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## Sentiments, Strategy, and Social Dynamics: Applying Brams' *Theory of Moves* (1996) to Parent-Child Dynamics in Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* (1876)

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### Abstract

This study examines how emotions impact parental decisions and how parenthood influences strategic decision-making, using Brams' theory of moves (TOM) as a framework. Focusing on selected character dynamics in George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* within a Victorian social context, it explores the motivations behind parental choices, their consequences, and the effects on children's well-being and development. Through extensive literature review and character analysis, the research provides deeper insight into the multi-faceted roles of parents in the novel and their decision-making processes. By applying Brams' TOM, particularly through backward induction and non-myopic equilibrium, the research assesses the rationale behind parental decisions considering Victorian societal norms and personal values. The findings indicate that while parental decision-making may be emotionally influenced, it remains rational and goal-oriented. Characters like Fanny Davilow and Leonora Charisi exemplify contrasting parenting styles shaped by their distinct life experiences, social statuses, and personal values. Despite their differences, Fanny's overprotective, indulgent approach and Leonora's more detached style, both demonstrate strategic thinking aimed at protecting and fostering their children's well-being. The analysis enhances understanding of how characters in *Daniel Deronda* navigate the intricacies of parenting, striking a balance between emotional involvement and strategic foresight to secure the best possible outcomes for their children. Integrating game theory into the analysis of well-known literary works, such as *Daniel Deronda*, can enrich interpretations and foster a more comprehensive understanding of characters and themes. Additionally, this approach can inspire wider applications of game theory within the field of literary studies, promoting further interdisciplinary exploration.

**Keywords:** *Daniel Deronda*, Game Theory, Character Dynamics, Backward Induction, Parental Decisions



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### Introduction

If ever there was a challenge to test one's mettle, it is parenthood, an unyielding crucible of trials and tribulations. Across time and cultures, countless stories have been shared about parents navigating the delicate balance between practical concerns and profound love for their children.

Parenting commences with a powerful instinct to safeguard and nurture, leading parents to seek equilibrium in their child's life. In early years, parents control their children's lives, but as they mature, conflicts can arise when children assert autonomy. Parents usually retain the final say, motivated by a wish to act in their child's best interest. Children's identities are significantly shaped by parental decisions, making it challenging to break away from their influence entirely. It is crucial to understand the intricacies of parenting, as parents are imperfect beings molded by personal experiences like trauma, supportive settings, or diverse structures. These experiences greatly impact parental decision-making processes. Despite good intentions, parents make errors and are not strategic masterminds. A balance between emotions and rationality is vital when parents make decisions impacting their children's futures. Although questioning parental authority is valid, acknowledging the diverse range of parenting capabilities and advocating for resources to help parents make well-informed choices for their children is equally essential.

### Review of Literature

Ginott (2003), in his book, argues that effective parenting is not solely about demanding obedience, but focuses on instilling positive values and nurturing responsibility. He asserts that nurturing values and fostering emotional intelligence and strong relationships within families contribute to a healthier and more resilient family dynamic. Rather than relying on negative labels and criticism, parents should focus on building self-esteem, empathy, and emotional intelligence in their children. While some argue that obedience is crucial in raising responsible children, focusing solely on compliance overlooks the significance of developing values and emotional intelligence. Ultimately, it is through empathetic parenting and role modeling that children learn responsibility and resilience. Since children learn values from role models, parents' attitudes and actions significantly impact their development. Promoting decision-making, self-reliance, and developing inner standards are key aspects of fostering responsibility.

Siegel and Hartzell (2003), in their book, assert that personality development combines genetic and environmental factors. While genes affect the nervous system, experiences influence gene activation and brain structure. Secure attachments, formed through attunement, balance, and coherence, are critical for infants' emotional development. Insecure attachments result from inconsistent emotional support, leading to avoidant, ambivalent, and disorganized attachment patterns. Recognizing and addressing these patterns is crucial for fostering healthy emotional growth in children. Parents can support this by providing a stable environment and seeking professional help when needed.



