The Zionist Character in the English Novel

Hani al-Raheb

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"Ireland, they say, has the honour of being the only country which never persecuted the Jews. Do you know why?"
"Why, sir?" Stephen asked.
"Because she never let them in," Mr Deasy said solemnly.

James Joyce, *Ulysses*

1. Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore the emergence and development of the Zionist character in novels written in English. Until early in the 19th Century, Jewish characters in English fiction were drawn after either Shylock or the Wandering Jew, but with Maria Edgeworth's *Harrington* (1817) and, two years later, with Scott's *Ivanhoe*, a new conception of the Jew as a good character is for the first time presented in English fiction. Mention should be made, however, of the incidental figure of Joshua Manasseh in Tobias Smollett's *The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom* (1753). Manasseh, a "benevolent Israelite"[1] who practises charity to both Jew and Gentile in a secret manner, is sketched in less than ten pages out of over five hundred and is merely a forerunner of the full-length portrait of Maria Edgeworth's Montenero. No other similar representation is to be found in English fiction until *Harrington* makes its appearance in 1817. Ever since, though not in all instances, the conception of the Jew as a good character has been in the ascendant, branching into two main trends, the one dealing with the character of the assimilated Jew, the other with that of the Zionist. Apart from attempting a chronological description of the second trend this study assumes that the Zionist character is, more or less, a reaction against the figures of Shylock, the Wanderer and the ghetto Jew. Except in the case of Yaël Dayan's work, it is a character more idealized than realized.

The Zionist character, though fairly frequently referred to in some works of literary criticism, has not, to my knowledge, been treated in any of these works as an independent subject. Here we approach the reason for writing this study. My reason is twofold. First, the distinction between "Jew" and "Zionist" tends to be vague and is sometimes considered irrelevant. We shall see later that it is one thing to talk of a Jew, another to talk of a Zionist, and that the two characters exhibit contrasting features and are viewed from entirely different positions. Second, Zionist fiction presents a kind of utopian optimism not discernible in traditional Jewish characters. It tells of a new breed of men, self-made yet self-sacrificing, idealistic yet pragmatic, who are a strange amalgam of the effects of adversity and will-power. With the exception of Dayan's novels, Zionist fiction speaks of a re-found land of promise and creativeness, the new inhabitants of which are larger than life.

There is the urge to investigate the role played by literature in shaping and, later, reflecting the dreams and realities of the Zionist's world.

Before going further, it is perhaps necessary to explain two groups of expressions, political and cultural, which will be encountered in this work. Expressions such as "the assimilated Jew", "the Zionist", and "Zionism" belong to the political group, while "Shylock", "the Wandering Jew", and "the Sabra" belong to the cultural. All of these, however, carry with them connotations which are not always present in the text, and they need some clarification, always bearing in mind that these expressions describe the life of the Jew in Europe.

Assimilation, a socio-political phenomenon, has been a continuous, but by no means complete, process ever since the Jews settled in Europe during the early centuries of the Christian era. Nevertheless, religious and socio-economic factors of considerable magnitude have not merely handicapped the integration of the Jews with the peoples they have dwelt among, but have indeed segregated most of them in ghettos down to the early 20th Century. The emancipation of the Jews, which started a new wave of assimilation and caused the character of the good Jew to appear in literary works, is initiated in England in the 18th Century and is due, in part at least, to the philanthropy of that age. Oliver Elton[2] outlines its spirit and temper in three broad aspects: criticism, learning, and construction, which paved the way for those who, in the 19th Century, welcomed justice and equality for the Jews. In Germany, the movement towards changing the general, unfavourable conception of the Jew started much earlier and derived momentum from the character and writings of Moses Mendelssohn (1729-84).

Mendelssohn was born to German Jewish parents in abject poverty. "The lot of the Jews in Germany was then, and for long afterwards, a very grievous one . . . . They had to pay toll on their own bodies like merchandise . . . . Jewish children could not go in the streets of Berlin without being stoned and hooted."[3] His father entrusted him to a rabbi for his education, after which he became tutor to the children of a wealthy Jew, a silk merchant at whose factory Mendelssohn taught and read books. In 1754 he became acquainted with Lessing "as a worthy antagonist in chess."[4] Soon they became inseparable, and their friendship was continually deepened by joint authorship of books, correspondence and discussion, the outcome of which was Lessing's delineation of Mendelssohn's character in *Nathan the Wise*. "From their friendly disputations Lessing gained many a hint for his own critical essays."[5] Mendelssohn dedicated his life to the culture and emancipation of his people. Most prominent among his achievements was the translation of the Pentateuch and other parts of the Bible into German. In his *Jerusalem, oder über religiöse und Mach und Judentham*, "he asserted the pragmatic principle of the plurality of truths: that just as various nations need different constitutions . . . so individuals may need different religions. The test of religion is its effect on conduct."[6] He remained faithful to Judaism throughout his life, and "recognized only one possible faith — faith in historical truth, such as the facts on which the ritual Judaism is

founded. He held that the existence and omnipresence of God are known through reason, that Judaism is not a revealed religion but a revealed law."[7] His views on monotheistic religions are illustrated by the parable of the three rings which Lessing elaborated in *Nathan the Wise*. The parable is narrated by Nathan in answer to Sultan Saladin's question as to which of the three religions contending in Jerusalem is the true one. It tells of a man who inherited a sacred ring and was faced by the dilemma of which of his three equally-loved sons was to be entrusted with the inheritance. To counter in advance the future problems which might ensue from his choice, he ordered two perfect imitations of the ring, and then gave one to each son. Dispute, however, arose after his death, when each son claimed to be the possessor of the genuine ring. The judge, who was asked to settle the dispute, announced that the original may have been lost, that the father may have had three rings made, that he — the father — would no longer endure "the tyranny of one ring in his house":

> He loved you all and loved you all alike —
> would not have one exalted, one oppressed.[8]

The life and character of Mendelssohn had been a great influence on his fellow-Jews. He set the example of a religious character free of prejudice and always seeking the furthering of socio-religious toleration. He pronounced the state to be concerned with action, not with faith, and stressed good conduct as a criterion of human relationships. His call and struggle for the assimilation of the Jews, without loss of their Jewishness, with Christians achieved considerable success during his life and became a socio-political movement after his death. The movement was supported by powerful Jewish figures on the Continent. Its principles are still alive and, broadly speaking, are shared by assimilated Jews in Western Europe and Northern America. The struggle for assimilation is still one of the themes of some literary works written by Saul Bellow, John Updike and Bernard Malamud. Of course, novelists do not sit down and say: "Let us have a Mendelssohnian character." They may not even think of the man. Moreover, there has been no character identified as Mendelssohnian in English literary criticism. But it is noticeable that under the influence of toleration and assimilation movements good Jewish figures were portrayed in English fiction as being somewhat distinguished by their Jewishness. And whenever these figures are presented, notably in *Harrington* and *Ivanhoe*, they are drawn, unconsciously of course, after Mendelssohn's principles and preachings of good conduct and freedom of the choice of faith.

The Emergence of Zionism

However, the Mendelssohnian movement helped unintentionally to promote an "impulse to the racial consciousness of the Jews."[9] Moreover, severe

persecution of them in some European countries and the re-opening of the Eastern Question in the 19th Century helped to encourage a spirit of Jewish nationalism. The Holy Land gradually changed in the imagination of many from an object of religious yearning, which hinged on a Messianic conception of the end of the world, to a political centre for the regathering of the Jews. "In the middle of the 19th Century, Zionism . . . was already being preached in western Europe by Moses Hess (1812-1875) and in eastern Europe by Hersh Kalischer (1794-1874) and Perez Smolinskin (1842-1885) . . . and Leo Pinsker of Odessa (1821-91) . . . . The 'back to Zion' movement [in Russia] soon began to assume a practical form."[10]

Zionism is a product of anti-Semitism, and, as a political trend, it is perhaps "more European than Jewish".[11] In his *The Israelis: Founders and Sons*, Amos Elon, a prominent Israeli writer and journalist, gives a penetrating analysis of Zionism:

> Modern Jewish nationalism started in Eastern Europe during the second half of the 19th Century . . . . As colonists the Jews were latecomers. As nationalists they were latecomers as well. Of all the national minorities that populated Eastern and Central Europe in the 19th Century, the Jews were the last to succumb to the lure of their own piece of cloth nailed to a wooden stick . . . . If the spirit of the humanist enlightenment had won [in Europe], there would have been no Zionism.
>
> Zionism has been called a form of "collective assimilation." As a people, the Jews wanted to be like "other peoples." Assimilation and conformism certainly played a role; but so did convictions born of bitter experience. Zionist nationalism was a form of Jewish self-defence and a plan for a better future. It derived from French positivism, German idealism, and Russian populism. It was imported into Israel from Europe by the early pioneers along with modern agricultural implements and industrial technology.[12]

Elon goes on to describe how the idea of the "national soul", voiced in the 19th Century by Fichte, Dostoyevsky and others, received a favourable hearing from disgruntled Jews, who consequently sought a similar "mystique" of their own. Fichte wrote of an ideal community on earth for the fulfilment of which Germans were particularly suited. Dostoyevsky and other Russian writers also wrote of "mother" Russia. All through Europe, "the new mystique of race was often a 'democratic' substitute for the old mystiques of class."[13] The Zionists followed suit and mysticized the plight of their people in a similarly nationalistic spirit.

The greatest force that has compelled many Jews to adopt racial-nationalistic ideas is anti-Semitism. Elon writes of "the unholy alliance between anti-Semitism and Zionism".[14] An Irish nationalist leader, who visited Russia in the second half of the 19th Century, gives an account of how "from their hiding places in cellars and garrets the Jews were dragged forth and tortured to death":

> Many mortally wounded were denied the final stroke . . . in not a few cases nails were driven into the skull and eyes gouged out. Babies were thrown from the higher stories to the street pavement . . . Jews who attempted to beat off the attackers by clubs were quickly disarmed by the police . . . The local bishop drove in a carriage and passed through the crowd, giving them his blessing as he passed.[15]

Because of similar and successive waves of persecution a great number of Jews lost all hope in the possibility of a peaceful co-existence with European communities. Leo Pinsker, an ardent assimilationist, realized that Jews, even if they wanted to integrate, would never be allowed to. He concluded that anti-Semitism was an incurable disease, and opted irrevocably for a Jewish homeland.

A curious reaction to 19th Century anti-Semitism is manifest in the attitude of Zionists towards their Jewishness. The apostles of Zionism, in the words of Elon, soon

> conformed to the new ideal of the "un-Jewish" Jews, as strong and hardy and courageous as the Gentiles were held to be and, according to the Zionist myth, as the "diasporic" Jew was not.[16]

This reaction further explains Zionism as an offshoot of European history. The Zionist movement is not, it seems, a return to biblical Judaism, but rather an attempt to preserve for the Jews their European character. This is also clear in the ideological aspect of Zionism. Once more I quote Elon:

> The idea of modern Israel was conceived in the light of the national awakening of Poland, Lithuania, and the Ukraine, of the Serbs, the Czechs, the Finns, and the Slovaks, but above all in the revolutionary climate prevalent in Russia between 1880 and 1920. From Russia came Israel's founding fathers; the Zionist Labour movement was born in Minsk in 1920 and . . . was a product as native of Russia as Populism (Narodnism), Menshevism, and Bolshevism.[17]

In the western half of Europe, Zionism has likewise been prompted by anti-Semitism. Towards the end of the 18th Century, the French Revolution proclaimed principles against discrimination and injustice, under whose influence the Jews acquired the status of full citizenship in many countries. The new liberalism of the bourgeois revolution, together with Mendelssohnianism, gave a great impetus to the assimilation of the Jews with the emerging nationalisms of Western Europe. They were only required to identify themselves with the national character of the country they lived in, and most of them were satisfied to do so. Nevertheless, anti-Semitism did not die; on the contrary, it was revived now and then by reactionary governments to fight liberalism and secularism. Bismarck's policy in 1879 and the Dreyfus Affair in France in 1895 gave rise to a new wave of anti-Jewish demonstrations that spread to Austria and Russia. Theodor Herzl, a

thoroughly assimilated Jew from Vienna who considered nationalism an anachronistic phenomenon, was appalled by the attitude of the French mob against Dreyfus and vehemently wrote his *A Jewish State* in 1896. In the following year, the first Zionist conference was held in Basle under his leadership. The conference opened the campaign "to create for the Jewish people a homeland in Palestine secured by public law."[18] Its policy to achieve this end was outlined in four points:

> (1) The promotion on suitable lines of the colonization of Palestine by Jewish agricultural and industrial workers. (2) The organization and binding together of the whole of Jewry by means of appropriate institutions, local and international, in accordance with the laws of each country. (3) The strengthening and fostering of Jewish national sentiment and consciousness. (4) Preparatory steps towards obtaining Government consent where necessary to the attainment of the aim of Zionism.[19]

Like his East European fellow-Zionists, Herzl thought of a Jewish state as an extension of European culture and civilization. He believed neither in a Jewish culture nor in a Jewish history, and Palestine was not his first choice although he recognized its force as a "powerful legend".He thought of Argentina as a possibility, and later accepted, together with leading Zionists, the British offer of Uganda. In his *A Jewish State*, he wrote of Palestine:

> We should there form a portion of the rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilization as opposed to barbarism.[20]

The conception of Zionism as a reconstruction of the European character of the Jews has been a primary objective of the Zionist movement and is evident nowadays in the Israeli patterns of life.

