreading to other places as if by connecting threads. He says, for instance, that the soul of a man “who feels the life of his people stirring within his own” is like “a seed of fire that may enkindle the souls of multitudes, and make a new pathway for events” (527). From the organic center, “the living warmth will spread to the weak extremities of Israel” (533), and its “national life” will once again become “a growing light” if “the central fire [is] kindled again, and the light will reach afar” (537). Mordecai suggests that “the strongest principle of growth lies in human choice” and concludes by appealing to his audience: let us “choose our full heritage, claim the brotherhood of our nations, and carry into it a new brotherhood with the nations of the Gentiles. The vision is there; it will be fulfilled” (538).

The metaphoric language of Mordecai’s passionate entreaty is suggestive of a specific type of a historical nationalist argument that uses the organic model as the basis of the functional explanation of its world picture. The two competing paradigms are those of a nation as a collection of individuals or as an organic whole. At the bottom of this dichotomy lies the difficulty of theorizing group behavior and group rights. Are groups just aggregates of individuals or do they form new kinds of entities with emergent properties that warrant different models than those valid for individuals? An atomistic model imagines society as a sum total of its inhabitants endowed with individual rights. Citizens of such a polity must be bound by a law-like fiduciary link for this arrangement to work and not dissolve into chaos. The laws could be imposed from above, as in an absolute tyranny. They could also be voluntary, in conformity with Kant’s categorical imperative, whereby each rational subject articulates a maxim that is valid when applied as a universal law. What guarantees agreement between maxims then is the belief in the universality of reason. Both models view society in mechanistic terms, however–at best, as a well-oiled machine, the constitutive parts of which are subject to laws, be they external, imposed by a dictator from above, or internalized by the conscientious citizenry as the rational rules of moral behavior. What this model does not admit is

ideas such as collective striving, political will, joint decision. Ultimately, it is a society without a destiny because it does not allow for a common purpose–all its members pursue their own goals and interests, coexisting in a state of competition and contributing in their combined striving to a zero-sum result. In *Daniel Deronda*, this paradigm is embodied by the idea of gambling. Gwendolen is initially puzzled by Deronda's disapproval of her gambling and wants to hear his explanation. She asks him whether he objects to her gambling on the grounds of her sex. Deronda's response is that this is not the main reason.

I think it would be better for men not to gamble. It is a besotting kind of taste, likely to turn into a disease. And, besides, there is something revolting to me in raking a heap of money together, and internally chuckling over it, when others are feeling the loss of it. I should even call it base, if it were more than an exceptional lapse. There are enough inevitable turns of fortune which force us to see that our gain is another's loss:–that is one of the ugly aspects of life. One would like to reduce it as much as one could, not get amusement out of exaggerating it. (337)Hearing him present this in the formula of "one's gain is another's loss" makes a profound impression on Gwendolen: "the idea that somebody thought her gambling wrong, had evidently bitten into her" (404). She quickly connects it to her own action of marrying Grandcourt against the interests of his illegitimate family and confesses to Deronda that she has "done a great deal worse" (445). This is why she is so hesitant in the end to touch even the meager allowance left to her by Grandcourt's will. The same win-or-lose logic operates for the inheritance plot as well. Grandcourt stands to gain Sir Hugo's title and his property because of the latter's failure to produce an offspring of the requisite gender, whereas, in a surprising turnaround of fortune, it is Sir Hugo who luckily profits from his healthy nephew's untimely demise. In a similar twist–and despite Gwendolen's agonizing awareness of having disinherited Grandcourt's first family–it is Gwendolen herself who is disinherited. Henleigh Grandcourt's illegitimate son, little Henleigh, whose chances of inheriting were slim to none when his still young father marries a young woman, benefits unexpectedly from his father's not leaving a legitimate heir. In an ironic plot reversal, Mrs Glasher's family and Gwendolen exchange circumstances. Little Henleigh, who inherits the large estate of Ryelands and Grandcourt's fortune, is to assume Gwendolen's former lavish style of living, while Gwendolen herself is to move to the humble Gadsmere in the heart of the disfigured coal-mining country and make do on the kind of modest income that Mrs Glasher had to contend with previously. Gwendolen, who used to be afraid of being poor, now accepts her lot with humility as a debt she has to pay for her former selfishness. Yet Deronda cautions her not to read "debt" in terms of the zero-sum logic of the atomistic paradigm.

Looking at your life as a debt may seem the dreariest view of things at a distance;