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Griffiths (2008), in his article, draws on Melanie Klein's (1940)<sup>1</sup> theory on the "depressive position"<sup>2</sup> which posits that anxieties about ambivalence, guilt, and loss persist throughout life, reactivating early emotional struggles whenever loss occurs. Klein equates the loss of a mother with the fear of death, suggesting that every parting symbolizes mortality, as illustrated in George Eliot's "The Sad Fortunes of the Reverend Amos Barton" (1857/ 2007)<sup>3</sup>. In Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* (1876), themes such as the fear of sexual love, love as fantasy, the desolation of lovelessness, and indefinable dread manifest through various characterizations and symbols, including the sharing of the mother's bed, the idealization of the mother, and the search for a "new" mother. The manifest text<sup>4</sup> of *Daniel Deronda* masks a profound dread of abandonment, exemplified by Daniel's real mother's revelation. The latent text counters this fear through an idealized mother-child unity, reflected in the manifest text through idealized relationships and Mirah's flawless portrayal.

Tsabary (2010), in her book, suggests successful parenting balances authenticity, emotional connection, and personal growth. By developing self-awareness and accepting limitations, parents encourage resilience and empathy, promoting honest communication and self-worth. Instead of dictating children's identities, parents should encourage self-expression. Recognizing life's uncertainties helps parents adapt to their children's evolving needs, strengthening bonds and understanding. Accepting imperfection is crucial for emotional growth and healthy relationships. Distinguishing ego-driven reactions from genuine responses allows parents to foster healthier family dynamics while nurturing their children's individual qualities and growth, ultimately supporting their emotional well-being.

Gibson (2015), in her book, explains that emotional loneliness results from inadequate emotional intimacy, often originating in childhood when parents are emotionally unavailable. Persistent emotional loneliness can stem from a lack of parental emotional responsiveness. Growing up with emotionally immature parents leads to feelings of emptiness and insecurity that may influence adult relationships. Overcoming emotional loneliness requires self-awareness, understanding its roots, and nurturing emotional intimacy.

Emotional intimacy necessitates trust, empathy, and understanding. For children, emotional connection with caregivers is crucial for secure attachment. Emotionally mature parents foster intimacy by engaging attentively with their children, making them feel valued. Conversely,

<sup>1</sup> "Mourning and Its Relation to Manic-Depressive States" (1940)

<sup>2</sup> The depressive position refers to an infant's internal struggle and distress during weaning, marking their first painful experience of separation and loss. This stage involves the realization that a loved object can also be hated, and it elaborates on the feelings of loss linked with early separation (Radden, 2000).

<sup>3</sup> Short story from *scenes of clerical life* (1857/2007)

<sup>4</sup> In the field of literary theory, especially in psychoanalytic criticism, the term "manifest text" pertains to the visible content of a piece of literature. It differs from the "latent text" or "latent content," which includes unconscious themes, symbolic elements, and underlying meanings that are not immediately obvious but can be understood through more thorough analysis.



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emotionally immature parents struggle to connect emotionally due to self-centeredness, leading to emotional loneliness for their children. Empathetic understanding can help address underlying neglect and invisibility issues. Children of emotionally immature parents often experience frustration and loneliness because their parents cannot provide the emotional intimacy and understanding they need, significantly impacting their emotional development.

This study will analyze the parental decisions made by Fanny Davilow and Princess Leonara Halm-Eberstein, examining their substantial impact on their children's lives and identities. In parent-child relationships, children must reach a certain maturity level to engage in strategic interactions with their parents. As their rational thinking abilities develop, they can participate in decision-making processes, leading to complex dynamics consistent with game theory principles.

The study focuses on instances from Gwendolen and Daniel's adult lives, ensuring their sufficient maturity for strategic decision-making. Parental decisions can have both short-term and long-term consequences, necessitating a nonmyopic equilibrium. The following section will evaluate these strategic interactions using Steven J. Brams' theory of moves (TOM), backward induction, and the concept of nonmyopic equilibrium.