The national movement, however, did not go unhampered, and, indeed, it suffered much from the early death of Herzl. Herzl's death, the foundation of the counter-Zionist Jewish Territorial Organization, with assimilation as its ultimate aim, and the withdrawal from the Zionist Organization of influential anti-nationalist figures, resulted in a serious setback for the movement. The First World War was equally damaging, and by 1927 there were more departures from the Yishuv (Zionist settlement in Palestine) than arrivals from other countries. The three waves of immigration, known as "aliyeh", into Palestine that took place between 1880 and 1925 were "a mere trickle"[21] compared to the massive exodus to the United States during the same period. But "Hitler's persecution [of the Jews] unleashed a new flood of immigrants, which saved the Yishuv."[22] Nevertheless, the movement went on to fulfil its objectives of creating a Jewish nation and establishing a racial autonomy in Palestine. In 1909 "Ben Zvi and Ben Gurion helped to organize a secret defence organization" whose motto was: "In blood and fire Judea fell, in blood and fire it shall rise again!"[23] The

defence organization, known later as the Haganah, was able during the 1936-38 Arab revolt in Palestine to defend the Yishuv and their settlements. "Some even undertook reprisals. They collaborated closely with the British Army, which gave them arms."[24] In the 1947-48 war for Palestine between Arabs and Zionists, the numbers of the fighting troops on both sides "were at first about equal . . . In the final phase of war, there were 60,000 Jewish soldiers facing 40,000 Arabs."[25]

So far, Zionism may be roughly defined as having two main objectives, namely, the creation of a Jewish nation and the colonization of Palestine as a homeland. The substance of Zionist nationalism is more difficult to identify even now. Elon provides statistics to the effect that the Israelis have come from "one hundred and two countries of origin," and that in 1956 more than half of the immigrants "still used one of a dozen different languages as the main instrument of communication."[26] Even now, there is scarcely one-fifth of the world Jewish population in Palestine, a fact which makes the definition of a "Jewish nation" impossible in terms of geography. Likewise, a "Jewish nation" cannot be defined in terms of common history, language and economics, since a diaspora of two thousand years among peoples of the world has tended to mould the Jews in the image of these various peoples. Professor Jacob Petuchowski admits, in his *Zion Reconsidered*,[27] the invalidity of any attempt to define the Jew on the grounds that he, the Jew, belongs to a certain history, speaks a certain language, lives on a certain land, or possesses a certain religion or culture. He goes on to say that the Jews have acquired through centuries of semi-assimilation the cultures, languages and national characteristics of other nations. These and other elements, usually applied to define a national figure, do not constitute, he believes, sound bases for the definition of a Jew. The Jew is different, and Petuchowski identifies him as a person who belongs to the family of Abraham chosen by God to fulfil a divine mission. We shall see later that this racialistic conception of the Jew has increasingly been the dominant term of reference in the Zionist self-identification.

Connected with the Zionist colonization of Palestine are the British and the Arabs. The first official commitment of Great Britain to Zionism is the well-known Balfour Declaration of 1917 addressed in a letter to Lord Rothschild. The letter stipulates that

> His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object . . .[28]

In Palestine under the British Mandate (1920-48), and after violent reactions on the part of the Arabs, British governors and officials began to realize the enormous difficulties Zionist colonization of the country would entail, and this resulted in a modification of policy known as the Churchill Memorandum published in 1922. The term "national home" in the Balfour Declaration had been simply interpreted as "the further development . . . [of] a centre in which the Jewish people as a whole may take, on

grounds of religion and race, an interest and pride."[29] Immigration of the Jews would be limited to the "economic capacity of the country at the time to absorb new arrivals."[30] The Zionist Organization Executive, under the leadership of Dr Weizmann, accepted the modification, thus officially abdicating the project for a Jewish state. With the new policy endorsed by the Zionist leaders, the Balfour Declaration was ratified by the League of Nations in 1922.

The Arabs did not object to the immigration into Palestine of the persecuted Jews, and King Faisal I signed with Weizmann an agreement to this effect. But Arab leaders, and those who became aware of the Zionists' ultimate objectives, refused outright any form of Zionist state in the country.

The Zionists hailed and extolled the Balfour Declaration, and in 1922 they took its ratification by the League of Nations as international agreement to their aim of establishing a state in Palestine. When, in the late 1930s, the mandatory officials attempted seriously to implement the Churchill Memorandum, the Zionists accused Britain of apostasy and double-crossing. More ironical, perhaps, was their attitude towards the Arabs. When Herzl's secretary informed him of the existence of an Arab people in Palestine, he said nothing and maintained his silence for the rest of his life. Those who succeeded him also remained silent. Elon's interpretation of this seemingly strange attitude is hardly acceptable, and is in many ways misleading. It is true, as Elon writes, that early Zionists thought they would be "operating in a political void" in Palestine, that Israel Zangwill's famous dictum, "The land without people – for the people without land",[31] was their sole conception of the country, and their fear of losing Palestine to the "imperialists" of Europe and not to the Arabs was a genuine one. But before 1922, they had finally come to be aware of the Arabs. They were all "shocked" out of their dreams, as Elon maintains, but refused to recognize the Arabs' right to their country and soon held to the imperialistic argument that their existence in Palestine would benefit the Arabs economically. It appears that they never seriously considered Arab nationalism. Steeped in their European traditions, they saw in colonization a "natural phenomenon", a moral right confirmed by their superiority as Europeans and their suffering as Jews in Europe. Their "innocent intentions", as Elon writes, can hardly account for the training of an army as early as 1909 or their attempt to obtain the Arabs' consent to a Zionist state on the grounds that Palestinian Arabs could live elsewhere in Syria, Iraq and Egypt.

Shylock and the Wandering Jew

On the cultural plane, historical events relating to Jewish life are accompanied by the widespread myth of the Wandering Jew and, later, by the figure of Shylock. The story of the Wandering Jew is steeped in religious

imagination. It begins with Cartaphilus, in one version a Jewish Roman guard, in another a Jewish shoemaker, striking Jesus on his way to Calvary. As a result, Cartaphilus, or Joseph, or Isaac Laquedem, to mention only some of the names given him,[32] is doomed to wander until Jesus's second coming. A myth develops out of his wanderings, adapting itself to the conceptions and conditions of diverse generations and diverse faiths. In the early stages of the myth, the Wanderer's appearance is associated with storms, thunder and hurricanes. His name fills children's imagination with horrific images. All sorts of evil deeds are attributed to him, and a vast quantity of literature is produced in connection with him. In essence, this literature is the story of progress, or at least change, in the history of ideas and human relationships, the greatest and most influential of which is the one crystallized by no less a writer than Shakespeare. Shylock soon comes to be a prototype of the 16th and 17th Century Jew, which, with the passage of time, has bordered on mythology.

Shylock and the Wanderer become the two dominant prototypes of the Jew in English literature, and can be traced down to the 20th Century. However, a slow, but steady, modification in the attitudes of people is reflected in the literary works of the 18th and 19th Centuries. The Wandering Jew is transformed from a sinner into an accuser, from a figure of expiation into one of revolt, from a personification of eternal punishment to that of redemption. He is reported to possess a healing power far superior to the physician's healing knowledge and experience, to have baffled professors at Oxford and Cambridge with his astonishingly deep information on history and languages, and to have stirred sympathy for his lasting endurance.[33] On the other hand, Shylock has not disappeared altogether, not even during the 19th Century. But as early as the middle of the 18th Century, the figure of a good Jew emerges in the drama of enlightenment and reaches its fullest characterization in Cumberland's play *The Jew* (1794), whose principal character is the Jew Sheva, "a kind of professional do-gooder whose animating principle reads to the effect that he builds his hospital in the human heart."[34] In fictional works, the character of the good Jew, after its incidental appearance in Smollett's *The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom* (1953), receives full literary recognition in the two novels of Edgeworth and Scott mentioned earlier. From it emerge the two characters of the assimilated and the Zionist Jew. It must be noted, however, that the Shylockian tradition persists in presenting Jews who are not defined by human nature, but by sheer criminality and imperviousness to moral law. Thus we have Dickens's Fagin in *Oliver Twist* (1838) and Trollope's Melmotte in *The Way We Live Now* (1875). Nevertheless, this line of fiction does not seem to have obstructed the growth of the new one, which persisted in presenting good Jewish figures.

The Zionist, then, is a Jew who believes in the Zionist ideology of Jewish nationalism, and Zionist literature is that which is dedicated to this nationalism in its two elements previously outlined. Every Jewish writer is not necessarily a Zionist, and a non-Jewish writer may be a pro-Zionist or

may present a Zionist character without himself being a Zionist. A Zionist figure in fiction is not easy to define, for it is subject to constant historical change and to the general outlook of the individual writer portraying it. This study attempts to present a sufficient account of it with regards to each writer. Nevertheless, two Zionist appellations need to be mentioned here. The Palestine-born Zionist is called "Sabra", a corruption of the Hebrew word for cactus, which suggests hardness on the outside and tenderness inside and which denotes the fostering of a new and different generation of the Jews. The "Israeli" is the Zionist citizen of the state of Israel.

The Zionist Character in Fiction

My description of the Zionist character as it appears in English, American, and Israeli novels written in English is chronological but neither lineal nor comparative. As I am discussing the works of more than a dozen writers, I have tried to study the Zionist figure only within the framework of each author's moral vision and to analyse the pressures under which each of these writers has conceived the Zionist Jew. There are two exceptions to this approach. In the second chapter, my work is purely descriptive, on the grounds that the two novels of Maria Edgeworth and Walter Scott present only the character of the good Jew and not the Zionist. The second exception occurs in the sixth chapter, discussing the novels of four popular writers which are not of high literary merit. Here, my work has been restricted to the character presented, the Sabra, with little, if any, reference to the writers' field of interest.

The third chapter deals with the elusive character of Benjamin Disraeli, himself the first to pronounce principles and ideals tantamount to a Zionist creed. Disraeli's literary works are stamped by his ideas and personality; this is why I have chosen to study him through several characters in five novels he wrote before 1850. Disraeli is not a Zionist, but rather a Jew fighting for honourable assimilation by semi-Zionistic means. The first fully Zionist characters are carved out of George Eliot's moral vision in *Daniel Deronda* (1876), which is the subject matter of the fourth chapter. George Eliot wrote her novel at a time when Zionism in western Europe was still in its embryonic stage, and consequently she had to draw heavily on her imagination, relations with a few Jewish friends, and her knowledge of Judaism. Yet her portraits of Zionists are characterized by astonishingly deep perceptiveness and boundless sympathy.

The fifth chapter discusses the Zionist as pioneer and colonist in the novels of four authors, of whom the most important is Arthur Koestler. These works cover a period of over sixty years, and are, to my knowledge, the only fictional production pertaining to the subject of the chapter between 1893 and 1954. Literary histories of novels written in English during this period are devoid of any reference to Zionism. Only in Sol Liptzin's *The Jew in American Literature*[35] is mention made of Zionism and Zionist writers.

Ludwig Lewisohn's discovery of Zionism, pronounced in his *Upstream* (1922) and *Mid-Channel* (1929),[36] cannot be included in the chronological order of this research. While his ideals of a Jewish nation correspond to the Zionism of the mid-19th Century, Zionists of the same period, the 1920s, were far advanced in their colonization of Palestine. The same is true of Maurice Samuel, who published his *I, the Jew*[37] in 1927. The works of both writers add nothing to our examination of the Zionist character.

The seventh chapter discusses the novels of the Israeli writer Yaël Dayan, who writes in English. Like many leading Israeli writers, Dayan explores the dark aspects of the Israeli psychology. But, unlike those writers, she has included no Arab characters in her novels. Still, her writings stand in contrast with the Zionist novels of non-Israeli writers.

