DUELING DIVAS: NINETEENTH CENTURY IDEOLOGY AND THE REPRESENTATION OF MUSICIANS IN *DANIEL DERONDA*

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"'Herr Klesmer is something more than a pianist,' said Miss Arrowpoint, apologetically. 'He is a great musician in the fullest sense of the word. He will rank with Schubert and Mendelssohn.'"[1] As Catherine Arrowpoint is swept up in the mystique surrounding the piano virtuoso Elijah Klesmer, the preoccupation with the musician is an inconspicuous pulse throughout George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda.* Literary scholar Alison Byerly notes the significance of music in Eliot's work when creating images of nineteenth-century gentility and femininity, juxtaposed against gender roles and function in society. Byerly's study is interesting in that it is an early attempt to cross discipline lines, combing the study of literature with music. However, when discussing these two disciplines in relation to the realm of culture, it is somewhat lacking. She states that "…music was extolled as the most sublime and expressive of the arts, but in practice, it was treated as a social diversion, a trivial accomplishment best left to ladies and foreigners."[2] Byerly's statement leads to the area of cultural studies regarding otherness, difference, gender, place and class. I n the Victorian period, there was no better gauge of judging the social standing and gentility of a lady than her ability to make music. Music was considered a melodic expression of the self, capable of transcending the boundaries of the spoken/written word and emotion. Byerly, citing Hegel, writes that "[m]usic was considered the one art capable of mirroring human emotions—in Hegel's words, 'the language of the soul.' Eliot appropriated this view of music in order to establish within her novels a system of representation that would permit

[1] George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda.* (London: Penguin Books, Ltd, reprint, 2003), 242.

[2] Alison Byerly, "The Language of the Soul': George Eliot and Music," *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 44, no. 1 (June 1989): 2.

the impossible: the 'true' portrayal of a person's inner self."[3] Nineteenth-century music was a hodge-podge of styles, genres and forms that divided the concept of music-making between the public and private realms. The world of private music revolved around the social interactions that took place in the parlor—thus forming the genre of parlor music that was dependent upon the intimacy of the piano and contributed to the rise of a specific parlor culture. By the time Eliot published *Daniel Deronda* in 1876, piano parlor music had achieved a particular level of status, propagated and popularized by the accessibility of the piano and expanded by composers from all areas.

Previous scholars, such as Percy Young, Alison Byerly and Shirley Levenson, discuss the impact music made on Eliot's life and its imprint on her very being, reflected in her desire to include it in her works. While previous studies regarding music and *Daniel Deronda* mingle with cultural studies, they are strictly confined to the discipline of literary studies, handicapping what could be significant breakthroughs when looking at literature, culture and music of the nineteenth century. The goal of this project is a cultural anthropological interdisciplinary inquiry: combining the fields of literary and cultural studies with musicology, using Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* as an historical artifact and representation of cultural ideology in order to look at the role of music within bourgeois home life. My aim is to look at how culture shaped the concept of the Victorian parlor as the domain of the angel of the house[4] and the representations of female musicians found in *Daniel Deronda* that conflict with the cultural ideology and the music available to them. Using the novelist as social chronicler and the discipline of cultural studies, my aim is to contrast the amateur/professional argument

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[3] Ibid., 2.

[4] Elizabeth Langland discusses how culture and class shaped the roles of housewives in nineteenth-century culture, thus creating the roles allocated to the angel of the house. Citing the studies of Duncan Crow and Catherine Hall, she writes that "[t]he angel in the house is a middle –class ideal built explicitly on a class system in which political and economic differences were rewritten as differences of nature. Social ideology inscribed the lower classes as inherently less moral, less delicate, more physical, and more capable of strenuous labor. This refiguration of sex and class was necessary because 'the main distinguishing mark between the middle-class woman and those who were considered socially inferior was the attitude of mind which demanded that she should have at least one servant to wait on her.'" Langland's discussion looks at the interactions and the regulation of servants as one of the main measures of the angel's "success or failure," which are illustrated through novels such as *Bleak House, David Copperfield,* and *The Warden.* Elizabeth Langland, "Nobody's Angels: Domestic Ideology and Middle-Class Women in the Victorian Novel," *PMLA* 107, no. 2 (March 1992): 295.

surrounding nineteenth-century bourgeois women and the popular parlor music of the time. Percy Young, in a study that investigates the role of music in George Eliot's life and the impact it made on her work, notes the ability of the author to transcend the arts into a wider scale of culture, saying "…George Eliot, chronicler of her age, comes into the arena [of music] in its defense," since she was "…so interested in the dramatic and philosophic significance of music."[5] While Young's study mingles the disciplines of authorial biography, music and the artistic process, he is also invoking Althusser's concept of lived experience and the author's ability to chronicle every-day life, including social institutions and cultural ideology.[6]

Where the majority of scholarship regarding *Daniel Deronda* and music is based on literary analysis, I propose to treat my discussion within the confines of society and culture (with musical examples and references from the novel), using cultural theories to show the cultural constructions that gave rise to the roles surrounding the angel at the piano. Where previous scholars look at music in Eliot's work in order to identify character traits seen within her novel, I plan to look at the ideology surrounding these character traits that illustrate the social constructs of music, home life and the angel in the house to contrast the disconnect between musical forms and social conventions. Shirley Frank Levenson's study looks at "…how George Eliot has made use of the recurring theme of music in *Daniel Deronda* as a technique for revealing…character faults…"[7] While Levenson's claim is perfectly acceptable, what he fails to connect is that Gwendolen's character—in his particular argument—is representative of something larger than a fictitious being—the mingling of ideology and identity with the creative art that formed Eliot's novel. While

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[5] Percy M. Young, "George Eliot and Music," *Music & Letters* 24, no. 2 (April 1943): 93.