### Methodology

#### TOM & Nonmyopic Equilibrium

Steven J. Brams introduced the dynamic theory of moves (TOM) as an extension of classical game theory. In his book, *Theory of Moves* (1996), Brams argues that while considerable progress has been made in game theory through concepts like backward induction, fictitious play, and Nash refinements, there remains a critical issue, the neglect of conditions leading to a specific order of play.

In response, TOM addresses this shortcoming by determining the order of moves endogenously. Unlike traditional game theory, which primarily focuses on immediate optimal choices, TOM incorporates long-term considerations, exploring whether players would deviate from Nash equilibria when contemplating future outcomes. TOM achieves this through a dynamic framework wherein players begin at a given state, assess potential consequences of strategic shifts, and anticipate the game's conclusion.

By examining games beyond simple 2x2 structures, TOM demonstrates its applicability to complex strategic scenarios. The aim of TOM, however, is not to provide a superior outcome but to offer a more realistic model of strategic decision-making, reflecting how individuals might genuinely think and act in such situations.

Additionally, TOM demonstrates its ability to model real-life conflicts more reasonably by accounting for the future implications of actions. Players considering the possibility of becoming the next target if they fire first, highlights the advantage of incorporating a dynamic





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theory like TOM, which extends classical game theory's limitations. Overall, TOM proves to be a valuable addition to the realm of strategic decision-making in conflict situations.

Standard game theory assumes players choose strategies simultaneously, focusing on immediate outcomes and disregarding the rationality of deviating from them. However, in real-life scenarios, games often start at an existing outcome, representing the status quo. This shifts the focus to whether deviating from this outcome would result in long-term benefits. In light of these considerations, Brams introduced a new concept known as the nonmyopic equilibrium (NME).

As per Brams (2011), the nonmyopic equilibrium (NME) in the theory of moves (TOM) framework encapsulates the strategic outcome of forward-thinking decision-making. In adhering to TOM rules, players analyze potential move-countermove sequences and their consequences, adopting a broader perspective and anticipating the future outcomes of their actions. NMEs thus result from players' rational calculations, evaluating various initial states and determining the most advantageous long-term outcomes.

In a two-player game, a nonmyopic equilibrium represents a state where neither player has an incentive to deviate, considering all potential rational moves and countermoves. This equilibrium ensures that any unilateral departure from the initial state will ultimately result in an equal or inferior outcome, accounting for long-term consequences and strategic decision-making. Players utilize backward induction to identify nonmyopic equilibria by examining the game's progression from its end, taking into account the long-term consequences of strategic decisions. This method entails analyzing potential move-countermove sequences within game trees, allowing players to determine optimal outcomes using TOM.

### Game Trees and Backward Induction

According to the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2007), 'game theory' entry, game-trees, which are commonly utilized for game theoretical analyses, are graphical representations that provide a visual depiction of the action sequence and potential outcomes. They empower players to strategize and anticipate consequences effectively. Notably, game trees facilitate backward induction, allowing players to assess possible outcomes and select actions based on the most advantageous result. These graphical depictions, typically drawn from either top to bottom or left to right, offer players a clear view of the series of events and potential results, particularly pertinent in perfect information games where players can confidently foresee the repercussions of their decisions.

A key feature of game trees lies in their support for backward induction reasoning. Starting from the end of the tree where outcomes are displayed, players can work backward to pinpoint the optimal strategies leading to their desired results. This process takes into account each player's utility function, reflecting their individual preferences. However, it's important to note that not all paths within the tree may be viable, as the choices made by each player affect the overall outcome. In contrast, matrices serve as representations for games where players make



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simultaneous moves without prior knowledge of their opponents' decisions. Matrices present the outcomes for every possible combination of strategies, as indicated by the players' utility functions. For example, the river-crossing game can be effectively depicted using a matrix, as both the fugitive and the hunter have only one move each and make their decisions independently of each other's choices.