The final chapter sums up the findings of the previous ones, and attempts to construct out of them a general picture of the Zionist character.

The literary works with which this study deals cover a long period stretching between 1817 and 1967. Analysis, therefore, is concerned more with the Zionist character as envisioned by each writer than with the style and technique employed in the presentation of this character. Moreover, the considerable amount of Zionist literature produced after the 1967 war between Israel and the Arabs is not examined here since it would be difficult to gain a proper perspective on a literature so recent and complex.

Notes

1. Tobias Smollett, *The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom* (Basil Blackwell, 1925 edition) Vol. II, p. 88.
2. Oliver Elton, *A Survey of English Literature, 1780-1880*, (Edward Arnold, 1920).
3. T.W. Rolleston, *Life of Getthold Ephraim Lessing* (Walter Scott, 1889) pp. 49-50.
4. Ibid., p. 61.
5. L.A. Willoughby, *The Classical Age of German Literature, 1748-1809* (Oxford University Press: 1931) p. 34.
6. Encyclopaedia Britannica (14th ed., 1932), Vol. XV, pp. 242-43.
7. Emile Brehier, *The History of Philosophy: The Eighteenth Century,* trans. Wade Baskin (The University of Chicago Press, 1967) p. 185.
8. Quoted from Lessing, *Nathan the Wise*, by Rolleston, *Life of Getthold Ephraim Lessing*, p. 187.
9. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. XXIII, p. 954.
10. Ibid., p. 955.
11. Amos Elon, *The Israelis: Founders and Sons* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971) p. 40.
12. Ibid., p. 34.
13. Ibid., p. 61.
14. Ibid., p. 66.
15. Quoted by Elon, *The Israelis*, without reference to the original source, p. 53.

16. Elon, *The Israelis*, p. 122.
17. Ibid., p. 36.
18. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. XXIII, p. 955.
19. Ibid., p. 955.
20. Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State*, trans. Sylvia D'Avigdor (Central Office of the Zionist Organization, 1936) p. 30.
21. Elon, *The Israelis*, p. 80.
22. Maxime Rodinson, *Israel and the Arabs*, trans. Michael Perl (Penguin Books, 1970) p. 32.
23. Elon, *The Israelis*, p. 118.
24. Rodinson, *Israel and the Arabs*, p. 34.
25. Ibid., p. 39.
26. Elon, *The Israelis*, p. 33.
27. Jacob Petuchowski, *Zion Reconsidered* (Twayne, 1966) pp. 117-33.
28. *The ABC of the Palestine Problem* (The Arab Women's Information Committee, n.d.) p. 10.
29. Quoted by Rodinson, *Israel and the Arabs*, p. 27, from Correspondence of Colonial Office with Palestine Arab Delegation and the Zionist Organization, Cmnd. Paper 1700, HMSO, 1922.
30. Ibid.
31. Elon, *The Israelis*, p. 149.
32. Joseph Gaer, *The Legend of the Wandering Jew* (Mentor Books, 1961) pp.11-62, 75-8.
33. Ibid., pp. 75-8.
34. Edgar Rosenberg, *From Shylock to Svengali: Jewish Prototypes in English Fiction* (Peter Owen, 1961) p. 40.
35. Sol Liptzin, *The Jew in American Literature* (Block, 1966) pp. 172-9, 213-33.
36. Ludwig Lewisohn, *Upstream: An Autobiography* (Grant Richards, 1922). Ludwig Lewisohn, *Mid-Channel: An American Chronicle* (Blue Ribbon Books, 1929).
37. Maurice Samuel, *I, the Jew* (Harcourt, Brace, 1927).

2. The Good Jew

> Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison us, do we not die?
>
> Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*

This chapter will concern itself with those fictional Jewish figures which are precursors of the Zionist Jew in 19th Century novels. Towards the end of the 18th Century and during the early 19th Centuries the Industrial and the French Revolutions usher in a new era in the history of Europe. Consequently, the relationships between Jews and Gentiles witness a change from antagonism to comparatively peaceful co-existence. Moreover, Jews like Mendelssohn and many others, prompted by an increasing self-awareness, start a search for a new identity.

On the literary plane, the new attitude towards the Jew is expressed, as we have seen in the previous chapter, in the works of some writers who have treated the Jew as a good character. In English fiction, the first full-scale treatment of the Jew as a good person appears in *Harrington*. It is not a mere concidence that Maria Edgeworth, who has peopled many of her stories with Jewish bogeys, criminals, thieves, swindlers and the like, finally draws respectable Jews of different social statuses. In this, she perhaps represents the shift that her age has made in viewing the Jews as ordinary people.

Ironically enough, these stories in which bad Jewish characters appear, are written with a didactic tone aiming at moral elevation, through the sharp distinction of virtue from vice. The writer has the assistance in this respect of her father, Richard Lovell Edgeworth, a liberal and rather eccentric educationalist who, however, not only provides his daughter with a set of values but also compromises her artistic talent by insisting on the didactic element. Many of these stories are written as a fictional illustration of the educational principles of *Practical Education*, a book she and her father wrote in 1798. Her *Moral Tales* (1801) contain many wicked Jews presented as antagonists to the intended moral. Apparently, she has relied for this

presentation on the public store of the traditional Jew-villain without seriously examining the situation. In "The Prussian Vase", a witness by the name of Solomon, a stiff-necked Jew, turns out to be the real offender and is sentenced not to one year's imprisonment, but to sweep the streets of Potzdam. As Dr Rosenberg comments, he "is led away on the dual counts of being a traitor and a Jew"[1]. In "The Good Aunt", the secondary villain is a Jew who is always cheating schoolboys by means of false lotteries, and who persists in his evil deeds despite his knowledge of dire consequences.

In *Popular Tales* (1804) the superstitious belief, which dates back to the medieval conception of the Wandering Jew, that the Jew spreads diseases through the materials he deals with, is childishly presented in "Murad the Unlucky". Rachub of El-Arish is a Jewish broker who sells Murad old clothes that cause the death of hundreds of innocent people.

In *The Absentee* (1812), one of Maria Edgeworth's important novels, a Shylock-type character, a coach-maker Jew appears who attempts to extort a bond from the son of a dying landlord. The son refuses, and the Jew, although aware that his charges are exorbitant and will not stand judicial examination, threatens to have the father arrested on his death-bed, allowing the son a choice between the bond and the body of his father.

Maria Edgeworth's *Harrington*

We need not go through all Maria Edgeworth's portrayals of Jewish villains, since the interest in this chapter is focused on good Jews. The fact that her villains are not deliberately made Jews is evident in her traditional presentation of them which draws from public conceptions rather than actual experience. This is also clear in the otherwise astonishing ease with which she has portrayed her good Jews in *Harrington*. It has been common knowledge that the novel "was occasioned by an extremely well-written letter, which Miss Edgeworth received from America, from a Jewish lady [Miss Mordicai], complaining of the illiberality with which the Jewish nation had been treated in some of Miss Edgeworth's works."[2]

Harrington is set in a social background permeated with stubborn prejudices against the Jews of which the hero is an appalling victim. At the age of six, little Harrington believes that "the Jews are naturally an unnatural pack of people."[3] The novel traces the gradual dissolution of his prejudice and the growth of his attachment, as a young man, to Miss Montenero, a Jew's daughter whom he finally marries. The love story between Berenice, the daughter, and Harrington is only a medium through which the author presents a number of Jewish characters who counteract both her previous presentation of bad Jews and the public image of Shylock and the Wanderer.

Most prominent among the new type of Jews in *Harrington* is

Montenero. His first appearance, much prepared for, is delayed till all other characters are presented:

> He had that indescribable air, which . . . distinguishes a gentleman – dignified, courteous, and free from affectation. From his figure, he might have been thought a Spaniard – from his complexion, an East Indian; but he had a peculiar cast of countenance, which seemed not to belong to either nation. He had uncommonly black penetrating eyes, with a serious, rather melancholy, but very benevolent expression. He was past the meridian of life. The lines in his face were strongly marked . . . they seemed to be the traces of thought and feeling.[4]

Here is a Jew whose complexion is not diabolic, and is far from having a caricature nose, evil eyes, or stooping body. On the contrary, his Semitic physiognomy demands respect and admiration. It is interesting to note that the two men, Harrington and Montenero, converse on Shylock, and the latter tells the former: "In the true story . . . it was a Christian who acted the part of the Jew, and a Jew that of the Christian."[5] An admirer of Shakespeare, yet he criticizes with tact and candour the great dramatist's misrepresentation of the characters. He is in favour of that happy part of America where his daughter has lived and where, as he says, "religious distinctions are scarcely known – where characters and talents are all sufficient to attain advancement – where the Jews form a respectable part of the community."[6] Harrington is deeply impressed by his politeness, his appreciation of art, but:

> What pleased me far more than Mr Montenero's taste was the liberality and enlargement of mind I saw in his opinions and sentiments. There was in him a philosophic calmness and moderation; his reason seemed to have worked against great natural sensibility, perhaps susceptibility, till this calm had become the unvarying temper of his mind.[7]

Perhaps no better description of a Mendelssohnian character may be seen in other statements. Reason and liberality, as well as moderation, have now become characteristics of the Jew. Montenero is particularly against all sorts of prejudice. He pays a big sum of money to buy "The Dentition of the Jew", a picture of hardly any artistic merit, "to destroy it . . . So perish all that can keep alive feelings of hatred and vengeance between Jews and Christians!"[8]

Another characteristic of Montenero is his practical knowledge of the ways of the world. When necessity calls he is steadfast enough to beat Lady de Brantefield in an auction, but for humane intentions. Moreover, he has preserved under severe Spanish persecution of the Jews not only his immense wealth but his dear collection of paintings as well. Although insufficiently acquainted with the English upper class, he can easily distinguish good from bad people among them. His penetrating understanding of appearances and realities enables him to expose Lord Mowbray's elaborate

affectations by which the latter is plotting to win Berenice from Harrington. The young aristocrat is "another of Miss Edgeworth's marvellously acute portraits of the man of the world, of an evil nature."[9] Fair semblance and good manners conceal the villain that is hidden beneath his attractive disguise. But Montenero realizes his essentially cruel and dishonest character and refuses him as a son-in-law.

Dr Edgar Rosenberg refers Montenero to a group of fictional Jews whom he names as stereotypes of Rothschild.[10] Although Maria Edgeworth never hits on the socio-economic implications of Montenero's huge wealth and only discusses the philanthropic side of his character, it is understood, through his redemption of Harrington's financial position, that wealth is an important factor in the relationships of Jews and Christians in Britain; a fact which he himself acknowledges with pride and accepts as being in full accord with his humanistic interpretation of life:

> "You know . . . that we Jews were the first inventors of bills of exchange and banknotes – we were originally the bankers and brokers of the world." "You see, Berenice, here, as in a thousand instances, how general and permanent good often results from temporary evil."[11] [By evil he means persecution.]

A good Jew is not a Shylock, of course, but there are ostensible resemblances between Montenero and the notorious Jew of Shakespeare. For one thing, they are tremendously wealthy. Moreover, each has a daughter and no son, and both suffer from a degree of social ostracism. True, people do not label Montenero a "misbeliever" or a "cut-throat dog"; but Harrington, who has threatened to disinherit his son should the latter propose to a Jewess, firmly believes that "when a man once goes to the Jews, he soon goes to the devil."[12] Mrs Harrington is about to faint out of consternation hearing her son defend Montenero and Lady de Brantefield prefers death at the hands of savage rioters to taking refuge in Montenero's house.

Here, the peripheral similarity between the two characters ends. The supposed *sui generis* villainy of Shakespeare's Jew is replaced in Maria Edgeworth's Jew by benevolent philanthropy. Whenever he is offended or spoken ill of, as a Jew, we feel the offence, regret or renounce it.