but it cannot be really so. What makes life dreary is the want of motive; but once beginning to act with that penitential, loving purpose you have in mind, there will be unexpected satisfactions–there will be newly-opened needs–continually coming to carry you on from day to day. You will find your life growing like a plant. (769)In contrast to the atomistic paradigm, the organic idea envisions society in the collaborative terms of a biological entity. Each part of it has a specialized role, and all components must work together in harmony in order to contribute to the organism's survival and thriving. Thus, particularization implies functionality. The participants can no longer be theorized as undifferentiated and replaceable parts of a mechanism–each is assigned a special function. This particularistic model is compatible with a worldview that accords with the functional explanation in biology, which views systems teleologically. Each component of the system contributes to overall survival (just as each organ in the body or each part of the plant): it is placed there "for the sake of something," and, as such, is futural, making purposiveness one of the important aspects of the functional view of things. A purpose implies a creator who has a special relation to his creation: he wills his creation into being–and, by willing, chooses it. Thus, his relation to it is that of an election. But also, if he wants his creation to be aware of its special mission, he must convey that mission by imparting to it a knowledge of its calling, and this calling must be reciprocated in some contractual form. In other words–the call, the election, the covenant, the mission–are the necessary attributes of the organistic view of society. All of these elements are clearly present in Mordecai's reasoning. The organistic metaphoric language of his eloquent entreaty is closely compatible with the Heideggerian moment of appropriation or *en-ownment*: the call of conscience is heard in the ancestral voices that awaken one, speaking through "the soul fully born within" (498) him; the responsible grasp of one's *ownmost* possibility grounded in its primordial *thrownness* is felt through the affection and fellowship that binds one to his race, the periphery to its center, the outgrowth to its root; and, finally, the temporalization of authentic decision that unifies the past, present, and future is understood as collective destiny–"the past becomes my parent, and the future stretches towards me the appealing arms of children" (528).

Zionism, as a model of nationalism, employs such an organistic, functionalistic schema, which ascribes to the people of Israel a special role among the nations. David Vital, paraphrasing Rabbi Yehuda Liwa, says that "God granted every nation its proper place. . . . To the Jews he gave the land of Israel. Equally, he ordained that no nation should be subservient to any other and that each nation should cohere, rather than be scattered."(3) Thus, Judaism extends the metaphor from one nation to many; that is to say, not only do people within the nation relate to each other as organs within an organism, but the world as a whole can be considered as one organism, consisting of many nations–each with a unique function. This extrapolation from individuals to countries is internally consistent with the idea of

an organism, but is at odds with a more “realistic” realization of nationalism that Hans Kohn calls “double-faced,” because “[i]ntranationally, it leads to a lively sympathy with all fellow members within the nationality; internationally, it finds its expression in indifference to or distrust and hate of fellow men outside the national orbit.”(4) The conflict between sympathy and competition that Kohn notes reflects the simultaneous human desire to exclude while being included and maps onto the mimetic configuration of ingroup versus outgroup (see, for instance, Girard’s discussion of Albertine and her set in Proust).(5)

From the anthropological and ethological perspective, the conflict can be situated in the collision between two needs–group cohesion and the struggle for resources. Mutual attachment between the individuals of the same group is an essential feature of animal sociality. Even in primate societies, the level of cooperation between members is surprisingly advanced. For example, several primatologists, such as Frans de Waal and Christophe Boesch, observe wide-spread meat sharing among unrelated chimpanzees (but it exists among other primates and some social carnivores as well), even though meat is only obtained by hunters: “Meat is eaten by the vast majority of group members only thanks to the collaborative effort of others and of generous meat-sharing rules.”(6) In addition, chimpanzees exhibit behaviors that are tempting to interpret in the anthropomorphic terms of generosity and chivalry. For instance, dominant males like to distribute the surplus of food themselves among other members, not caring whether the portion they leave for themselves is the smallest. Also, it is common for males to give up their place to females (although they would never give up their place to a lower-ranking male) and to allow females to break up fights and confiscate weapons. Another example of group allegiance is the apparent compassion and support primates show to injured and handicapped members that allow the latter to survive–something that has been observed not only in higher primates but in Japanese and rhesus monkeys. Group cohesion allows social animals to behave in a cooperative manner. Boesch distinguishes between four levels of cooperation. The highest degree of cooperation is collaboration, wherein individuals “different complementary actions all directed toward the same prey” (94). Collaboration, which is rare or unproven among lower primates, has evolved to sophisticated levels among chimpanzees, who use very complex and flexible cooperative strategies during hunt and territorial defense. All in all, the complex social organization of higher primates which employs relatively advanced forms of cooperation and specialization for performing difficult tasks demonstrates that the use of the organic metaphor for describing social interactions is neither far-fetched nor unjustified. Solidarity and attachment between social animals is a survival mechanism on the group level–a “real” phenomenon, as it were, that is universally agreed upon. There are some disagreements in explaining it, however. The variations on popular theories of *kin selection* and the *selfish gene* claim the collaborative behavior of social animals to

be an evolutionary adaptation that allows genes to propagate. In other words, these theories postulate that (seemingly) altruistic behavior occurs between relatives who share genetic material and can therefore be ascribed to the evolutionary mechanism of genetic replication, so that "individual organisms are merely the vehicles or throw-away survival machines for those selfish genes."(7) These genetic-level explanations are reductive in that they put social behavior down straightforwardly to genetic causes. Frans de Waal's emergentist view, on the other hand, is that the picture is more complicated, because, as he notes, strong social bonds between members of social species operate on the behavioristic level of social adaptation, since altruism, coalition-building, empathy towards sick individuals and other examples of "proto-moral" behavior are often exhibited by genetically unrelated animals.(8)