However, backward induction has its limitations. As Binmore (2007) discusses in his book, while there is ongoing discussion regarding backward induction<sup>1</sup>, there is agreement that it has the potential to determine players' maximin values in finite games with perfect information, as long as the necessary computational resources and time are available to handle the game's complexity. While theoretically powerful, backward induction's practical limitations become apparent when applied to complex games such as Chess. The computational complexity involved in identifying the optimal strategy may render it impractical or even infeasible, highlighting the obstacles to real-world implementation. Moreover, it is crucial to acknowledge the inherent imperfection of human beings. Backward induction operates under the assumption that players invariably act rationally, choosing the optimal strategy at each decision point. However, human behavior is susceptible to deviation due to emotions, personal tendencies, and various external factors.

When performing backward induction and eliminating certain choices at a node, the process effectively removes equivalent pure strategies. In terms of the strategic form of the game, any discarded strategy is dominated by another strategy that is identical except for making the optimal choice at that particular node. This process mirrors the elimination of dominated strategies in a game's strategic form.

While successive deletion of dominated strategies can sometimes reduce a strategic form to a single outcome, it does not always mimic backward induction. However, in two-player or zero-sum games, the result is always a maximin outcome. For games in general, any Nash equilibrium achieved by removing dominated strategies from a larger game must also be a Nash equilibrium of the original game. This is because adding a dominant strategy cannot make any of the current best responses worse. Although some Nash equilibria may be lost when eliminating dominated strategies (unless all dominations are strict), it is impossible to eliminate all Nash equilibria of the original game. In this study, backward induction will be applied as a game-theoretic analytical instrument to examine the parent-child dynamics between the selected characters in *Daniel Deronda*.

### Discussion

#### *An Instance of Strategic Dynamics Between the Mother and Daughter*

Adhering to traditional values, many parents, like Fanny, view marriage as an essential part of

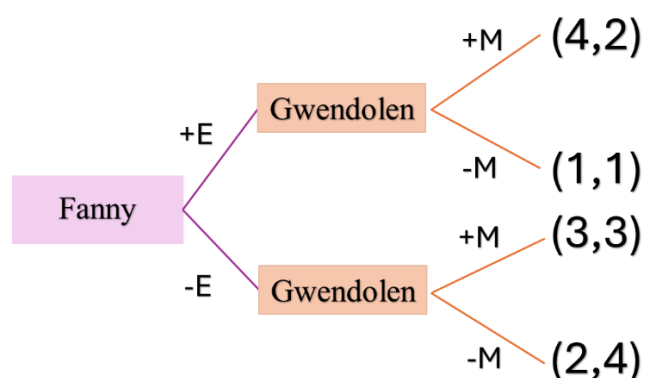
<sup>1</sup> For an overview of discussions on the backward induction paradox, see Bicchieri (1988), Bermúdez (1999), Baltag et al. (2009), Sobel (2022), and Gustafsson and Rabinowicz (2024).

their child's life trajectory. This belief often leads to conflict between parent and child when they hold differing opinions on the importance of matrimony. Similarly, marriage is the point of contention between Fanny and Gwendolen, as she sincerely believes that "marriage is the only happy state for a woman" (p. 22) while Gwendolen sees marriage as restrictive and prioritizes independence and personal ambition. The arrival of Mr. Grandcourt, a wealthy suitor, highlights their differing perspectives: Fanny sees him as a transformative opportunity for the family, while Gwendolen resists traditional expectations. Thus, this marriage scenario has been selected as an appropriate setting for a game theory examination and interpretation of the dynamics between the mother and daughter.