[6] Althusser states that "[w]hen we speak of ideology we should know that ideology slides into all human activity, that it is identical with the 'lived' experience of human existence itself: that is why the form in which we are 'made to see' ideology in great novels has as its content the 'lived' experience of individuals. This 'lived' experience is not a *given,* given by a pure 'reality', but the spontaneous 'lived experience' of ideology in its peculiar relationship to the real." Louis Althusser, "A Letter on Art in Reply to Andre Daspre," *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism,* ed. Vincent B. Leitch. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001), 1481.

[7] Shirley Frank Levenson, "Music in *Daniel Deronda,*" *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 24, no. 3 (December 1969): 319.

Levenson's study is an early attempt at an interdisciplinary investigation of Eliot's work, it is lacking, in that it remains only within the realm of literary studies. Studying the social conventions found within literature, Mary Burgan notes that nineteenth-century fiction studies the close relationship between women and music and provides "…the linkage of music with women's role in domestic life [which] was so pervasive that its manifestation in social history as well as fiction…" was felt throughout the cultural/social establishment.[8] Burgan identifies the heart of the problem when looking at women and music:

> …the issue of women's independence from the conventional round of family life became a feature of the 'woman question' towards the end of the century, the possibility that woman's music could be a disruptive rather than a harmonizing force in the home became more insistent. In some novels…feminine musicians were likely to exhibit gifts that were self-proclaiming and unsettling in their aggressive display of energy.[9]

Burgan notes the social conventions surrounding young women at the piano: that "most of the young women who labored to learn the piano…were not intent upon mastering the intricacies of Mozart, Haydn, or Beethoven…" and that these composers were not necessarily suitable to the feminine artist, but the "…expressive capacities of the [piano] promised effects that could make the amateur shine in the playing of showy 'salon' music, simple ballads and sacred songs[,] …compositions [that] did not demand a great deal of technical finish or musical intelligence."[10] While Burgan's study is an all-encompassing look at the social conventions and their illustrations within various Victorian novels, her argument fails to offer musical support for her claims. What I want to explore within this study, using Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* as a literary representation of the cultural ideology regarding women and music, is the fact that the music being written and popularized for the parlor went

[8] Mary Burgan, "Heroines at the Piano: Women and Music in Nineteenth-Century Fiction," *Victorian Studies* 30, no. 1 (Autumn 1986): 52.

[9] Ibid., 52.

[10] Ibid., 56-57.

beyond the capacity of amateurs, thus contradicting the culturally-constructed image of the amateur angel at the piano while propagating the domestic diva as the artist. I will do this looking at Eliot's novel and also through a musicological investigation. Within this discourse, I will look at specific compositional genres that contemporaries considered appropriate for the amateur angel at the piano. No other composer is as synonymous with parlor music as Frederic Chopin. By analyzing his piano music, one can break down specific traits seen in his compositions and juxtapose these with the ideology of the nineteenth-century female amateur.

Language plays a major factor when looking at the concepts of ideology and cultural consensus within the organized collective voice of society. Language is the way in which cultural hegemony is disseminated, creating ideology which is considered "normal" or common sense. Looking at the way language is acted out in speech act theory, J.L. Austin's lectures on "How to Do Things with Words," discuss the utterances of words and their ability to make statements. Austin studies how these statements become performative actions, given the correct conditions when they are being stated and the authority of the speaker.[11] "The uttering of the words is…usually a, or even *the* leading incident in the performance of the act…the performance of which is also the object of the utterance…"[12] Inside this performative act, Austin investigates the roles of performers and that "[a]ctions can only be performed by persons, and obviously in our cases the utterer must be the performer…"[13]

Looking at linguistics and language-construction helps find the root of discourse, power and hegemonic consensus, specifically when identifying the ideologies and the

[11] Austin traces at length the role of conditions when given by the appropriate speaker and the consequences of "failed" statements/utterances, but in this particular project, it is the action and performativity of statements within language that is of particular note. "Performatives are, of course, incidentally saying something as well as doing something, but we may feel that they are not essentially true or false as statements are. We may feel that there is here a dimension in which we judge, asses, or appraise the contative utterance…which does not arise with non-contstative or performative utterances. Let us agree that all these circumstances of situation have to be in order for me to have succeeded in stating something, yet when I have, *the* question arises, was what I stated true or false?" J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things With Words,* 2d ed., ed. J.O. Urmson and Marina Sbisa (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), 140.

[12] Ibid., 8.