Some anthropological and bio-evolutionary studies of human conflict also indicate that humans are not fundamentally different from animals in that group identity is a prominent feature of human socialization that has evolutionary origins and adaptive value. Johan van der Dennen writes that "[p]roto-ethnocentrism is supposed to imply some kind of group identity, that is, the ability to recognize ingroup versus outgroup members, to discriminate between these categories, and to preferentially treat ingroup members to positive reciprocal (altruistic) interactions such as protection, nepotism, and sharing of resources."(9) Ingroup recognition is aided by so called *ethnic badges*. Van der Dennen distinguishes three basic kinds of ethnic badges: the first is physical–an identifiable phenotype–and the other two are cultural. One of these is body markings–van der Dennen calls them "a man-made ethnic uniform" including "bodily mutilations and/or adornments carried as visible badges of group belonging. These markers range from clothing and headgear to body painting, tattooing, circumcision, tooth filling and sundry mutilations of the lips, nose and earlobes."(10) The other is linguistic (he calls it behavioral): "[e]thnicity is determined by speech, demeanor, manners, esoteric lore or some other proof of competence in a behavioral repertoire characteristic of the group. Language is the supreme test of ethnicity (e.g., the *shibboleth*)."(11) Just as for animals, the evolutionary significance of human groups is to promote survival by increasing the efficiency of obtaining food, defending themselves from predators and other groups competing for the same resources, and, in the case of humans, sharing knowledge.(12)

Cooperative behavior between social animals coexists with conflict, which accompanies the hierarchical struggle for a higher dominance rank–the ethological precursor to human mimetic desire. *Dominance drive*, according to de Waal, is universal, with animals continually striving to establish a dominant social position and maintain it. He writes: "From my own study of both macaques and chimpanzees I have no hesitation whatsoever on this point. The animals I observed

clearly strove to attain a higher status."(13) But a significant feature of the ingroup fight for social position is that the conflicts and skirmishes it generates rarely lead to life-threatening injuries. The confrontations between contenders often have a ritualistic character and resolve in an act of "formal" recognition. In the case of chimpanzees, "[t]he formal dominant may lose numerous times, flee in panic, end up screaming high in a tree, and so on, but if he refuses to raise the white flag that the species evolved for this purpose, the challenger will not let up. Only when his target formally submits will the challenger change his conduct from aggressive to tolerant. The two rivals will reconcile and the calm will be restored."(14)

The situation changes radically when the focus is switched from intra- to intergroup conflicts. Whereas lethal aggression within a group might not be a viable survival strategy, the hostilities between groups are often devastating and deadly, because what is at stake in intergroup antagonism is a competition for vital resources. Thus the relationship between individuals within a group has a principally different character from that of intergroup interactions: the former is collaborative, while the latter is agonistic. The character of intergroup aggression is typically territorial. Social animals patrol the boundaries of their territory trying to maintain its integrity in defending it from intruders; yet they also make raids into the neighboring territories in an attempt to expand their own. While the fighting does not always assume the form of an all-out war of attrition because groups may rely on each other for mates or the territory may be too large to defend, the territorial struggle becomes especially acute with the pressure of certain ecological factors, such as habitat saturation or shortage of alienable resources. Material resources are defined as alienable if they are confined to "valuable objects or land that can be seized"–for example, "fruit trees used by territorial monkeys are alienable, because territorial boundaries can shift. Accordingly, monkey troops are expected sometimes to encroach on others' territories."(15) The same holds true for human foraging societies. The result of a study by Joseph Manson and Richard Wrangham on a relation between territoriality and aggression demonstrated that "[t]he hypothesis that in appropriate circumstances alienability of resources is an important determinant of the causes of intergroup aggression is . . . supported."(16) Territoriality is thus a key feature of both human and non-human intergroup aggression. Van der Dennen writes that the myth about peaceful hunter-gathering societies has received a mortal blow in the last several decades. Warfare is endemic to these societies–in fact, "'primitive' warfare (among hunter-gatherers, horticulturalists, simple agriculturalists) and prehistoric warfare is generally a lethal, bloody, and sometimes even genocidal business: *guerre à l'outrance* (due to rapidly accumulating casualties in raiding and routing). Group extinction due to chronic warfare between (horticultural) village communities is quite common in New Guinea, Amazonia, and other regions where feud and war are endemic."(17) He quotes P.A. Corning's explanation of war: "War is obviously one way of gaining

access to needed resources–and of eliminating potential threats to your own population or resources."(18) "Territoriality as a causal factor in primitive warfare and feuding has been described for hundreds of peoples,"(19) as Van der Dennen points out. At the same time, the reverse is also true: "Territoriality [is] a way to *avoid* continuous warfare" because "it is quite possible that territoriality at the band level developed as a means of regulating inter-band aggression"(20) by helping bands to steer clear of territorial disputes.