In the strategic interplay between Fanny and Gwendolen, Fanny's initial move is to encourage the marriage between Gwendolen and Grandcourt. Fanny's potential payoff lies in the financial and social stability that the union would offer her family. On the other hand, Gwendolen has two possible courses of<sup>1</sup> action: marrying Grandcourt or deciding against the marriage. Gwendolen's payoffs are somewhat complex, as she places importance on both her personal autonomy and the financial and social advantages that the marriage could bring. Consequently, her decision must strike a balance between these competing priorities.<sup>2</sup> The interaction between Fanny and Gwendolen can be illustrated through the following game tree:

Figure 2

*Tree Diagram Form of the Parent-Child Game*



Key:  $(x,y)$  = (payoff to Fanny, payoff to Gwendolen)

4=best; 3=next best; 2=next worst; 1=worst

+E= encourage, -E= do not encourage; +M=marry, -M= do not marry

In this game-theoretic framework, Fanny's preferred outcome involves encouraging Gwendolen

<sup>1</sup> "Of course, marriage was social promotion; she could not look forward to a single life; but promotions have sometimes to be taken with bitter herbs" (p. 31).



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to marry Grandcourt. This approach could significantly alter the family's financial circumstances, with Grandcourt ideally catering to Gwendolen and her family's needs, thereby securing financial stability and a favorable resolution for everyone. By marrying Grandcourt, Gwendolen would have her wishes fulfilled, ultimately satisfying Fanny's top priority: Gwendolen's happiness. Additionally, if Gwendolen is swayed by her mother's persuasion, Fanny's maternal needs are also satisfied, as her daughter acknowledges and values her guidance (4).

The second-best outcome for Fanny would involve maintaining a neutral stance rather than actively supporting the marriage. She must weigh the potential benefits and drawbacks of this passive strategy against the risks of promoting the marriage. This approach requires trusting that Gwendolen will make the "right" decision independently. In this scenario, Fanny would still enjoy the financial security resulting from Gwendolen's decision to marry Grandcourt, avoiding the risk of alienating her daughter through persuasion. However, this approach might lead Fanny to question her influence as a mother and potentially undermine her authority in Gwendolen's eyes (3).

The less favorable outcome for Fanny would be maintaining the status quo. By adopting a passive strategy and refraining from encouraging Gwendolen to marry Grandcourt, Fanny avoids potential conflict with her daughter but also relinquishes control over the situation. If Gwendolen ultimately refuses to marry Grandcourt, their financial problems persist, leaving Fanny's "princess" still in a state of "exile". This would necessitate the search for another suitable suitor. Additionally, Fanny may face criticism and disapproval from her family, particularly Mr. Gascoigne<sup>1</sup>, for failing to utilize her maternal influence and missing a golden opportunity to secure a prosperous marriage for Gwendolen (2).

The worst possible outcome for Fanny would arise if she encouraged the marriage between Gwendolen and Grandcourt, only for Gwendolen to defy her counsel. Under these circumstances, their financial difficulties would persist, casting doubt on Fanny's maternal influence, specifically her capacity to guide Gwendolen through major life choices. Furthermore, the missed opportunity to improve their financial situation through a strategic marriage would not only weaken Fanny's authority as a parent but also intensify her conflict with Gwendolen. Considering Gwendolen's strong dislike for being pressured, Fanny's attempts to persuade her against her will could cause tension in their relationship (1).

For Gwendolen, the most favorable outcome lies in choosing not to marry Grandcourt while experiencing no interference from her mother or anyone else. This scenario allows Gwendolen to maintain her independence, youthfulness, and personal freedom, which are essential aspects of her life. Although she forfeits the financial benefits that marriage to Grandcourt would provide, this outcome enables her to avoid being cornered or pressured into a situation that

<sup>1</sup> "She has a little too much fire in her for her present life . . . It is natural and right that she should be married soon, not to a poor man, but one who can give her a fitting position" (p. 68).





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contradicts her desires. By asserting her autonomy and prioritizing her personal values, Gwendolen can retain control over her life decisions without external influence. This result not only preserves the bond between Gwendolen and her mother by minimizing potential conflict but also empowers Gwendolen to navigate her future on her own terms (4).