[13] Ibid., 60.

discourses that established women's roles in Victorian home life and the location of music within this life. While discussing Michel Foucault and the formation and policing of discourse, Chris Barker looks at the meaning of language in Foucault's "formalist theories…and functions" and, in the vein of Austin, states that "Foucault attempts to identify the historical conditions and determining rules of the formation of discourses or regulated ways of speaking about objects."[14] Unlike Austin, though, Barker takes Foucault's argument to look at the meanings behind language and how discourse shapes meaning through application, in that "Foucault explores how meanings are temporarily stabilized or regulated into a discourse. This ordering of meaning is achieved through the operation of power in social practice. For Foucault, discourse 'unites' both language and practice."[15] Within this study of Foucault, Barker investigates the role of power within the discourse in regulating and creating subjects. Judith Butler takes this further, making Foucault's formation of the subject and the power over creating the subject as the foundation of her work. In a synthesis of Austin and Foucault, she writes that "Foucault…insists that the subject is not 'spoken' into existence and that the matrices of power and discourse that constitute the subject are neither singular nor sovereign in their productive action," and points out that it is through the policing power of language that the subject is created within hegemony.[16] While Butler mitigates between theorists, her inherent argument lies in the power of one group over another in casting the Other as subjective and the psychological effects of this power struggle. Within Butler's "struggle," one finds implicitly the role consensus plays in setting the norms.

Ideology and cultural constructions take root in consensus formed through various discourses, creating a unified front (whether totally unified or fractured) through hegemony. Chris Barker notes that "[c]ulture is constructed in terms of a multiplicity of streams of

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[14] Chris Barker, *Studies: Theory and Practice,* 2d ed.. (London: SAGE Publications, 2005), 101.

[15] Ibid., 101.

[16] Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 5.

meaning and encompasses a range of ideologies and cultural forms."[17] Within his study of ideology, Barker invokes the work of Antonio Gramsci and the role of language as a function of power. He cites that "[t]he process of making, maintaining and reproducing authoritative sets of meanings and practices has been called hegemony," and is "…achieved through a combination of force, and more importantly, consent…" as a ruling sect flexes its social authority over a group that is willing to subject themselves submissively to this rule.[18] When discussing the cultural construction of place within nineteenth-century society, one can invoke Barker's function of ideology as a social structure and policing tool, determining cultural norms and gender roles associated with place. Interpreting Gramsci, he writes that "[i]deologies provide people with rules of practical conduct and moral behavior equivalent 'to a religion understood in the secular sense of a unity of faith between a conception of the world and a corresponding norm of conduct.'"[19] Viewing nineteenth century home life through the eyes of cultural constructions and power relations allows one to investigate the roles set out culturally for women, particularly the function of the women's domain of the parlor and the role of music within this feminine space.

Domesticity and home life were considered the responsibility of the bourgeois housewife in nineteenth-century Britain. Elizabeth Langland looks at the role of the ideological construction of the housewife and her depiction in Victorian literature. Langland places the Victorian housewife at "…the intersection of class and gender ideologies in a Victorian icon—the 'Angel in the House.'"[20] The matronly duties called for women to be the catalyst that brought the working man home at the end of each day.[21] In an historical

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[17] Barker, 80.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Langland, 290.

[21] Anne Martin-Fugier discusses this concept of the role of the wife in preparing a welcoming home. She writes that "[h]ome was the haven in which men rested from their outside labors, and everything possible was to be done to make that haven a place of harmony. The house was a nest, a place where time stood still. Not only was this nest idealized, so too was the woman who was its mistress. Like a fairy, she was expected to achieve perfection without making a show of the effort required." Anne Martin-Fugier, "Bourgeois Rituals," in *A History of Private Life: From the Fires of Revolution to the Great War,* ed. Michelle Perrot (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1990), 270.

study of home life, Catherine Hall notes that "[h]ome was the place of sweet delights, the haven for the harassed and anxious man who had to produce the material wealth on which that home depended."[22] Using magazines that furthered the hegemonic depiction of the domesticated housewife, Hall goes further, writing that "[a] new version of gentility was lauded in magazines such as *The Spectator.*"[23] Such publications taught women how to run the household successfully, while dictating the proper social role of women and delineating the gendered spaces of the house. Buried within these discourses we find the link between music and female propriety. As Mary Burgan states, "[o]f all the luxuries available to the middle classes in nineteenth-century England, the piano was perhaps the most significant in the lives of women; it was not only an emblem of social status, it provided a gauge of a woman's training in the required accomplishments of genteel society."[24] Studying the role of the angel in the house within the Victorian novel, Langland notes the power of women in the ideological practices, saying that "…beginning in the 1830s and 1840s middle-class women controlled significant discursive practices… [T]hey controlled the dissemination of certain kinds of knowledge and thus helped ensure a middle-class hegemony in mid-Victorian England."[25] The secrets of home life were controlled and codified by the angel of the house within the realms of class and social construction. "Women, excluded from…the public world, ruled the private one through the system of etiquette, the rules of 'Society' and of the 'Season.' They were the leaders…[who] acted as gatekeepers…"[26] As Michelle Perrot argues, publications, such as etiquette books aimed at reproducing this class-conscious form of gentility, promoting etiquette and family values. Aside from etiquette manuals, "[p]eople also were instructed by novels, which may be consulted as legitimate historical sources because they reveal more fully than other sources the ideals of private life that fascinated

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[22] Catherine Hall, "The Sweet Delights of Home," in *A History of Private Life: From the Fires of Revolution to the Great War,* ed. Michelle Perrot. (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1990), 74.