The purpose of this excursus into the sociobiology of cooperation and conflict is not only to remind ourselves that these behaviors are deeply rooted in the evolutionary past of sociality, but to introduce the material factor into the discussion of nationalism. The material question of resources and territory is indispensable to the ethical dimension of human intersubjectivity revealed by Eric Gans's elaboration of René Girard's mimetic theory from the appetitive angle. While Girard considers mimetic desire from the interpersonal perspective, Gans's linguistic and ethical extrapolation allows us to expand this analysis to the group level. An important insight of his is the vertical dimension of the sign, which became possible with the evolution of joint attention or, as it is also termed, *triadic mimetic intersubjectivity*, which makes communicative mimesis possible. The concept of the triadic nature of language, pointed out and explained by C. S. Peirce, is applied by cognitive scientists to the comparative study of animal and human communication. Jordan Zlatev, Tomas Persson, and Peter Gärdenfors write that "human language is, in general, *triadic*–it is used by one individual for explicitly representing an existing or imaginary state of affairs for another individual. On the other hand, animal signs are generally speaking *dyadic*: the animal responds to a stimulus or *cue* in the environment, causing the emission of a particular signal directed to a conspecific, without linking self, referent and addressee into a referential triangle."(21) This distinction resolves into the differentiation between shared and joint attention. "To make a given object X fully intersubjective between you and me, I would need not only to 'see that you see X' [shared or second-order attention], but also 'to see that you see that I see X' [joint or third-order attention] and vice versa" (17). In other words, joint attention is a reciprocal attention: the participant holds in mind the object, the other participant, and the other participant's awareness of his awareness. Apparently, it is only humans who are capable of the latter, because "it has not been shown that (non-enculturated) apes are capable of understanding another's mental states about their own mental states, which would involve . . . third-order mentality;" and therefore joint attention "appears to be beyond the cognitive capacities of apes" (17).

The idea of the verticality of the sign originates precisely in the split of joint attention between the awareness of the other contemplating the central object and the self-conscious awareness of the self contemplating the object as reflected

through the eyes of the other. Thus, the meaning of “desire” is clarified: a desire is not just a directional intentionality of attention, a deliberate turning toward an object with a purpose of appropriating it, but a reciprocal knowledge of this intentionality by the desiring individuals. According to the mimetic configuration of two subjects vis-à-vis an object, one of the desires may well be non-original, but imitative. But this does not make a difference at the point when two desires converge on one object–they become each other’s obstacles that are bound to collide. This mutual awareness of impending collision brings with it an understanding of “the incompatibility of the two roles of subject and the other in the mimetic process.”(22) It is at this juncture that the “sign emerges as a turning away from the other as model to the object of desire as model. In the transformation of the mimetic relationship wrought by language, the subject displaces the intention of his gesture from (unconsciously) imitating the other to (thematically) imitating the object.”(23) The contemplation of the object as something desired by the other injects a new dimension into the relationship between the subject and the object, which Gans calls the *verticality* of the sign: “The emission of the sign creates verticality out of what was previously a horizontal relationship of appetite and appropriation by combining the roles of model and object in a single behavior.” In its new role, the object is perceived thematically, which is an important milestone in the origin of language. “The originary sign is the first instance of the free, conscious, intentional thematization of an object.”(24) On the level of interpersonal conflict, the ability to thematize also implies that the two contenders withdraw or defer their conjoined appropriative gestures and convert them into a shared designative gesture. Instead of battling over the disputed object for the purpose of usurping it, they suspend hostilities and share it symbolically as an ideal object of representation. In this acknowledgment of their mutual desire and its ritual sublimation lies the ultimate ethical moment. “Instead of my action being a simple means of self-expansion into the world through the incorporation and obliteration of external objects,” writes Gans, “it becomes a means to preserve these objects by reproducing them within myself.” (25) The ethical gesture of symbolic sharing through representation must be accompanied by a prohibition of the real object, the appropriation of which was suspended at the moment when the sign is invented. Earlier, it was the mimetic competitor that presented an obstacle. But no longer. “Because the [mimetic] model does not disturb my signing behavior, it is the object that is perceived as the obstacle to its own appropriation; this is what we call its sacrality.” (26)

Gans’s exposure of the ethical dimension of language has important implications for elaborating the materiality of the sign by illuminating its original acquisitive connotation that later becomes obscured by the formalized relationship between signifier, signified, and referent. His analysis suggests that the originary referent is the appetitive object of which the mimetic rivals imagine themselves in possession

and from which they collectively abstain in the formal act of interdiction that designates it as the sacred. Thus the originary linguistic act is a speech act that designates the sacred. It is the ostensive act of naming. “The originary use of the ostensive takes place in a collective scene where each participant designates the central object-referent to fellow participants at the periphery.” Which means that, in its minimal form, “language would originally possess only a single word that would mean ‘uniquely significant.’” (27) Consequently, the first performative performs this unique significance, presenting it as such to all participants on the scene of representation. “What is ‘performed’ by the ostensive is a centering of its referent that is at the same time a subsumption of it under the category of the significant center.”(28) Gans suggests that the meaning of this first uniquely significant word is the name of God. I would like to deviate from this somewhat and make a conjecture as to an additional/alternative object of the act of naming. What else could possibly be named? Let us reiterate again Gans’s assertion that language emerged as an ethical resolution to contentious and potentially violent mimetic rivalry. How is it resolved? In two ways: settling the conflict by making a contested resource shareable (representation), but also claiming it as communal property (designation). Both are achieved through the act of the “imaginary prolongation of the designative gesture toward the object [that] constitutes the original experience of desire. . . . For the object is *necessarily* inaccessible, and it is precisely this that permits each individual to imagine himself as alone acceding to it.”(29) It is tempting to suggest that the appetitive object of unique and most fundamental significance, on which the very survival of the community unconditionally depends, is the ultimate resource of the land that sustains all life. I therefore propose that the originary performative moment of naming could be construed as a double speech-act: a self-naming and a naming of the territory one claims as one’s own. The bestowing of a shared name on itself as a group and on the land one occupies is a self-founding event by a speech community. The community springs into existence by staking its territory in a symbolic act that signifies both the sharing of resources by all members as well as the territorial arrogation on behalf of the entire community. By associating the group with the resources, this originary linguistic event aspires to engineer an abiding–“hard-wired,” as it were–coupling between the sign and the referent as a founding act that puts a signifying system into circulation. This supposition accommodates Gans’s prioritization of the materiality of reference, which rests on the underlying desire to possess the appetitive object. It is because the contested object is the locus of desirous intentionality that language emerges in its ethical functionality. Insofar as language, as a cultural convention, is “activated” through the act of pointing at or selecting the real as something of appetitive (broadly speaking) import, its contractual operation is predicated on some ethical agreement established on the formal scene of representation. The double-naming as the grounding of the transcendental signifier thus bridges the gap between the symbolic cultural domain and that of the real. Consequently, heritage is passed on