The next most favorable outcome would involve marrying Grandcourt freely, without her mother's persuasion or meddling. By taking charge of her own life and choosing Grandcourt independently, Gwendolen would not only secure financial stability and elevated social status but also achieve the recognition and position she believes she deserves. This alternative empowers Gwendolen to assert her autonomy and make decisions about her life without external pressure (3). A less desirable outcome for Gwendolen would be marrying Grandcourt with her mother's encouragement. While this scenario allows Gwendolen to enjoy the financial and social advantages of the marriage, Fanny's influence on the decision becomes a factor, which detracts from Gwendolen's desire for autonomy and sole control over her life choices. Sharing credit for the successful match with her mother undermines Gwendolen's wish for independence and decision-making authority (2).

The worst outcome for Gwendolen would be her mother pushing her to marry Grandcourt, interfering with her life, while Gwendolen values her independence and chooses not to marry him. This creates conflict, as Fanny's involvement contradicts Gwendolen's desire for autonomy. Despite their close relationship, this scenario strains their bond, making it the least desirable outcome. Rejecting Grandcourt also means sacrificing financial and social benefits, placing Gwendolen in a challenging situation as she attempts to reconcile her personal goals with her mother's expectations (1).

A nonmyopic equilibrium is achieved when players, like Fanny and Gwendolen, consider both immediate and long-term consequences in their decisions. By using backward induction, they can anticipate each other's reactions and adapt their strategies for more balanced decision-making. In this case, Fanny weighs the impact of Gwendolen's marriage on their relationship and finances, while Gwendolen evaluates the effects on her independence and stability. A neutral stance from Fanny preserves her relationship with Gwendolen, allowing the latter to make her own choice. The nonmyopic equilibrium results in Fanny refraining from interference, and Gwendolen choosing not to marry, maintaining their priorities, interests, and relationship harmony.

### **An Instance of Strategic Dynamics Between the Mother and Son**

The dynamic between Daniel Deronda and his mother, Princess Leonora Halm-Eberstein, can be analyzed through a game-theoretic lens. The identity of Daniel's mother remains an enigmatic mystery until the reveal in Book VII, aptly titled "The Mother and the Son". During their first encounter, Daniel's mother utters a pivotal statement, saying, "I am your mother. But you can have no love for me" (p. 567). This declaration ultimately shapes the foundation of their complex relationship. Their newly shaped relationship, marked by secrets and revelations,



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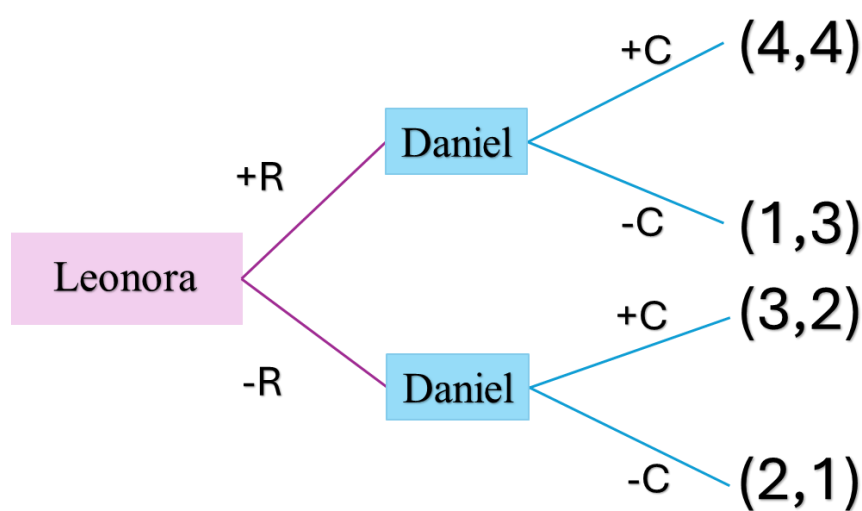
exemplifies a strategic game of psychological and emotional maneuvering. In the past, decisions were predominantly made by Leonora in a one-sided manner notably placing Daniel in Mr. Hugo's care. However, the dynamic has shifted, and now both mother and son find themselves in a situation where they must engage in strategic interactions, considering not only their own needs but also the consequences of their actions on one another.