It appears as if Maria Edgeworth has meant her Jews to counteract Shakespeare's in *The Merchant of Venice*. More often that not she mentions Shakespeare's treatment of his Jews and dwells on the injustices of taking for granted the great poet's view. Her presentation of her Jews displays a complete divergence, in psychological and social issues, from Shakespeare's. In addition to Montenero, who is supposed to be Shylock's direct opposite, the old-clothes man, Simon the Jew, offers a contrast to old Gobbo, and Simon's son, Jacob, who reads "The Life of the Celebrated Mendelssohn", offers another contrast to Gobbo's son, Launcelot. Simon belongs to a dying breed of the Wandering Jew:

> His torch flared on the face and figure of an old man with a long white beard

> and dark visage, who, holding a great bag slung over one shoulder, walked slowly on, repeating in a low, abrupt, mysterious tone, the cry of "Old clothes! Old clothes! Old clothes!" I [Harrington] could not understand the words he said, but as he looked up at our balcony he saw me – smiled – and I remember thinking that he had a good-natured countenance.[13]

Unlike Gobbo, he is not meant for caricature and dramatic relief; on the contrary he stimulates sympathy and has "a good-natured countenance." While Gobbo is fooled by his son and led to change his intention of offering a present to a Jew, Shylock, Simon is treated by his son with respect tantamount to reverence.

Jacob, like his father, comes from the poorest stock of Jews. Contrary to Launcelot, who is almost a clown and definitely a parasite, he is serious of purpose and honest in his dealings. He is first presented as a sweet-seller at a school, where his honesty repudiates the public image of the Jew as a schoolboy-kidnapper and slayer. The boys will neither believe him nor appreciate his patience:

> Every Thursday evening, the moment he appeared in the schoolroom, or on the playground, our party commenced the attack upon "the Wandering Jew."[14] But he was as unlike to Shylock as it is possible to conceive. Without one thought or look of malice or revenge, he stood before us Thursday after Thursday, enduring all that our barbarity was pleased to inflict? [sic] he stood patient and long-suffering.[15]

In Spain, Jacob is provided with a better living at Mr. Menessa's store. Here again, Maria Edgeworth cleverly weaves the two notorious characters of the Wandering Jew and Shylock into the plot by leading Lord Mowbray, now an officer of the British Army at Gibraltar, into the store where he finds poor Jacob and shouts at him:

> "So! are you here, young Shylock? . . . you are of the tribe of Gad [sic], I think, thou Wandering Jew!"[16]

Actually, Jacob is a Wanderer, but as a result of socio-economic pressures. Throughout the novel, he is as wretched a person as one can imagine, doomed to flee from place to place. He is persecuted chiefly by the Mowbrays, who stand as an evil fate against him from the time he appears in the novel till nearly the closing pages. However, his virtue is rewarded, finally, and poetic justice is meted out.

The Rabbi Israel Lyons is another of Maria Edgeworth's good Jews, this time in the sphere of knowledge and learning. A professor at Cambridge, he maintains with Montenero a friendly relationship which is in contrast to that which makes Tubal an informer of Shylock's.

Berenice Montenero is a case in point. Many critics regard the fact that

she is Christian by faith as a cowardly retreat on the part of the author from really presenting good Jewish characters. Helen Zimmern writes:

> And even his [Montenero's] daughter Berenice, whom we are led to regard throughout as a Jewess, is finally discovered to have been born of a Christian mother, and christened in her youth, so that her lover Harrington can marry her without any sacrifice to his social and racial prejudices. This is weak indeed, since the whole purpose of the story was to overcome the baseless dislike Harrington had from his childhood entertained for the name of the Jew.[17]

Although generally relevant, Zimmern's interpretation of Berenice's Christianity overlooks Harrington's feelings and attitudes. The young Christian has already overcome his anti-Semitic prejudices, and gone as far as to sacrifice both his family relationships and his fortune in order to marry the girl whom he thinks of as a Jewess.

Montagu Modder[18] reiterates Zimmern's criticism, and Ernest Baker responds similarly:

> So far as the supposed object of the story is concerned, reparation to the Jews for an alleged libel, she [Maria Edgeworth] gives her own case away. The heroine who has acquitted herself to everyone's satisfaction is pronounced "Not a Jewess," after all, but "a Christian – a Protestant"; so that both Semites and anti-Semites are disarmed.[19]

Dr Rosenberg views the issue rather more critically. He describes Berenice as "a crypto-Jewess whose last-minute redemption for Protestantism hinges on a shallow and dishonest formality."[20]

It seems that Berenice can be neither Spanish, American, nor English. Above all, she cannot be a Jewess, since "that which makes a Jew a Jew, his religion,"[21] is not her faith. Indeed, what is she? The answer depends on how one defines religion. Benjamin Disraeli, whom this thesis will discuss as a pre-Zionist, was christened at the age of thirteen; but, as we shall see later, no better Judaist is ever to emerge in 19th Century English fiction. Berenice Montenero should be regarded as a fairly complete Jewess through her education. If the father is representative of a certain culture, which we might describe as being Jewish, the daughter, then, may be said to have been greatly influenced by his ideas and attitudes. It is evident that Monternero has missed no chance of bringing up his daughter on principles, which he, a Mendelssohnian Judaist, has cultivated out of Jewish religion and traditions. The attachment of both father and daughter to each other indicates the influence the former has on the latter: "When her father spoke, it seemed to be almost the same as if she spoke herself – her sympathy with him appeared so strongly."[22] Religion, in this case, becomes a formality. Dr Rosenberg seems to have judged the author's intention, albeit wrongly, and not the text. Berenice's Judaic education has made her, among the women

portrayed in the novel, unique in dignified simplicity and graceful modesty of appearance, unlike the fashionable forwardness and coyness of Lady Anne Mowbray and her associates. Lady Anne, on the one hand, is "a perfect model of that mixture of feline grace and obstinate silliness,"[23] and Lady de Brantefield hides her insignificance under a stately formal manner. On the other hand, there are in Berenice's "manner and countenance indications of perfect sweetness of temper, a sort of feminine gentleness and softness which art cannot feign nor affection counterfeit."[24]

Many critics, as has been shown, tend to hold Maria Edgeworth responsible for having spoilt her efforts to make amends for the Jews by uncovering Berenice's Christianity at the eleventh hour. It is not the purpose of this study to adduce reasons that will excuse the author's ostensible balking at a Jewish-Christian marriage, though it is unjust to demand of her a complete compensation for an age-old human folly. Moreover, her treatment of the Jewish characters in *Harrington* is undoubtedly ahead of the time in its basically philanthropic attitude. After all, Miss Mordicai of the United States sent her neither a gun nor a Saxon axe, but a complaining letter. There is no reason to believe the author is against a Jewish-Christian marriage, since Montenero has married a Christian woman. A true objection to this marriage may arise only in connection with differences in the familial and social education each of the two lovers has received. The main deficiency in Maria Edgeworth's presentation is not moral, but rather artistic. The heroine is most of the time kept in the shadow, spoken of more than speaking, infinitely more desirous to see than be seen. She scrutinizes what is going on but is not at all communicative about it. She faints, or is about to faint, at times when she is expected to reveal whatever may be her true character. The little we know of her comes through either Harrington's impassioned impressions or Montenero's compact conversation. Had she been presented through action rather than through word, a better conclusion might have been drawn on the issue of how much of a Jewess she is.

Critics have little to say on Maria Edgeworth, less on *Harrington*. Most of them dismiss the novel as something unworthy of discussion. In their studies and biographies of Maria Edgeworth, I.C. Clarke, Michael Hurst, Elizabeth Inglis-Jones, Marylin Butler and Emily Lawless[25] pass it over almost unmentioned, while P.H. Newby thinks that it is "not a novel to take very seriously."[26] Desmond Clarke writes: "Maria had completed her novel *Harrington*, a somewhat tedious story written primarily at the request of an American Jewess."[27] Modder sums up the value of the book as follows:

> Yet with all its palpable defects, and although it cannot take rank with the best of Maria Edgeworth's studies of society, *Harrington* is significant as the first work to advertise the fact that a Jew may be a gentlemen merchant, like Mr Montenero; a gentlemen professor of Hebrew like Israel Lyons; a gentlemen old-clothes-man, like Simon the Jew; and a honest peddler, like Jacob the Jew. The obvious hope of the novelist is to drive out the ancient and intolerant

> conceptions of the Jew as a repulsive and horror-provoking creature, and to substitute a new and more flattering portrait.[28]

This is perhaps the only important thing about the novel. Apart from its good intentions, the work is a poor one. Maria Edgeworth is better at drawing bad or eccentric characters than good or virtuous ones. Consequently, her good Jews are almost always wooden and insipid. Montenero is made to pronounce the proper statement on the proper occasion, so much so that he appears all but a tedious paragon. Berenice is a shadowy figure whose sole function in the novel is to smile with approbation at her father's pronouncements and to fascinate Harrington. Jacob, though perhaps the only sympathetic Jewish character in the novel, is too humble and lugubrious to stimulate genuine interest. Yet the novel has achieved its objective in presenting Jewish characters who are neither demons nor murderers.

Sir Walter Scott

The opportunity of meeting an out-and-out Jewess of a Mendelssohnian character and a realistically drawn Jew is provided in Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*. Two years after the publication of *Harrington*, on 25 December 1819, *Ivanhoe* made its appearance in the bookshops. A week later, the novel was out of print, and proved an enormous success. Thousands of British readers, and many more on the Continent, became acquainted with the beautiful Rebecca and her father, Isaac of York.

Readers in the early 19th Century received *Ivanhoe* with perhaps undue acclamation. The reasons for their generous reception are quite different from those which some contemporary critics hold as good enough to consider the novel an important work. It is perhaps worth examining the ups and downs of Scott's reputation as a man of letters, and that of *Ivanhoe*, from his death in 1831 till the present time. The first writer to sense an imminent decline in the reputation of the great historical romancer is Stendhal, the French novelist, who, commenting on *Ivanhoe* and *Quentin Durward*, much in vogue in the 1830s, writes: "I shall pronounce with all frankness my conviction that, in ten years' time, the reputation of the Scottish novelist will have declined by half."[29] Balzac, in a letter to Mme Hanska dated 1839, holds a contrary view: "All these works [including *Ivanhoe*] have their own special merit, but genius shines throughout them all."[30] Twenty years later, Walter Bagehot comments on the charm of *Ivanhoe* as "addressed to a simpler sort of imagination, – to that kind of a boyish fancy which idolizes mediaeval society as the 'fighting time'."[31] Henry James is sure that "no publisher would venture to offer *Ivanhoe* in the year 1864 as a novelty."[23] Sir Leslie Stephen regards as fact that "*Ivanhoe* . . . is no longer a work for men, but it still is, or still ought to be, delightful reading for boys," and that it "has rightly descended from the library to the schoolroom."[33]

Literary appreciation of *Ivanhoe* as an interesting work meant chiefly for boys run through literary criticism of Scott until nearly 1938.[34] The earliest example and the nearest to our subject is Coleridge, whom we quote here at length:

> I do not myself know how to account for it, but so the fact is, that tho' I have read, and again and again turned to, sundry chapters of *Ivanhoe* with an untired interest, I have never read the whole... Perhaps the foreseen hopelessness of Rebecca – the comparatively feeble interest excited by Rowena, the from the beginning foreknown bride of Ivanhoe – perhaps the unmixed atrocity of the Norman nobles, and our utter indifference to the feuds of Norman and Saxon... these may, or may not have been the causes, but *Ivanhoe* I never have been able to summon fortitude to read thro'. Doubtless, the want of any one predominant interest aggravated by the want of any one continuous thread of events is a grievous defect in a novel.[35]

The first critic to examine Scott's work in a new light, and to penetrate the possibility of symbolic interpretation of his characters, is Professor David Daiches. In his "Scott's Achievements as a Novelist", Professor Daiches analyses the anti-Romantic element in Scott's Waverley novels, reaching the conclusion that Scott is not merely an interesting storyteller but one who renounces meaningless traditions for liberal, modern and pragmatic trends. Daiches sums up Scott's moral vision in that

> heroic action... is, in the final analysis, neither heroic nor useful, and that man's destiny, at least in the modern world, is to find his testing time not amid the sound of trumpets but in the daily struggles and recurring crises of personal and social life.[36]

While the new interpretation of Scott is restricted to the Waverley novels, J. E. Duncan extends it to include *Ivanhoe* as well. He considers that *Ivanhoe*, viewed as a juvenile romance, "is neither juvenile nor romantic, but thoughtful, mature and in a sense anti-romantic."[37] Duncan points out the "predominant interest," which Coleridge failed to see, in Scott's advocacy of the living present against the dying past – including, of course, the relationships between Jews and Christians. In a more recent study of Sir Walter Scott, Edgar Johnson recalls the dominant atmosphere and sound of violence, bloodshed and racial prejudices which led "later generations of critics to dismiss *Ivanhoe* as a boys' book."[38] The lasting significance of the book lies perhaps in its presentation of the evanescent values of chivalry and feudalism. The main theme of a new society replacing the old, moreover, is linked with another equally important one: the theme of peace versus war. Ivanhoe criticizes King Richard's reckless exposure of himself to unnecessary dangers while the country, shattered by his absence in the East and by internal disputes, needs him as a symbol of the unity and power of the state. The character of the Templar Brian de Bois-Guilbert adds more depth to Scott's main themes in the novel. The Templar represents the