and conferred via the symbolic act of appropriation that bestows sovereignty and grants one complete and rightful disposal over one's claimed domain.

We are reminded of the significance of naming in Eliot's novel when Grandcourt drowns and his estate is to go to his son. Sir Hugo tells Deronda: "The boy is to take his father's name; he is Henleigh already, and he is to be Henleigh Mallinger Grandcourt. The Mallinger will be of no use to him, I am happy to say" (716). The middle name will be of no use to him, because he will not be able to inherit Sir Hugo Mallinger's estate. It will now go to Sir Hugo's future grandson. Having lost the inalienable connection to the right to the land that inheres in the title, the name has also lost its meaning. Similarly, Deronda is precluded by his unassimilably foreign name from coming into the possession of the English heritage proffered to him. His name serves as a constant reminder of his non-English provenance, consistent with the fact that, before the restoration of Israel, Jews, as a "virtual" entity, exist in the form of a dispersed world diaspora community. It is significant that Daniel's mother, Leonora, is not firmly planted in any particular place: her father's branch of the family is from Genoa, while her mother is from England, but with more distant roots in Portugal. There is also a connection to Germany, where the grandfather's oldest friend, Joseph Kalonymos, resides and where Deronda first meets him. Neither do Jewish names have strong significance in the novel. They neither manifest a natural connection to the historical territory nor signify belonging, being further attenuated by the fact that, in exile, Jewishness is determined through the mother. This is reflected in the ironic circumstances of Deronda's successful search for Mirah's brother. His full name, Ezra Cohen, turns out to be so generic that it is shared by a non-relative who happens to have taken him in, while the brother himself goes under the name of Mordecai. There is even irony in the fact that the noble Hebrew name of Cohen, from which in the Messianic times future priests will be selected to serve in the re-built Third Temple, is devalued by the characters of the novel, being seen as too common and low. A more presentable name, Lapidoth, is selected as Mirah's stage name, with Deronda telling her: "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" (467-468). But even though he puts the blame on the "vulgar prejudice" of the crowd, to Deronda himself, "the name Cohen was equivalent to the ugliest of yellow badges" (468). This is why the Jewish inheritance that Deronda receives is as abridged and "virtual" as can be, comprised of a chest of papers that Joseph Kalonymos keeps for him in his grandfather's name which contains blueprints that lay out a plan for the future Jewish homeland. As a sign, it is not once-, but twice-removed from the real (the appetitive territorial object), which reflects the predicament of the Jews.

Territoriality is the final component of the Zionist model, in addition to those of election, covenant, and destiny. It completes the picture by giving the nationalist

model an indispensable “grounding” in the real. In *The Zionist Idea*, Joseph Heller considers several characteristics of a nation: “1. ‘National consciousness,’ i.e., a feeling of unity and a will to its preservation active throughout the community. 2. The idea of common origin. 3. Common physical and mental peculiarities. 4. A common historical past and traditions (common memories, common struggles and victories, suffering and happiness). 5. A defined territory as ‘homeland.’ 6. A common language. 7. A common culture.”(30) Not all of these criteria, writes Heller, must be in place for a nation to be a nation. In the case of the Jews before the creation of Israel, not all of the conditions were met. However, the defining gauge of the Jewish national consciousness, according to him, was the existence of a distinct Jewish identity deeply rooted in religious belief. It is the religion that defines the Jewish mission and, through it, gives meaning to Jewish history. “The Jewish people never renounced the ‘Land of Israel,’ but always kept its memory alive and cherished the hope of a restoration. This hope was merged into the people’s prayers and connected with its belief in the future redemption of mankind” (17). But, at the same time, “[r]eal historic right derives not from a mere external event or from a factual situation belonging to the past, but from *historically significant cultural achievements* that become permanent factors of national life. . . . A nation therefore has a historic right to its homeland not because it conquered the territory at some time in the past and occupied it for a certain period, but because its connection with the territory has become a *creative factor* and a permanent element of cultural, economic and spiritual development both in the history of the country and in the nation itself” (91-92). The historical memories, in their turn, sharpen the resolve to carry out the historic mission. “Jewish religion . . . proclaimed the historical mission of the ‘chosen people,’ which had been predestined to live and act as an example for the other nations and to teach them the truths of God’s uniqueness and of the unity of mankind” (29). They are chosen by God to be his champion and messenger, proclaiming his will and “striving for the messianic era to come, the era of universal knowledge of God” (64).