[23] Ibid., 87.

[24] Burgan, 51.

[25] Langland, 291.

[26] Hall, 89.

their perspicacious authors."[27] Therefore, within the role of cultural consciousness, the author was not only acting as storyteller, but facilitating and restating cultural institutions and ideologies.

The role of the author as social chronicler takes more significance as novels illustrate hegemonic ideology, particularly when looking at Eliot's depiction of female musicians. Langland studies this role, stating that "…the nineteenth-century novel presents the household as a secure and moral shelter… The novel…stages the ideological conflict between the domestic angel in the house…[and] the stratagems of desire."[28] Carole Robinson looks at the nineteenth-century hegemonic constructs of the angel in the house in her work discussing George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* and the inverted, male angel *outside* the house that Eliot creates in the heroic Daniel. She notes that politically, the public "…demanded a man in the title role."[29] Inverted social roles aside, Eliot's work points to the cultural norms surrounding gender roles within the domesticated realm of the house.

Cultural constructs throughout the nineteenth century became increasingly gendered as men and women separated their spheres within the domestic palace. Inspired by the Marxist study of industrialism, consumerism, and Lacan's concept of the symbolic object, Nancy Bercaw notes that "…women and men sought out and codified the meaning of things" within these spaces, as Victorians placed a cultural value on objects and "…stuffed [their] parlor with…padded chairs, ladened whatnots, and crowded center tables [that] formed…new domestic spaces…"[30] While Bercaw's study investigates the role of fancywork, she uses this creative topic to propel her discussion of how women marked their new space in society and determined their value within this new parlor culture.

Julia Koza notes the role of music within this feminine domain of the parlor. She writes that "…music was more closely associated with the feminine sphere than the

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[27] Ibid., 134.

[28] Langland, 291.

[29] Carole Robinson, "The Severe Angel: A Study of *Daniel Deronda*," *ELH* 31, no. 3 (September 1964): 278.

[30] Nancy Dunlap Bercaw, "Solid Objects/Mutable Meanings: Fancywork and the Construction of Bourgeois Culture, 1940-1880," *Winterthur Portfolio* 26, no. 4 (Winter 1991): 231.

masculine…"[31] Further, "[m]usic was considered to come naturally to women,"[32] perhaps setting up the argument surrounding musical genres and the lyric. Describing the parlor scene at the Meyrick household, George Eliot lays out the parlor as a delicate part of life, evoking effeminate language and symbols. She writes that "[t]he small front parlour was as good as a temple that morning. The sunlight was on the river and soft air came in through the opening window; the walls showed a glorious silent cloud of witness…"[33] In this scene, the parlor is the setting of Mirah Lapidoth's private vocal recital as she sings for Daniel Deronda and the Meyrick women. Private performances were at the heart of this new parlor culture, and centered around the family piano.

Within the new value placed on domesticated objects, the nineteenth-century family piano took center stage. Alain Corbin notes the social significance of the piano within Victorian culture: "[t]he ability to play the piano well established a child's reputation and gave public proof of a good education. Virtuosity figured, along with the rest of the 'aesthetic dowry,' in marriage strategies."[34] Apart from influencing marriage marketability, the piano played a significant role defining women and the ideology of domesticity in the nineteenth century. The piano emerged in the nineteenth century as a symbolic form of home life. Richard Leppert traces the development of the piano in relation to its appearance in house: "…the piano became the ubiquitous and unrivaled instrument of the bourgeois home… [It] located itself almost exclusively among amateurs as a female instrument…"[35] Koza agrees with this argument regarding the piano and gendered instruments. She writes that "…males [were] most commonly linked with members of the orchestral string and

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[31] Julia Eklund Koza, "Music and the Feminine Sphere: Images of Women as Musicians in Godey's Lady's Book, 1830-1877," *The Musical Quarterly* 75, no. 2 (Summer 1991): 103.

[32] Ibid., 104.

[33] Eliot, 210.

[34] Alain Corbin, "The Secret Life of the Individual," in *A History of Private Life: From the Fires of Revolution to the Great War,* ed. Michelle Perrot, (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1990), 531.

[35] Richard Leppert, "Sexual Identity, Death and the Family Piano," *19th-Century Music* 16, no. 2 (Autumn 1992): 111.

woodwind families, females with keyboard instruments."[36] This new expressive aesthetic was perfect for the intimate spaces of the parlor. These factors combined to change keyboard playing and compositional techniques.