Crusading Age, with its religious fanaticism and chivalric standards. His relationship with Rebecca, however, unequivocally reveals how thin his humanity has become. He is a disillusioned crusader who suffers the formidable agony of solitude as well as the instability of human relationships and the meaninglessness of chivalric life. Rebecca, who is in many instances Scott's mouthpiece, challenges his seemingly superior world and by sheer sincerity of purpose tears it to pieces. The more defiant her attitude, the more dissolute his. Callous and tyrannical as he is, his love for her, which finally replaces cupidity, is kindled by her consistent refusal of him. When he declares his willingness to relinquish his former glories in order to live with her, he is totally unaware of how degenerate he has become. Robin Mayhead writes on Scott:

> Reconstructions of English and non-Scottish historical periods, though some may be enjoyable to the specialist, are hardly to be counted among his significant productions.[39]

The statement is not quite true in the case of *Ivanhoe*. In addition to Ivanhoe's criticism of King Richard and the moral collapse of the crusader Bois-Guilbert, several scenes in the novel carry Scott's deep understanding of history as well as his advocacy of a peaceful life. Most significant of these scenes is perhaps the siege and destruction of Tourquilstone. The destruction itself is indicative of the fall of a feudal system before the national unity which, Scott makes clear, Richard is trying to establish. The Saxon Axe with which the Lion's Heart, who identifies himself as Richard of England and not of Anjou, storms the gate of the castle is symbolic of the growing national sentiment in the country. Equally important is Rebecca's dialogue with Ivanhoe during the siege, when both are prisoners at Tourquilstone. When offering the young warrior a direct commentary on the battle, she every now and then cries disapprovingly: "God of Zion", "what a dreadful sight", or "God of Moses, forgive the creatures thou hast made."[40] Ivanhoe, with rhetorical flourishes, laments lying there "like a bedridden monk . . . while the game that gives me freedom or death is played out by the hands of others!"[41] The more impatient he grows, the more sorrowful she is for the cumulative killing. While Ivanhoe champions "actions of chivalry" and vehemently regrets his inability to participate in the fighting, she expresses Scott's criticism of chivalric ideals and suggests, as substitute, "domestic love, kindly affection, peace and happiness."[42]

Rebecca's character also represents the curious, and somewhat ambiguous, blend of the romantic and anti-romantic which runs through most of Scott's novels. This is obvious on four significant occasions. With Gurth, she exhibits a romantic sense of gratitude towards him and his master, Ivanhoe. When she gives him the money back she is not playing that sort of womanish trick of buying the attention of the man she loves. She simply shows that a Jew can be as generous as a Christian. With her father and Ivanhoe, her temper of mind is so profoundly rational that the first always

gives up in argument and the second appears as a romantic relic. In the trial scene, her romantic adherence to her religion is equalled by her constant refusal to admit the existence of supernatural elements in her character. Her realistic reasoning before her judges and the prosecution witnesses, who accuse her of sorcerous practices, renders their accusations frivolous and fanatical.

Rebecca's love for Ivanhoe is perhaps a better illustration of how Scott blends the romantic and the anti-romantic in one chracter. She loves Ivanhoe passionately athough she is realistic enough to observe that her love is not reciprocated and that the slightest hope in a future union with him is only wishful thinking. It is a concealed and hopeless love. All that the beautiful Jewess can do for her one-sided passion is to contemplate Ivanhoe's complete unawareness of it.

However, one is surprised at the speed with which the cautious Rebecca falls in love with Ivanhoe. She meets him for the first time at the tournament, and shortly afterwards we are made to believe that she loves him and is unhappy about his preoccupation with Rowena. How soon indeed, and how contrary to the Jewess's nature! It seems that Scott will not miss the chance of introducing such a fascinating love story, for romance is, after all, a powerful temptation for him, although his poise is profoundly rational.

The character of Scott's Jewess marks a complete departure from that of Shakespeare's. Other than the similarity of being daughters of wealthy and much insulted Jews, there is nearly nothing in common between the two women. While Jessica finds it proper and rewarding to flee into the Christian camp with a huge dowry of jewels and ducats stolen from her father's safes, Rebecca feels keenly the degradation and humiliation of her people and resolutely refuses the Templar's various proposals. It is Brian de Bois-Guilbert who kidnaps her and makes one concession after another to persuade her to share her life with him. Moreover, her affection for Ivanhoe, which is not quite compatible with her character, is never revealed, and she converses with him in a more self-composed manner than his. Jessica, on the contrary, believes her father is a faithless man and her mother is a sinner, and soon converts to Christianity to gain the protection of God on earth and in heaven. Where Jessica appears frivolous and flippant, Rebecca "endures the hardships of her lot with calm resignation and extraordinary religious faith."[43] She takes pride in both her religion and her people, and is well acquainted with Jewish history, past and present:

> "Industry has opened to him [the Jew] the only road to power and to influence which oppression has left unbarred. Read the ancient history of the people of God, and tell me if those, by whom Jehovah wrought such marvels among the nations, were then a people of misers and usurers!"[44]

Her relationship with Ivanhoe brings her, at least externally, nearer to Jessica in that both Jewesses fall in love with Christians. But, of course, Rebecca is no Jessica, and Ivanhoe is no Lorenzo. In no part of the novel

does Ivanhoe show the slightest hint of being aware of the Jewess's love; while "Rebecca, with no hope that her affection for Ivanhoe can be reciprocated, risks her life to nurse him and even to give him a rapid-fire account of the siege."[45] They meet often, far more often than Ivanhoe meets Rowena. The events that link them together furnish a cogent background for a great love story. In this perhaps lies the reason behind Thackeray's objection to the marriage of Ivanhoe and Rowena. As Baker justly remarks, "this time Scott lets another female assert herself almost to the extent of being a rival heroine . . . he gave her [Rebecca] life and charm that were enhanced by the contrast of Rowena's insipidity."[46] Rowena is certainly a feeble portrayal, compared to Rebecca. Scott does not neglect her altogether, in fact he sometimes presents her in situations where she displays a commanding air and a majestic dignity; but even on these occasions she only reminds the reader of Rebecca. Perhaps this is the case with many of Scott's heroines who, in the words of Angus and Jenni Calder, "tend to be more passive and colourless . . . For some – Rowena, for instance – Scott seems to have neither affection nor much respect."[47] Thackeray, as Dr Rosenberg reports, wished that Scott had followed the traditional Jessica-Abigail solution of his predecessors by submitting Rebecca to baptism, a solution thought of by many, on which Dr Rosenberg comments as follows:

> In that case she [Rebecca] would have compounded the venial sin of bombast with the mortal sin of hypocrisy, and her function in the novel would have lost what meaning it has. She has to stick it out with her father, if only to make good her protests and act out her creeds. The only way in which Scott could have eaten his cake and had it too would have been to recruit Ivanhoe for the synagogue.[48]

Dr Rosenberg's suggestion, that Ivanhoe be recruited for the synagogue, is no less misguided than Thackeray's opposite one. A better understanding of the issue is expressed in Scott's comment on the reader's preference of the marriage between Ivanhoe and Rebecca. In his introduction to the 1830 edition of the novel, he indicates that Ivanhoe was too good a Catholic to retain the same class of feelings bestowed on Rowena towards a Jewess. To the argument that it would have been happier for Ivanhoe and still more just to Rebecca had she become his wife, Scott declares that this match was impossible at that time. Defending his view of poetic justice, he argues that, "not to mention that the prejudices of the age rendered such a union almost impossible, the author may, in passing, observe, that he thinks a character of a highly virtuous and lofty stamp, is degraded rather than exalted by an attempt to reward virtue with temporal prosperity."[49] Scott convincingly refers the issue of the Ivanhoe-Rebecca marriage to its historical background. Needless to say, this marriage is impossible in the 12th Century. What is more important than religious discrepancy are the feelings, views and attitudes of each person. Rebecca, who has committed the unguarded mistake of falling in love with a Christian, is unlikely to commit a fatal one

by marrying a man whose principles and practices are diametrically opposed to hers.

It is almost certain that Scott has not thought of this marriage either before or while writing *Ivanhoe*, and that the realist in him has had the upper hand over the romanticist. Rebecca is chiefly his mouthpiece. She rationalizes the conduct of the Jews and at the same time uncovers the fallible and the inhuman in 12th Century Christian society. However, if Scott seems to have displayed a certain warmth in his portrayal of Rebecca, his presentation of her father has been accomplished with a greater degree of detachment. Rebecca is a romantic character with realistic ideas. Isaac of York is an historically realistic figure. No sooner is he introduced than the author reveals the background which has unjustly caused him to appear contemptible:

> Introduced with little ceremony, and advancing with fear and hesitation, and many a bow of deep humility, a tall thin old man, who, however, had lost by the habit of stooping much of his actual height, approached the lower end of the board. His features, keen and regular, with an acquiline nose, and piercing black eyes; his high and wrinkled forehead, and long and gray hair and beard, would have been considered as handsome, had they not been the marks of a physiognomy peculiar to a race which, during those dark ages, was alike detested by the credulous and prejudiced vulgar, and persecuted by the greedy and rapacious nobility, and who, perhaps owing to that very hatred and persecution, had adopted a national character, in which there was much, to say the least, mean and unamiable.[50]

This is a key statement for the understanding of Scott's presentation of Isaac's character. The author impressively presents him among a host of hateful Normans and Saxons of different social strata, all of which seem to compete as to which can insult the Jew more. The response of Prior Aymer and Bois-Guilbert to Isaac's entrance is one of disgust and denunciation; Cedric's, although not very different from theirs, is tempered by his Saxon feeling of the duty of hospitality. Even Wamba the jester suggests that Isaac be shown in by a similarly inferior character like Gurth the swineherd. Only the Palmer, the disguised Ivanhoe, offers him a seat at the banquet table.

To this indignity shown by the others, Isaac responds with absolute humility. This is only the apparent Jew, the insulted and the humiliated. When at home, however, or with friendly company, he exhibits genuine kindness and voices nearly the same ideas as Rebecca. Realizing Ivanhoe's determination to take part in the tournament, he urges him not to thrust himself too forward "into this vain hurly-burly – I speak not for endangering the steed and coat of armour, but for the sake of thine own life and limbs."[51]

Another feature of Isaac's character is his pragmatism, without which, perhaps, he could not survive except as a beggar. His cringing in the presence

of both Normans and Saxons, despite the insults they heap on him, is one phase of a terrible adjustment by which he manages to keep himself alive. His miserliness is another, which helps him to endure life. One should not forget, in this respect, Rebecca's description of money as the only "road to power and influence" left for the Jews. Scott caricatures Isaac's avarice, perhaps as dramatic relief after the turbulent day of the tournament. From an artistic point of view, this caricature is rather exaggerated for the sake of wit and humour, and is likely, especially if misinterpreted, to undermine Scott's frequent rationalization of the Jew's conduct.

Of course, Isaac has his reasons, and nowhere in the novel does Scott forget to remind us that his Jew lives in constant dread that somebody is after his moneybags; a dread furthered and kept vigilant by the ruthless injustices of the ruling class. The Templar Front-de-Boeuf, to cite but one example, offers him a choice of either paying a thousand silver pounds or delivering his body to red bars fixed above a glowing furnace. Against this background of fanatical people and a precarious human condition, Scott leads Isaac through two situations, one traditional where he is, more often than not, slandered or tortured, the other, liberal, where revealing light is shed on the essentially good-natured Jew. But Isaac must not be judged by his external behaviour. As Duncan justly remarks; "The Jews are conventionally charged with avarice . . . but they are also the best representatives in the novel of the Christian virtues of love and sacrifice."[52] Isaac never demands a pound of flesh from his debtors. He responds immediately to Ivanhoe's benevolence, and is easily convinced by Rebecca to have him carried, when wounded, in her litter: "I would I knew what the Rabbi Jacob Ben Tudela would opine on it . . . nevertheless, the good youth must not bleed to death. Let Seth and Reuben bear him to Ashby."[53] Given the initiative in good deed and will, his charitable nature comes to the fore. This is not, however, to suggest that his goodness operates only when there is an extraneous motivation. His attitude towards fellow-prisoners of Tourquilstone, Ivanhoe and Cedric, shows a purely humanistic concern for them: "Grant me . . . at least, with my own liberty, that of the companions with whom I travel."[54]

Isaac's decisive moment comes when de-Boeuf informs him that his Rebecca has been allotted as house maiden to Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert. He rises to true heroism in his resoluteness to give his body to the fire rather than give his daughter to Bois-Guilbert. His courageous devotion is in contrast with Cedric's repudiation of his son and de-Boeuf's slaying of his father. When the power of money fails to save her, he shouts at de-Boeuf:

> "Robber and villain! . . . I will pay thee nothing – not one silver penny will I pay thee, unless my daughter is delivered to me in safety and honour! . . .
>
> I care not! . . . do thy worst. My daughter is my flesh and blood, dearer to me a thousand times than those limbs which thine cruelty threatens . . . Take my life if thou wilt, and say, the Jew, amidst his tortures, knows how to disappoint the Christian."[55]

Indeed, the true heroism of the Jew of York lies fundamentally in his capability of retaining natural goodness, having been since childhood subject to humiliation, oppression and exploitation. The traditionally stiff-necked, rapacious Jew proves to be in possession of a truly noble heart. His character presents another contrast to that of Shylock, whom similar circumstances have transformed into a villain. While Shylock, in reaction to a hostile environment, becomes more and more bitter and lonely, Isaac's moral survival is remarkable and profound. Shylock's conduct drives his daughter to elope and his servant to flee; Isaac strengthens all the more his daughter's devotion and his servant's fidelity.