Zionism was not the only solution to “the Jewish question.” Historically, there were other proposals, such as the idea of individual rights, Diaspora nationalism and territorialism. The first is not nationalism proper but an emancipatory ideal that stems from the discourse of Enlightenment and views the national question through the prism of individual rights within nation-states. According to this paradigm, Jews would not be seen as a distinct group but as individuals to whom all inalienable citizen rights are to accrue on non-discriminatory terms. The second, the Diaspora nationalism, popular in the nineteenth-century, took a group view, but from a strictly cultural perspective. Its proponents envisioned some kind of a territorial integrity in the form of “national autonomy, involving three basic principles: communal self-determination, legal recognition of Yiddish, . . . and free national education.”(31) Heller criticizes Diaspora nationalism as misguided because of its

“belief that the independence and freedom of Jewish cultural life can be safeguarded by constitutional law and international treaties alone, without the material basis of a national economy” (56). The concern with the material basis of economy is essentially a Marxist position that advocates territorialism. Vital summarizes this line of thinking as a belief in a uniquely Jewish predicament. Because of their refusal to assimilate, the Jews can never feel safe. “All have a home somewhere–except the Jew. All can therefore require or deny hospitality–except the Jew. And as he cannot requite it, he cannot demand it. He is neither friend not foe, but an alien, the stranger *par excellence*. At best, he is granted privileges; and these can be taken from him.”(32) Another angle, mentioned by Heller, is that in the Diaspora, Jews exist in an abnormal situation, because “[h]aving lost contact with the soil, the nation becomes more and more alienated from the life of nature” (69). Both the normalization of economic life and political security demand the solution of endowing the Jews with their own territory in the form of a sovereign state, not necessarily in Palestine. The shortcoming of territorialism is that it overlooks the historical connection with the land of Judea and Israel, “the living power of the past and the subconscious working of historical memories, and it takes into consideration nothing but immediate external conditions and observable present needs” (59). It also neglects the religious doctrine and the weight it places on the idea of messianic destiny. “To achieve its mission the Jewish people must be restored to the national independence in Palestine; nothing else can deliver them economically, socially and spiritually” (64).

All these political ideas sanction nationalism and emancipation on the basis of the principle of self-determination as an unexamined universal attitude valid both/either for a person and/or national entity. Zionism, however, explicitly incorporates self-determination into its organic model of society. This paradigm is compatible with the Heideggerian sense of destiny, which is collective from the outset. For Heidegger, the question of destiny is closely bound up with the problematic of historicity and relevant to a historical generation. Historicity enters into destiny by way of anticipatory resoluteness, which discloses to Dasein its ownmost, authentic possibilities. But which possibilities are the most authentic? They are the possibilities that have been disclosed throughout history as true, tried out and selectively adapted as received tradition. “The resoluteness in which Dasein comes back to itself discloses the actual factical possibilities of authentic existing *in terms of the heritage* which that resoluteness *takes over* as thrown” (351). Thus, insofar as “everything ‘good’ is a matter of heritage and if the character of ‘goodness’ lies in making authentic existence possible, then handing down a heritage is always constituted in resoluteness” (351). Heidegger’s understanding of a collective decision is based on his idea of unproblematic intersubjectivity: “essential willing already in itself brings about mutual understanding, and this through the mystery of the actual willing of the individual.”(33) In other words, authenticity presupposes

like-mindedness and consensus: any authentic decision rendered by an individual is assuredly in agreement with other authentic decisions. What guarantees this concord is Dasein's constitution of being-with-one-another. Which means that Dasein's authentic "occurrence is an occurrence-with and is determined as *destiny*" (352). With the term "destiny," he writes, "we designate the occurrence of the community, of a people. Destiny is not composed of individual fates, nor can being with one another be conceived of as the mutual occurrence of several subjects. These fates are already guided beforehand in being-with-one-another in the same world and in the resoluteness for definite possibilities. . . . The fateful destiny of Dasein in and with its 'generation' constitutes the complete, authentic occurrence of Dasein" (352).

Elsewhere (*Contributions to Philosophy*), Heidegger develops the notion of *enownment* (*Ereignis*), which is a more fleshed out version of anticipatory resoluteness (a moment of vision–*Augenblick*–in which we perceive and claim our destiny). Etymologically, *Ereignis* is related to *Augenblick*, while semantically it strengthens the relation between a momentous, resolute decision and an act of possession–a decision as a coming into the possession of one's rightful inheritance. Enownment, in reference to an individual, signifies the becoming of one's proper self or the resolute appropriation of what belongs to one. But as an act of appropriation by a group, it constitutes a taking possession of its destiny. What I am proposing is that destiny has a performative meaning as an act that establishes a community and grounds its eschatological narrative of appropriation. The possessive aspect of enownment is suggestively and significantly reminiscent of its anthropological underpinnings in the originary act, which creates the communal scene of representation and institutes the sacred (to be shared symbolically between the members of the community). The narrative character of destiny is thus to be understood as a prolongation of the deferred gesture of appropriation that aims to close the gap between the symbolic and the real (such as the name and the land).