The connotations and sexual tensions surrounding the lady at the piano stirred anxiety in the nineteenth century. The ability of music to express and communicate was exploited at the hands of authors. Corbin writes that

> even the innocent fingers of an inexperienced young girl could express through the keyboard feelings that could never be stated in language. For that reason Balzac advised his sister, Laure Surville, to buy a piano. The instrument was seen as an outlet for the timid. Accordingly, it was a literary convention to portray a young girl at the piano, who, believing that she is alone, reveals unsuspected feelings to an indiscreet listener. The piano, which lifted the girl's soul toward the lofty realm of the ideal, even helped her to conceal those feelings from herself.[37]

Leppert looks at the sexually-charged voyeuristic audiences surrounding a woman at the piano, and writes of the objectification of the woman while at the piano and the semiotics found as "…the looking was insistently gendered, driven by the instrument's extramusical function within the home as the visual-sonoric simulacrum of family, wife and mother."[38] Leppert studies the historical constructions surrounding the female as musician and their role in the social function of the piano. He writes,

> [i]n Victorian culture, the piano functioned in sound and sight alike as an analogical referent to social harmony and domestic order. Its sonorities…served as the aesthetic metaphor simultaneously connecting and justifying the connection between public and private life…between men and women and their social relations, and…between bourgeois desire and erotic capacity, on the one hand, and their sublimation…on the other.[39]

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[36] Koza, 107.

[37] Corbin, 533.

[38] Leppert, 105.

[39] Ibid., 116.

Cultural studies investigate what members of a particular society did with their time, at home or abroad, and their lived experience. A major factor of nineteenth-century home life was leisure and music-making, setting up the social role of the amateur. While Anne Martin-Fugier lays out the fundamental responsibilities of the lady of the house, she notes that "if there were enough servants to handle the work, the lady of the house was free to devote her morning to private pursuits such as reading the mail, playing the piano, sewing, or knitting."[40] What is striking about Martin-Fugier's depiction of the parlor is that, while the parlor was used for family gatherings and social activities, it was in this setting that the amateur musician rose to prominence. She notes "[e]venings were an ideal time for amateur musicales and theatricals… [P]eople were obliged to amuse themselves, [and] formed groups of musicians and singers that met regularly at a member's home."[41] Citing George Sand's account of the amateur music gatherings, she writes "'[i]n the provinces those days people were still artists… [E]very week people gathered at the home of one music lover or another to make what the Italians call *musica di camera*…a reputable and noble form of relaxation…."'[42] This form, Martin-Fugier notes, was very common, and "…amateur music-making flourished throughout the century."[43]

When looking at authorial depictions of lived experience as an illustration of ideology, we can use Eliot's work as a representation of contrasting female musicians within this feminine space of the parlor. Eliot's first significant reference to music in *Daniel Deronda* novel is the performance of Catherine Arrowpoint and Herr Klesmer at the neighborhood party welcoming Gwendolen and her family.[44] Eliot describes Miss Arrowpoint, whose proficiency at the piano is unbridled among the female characters in the work, as "…neutral,

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[40] Martin-Fugier,. 270.

[41] Ibid., 281.

[42] Ibid., 282.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Eliot describes the scene, writing "[m]usic was begun. Miss Arrowpoint and Herr Klesmer played a four-handed piece on two pianos which convinced the company in general that it was long, and Gwendolen in particular that the neutral, placid-faced Miss Arrowpoint had a mastery of the instrument which put her execution out of the question…" Eliot, 47.

placid-faced," compared to the musical dilettante Gwendolen, who as Eliot notes "…had the rare advantage of looking almost prettier when she was singing than at other times…"[45] On the other hand, Eliot gives a very different account of Mirah Lapidoth upon her return from a singing engagement: "[h]er concert dress being simple black, over which she had thrown a dust-cloak, would not make her an object of unpleasant attention..."[46] The dichotomy is clear: more ideal both in physical beauty and submissiveness to the code of ideology, the amateur musician contrasts sharply the plainness and otherness of the competent musician. The idea of the artist as curator of social ideology could not be more explicit.

Gender, class, and education collide in the role of music within the educational ideology of nineteenth-century society. Within the educational institutions of the middle class, Burgen notes that music education was "pervasive" among young women. "Though learning to play the piano was a requirement for middle-class girls, tutelage in piano-playing seems to have had little place in the curriculum for boys."[47] This compulsory music education was typically gendered and considered a lesson in morality for young ladies. Burgan states that girls were meant to be proficient in piano skills, yet it was considered taboo to move into the professional realm: "[m]ost professional pianists in Victorian England were male."[48] The core of Burgan's argument is that young ladies were expected to be proficient in playing as a proof of gentility and a source of "social climbing", and investigates the anxieties surrounding the female virtuoso, illustrated by Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*.[49]

Koza states that women who showed more than a basic proficiency in piano playing compromised their status but had the choice to save "…their family by going to work and, by that act, acknowledging their fallen social status, or remaining at home and facing certain

[45] Ibid., 47-48.
[46] Ibid., 736.
[47] Burgan, 59.
[48] Ibid., 60.
[49] Ibid., 62.

doom."[50] We see this struggle illustrated in Eliot's *Deronda*, as the destitute Gwendolen has to make her choice: ""There are two situations that offer themselves. One is in a bishop's family…and the other is in quite a high class of school; and in both, your French, and music, and dancing…and then your manners and habits as a lady, are exactly what is wanted.""[51] Thus, nineteenth-century hegemony glorified the amateur and demonized the male virtuoso as foreign.[52] This concept of otherness is at work in Eliot's character of Herr Klesmer, who she describes as "a felicitous combination of the German, the S[lav], and the Semite, with grand features," whose "English had little foreignness except its fluency…."[53] Later in her work, Eliot goes further, having Klesmer describe himself as "…the Wandering Jew…."[54] We see through class ideology how this foreignness of the professional musician could threaten any sense of social status that female musicians could hold. Looking through fictitious works allows one to see these ideologies written as a code of law.