Edgar Johnson sums up Scott's Jew as follows:

> Isaac and Rebecca are in fact at the moral heart of *Ivanhoe*. Both are what they are in response to the pressures of their world. If Isaac is in part comic and contemptible, Scott shows clearly that his most unlovely and ludicrous traits are to an overwhelming degree the consequences of the cruelty with which he and his people have been treated. Exiled, hurried, and despoiled, denied an entry into almost all trades except the manipulation of money and then reviled as blood-sucking usurers, the Jews are revealed in historical perspective not as villains but as victims. If Isaac is still the legendary moneylender, it is because Christians will not let him be otherwise.[56]

Dr Rosenberg, who has studied what he calls Jewish prototypes and stereotypes in 19th Century English fiction, has come to a different conclusion as regards the interpretation of Isaac's character. Here we quote at length parts of his argument in the chapter entitled "The Jew as Clown and the Jew's Daughter":[57]

> Indeed, he [Scott] may be said to have given Shylock his first eminent place in the English novel. It may be well to insist on this point at once, if only to correct the fashionable tendency to stress Scott's tolerance towards Isaac at the expense of some other things in his portrayal. Instead of Isaac's being viewed, as I think he should be viewed, as Shylock's historical ancestor and fictional heir, it has too often been taken for granted that Scott meant him to be Shylock's antipode . . . When nine-tenths of Scott's text goes to demonstrate that Isaac is unprincipled, grasping, and cowardly . . . The difference between Isaac and a character like Fagin is not really accounted for by assigning the two figures to different traditions and modes of thinking: the elements of the medieval Judas-type determine the portrayals of both . . . He reacts as badly as possible under pressure . . . Isaac is, therefore, both a pathetic fiction and a traditional Jewish miser . . . He is Shylock after the trial, Shylock without fangs, Shylock depressive . . .

While regarding Isaac's seemingly clownish gestures, intended to mitigate feelings of hostility, as the expression of his true character, Rosenberg ignores the importance of socio-economic and historical pressures, which

the author, as well as most critics, refers to. He also appears to have overlooked the scenes where Isaac is presented as essentially a good character. His assertion that "nine-tenths" of the novel prove Isaac to be a despicable Jew is amazingly arbitrary. He goes further to block the way before any other appreciation of the Jewish situation contrary to his: "And any theory that seeks to make him [Isaac] over into a relatively [and not ultimately] decent character has to assume an indecently high degree of relativity."[58] Isaac is neither idealistic nor Shylockian. He does not fit in Rosenberg's classification of the English fictional Jews as extremely good or extremely bad characters.

If one is to consider Isaac as a fictional Shylock, as Rosenberg advocates, one has to dismiss as irrelevant Scott's pointed criticism of the 12th Century Christian attitude towards the Jews. The fact is that Scott has not only presented good Jewish characters but has also given them a basic role in his exposition of the religious fanaticism of a feudal society. *Ivanhoe* should be examined as a novel of ideas rather than events, despite the fact that much of its charm derives from battles and actions of chivalry. In the final analysis, the ghastly comedy Scott creates out of Isaac's predicament leads, among other things, to the conclusion that Jews are inferior to no human society, that they have eyes, senses, affections and all that distinguishes and glorifies human beings. It is a novel principally addressed to modern readers, especially in its themes of peace versus war and the new society replacing the old. When Bois-Guilbert shouts at Isaac: "Ay . . . to gnaw the bowels of our nobles with usury, and to gull women and boys with gauds and toys – I warrant thee a store of shekels in they Jewish scrip"[59] it is evident, though the comic element is there, that the Templar's are conceptions of a decadent age. Gurth, who belongs to lower classes, voices nearly the same superstitious belief in connection with the Jew. Before entering Isaac's house, he hesitates a little for fear of fiends, white women, and above all, of being in the house of a Jew. Baffled by the generosity of Rebecca, he mutters with, again, a clear comic gesture: "By St Dunstan . . . this is no Jewess, but an angel from heaven . . . this pearl of Zion."[60] The Grand Master of the Templars, moreover, will not receive a hand-delivered letter from Isaac: "Back, dog! . . . I touch not misbelievers, save with the sword."[61] The trial scene, furthermore, is in fact a verdict against stubborn and destructive prejudices. The fabricated charges of sorcery, seduction and other damnable practices brought against Rebecca are implicit condemnations of those who either vowed them to be true or believed them as a matter of course. The jargon of society is successfully reproduced with its fanaticism, superstition, "exaggeration, and invention of trifles and irrelevancies."[62] The fair Jewess is accused of working curses on Christians by means of talismans and cabalistic sorcery, and "she is found guilty on three immaterial grounds, her race, her medical skill, and her sexual attractiveness."[63]

Rebecca is saved from death by Ivanhoe, and Isaac by a deus-exmachina in the form of a bugle, the winding sound of which informs de-Boeuf of a meeting more important than the roasting of a Jew. More

significant is perhaps the moral salvation of both figures. For, despite persecution, their integrity and good nature remain unblemished.

Conclusion

The Jewish condition in both *Harrington* and *Ivanhoe* is almost the same. On the one hand, there is the antagonistic Christian society, with the exception of a few, but increasing, tolerant persons such as the Harringtons and the Ivanhoes. On the other hand, there are the Jews looking for admission into society on mutually fair terms.

The father-child relationship among the Jews is a case in point. Social oppression is at least one of the factors strengthening the familial bond between the two figures in their small world. The Judaic heritage and tradition are another. Berenice Montenero is almost always under the loving and prudent spell of her authoritative father. This is the Eastern type of patriarchal family relationship. One cannot be entirely sure which are Berenice's ideas and attitudes and which are her father's. The relationship between Isaac and Rebecca shows more independence of character, which is due primarily to personal faculties. Evidently, Rebecca is more intelligent than her father, who, in many respects, shows less remarkable talents. Nevertheless, their relationship is marked by complete harmony. At crucial moments both exhibit utter devotion to each other – a devotion which is also characteristic of Jacob's attitude towards his father – whereas at ordinary times their conversation is tinged with a sense of humour.

Another phenomenon manifest in the life of the Jews of the two novels is their strong clan-feelings. Whether this is the result of one or more specific causes is not our concern here, nc matter how important the issue is. However, the authors of *Harrington* and *Ivanhoe* make it clear that a hostile environment has unified the Jews in their agony, intensified their clannish bond and forced them to remain virtually separate from the societies they dwell among. This is conspicuous in Jacob's pathetic life which has made of him an unfortunate target for sadistic aggression. Rebecca tells Rowena why she and her father are leaving for Spain:

> "The people of England are a fierce race, quarrelling ever with their neighbours or among themselves, and ready to plunge the sword into the bowels of each other. Such is no safe abode for the children of my people... Not in a land of war and blood, surrounded by hostile neighbours... can Israel hope to rest during her wanderings."[64]

This explains perhaps the importance of communication by letters among the Jews. A letter of introduction from Jacob prepares for Harrington's acquaintance with the Rabbi Lyons of Cambridge, who, in turn, introduces Harrington to Montenero in London by the same means. More often than not, Isaac cites names of his fellow Jews, who helped him to endure

difficulties and hardships. Again his letter recommending Ivanhoe to another Jew enables the young knight to obtain the needed armour and horse.

Religious affinity is another salient feature of the Jewish inter-relationship. In fact, it is hard to draw a sharp line between this and other characteristics of the Jews' clannish life, since Judaism, as Mendelssohn put it, is not a revealed faith but a revealed law, which regulates behaviour according to specific codes. Consequently, particulars of the Jews' tribal life, ranging from dealings to rituals, are stamped with the laws of the Talmud. With the exception of Montenero, who appears to be impervious to surprise and emotion, all Edgeworth's and Scott's Jews cite the names of Jehovah, God, Abraham and Moses in their various exclamations. And all of them follow strictly the maxims of their religion, which provide them not only with solutions to everyday problems, but also with pride and dignity whether hidden or expressed.

In this respect, their relationships with Christians are not shown as fanatical. Even Isaac's vigorous adherence to his faith gives way to the necessity of assisting a wounded Christian. Rebecca, in the forest scene, addresses Rowena in the name of the God whom both worship and the laws of Moses which both acknowledge, while Montenero welcomes many Christians to his home, and so does Israel Lyons.

Recognition on the part of the Christains, and a desire to integrate into Western societies on the part of the Jews, mark a turning point in the history of European Jews. Wherever the attitudes of both parties operate favourably, the Jews become citizens in the countries where they live; when not, they grow more self-centred and ultimately become Zionists.

Notes

1. Rosenberg, *From Shylock to Svengali*, p.53.
2. Richard Lovell Edgeworth, introduction to *Harrington*, p.iii.
3. Maria Edgeworth, *Harrington* (Dent, 1893, first published 1817) p.22.
4. Ibid., p.81.
5. Ibid., p.83.
6. Ibid., p.84.
7. Ibid., p.103.
8. Ibid., p.133.
9. Helen Zimmern, *Maria Edgeworth*, (W.H. Allen, 1883) p.122.
10. Rosenberg, *From Shylock to Svengali*, p.64.
11. Edgeworth, *Harrington*, p.120.
12. Ibid., p.17.
13. Ibid., p.2.
14. Ibid., p.24.
15. Ibid., p.25.
16. Ibid., p.95.
17. Zimmern, *Maria Edgeworth*, p.121.

18. Montagu Frank Modder, *The Jew in the Literature of England to the End of the Nineteenth Century* (Meridian Books, 1960, first published 1939) pp.136-7.
19. Ernest Baker, *The History of the England Novel* (Barnes and Noble, 1964, first published 1929) Vol.VI, p.45.
20. Rosenberg, *From Shylock to Svengali*, p.76.
21. Modder, *The Jew in the Literature of England*, p.212.
22. Edgeworth, *Harrington*, p.101.
23. Zimmern, *Maria Edgeworth*, p.122.
24. Edgeworth, *Harrington*, p.107.
25. I.C. Clark, *Maria Edgeworth: Her Family and Friends* (Hutchinson, 1950). M. Hurst, *Maria Edgeworth and the Public Scene* (Macmillan, 1969). Elizabeth Inglis-Jones, *The Great Maria: A Portrait of Maria Edgeworth* (Faber & Faber, 1959). Emily Lawless, *Maria Edgeworth,* (Macmillan, 1904). Marilyn Butler, *Maria Edgeworth: A Literary Biography* (Oxford University Press, 1972).
26. P.H. Newby, *Maria Edgeworth*, (Arthur Baker, 1950), p.71.
27. Desmond Clarke, *The Ingenious Mr. Edgeworth* (Oldbourne, 1965) p.240.
28. Modder, *The Jew in the Literature of England,* p.137.
29. Stendhal (Henri Beyle), Walter Scott and la Princess de Clèves, *Le National* (19 February, 1830), trans. Geoff Strickland, in John D. Hayden (ed.), *Scott: The Critical Heritage* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970) p.319.
30. Hayden (ed.) *Scott: The Critical Heritage,* p.374.
31. Ibid., p.409.
32. Ibid., p.428.
33. Leslie Stephen, Hours in a Library with Scott, *Cornhill Magazine*, XXIV (1871) p.289.
34. Stephen Gwynn, *The Life of Sir Walter Scott* (Thornton Butterworth, 1930) pp.285-6. Una Pope-Hennessy, *The Laird of Abbotsford* (Putnam, 1932) pp.198-9. Herbert Grierson, *Sir Walter Scott, Bart* (Constable, 1938) p.182.
35. Quoted from Hayden (ed.), Scott: *The Critical Heritage,* p.182.
36. David Daiches, Scott's Achievements as a Novelist, *Nineteenth Century Fiction*, Vol.6 (1951) p.81.
37. Joseph E. Duncan, The Anti-Romantic in *Ivanhoe, Nineteenth Century Fiction,* Vol.9 (1955) pp.293-4.
38. Edgar Johnson, *Sir Walter Scott: The Great Unknown* (Hamish Hamilton, 1970) p.737.
39. Robin Mayhead, *Walter Scott, (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968) p.8.*
40. *Walter Scott, Ivanhoe* (Adam and Charles Black, 1870, first published 1819) p.287.
41. Ibid., p.288.
42. Ibid., p.292.
43. Modder, *The Jew in the Literature of England,* p.142.
44. Scott, *Ivanhoe*, p.402.
45. Duncan, The Anti-Romantic in *Ivanhoe, Nineteenth Century Fiction,* Vol.9, p.298.
46. Baker, *The History of the English Novel*, Vol.VI, p.179.
47. Angus and Jenni Calder, *Scott* (Evans, 1969) p.122.