Heidegger stresses the active component of enownment (it is also described by him as a leap) as the act of appropriating one's future, which corroborates the territorial meaning of destiny as a field of endeavor. Destiny clears a space, creates elbow room in which one can perform appointed duties. In other words, a kinesthetic link is forged between the tasks one has to do and the proper territory that is cleared for them. Once Deronda begins to think of himself as "probably a Jew," he is faced with an "inheritance of tasks" (515) that his birth would burden him with. As he informs Gwendolen at the end of the novel about his plans to travel to the East to research the location for the Jewish homeland, he explains them as "a task which presents itself to me as a duty" (803). Another task that he appropriates as incumbent on him–that of finding Mirah's surviving relatives–also has territorial connotations in

the form of Daniel's wandering through the Jewish quarter of Frankfurt and London. Even Mirah's destiny as a singer is assigned a specific territory. Klesmer tells her: "No high roofs. We are no skylarks . . . I would not further your singing in any larger space than a private drawing-room. But you will do there" (485). At the same time, it is suggested that territory will be denied to those who defy destiny. This is why Leonora describes her strict Jewish upbringing with confining gender roles as suffocating: "I knew what was in the chest–things that had been dinned in my ears since I had had any understanding–things that were thrust on my mind that I might feel them like a wall around my life–my life that was growing like a tree" (637). A very similar metaphor is used to describe the redemptive ending for Gwendolen, who finds her destiny in renunciation after her husband dies, disinheriting her. During her marriage to Grandcourt, despite the life of ease and luxury it affords her, she feels "like a galley-slave" (695). But after Grandcourt's death, she resolves to live the life of debt in expiation of having wronged his illegitimate family, while Deronda promises her that despite her newly constrained circumstances, great vistas will open before her: "there will be newly-opening needs–continually coming to carry you on from day to day. You will find your life growing like a plant" (769).

The other relevant aspect of enownment is its connotation of belonging–coming into the inheritance of something that properly belongs to you. The notion of belonging together is the source of the interpersonal elements of Heidegger's analysis of anticipatory resoluteness, without which there is no "group" destiny. They are constituted by *the call of conscience*, *the summons*, and *the voice* that together have the capacity to summon Dasein from the mode of inauthenticity back to the mode of authenticity. These elements together with the insights of mimetic theory give an adequate account of the construct of destiny. The call, the election, the covenant, the mission are mimetic in character. The absolute (both in the sense of unqualified and peremptory) position of God who chooses but, at the same time, makes a contract with humanity, combines the mimetic authority of the ontologically prior sacred center, occupied since before man was thrown on the scene of representation, with the foundational status of the supreme law-giver who forges a fiduciary link with man, on whom he bestows the gift of reason. As a destiny-giver, he is therefore both a commanding and inspirational figure who orders and leads, and the physical first cause through which man is anchored to (in Heidegger's terminology) the primordial existential structure of *care*, which orients him teleologically toward his future (his for-the-sake-of-which). Therefore, human obligation to destiny in the form of a covenant has a dual nature–that of a duty imposed from above and a rationally discernable responsibility he undertakes willingly. Not incidentally, Kohn reports on a Midrash that recounts how "God offered the Covenant to all the nations, one after another, and all rejected it, until at last Israel declared itself ready to accept it. God did not choose Israel from the beginning and single it out from all the nations of the earth; Israel alone was willing

to take upon itself the obligation of a covenant" (38).

According to Kohn, "[t]hree essential traits of nationalism originated with the ancient Jews: the idea of the chosen people, the consciousness of national history, and national Messianism.... It was only through the Covenant that the Jews were constituted a people.... God chose this people and acted through it in history: the people received the mission to live and to act in history according to God's will" (37). Modern Zionism rests on similar construals, embedding the idea of the national destiny in interpellation (the call), thrownness, and for-the-sake-of, to use Heidegger's language. This destiny is appropriated through a decision that affirms the collective will. Thus, the collective will is the performative agency of destiny. Kohn maintains that "Jews became a nation . . . by an act of volition and of spiritual decision" (37), while Heller writes that "Zionism expresses the genuine will of the Jewish people" (116). What is performed by the decision, shaped by the collective will of Zionism's adherents, is the ritualistic reaffirmation of the coupling between the sign and the referent, the name and the territory. According to Gans, the function of the ritual, as a cultural phenomenon, is the reproduction of the memory of the original event. "The central moment of ritual is the communal performance of the sign"(34) aiming to make its referent present again. "The remembered significance of the object . . . makes its reintroduction–or, rather, its *reproduction*–on the scene an object of desire. The original event will thus not simply recur but be reproduced," (35) renewing the ethical bond within the community.