A crucial aspect of this analysis is the decision of whether to come together and confront their shared history or to leave the past undisturbed. Leonora has two options, to protect her secrets or to disclose the truth to her son. Simultaneously, Daniel must decide whether to confront his mother directly or seek information through alternative avenues. This complex interplay of motivations and strategies offers a framework for understanding their interactions and the evolving nature of their relationship. Leonora's main focus is to defend herself against allegations of having wronged Daniel's grandfather and depriving her son of a wholesome life. The weight of her secrets also pushes her to find relief from the burdens that she carries. However, it is essential to acknowledge that Leonora has always prioritized her own interests and is not likely to bow to Daniel's preferences simply due to a sense of responsibility or as compensation for his lost childhood.

On the other hand, Daniel's primary concern lies in uncovering his true identity and roots. In Daniel's value system, sympathy holds a significant position, which may lead him to adopt a more emotionally driven approach in their interactions. Conversely, Leonora dismisses the prospect of identification, as she firmly believes that no one can truly comprehend the experiences and challenges she has faced. This divergence in their value systems and emotional expectations contributes to the complexity of their dynamic, with Daniel seeking connection and understanding, while Leonora remains guarded and self-protective. The following game tree provides a visual analysis of their game:

Figure 3

*Tree Diagram Form of Parent-Child Game*



Key:  $(x,y)$  = (payoff to Leonora, payoff to Daniel)

4=best; 3=next best; 2=next worst; 1=worst

+R= reveal, -E= do not reveal; +C=confront, -M= do not confront

From a game-theoretic perspective, Leonora's optimal outcome lies in revealing her long-held secrets and investing in the possibility that Daniel will confront her directly. This situation would allow her to relieve the weight of the secrets she bears, provide an explanation for her past actions, and possibly have a chance to defend her choices. By opting for this strategy, Leonora chooses openness over secrecy, creating an opportunity to reconcile with her son, an opportunity she never had with her late father. Furthermore, Leonora aims to be recognized for her resilience in the face of adversity rather than being seen as remorseful and pitied by her son. She desires acknowledgment of the hardships she has endured, which serves as a driving force for her to pursue a path of transparency in her interactions with Daniel. In doing so, Leonora seeks to redefine her own narrative, emphasizing her strength and determination in the midst of difficult circumstances (4).

The second-most favorable outcome for Leonora would be to remain silent while Daniel discovers the truth on his own and confronts her. Although this scenario still presents an opportunity for reconciliation, it does not offer Leonora the same platform to showcase her strength and assertiveness as the previous one. By not taking the first step towards reconciliation, Leonora maintains her authoritative position despite being his estranged mother. Leonora's strong-willed nature makes her averse to being cornered by Daniel's accusations of hiding the truth. Consequently, she may prefer initiating the reconciliation herself to maintain control over the situation and to shape the narrative around her actions. This desire for control further underscores Leonora's determination to navigate her relationship with Daniel on her



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own terms, guided by her personal values and priorities (3).

A less favorable outcome for Leonora would be to maintain the status quo by remaining silent and not disclosing her secrets, while Daniel also refrains from confronting her. This scenario would result in a missed opportunity for her to reveal her side of the story, defend her choices in front of her son, and potentially reconcile with him. Given Leonora's terminal illness and deteriorating health, time is of the essence. If she fails to take action, she risks passing away without resolving their estrangement. If Daniel uncovers the truth after her death, she will no longer be able to provide clarification or defend herself against potential accusations, leaving her legacy and intentions open to misinterpretation (2).