48. Rosenberg, *From Shylock to Svengali*, p.92.
49. Scott's introduction to *Ivanhoe,* p.15.
50. Scott, *Ivanhoe*, pp.57-8.
51. Ibid., p.78.
52. Duncan, The Anti-Romantic in *Ivanhoe, Nineteenth Century Fiction*, Vol.9, p.298.
53. Scott, *Ivanhoe*, p.271.
54. Ibid., p.216.
55. Ibid., pp.218-19.
56. Johnson, *Sir Walter Scott*, pp.743-4.
57. Rosenberg, *From Shylock to Svengali*, pp.73-115.
58. Ibid., p.75.
59. Scott, *Ivanhoe*, p.65.
60. Ibid., p.121.
61. Ibid., p.361.
62. Johnson, *Sir Walter Scott,* p.738.
63. Coleman O. Parsons, *Witchcraft and Demonology in Scott's Fiction* (Oliver and Boyd, 1964) p.149.
64. Scott, *Ivanhoe*, p.464.

3. Pre-Zionists

"You ask me what I wish: my answer is, a national existence, which we have not. You ask me what I wish: my answer is, the Land of Promise. You ask me what I wish: my answer is, Jerusalem. You ask me what I wish: my answer is, the Temple."

Jabaster, in *Alroy*

"All is race; there is no other truth."

Sidonia, in *Tancred*

"It is no longer difficult to reach Jerusalem: the real difficulty is the one experienced by the crusaders, to know what to do when you have arrived there."

Sidonia, in *Tancred*

The 19th Century witnessed a decisive shift in the life of many European and North American Jews from persecution to alienation. This is to be expected as one of the consequences of the Age of Enlightenment, the Harringtons and the Ivanhoes increasing in number and the Monteneros growing more powerful. But alienation was not less effective, for many reasons, in creating a national consciousness among the Jews.

In the United States, the assimilative process was rapid and remarkable, as we have seen in *Harrington*. New Englanders, highly influenced by the literature of the Old Testament, felt and preached a greater affinity towards the Jews: "The Puritanism of New England was a kind of new Judaism, a Judaism transposed into Anglo-Saxon terms. These Protestants, in returning to the text of the Bible, had concentrated on the Old Testament, and some had tried to take it as literally as any Orthodox Jew."[1] In France, the French Revolution with its Declaration of the Rights of Man in 1791 considered the Jews as ordinary citizens. In Victorian Britain, 'Her Majesty's Jewish subjects' were given nearly all rights, with the exception until 1858 of ownership of land and membership of Parliament.

On the other hand:

> The Jews who were rising to the top in Disraeli's day tended to be silent, prudent, high-principled persons of impeccable integrity, who acquired vast wealth, became Masters of Hounds and bought the Vale of Aylesbury. Their quintessence is represented by Disraeli's later friend Baron Rothschild, who on grounds of principle stood again and again for Parliament until the ban on Jews was removed, and then, having at last got there, sat for fifteen years without opening his mouth.[2]

The response of the Jews towards British tolerance appears to be one of complacent acceptance mixed with a feeling of detachment. Generally speaking, they demanded little and expected less and were content to live in a peaceful home; while the British happily prided themselves on the fact that theirs had been an attitude of genuine liberality. The balance of relationship between Jewish and Christian British was fundamentally a legal one, with much to be desired at the socio-political level.

This tacit, mutual understanding, however, does not appear to have suited Benjamin Disraeli. In terms of assimilation, his ambition transcended the limits of British permissiveness and prompted some indignation, especially among upper-class dignitaries. The struggle he went through in order to become Prime Minister was one of the fiercest. Paramount in it was the question of assimilation versus self-consciousness. Fortunately, in his fervent endeavour to enjoy the privileges he was legally entitled to, Disraeli recorded in his fictional works a great deal of autobiographical material as well as of religio-political thinking. Almost all his novels open with the hero's coming of age, a theme which denotes an awakening of self-consciousness in the author's mind. Because these heroes are in all instances their master's voice, either in narrating fragments of his life or in uttering pieces of his philosophy, and because his novels have been almost always occasioned by circumstances of his life, this chapter will focus on Disraeli himself through the characters of five of his novels. There is little doubt that he lived, or wanted to live, what he had written. In his Hughenden Papers he writes:

> In *Vivian Grey* I have portrayed my active and real ambition. In *Alroy* my ideal ambition. The *P.R. [Psychological Romance*, the alternative title of *Contarini Fleming]* is a development of my poetical career. This Trilogy is the secret history of my feelings – I shall write no more on myself.[3]

This is true, "provided always that we allow for the novelist's privilege of altering facts to suit himself and still more for Disraeli's habit of seeing himself, and everyone connected with him in terms of inflated grandeur."[4] Disraeli, however, did not keep to his promise. His second trilogy, *Coningsby, Sybil* and *Tancred*, is in every respect the 'secret' as well as the pronounced history of its author during the 1840s. In fact, it is extremely difficult to draw a line between the author and his heroes and say: here ends Disraeli and here begins Vivian Grey, Sidonia or Eva Besso. Moreover, what makes

it necessary to study the creator rather than the creatures is the fact that Disraeli's literary works and career are so intricately interwoven that, as Monypenny puts it, "without a study of his books, it is impossible to understand his life," and Bloomfield, after quoting Monypenny, adds: "Without a study of his life it is impossible to understand his books."[5]

The most conspicuous fact about Disraeli was, and perhaps still is, his Jewishness. Although baptized when he should have been Bar-Mitzvahed, baptism proved insignificant in reducing the feelings aroused by his Jewishness either at school, in society or in himself. He remained an alien, perhaps more estranged and confused, though more fortunate, than he had been before. For him, 'what makes a Jew a Jew' was, contrary to Modder's definition, not religion, since he ultimately lost it, but his race. At Maidstone, when returned to Parliament for the first time, Disraeli "winced beneath the cries of 'Old clothes!' 'Shylock'."[6] Bloomfield records that Stanley, later Lord Derby, "despised Disraeli, and told Peel that 'if that scoundrel were taken in' [to the minstry] he would not remain himself."[7] His Maiden Speech in the House was stormed with jeers, gibes, scoffs and catcalls. George Bentinck, "cousin of Lord George . . . invariably referred to Disraeli as 'the Jew',"[8] and "Carlyle found Disraeli's Jewish jackasseries intolerable, and asked how long John Bull would allow this absurd monkey to dance on his chest."[9] In 1876, Carlyle also described him as "a cursed old Jew, not worth his weight in cold bacon."[10] Again, "it was the fashion with University intellect to despise Disraeli."[11] In 1874, Mrs Gladstone found it "disgusting" after her husband's "labour and patriotism and years of work to think of handing over his nest-egg to that Jew."[12] He was taken for a Jew even by Bismarck, who admired him. A modern literary critic emphatically asserts: "One feels a mistrust (gnawing, as it were, within our laurel) that even the best page of Disraeli does not belong to us."[13]

It is more likely than not that this morally damaging attitude on the part of Disraeli's contemporaries was first initiated by his school fellows. The two dramas of *Vivian Gray* and *Contarini Fleming* reveal quite clearly the disability he suffered at school because of his Jewishness. There, he had had his first experience of being singled out from his friends on this account. At that time, perhaps, the first seed was sown of a firm belief that a Jew meant simply an alien. There is an air of unexplained estrangement hovering around Vivian and Contarini. Vivian is the school hero and leader. Students applaud his audacity, genuineness and talents, and yet around him there always exists an atmosphere of possible hostility occasioned not by his success but by something ancestral, impersonal. Both the usher and the pupils call him "stranger". This atmosphere of estrangement is more accentuated in *Contarini Fleming*, where the "Southern appearance" of the hero is met with cruel prejudice. In this novel, Disraeli's expression of his alienation goes a step further in that Contarini, unlike Vivian, lives in a country which is professedly not his homeland. The most spectacular scene in both novels is one of a fight between each of the two heroes and the leader of his many opponents. The following sentences, often quoted in connection with

Disraeli's fraternal relationships, are in fact more expressive of relations with his fellow students:

> There was no similitude between us. Their blue eyes, their flaxen hair, and their white visages claimed no kindred with my Venetian countenance. Wherever I moved I looked around me, and beheld a race different from myself.[14]

Turning his back on school, and on memories as well, Disraeli – also Vivian and Contarini – enters public life: "In England, personal distinction is the only passport to the society of the great. Whether this distinction arise from fortune, family, or talent, is immaterial; but certain it is, to enter into high society, a man must either have blood, a million, or a genius."[15] The middle-class Disraeli does not have a million, in fact he is burdened with debts. He has not yet discovered the superiority of his Jewish blood. But he has genius. Thus, the three-Disraeli personae enter a distrustful milieu and, despite their superlative talents, are severely disappointed. Contarini becomes a leader of thieves, who gather in a forest with the intention of robbing their noble parents and every other noble traveller. Disraeli's own experience with Murray, Lockhart and Crocker ends in bitter discord and is transformed in *Vivian Grey* into the sphere of politics, Vivian has, or thinks he has, the necessary means for success: "He was already a cunning reader of human hearts; and felt conscious that his was a tongue which was born to guide human beings."[16] He plays the wire-puller for a new political combination, the consequence of which is utter humiliation and exclusion. In writing *Vivian Grey*, Disraeli's purpose "was to open the hearts of society to misbegotten lads like Vivian, not to harden them. Society, he guessed, would agree with him, pat on his back, and not only restore Vivian to fame and fortune, but also acclaim him, Ben, the new Byron."[17] Likewise, Contarini writes a novel, *Manstein*, after a similar failure of his social relations. At first both novels are received with curious admiration, and many people try to uncover, or provide keys for, the names of the thinly disguised public personages portrayed in them. When the authors' names are revealed, critics and commentators denounce them with the bitterest language. The effect of public reaction on Disraeli and Contarini is utterly disheartening:

> With what horror, with what blank despair, with what supreme, appalling astonishment, did I find myself, for the first time in my life, a subject of the most reckless, the most malignant, and the most adroit ridicule.[18]

A total regression, lasting nearly four years and culminating in a psychosomatic illness, seriously threatens his life: "He realized – finally – that he was indeed a nobody in terms of what Philistines valued: blood and gold. He realized that he was a despised outsider, a Jew, no less – and the Philistines would never for a moment let him forget it."[19] His regression is discernible in a shift he makes from a third-person narrative in *Vivian Grey* to a

a first-person one in *Contarini Fleming*, and in that an extrovert Vivian has changed into an introvert, introspective Contarini "of powerful passions, overpowering desires, inexplicable moods and paradoxical feelings."[20] A Jew, born and bred in 'Babylon', "with the unmistakable stamp of Israel on his very name,"[21] Disraeli, by a strange accumulation of circumstances, finds himself without country, without kindred and without friends. Contarini writes: "Such is the history of 'Manstein,' a work which exercised a strange influence on my destiny."[22] Disraeli feels he is, as he said once borrowing Sheridan's superb metaphor, "the blank page between the Old and the New Testaments."[23] Like Vivian, he would go to sleep every night asking himself: "Who is to be my enemy tomorrow?"[24] And like Contarini, he belives that "I have already been judged, and am now to be punished, without a trial," and he adds: "But I will not submit any longer to such persecution."[25]