While Burgan's study broadly investigates social structures concerning the anxieties of the female musician, she turns to Eliot to investigate specifically social ideologies as found in novels. This she justifies by stating, "The Victorian novelist who explored women's music most successfully within the confines of firm social observation and psychological realism was George Eliot. She considered herself to be only an amateur musician, but her characterization of musical women negotiates a variety of possibilities beyond amateurism, mesmerism, or idealization."[55] Burgan notes that Eliot's novels are "…rich in musical allusion," not only following her personal interest in music, but also indicating her interest in "…its implications for the development of woman's character…[through an] exploration of the varieties of musical experience available in late Victorian society."[56] In *Daniel Deronda*,

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[50] Julia Eklund Koza, "Music and the Feminine Sphere: Images of Women as Musicians in Godey's Lady's Book, 1830-1877," *The Musical Quarterly* 75, no. 2 (Summer, 1991), 113.

[51] Eliot, 233.

[52] Burgan, 66.

[53] Eliot, 47.

[54] Ibid., 242.

[55] Burgan, 71.

[56] Ibid., 72-73.

the reader can identify certain characteristic traits that Eliot assigns to the amateur, and contrast those against the traits that she assigns to characters who show potential to surpass the amateur. Within her own work, Eliot states matter-of-factly the social role of the amateur. Of Gwendolen, Eliot writes "…she had moved in a society where everything, from low arithmetic to high art, is of the amateur kind politely supposed to fall short of perfection only because gentlemen and ladies are not obliged to do more than they like."[57] This dichotomy between professional and amateur, represented by Gwendolen's conflict over remaining an amateur or becoming a professional, was not confined to cultural values; it spread into the discourse of the discipline of music.

The function of the amateur was ambivalent in the musical world. In an article in *The Musical Times,* Alfred Kalisch identifies the amateur as "…usually a member of the wealthier classes, and…[i]n those days [of the founding of the Royal Philharmonic Society in 1813,] the musician with a university degree was rare indeed."[58] The difference between the discourses, as the Society remembers its founding principles of the early nineteenth-century, and the culturally-accepted ideology of the Victorian period is that in the musical society, the correlation between professional and amateur lay within the career, rather than in social propriety. Kalisch writes that in 1813, the public could already make the distinction "…between the professional musician who makes his living by music and the amateur who does not."[59]

Max Kaplan, on the other hand, looks at the most basic distinction: "[t]he most common difference usually considered is payment of money…used in differentiating amateur from professional…"[60] Kaplan also looks at the social reactions to the contrasting roles, noting that the professional "…has authority because of recognized technical knowledge…" whereas the amateur "…is free to choose his circle and can perform his bit

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[57] Eliot, 263.

[58] Alfred Kalisch, "Professional or Amateur?" *The Musical Times* 73, no. 1072 (1 June 1932), 507.

[59] Ibid., 507.

[60] Max Kaplan, "The Social Role of the Amateur," *Music Educators Journal* 40, no. 4 (February-March 1954), 26.

for whomever he wants."[61] While Kaplan highlights the economic and social differences between the professional and the amateur, he nevertheless concludes that "[t]he amateur and the professional in art are not competitors, but close allies; their fate is interwoven."[62]

No other composer was as apposite to parlor music as Frederic Chopin. His piano works were suited to the small performance spaces and intimate mood of a parlor gathering, such as the ones illustrated in Eliot's work. Walter Robert states that Chopin's waltzes and nocturnes "…contributed to the image of Chopin as a 'salon composer.'"[63] Grout and Palisca note that "…Chopin's pieces are introspective and, within clearly defined formal outlines…" that hint at a clear-cut structure that was well-suited to amateur performers and listeners.[64] While Chopin's popular ethnic works required a level of proficiency that went beyond the female amateur, it was his piano nocturnes that were considered the definitive feminine musical genre.[65] Robert discusses the "…delicate tracery and feminine lyricism of many of Chopin's nocturnes…"[66] that forms the basis of Jeffrey Kallberg's argument surrounding the gendered systems of musical representation that were strictly a "…sociocultural construct…"[67] Kallberg finds musical genre a social construct that is a "communicative" tool used by composers and audiences to speak to specific groups highlighting the social effect of music and its communicative role. According to Kallberg, this communication evoked responses particularly from women.[68]

In his study of music and society, John Shepherd notes, a similar social trend in music, which "seems most faithfully to reflect the intangible, fluid and dynamic

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[61] Ibid., 26.

[62] Ibid., 27.

[63] Walter Robert, *From Bach to Brahms: A Musician's Journey through Keyboard Literature.* (Bloomington: Tichenor Publishing, 1994), 108.