The worst possible outcome for Leonora would be if she writes to Daniel to reveal her secrets, only for him to respond with indifference and avoid confronting her. In this scenario, Daniel might interpret her story on his own terms, potentially misconstruing her intentions and motivations. Given Leonora's strong personality and pride, this outcome could be especially devastating. It would undermine her role as a mother and authority figure, leaving her vulnerable and disregarded by her son (1).

From Daniel's standpoint, the most favorable outcome would be for Leonora to disclose her secret, paving the way for him to confront her and gain a deeper understanding of his past. This outcome aligns with Daniel's values and priorities. His desire for self-discovery is satisfied by learning about his mother's past, while his sympathetic nature is fulfilled by creating a safe space for Leonora to express herself without judgment. This scenario would allow Daniel to approach their relationship from a place of understanding, fostering a potential reconciliation based on openness and vulnerability. By gaining insight into Leonora's perspective, Daniel could better navigate their complex history and possibly mend the emotional wounds caused by their estrangement (4).

The second most favorable outcome for Daniel would occur if Leonora chose to divulge her secret without the need for a direct confrontation. This scenario would enable Daniel to discover his lineage while still preserving a sense of respect for his mother's privacy and emotional boundaries. By learning about his past without pressuring Leonora to discuss it openly, Daniel would gain insight into his identity while minimizing potential strain on their relationship. This outcome offers a balance between his quest for self-discovery and the need to maintain a delicate connection with his estranged mother. However, this scenario would deny Daniel the chance to personally connect with his mother and ask the burning question that has haunted him: why? The underlying motivations behind their estranged relationship would remain shrouded in mystery, leaving emotional wounds unhealed and unresolved (3).

A less favorable outcome would arise if Daniel were to uncover the secret independently and subsequently confront Leonora. Although this situation would grant Daniel insight into his heritage, it would lack the emotional closure and potential for healing that a joint revelation





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could provide. Ultimately, Daniel's preference lies in his mother voluntarily expressing her desire to reconnect after their years of separation, demonstrating her willingness to mend their fractured relationship (2).

Lastly, preserving the status quo is the least desirable outcome, as it perpetuates Daniel's ignorance of his lineage and prolongs his feelings of uncertainty and disconnection. This scenario deprives Daniel of the self-discovery and potential reconciliation he yearns for, leaving him to navigate his identity without the benefit of understanding his true origins (1).

For Leonora, the optimal strategy in the long term is to reveal her secrets and take the initiative to engage with Daniel directly. By taking this path, she prevents the possibility of Daniel uncovering the truth on his own and potentially misinterpreting her motives, which could lead to a devastating outcome for her. For Daniel, the long-term best strategy is to respond to Leonora's disclosure with engagement, seeking to understand her story and motivations. This approach aligns with his desire for self-discovery and emotional closure. If Daniel were to react with indifference or avoid confrontation, he would risk losing the opportunity to heal their relationship and to gain the full picture of his past, leaving lingering questions and unresolved emotions. In the nonmyopic equilibrium, both Leonora and Daniel choose strategies that ultimately lead to the best long-term outcome. Leonora's decision to disclose her secrets and Daniel's decision to engage with this disclosure create a mutually beneficial scenario where they both achieve their objectives.

## Conclusion

Fanny and Leonora, as rational decision-makers, developed unique parenting styles influenced by their diverse backgrounds and life experiences. Their approaches, while distinct, aimed to maximize benefits and secure optimal outcomes for their children. Fanny's nurturing approach provided a foundation for Gwendolen's growth, while Leonora's distanced method sought to protect Daniel and obtain privileges for his future. Despite generational dynamics impacting their decisions, both mothers demonstrated rational decision-making by considering past experiences and strategically addressing challenges. This analysis highlights the importance of understanding how individual perspectives shape parenting choices and the need to appreciate the strengths and weaknesses of various parenting methods.

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