What was formerly the biological regulation of social behavior within a group through alliance-formation, collaboration, dominance hierarchy, and other adaptational strategies becomes symbolically transformed and codified through ethics with the appearance of culture. But an important implication of this event is also that the formal structure of symbolic systems has the capacity to be extrapolated to higher levels of abstraction. Hence, the national idea is capable of extending the ethical model of intragroup sharing to intergroup sharing, by representing all the societies that constitute humanity as one community consisting of individual member nations, just as one society consists of individual citizens. This is why the functionalist conception of a nation as a metaphoric organism can, without a loss of integrity, be transferred to the world community of nations. Here, again, according to the organicist paradigm of cultural specificity, each nation has its unique function in the overall design and, consequently, no nation can be eliminated without the failure of the larger organism. Accordingly, Heller contends that in the "world-community of free and equal nations," there must be a place for a "restored and liberated Jewish nation," because "[i]n the polyphonic harmony of a united humanity every nation has its unique, individual part to play" (86). Such an extrapolation of the functionalist metaphor to the next level is an instance of

cultural emergentism, because it injects an ethical imperative into what would otherwise be biologically stipulated antagonism between competing human groups. The mimetic relationship between individual participants on the scene of representation is exported to the intergroup configuration, and with it, the ethical imposition of self-restraint. This means that the natural tendency of competing groups to unlimited self-expansion and unrestrained growth with its attendant uncompromising conflict can be checked through the symbolic representation of the world as a shared resource. The Hebrew Bible, according to Girard, is the first culturally self-conscious text that recognizes the victimage mechanism and attempts to contain mimetic contagion with moral law. Its codification is traditionally located in the obligation imposed by the Ten Commandments. But insofar as the Ten Commandments refer to the internal Jewish moral code (with seven of them extrapolated to the Noahide code), there exists perhaps an even more crucial instance of moral self-limiting that regulates the relationship between groups–and that is the covenant God makes with Abraham: "I *am* the Lord that brought thee out of Ur and Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it. . . . Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates" (Gen 15:7,18). Thus, the covenant prevents the Jewish people from unconditional expansion, restricting their territory to the boundaries set in his name and vouchsafed by his law.

In *Daniel Deronda*, the ideal of coexisting but unmingled nations is advocated by Joseph Kalonymos, a friend of Deronda's late grandfather, whom Deronda meets in order to retrieve his grandfather's legacy. Kalonymos tells him about Daniel Charisi's conclusions after he "travelled to many countries, and spent much of his substance in seeing and knowing"–namely, that "the strength and wealth of mankind depended on the balance of separateness and communication, and he was bitterly against our people losing themselves among the Gentiles" (724). In a ritual re-enactment of the originary scene, Kalonymos exacts a pledge from Deronda by assuming the preeminent interpellating position that issues the call of invitation. Putting his hand on the other's shoulder and, "looking sharply in his face," he asks Deronda: "You will call yourself a Jew and profess the faith of your fathers?" (725). Deronda, who is, at this point, prepared for Joseph Kalonymos's revelations about his heritage, affirms his destiny: "I think I can maintain my grandfather's notion of separateness with communication. I hold that my first duty is to my own people, and if there is anything to be done toward restoring or perfecting their common life, I shall make that my vocation" (724).

All of the above indicates that the idea of collective destiny promoted by Mordecai and embraced by Deronda implies the events of invitation and inclusion in an elect fellowship. The invitation is issued from the mimetically central interpellating position occupied by God and cannot, therefore, be refused. But, at the same time,

a decision to join is voluntary, made in a moment of anticipatory resoluteness that appropriates its destiny as its authentic ownmost possibility grounded in its communal heritage. As a response to an invitation, the decision is a submission, but it is a willingly undertaken submission, better described as consent that chooses to defer to the transcendent power in the spirit of reverence. Mordecai tells him: “I have had the experience which gives me a keen interest in the story of a spiritual destiny embraced willingly” (498), and his words have a strong effect. It is with newly-won respect for Mordecai’s spiritual authority that Deronda is “strangely wrought upon” by his new friend’s life story, and his initial suspicions about the other’s sanity “[give] way to a more submissive expectancy” (494).

In Deronda’s eyes, the structural position of God is arrogated to Mordecai, who, in an epiphanic vision against an icon-like golden background of the setting sun, recognizes Daniel as the prophesied man who will accept from him “the sacred inheritance of the Jew” (500). So strong is Mordecai’s conviction that Deronda is mimetically swayed by it, that he says to himself “I am in a state of complete superstition, just as if I were awaiting destiny that could interpret the oracle” (495). In Gwendolen’s case, on the other hand, it is Deronda who occupies the authoritative central position and becomes the voice of her conscience. Because Deronda is the first person who surprises her by his disapproval, his opinion gradually becomes more and more important to her. That is to say, because he does not choose her as a mimetic model, she chooses him as one: “he was unique to her among men, because he had impressed her by not being her admirer but her superior: in some mysterious way he was becoming a part of her conscience” (415). So when Deronda tells her that she ought to become the best woman she can be, she accepts this injunction as a voice from the above, gradually picturing herself as part of “the larger destinies of mankind” (803). As for Mordecai, the origin of the central voice that serves as the basis of his conviction remains a mystery, because his consciousness is not as fully revealed to the reader as those of Deronda and Gwendolen. But because this is a novel of foreshadowing, Mordecai’s position is bolstered by our identifying him with the narrative device of *deus ex machina*–and thus he garners the authority of the authorial voice.

From the perspective of generative anthropology, the event of the origin of representation inaugurates transcendence. It does so by opening up a gap between what is given and what can be represented as a possible future. The prospect of many alternative futures creates the dilemma of choice, making the question of what to do a genuine conundrum for the symbolic species. I suggest that the idea of destiny presents a viable strategy and originary solution for resolving man’s existential “lostness” that connect him in a sacrificial way to his fellow group members in a bid for survival.

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Notes

1. George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda* (Penguin Books, 1995). (back)

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