[64] Donald Jay Grout and Claude V. Palisca, *A History of Western Music,* 5d. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996), 599.

[65] "All his [Chopin's] works, however, demand of the player not only a flawless technique and touch but also an imaginative use of the pedals and a discreet application of *tempo rubato*…" Ibid., 599-600.

[66] Robert, 108.

[67] Jeffrey Kallberg, "The Harmony of the Tea Table: Gender and Ideology in the Piano Nocturne," *Representations* 39 (Summer 1992), 102.

[68] Ibid., 103.

characteristics of social relationships."[69] Kallberg narrows the focus of the social impact, focusing on Chopin's Nocturnes. He cites G.W. Fink's 1834 article in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* (AMZ): "[t]he Nocturnes are really reveries of the soul fluctuating from feeling to feeling in the still of the night, about which we want to set down nothing but the outburst of the feminine heart…"[70] Kallberg investigates this concept of feeling further by considering various reviews of Chopin's work. He notes reviewers such as Ferdinand Hand and Carl Kossmaly, who use feminine descriptions of the nocturnes. Kallberg writes that contemporaries' review terms like "'[f]eeling,' 'dream,' 'longing,' 'sentiment,' 'tender'…were [all] linked to, and surely in different degrees meant to compliment, the primary image of the feminine."[71] Reviewing Chopin's compositional process, fellow composer and music critic Robert Schumann wrote that "Chopin will soon be unable to write anything without making people cry out, at the seventh or eighth bars already, 'That is indeed by him!'"[72] As Kallberg uses these language constructions to delineate the gendered differences of genre, he lays out the gendered constructs of consumerism, citing that "…women were far and away the primary consumers of piano music…[and]…women played most of the keyboards found in middle-class homes throughout Europe and the United States in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries."[73] Kallberg continues his study by deconstructing Chopin's other genres, detailing that the "feminine topos" so conspicuous in his nocturnes is lacking from the polonaises and scherzo further cementing the nocturne as an amateur, parlor music par excellence.[74]

Within the feminine discourses of the nocturne, Kallberg notes the critics' role in devaluing the feminine genre. He writes that "…affiliation with women usually led to a

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[69] John Shepherd, *Music as Social Text.* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), 81.

[70] Kallberg, 104.

[71] Ibid., 105.

[72] Robert Schumann, "On Chopin's Piano Music," in *Words on Music: from Addison to Barzun,* ed. Jack Sullivan (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1990), 194.

[73] Kallberg, 106.

[74] Ibid., 107.

lesser ranking in the aesthetic hierarchy, it would have been odd if the nocturne had escaped unscathed."[75] Once again, the language of the feminine is conjured up to invoke the secondary aesthetic of effeminate delicacy. Despite this language surrounding the nocturne, piano virtuoso and composer Franz Liszt noted that Chopin's piano music harnesses "…the noise of the orchestra…produced on the ivory keyboard…to succeed in his effort to lose nothing in power, without claiming any pretension to orchestral effects or to the brush of a scene-painter."[76] Within this monumentality of piano writing, one sees flourishes that are reminiscent of the virtuosi. Within the effeminate, delicate Nocturne, the Romantic concept of chromaticism thrives side by side with emotional passages of sweeping scales and virtuosic cadenzas. In his discussion of Nocturne, Op. 15, No. 2, Charles Rosen notes that "[i]t would be a mistake…to think that the intensity that burns off the sentimentality of Chopin's material is dependent solely upon lavishness, on a profusion of ornamental and contrapuntal detail."[77] Rosen relates Chopin's compositional technique to that of Bellini and Verdi, but highlights differences in that Chopin "brought all his command of classical polyphony and harmonic invention to bear on material apparently simple. This gave his art an over-charged complexity that made if often quite literally offensive to his contemporaries."[78] Looking at the score, one finds the passages to which Rosen referred, as Chopin sets lyrical and expressive opening material amidst the complex figuration of five-lets, sixteenth notes and thirty-second notes within the opening ten measures of the Nocturne in F-sharp Major.

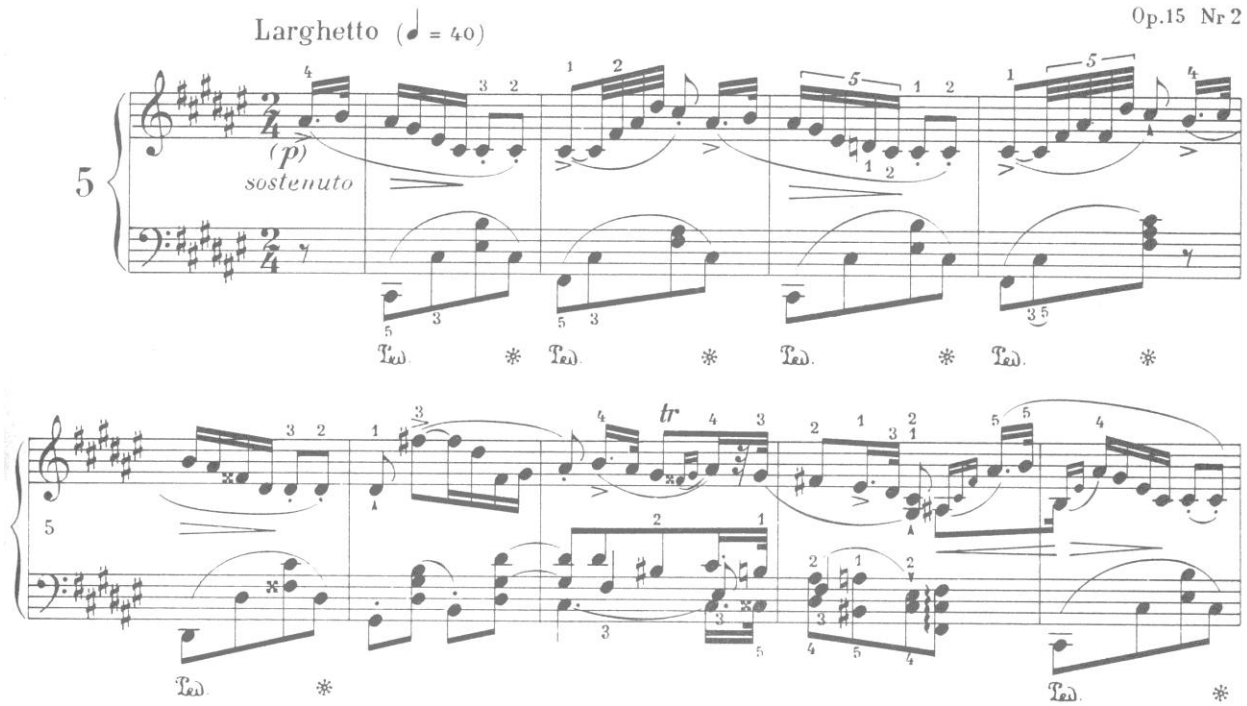
[75] Ibid., 110.

[76] Franz Liszt, "On Chopin's Piano Music," in *Words on Music: from Addison to Barzun,* ed. Jack Sullivan (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1990), 199.

[77] Charles Rosen, *The Romantic Generation.* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 405.

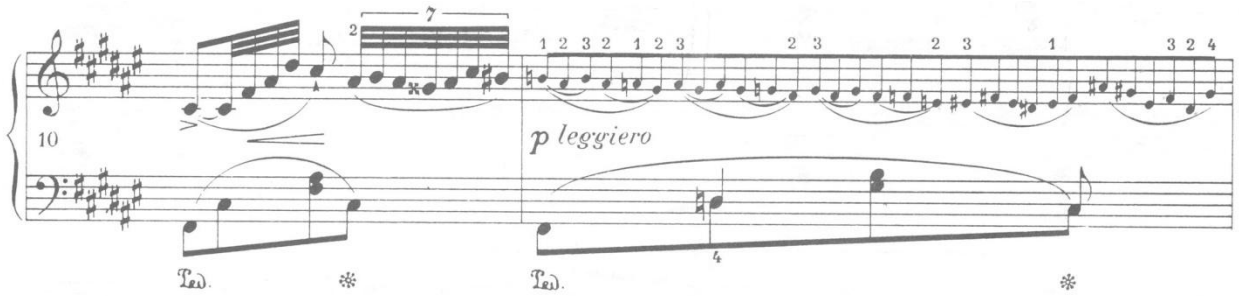
[78] Ibid., 408.

Example 1: Chopin, Nocturne, Op. 15, no. 2 (measures 1-9)



However, after the opening material is settled and the theme has been stated, Chopin moves to the virtuosic flourishes of scales, filled with harmonic movement and chromaticism that Rosen feels can be construed as offensive to the ear.

Example 2: Chopin, Nocturne, Op. 15, no. 2 (measures 10-11)



As Rosen states, "…the intensity of detail and the mastery of complex polyphonic form in Chopin's music have no parallel in his own time, and they make his work, in spite of its immense popularity, the most private and esoteric achievement of the period."[79]

[79] Rosen, 409.

Popularity, form and Chopin aside, the music of the parlor was considered an intimate form of music, played on pianos by amateur ladies of the house. However, given the social structures and the hegemonic idea of the female musician only as amateur, a study of Chopin's works show that the amateur was not welcome in his world. But as Kallberg notes, the only form socially acceptable to the female musician was the piano nocturne, filled with delicate sounds of night and the sentimentality appropriate for the feminine sphere of the parlor. According to Kallberg, the performer and the audience of the Nocturne were strictly feminine. But consensus of the nineteenth-century questions this concept.

As a cultural construct, the angel of the house was only required to be a musical dilettante, anything beyond considered to be socially taboo. Eliot navigates between these realms in *Daniel Deronda*, as she compares the musical talents of Catherine Arrowpoint, who studies "intimately" with Herr Klesmer, to the marketability of the female singer in Mirah Lapidoth. Where Mirah is seen as foreign, exotic and Jewish, the public performance is acceptable for her. However, in the world of Catherine Arrowpoint, who was raised a Gentile, the role of music is purely a social event. Through cultural studies, one can recognize the cultural constructs behind this distinction. But when looking at the musical genres available to these different spheres of performance, one finds a disconnect between consensus and practice.