As an outlet – for there must be one – Disraeli decided to leave London-Babylon, at least temporarily, for what came to be known as the Grand Tour. Noticeable in *Vivian Grey* is a similar hegira. In the sequel Disraeli provided for the novel, ostracized Vivian is portrayed as drifting southward; where Disraeli's family came from. Although greatly expurgated in Disraeli's 1853 edition of his works, the novel, symbolically enough, ends with Vivian standing on the top of a hill, deserted by his faithful servant, surrounded by a rising flood and a gloomy sky, and accompanied by a dead horse – all signifying his absolute isolation. Likewise, Contarini's publication of *Manstein* compels him to leave his nominal country for a long journey, first to Paris and Venice and then eastward to Syria and Egypt. Disraeli's actual Grand Tour started in May 1830 and lasted seventeen months. It is perhaps no exaggeration to say that the decisive moment for settling his inner conflict, for adopting a final attitude towards London-Babylon, and for an appraisal of his past and future, came to him either during the week he passed in Jerusalem or the few months he lived in Cairo and Egypt. Equally important in consequence is the astonishing improvement in his health: the neurotic illness which had afflicted him since his double failure in public and literary life vanished for ever. More important still is the fact that, in Jerusalem, "his mystical belief in the mysterious heritage of his race"[26] was heightened and ever-lastingly stamped on his personality and career:

> His imagination took fire [in Jerusalem] as he thought of Israel's past glory, the distinctive character of the race from which he sprang and the enduring poetic literature of its faith. He may well have dreamed of a possible revival of racial glory and power.[27]

Indeed, Disraeli "might well have dreamed of a possible revival of racial glory and power," although he did not transform his dream into action; and this is one of the reasons why this study classifies him as a pre-Zionist and not a Zionist proper. Disraeli's return to England denotes his preference for London over Jerusalem. But he will not accept London as a New Babylon,

and with all his ardent nature he will fight to make it a home for Disraeli, the Jew, refusing all along to bow to failure, despite the fact that his humiliation seems endless. He has to impose himself on the mocking English upper class by a greater mockery and "by differing from them as violently as possible."[28] On leaving the Arab East, however, he brought with him the drafts of two books: *Contarini Fleming*, a portrait of Disraeli as a young man, and *The Wonderous Tale of Alroy*, his "ideal ambition". Little significance has perhaps been given to this very short period of Disraeli's inner life and less to the coincidence of his having the two novels ready for publication at the same time. The long brooding over conflicting components of his psychology has fostered a permanent dualism: he is a true Jew of the Jews and Prime Minister of Great Britain, an Oriental and an Occidental, a stranger and a leader. True, he has repeatedly endeavoured, having transformed these conflicting components into two psychological forces, to harmonize, even to unify, them; but nobody has trusted him and it is doubtful whether he himself has ever believed his aim can be achieved by other means than conquering the New Babylon. We find a crystal-clear expression of his dualism in the concluding chapter of *Contarini Fleming:*

> It is my intention to build in these beautiful domains a Saracenic palace, which my oriental collections will befit, but which I hope also to fill with the masterpieces of Christian arts.[29]

Disraeli is already preparing himself to give the English what is English, the Jews what is Jewish, and himself the liberating benefits of belonging to the two parties. Again:

> My interest in the happiness of my race is too keen to permit me for a moment to be blind to the storms that lour on the horizon of society. Perchance also the political regeneration of the country to which I am devoted may not be distant, and in that great work I am resolved to participate.[30]

The two passages quoted above also denote Disraeli's great ambition. He intends to build a "Saracenic palace," and is resolved to participate in the "political regeneration of the country to which I am devoted." A more direct expression of his ambition is given by Disraeli the Prime Minister in 1874:

> 'Power!' It has come to me too late. There were days when, on waking, I felt I could move dynasties and governments: but that has passed away.[31]

Professor Jerman discerns in Disraeli an "intense interior fire" which "could subdue the human impulses to such a degree that he developed all sorts of bad qualities – ruthlessness, selfishness, and vanity – in order to keep that fire alive. In short he was inspired."[32]

Disraeli's character was so sensitive and unruly – his writings, his social and political life and his endless debts attest to this – that in a constantly suspicious environment and for a precarious personal future he had to mould a sheltering ideology which would serve as a compensation and an outlet. His racialism had been formulated between 1827-47 and gone through two stages, the first described in *Alroy*, the second, in his second politico-religious trilogy. It must be noted, however, that such racialism is prompted, among other things, by Disraeli's megalomania. As Jerman remarks: "If any thing, Disraeli felt superior to 'them' allowing that he had been descended from the best-born element of 'that glorious and ancient race'."[33] He feels that "the world – at least the Gentile world – is a farce. Ninety-nine men out of a hundred are fools."[34]

Disraeli and Zionism

Alroy, Disraeli's 'ideal ambition' and manifesto of his pre-Zionist doctrine, was published in 1833, one year after his first defeat at High Wycombe as Parliamentary candidate and sixty-four years before the declaration of Zionism as a political movement. Its racial dream, in the words of Walter Allen, "expressed what was probably the stabilizing factor in Disraeli's character."[35] It should have been Disraeli's second novel, for he started writing it directly after *Vivian Grey*. Unfortunately, neither the author nor his biographers explain the delay in completing it. Its main theme, the struggle to establish a Jewish polity in Palestine, suggests that Disraeli started writing it as a reaction to the agonizing failure of his first encounter with the English public. His second failure, however, appears to have revived the the idea of *Alroy* in his mind, but his illness rendered him physically incapable of writing it until he commenced his Grand Tour. The true history on which he bases the novel is simple. In 1160, David Ben Alruhi attempts an uprising against the Moslems of Azerbaijan. He frightens his fellow Jews of the whole area, including Persia and Iraq, who feel their peaceful life is endangered by his incitement of arms. His father-in-law slays him while asleep, thus cruelly putting a quick end to an imminent evil. However, the history Disraeli builds up out of Alroy's career, most of which is forged, distorted or exaggerated, is of no great concern to this study, but rather the ideas promulgated by a 19th Century Jewish mind. The novel represents Disraeli not as a Wandering Jew or a Shylock, but rather as a David Alroy, a captive or a Prince of the Captivity who, dissatisfied with the sedentary, humiliating conditions of his people, decides to take London-Baghdad by storm and "regain the blissful seat" of Israel for himself and his people. Thus the novel is an embodiment of an early Zionist dream. Race, religion history and the distinction of the ten Jewish tribes are stressed, as part of the book's creative idea, in a fashion similar to that of the Zionist doctrine, and the aim of establishing a Jewish autonomy in Palestine, be it a kingdom or a theocracy, is distinctly pronounced from the start.

Disraeli has always been difficult to assess. In his writings, seriousness, wit, satire, realism, farce, melodrama, fantasy, even the supernatural, form a tantalizing mixture. Sir Leslie Stephen, who admires him, frequently mentions ambiguity as characteristic of his writings: "Disraeli keeps most dexterously to the region of the ambiguous."[36] Robert Blake affirms that "Disraeli has never at any time of his life been an easy man to know."[37] Stephen solves the riddle of ambiguity "by accepting the theory of a double consciousness,"[38] in other words, by recognizing Disraeli's dualism. This theory, however, though fundamental to an understanding of Disraeli's works, is hardly sufficient to spot where the author is serious and where he is not. For his motives are as diverse as they can be, and, at times, he becomes deliberately misleading. A fear of being mocked or disparaged by the Gentiles is, most probably, the reason why he is so evasive in developing his themes.

This is particularly true of *Alroy*. The novel opens with the familiar theme of *Vivian Grey* and *Contarini Fleming*. Like the heroes of the two previous novels, the young Prince of the Captivity, conscious of great mental and spiritual powers within himself, soliloquizes over his present and future life:

> Oh! my heart is full of care, and my soul is dark with sorrow! What am I? What is all this? A cloud hangs heavy o'er my life. God of my fathers, let it burst! I know not what I feel, yet what I feel is madness . . . Lord of Hosts, let me conquer or die! Let me conquer like David; or die, Lord, like Saul!"[39]

The turgid style of the passage quoted above, which is typical of the entire book, can hardly escape notice. Yet, there is in it Disraeli at a moment of reconsideration of his life. The megalomaniac flight of thought in the last two sentences is quite Disraelian. The thin disguise of character, provided by phrases like "Lord of the Hosts" and "God of my fathers", comes short of hiding the author's real condition ("a cloud hangs heavy o'er my life"), or his burning desire for conquest ("let me conquer or die"). But the affected language of the passage diminishes to a great extent the credibility of the hero's suffering and explains why almost all of Disaeli's critics dismiss the novel as, in the words of Professor Jerman, "destined to the ash can".[40] That such a style dilutes the intensity of the hero's feelings, which are Disraeli's own, is also evident in the following passage. For we are soon informed that within the range of these feelings the condition and destiny of Alroy's people rank high:

> "God of my fathers! for indeed I dare not style thee God of their wretched sons . . . thy servant Israel, Lord, is now a slave so infamous, so woebegone . . . Alas! they do not suffer; they endure and do not feel."[41]

The picture Alroy draws of the Jews is not very encouraging for a young man whose ultimate aim is the rebuilding of the Temple of Solomon: "The

bricks have fallen, but we will rebuild with marble."[42] The flighty style is bound to reflect on the character itself and render it almost incredible. It also fails to stimulate sympathy for the Jews. But the author's theme is there: Israel is a servant, a slave so infamous and woe-begone.

Alroy, then, kills his Goliath, an Eastern Bois-Guilbert who tries to ravish Miriam, Alroy's sister, and exclaims:

> "So we can rid ourselves of them, eh? If the prince fall, why not the people? Dead, absolutely dead, and I am his slayer! Hah! at length I am a man. This, this, indeed is life. Let me live slaying!"[43]

Not very many readers will acknowledge the authenticity of such a blood-thirsty redeemer. However, Alroy, like early Zionists, finds two plausible elements of distinction, race and religion, and resolves on transforming them into an active force. The discussion which takes place between Alroy and Honain, concerning the reasons for the former's uprising, is significant.

Alroy believes in "sacred things" that have come "from the God of Israel" to "the chosen people," but the people have forgotten their God and as a result their "annals of victory, that will dawn again," have come to an end. Alroy is determined "on glory, eternal glory,"[44] which will never fail so long as he keeps his firm belief in it and leads his people under the banner of Israel and the sceptre of Solomon into the Holy Land. The basic motive for Alroy's uprising, therefore, stems from his belief in the chosenness of the Jews. His exposition of their human condition brings in futher justification for his resort to arms:

> "The world goes well with thee, my Lord Honain. But if, instead of bows and blessings, thou, like thy brethren, wert greeted only with the cuff and curse; if thou didst rise each morning only to feel existence to be dishonour, and to find thyself marked out among surrounding men as something foul and fatal; if it were thy lot, like theirs, at best to drag on a mean and dull career, hopeless and aimless, or with no other hope or aim but that which is degrading, and all this too with a keen sense of thy intrinsic worth, and a deep conviction of superior race; why then, perchance, Honain might even discover 'twere worth a struggle to be free and honoured."[45]

In short, the factor behind the rising national consciousness of the Jews, as Alroy believes, is a sense of intrinsic Jewish superiority reinforced by persecution.

Honain, an assimilated Jew after the Mendelssohnian principles, takes himself simply as "a man who knows men." He tells Alroy: "I believe in truth, and wish all men to do the same." His argument is that things cannot be sacred just because they come from God: "So does everything." A man in the nearest mosque will affirm that Alroy and his ideologue Jabaster are wrong. The chosen people are only "a frail minority" who

have come to be "chosen for scoffs, and scorns and contumelies." He concludes: "If redemption be but another name for carnage, I envy no Messiah . . . freedom and honour are mine, but I was my own Messiah."[46]

In this conversation, it is interesting to compare Alroy's pompous and affected sentences to Honain's realistic and laconic statements. The latter's ideas are supported by experience, while Alroy's are offshoots of enthusiastic dreams. It is not a mere difference of age that renders Alroy's argument flighty and unconvincing, for his reflection on history is at times exceptionally wise: "Empires and dynasties flourish and pass away; the proud metropolis becomes a solitude, the conquering kingdom even a desert; but Israel still remains."[47] This is a curiously serious statement of Alroy's thoughts which precedes his dialogue with Honain. On the face of it, one may surmise that there is a difference between Alroy as thinker and as arguer. The fact is that shortly after he pours out his rhetorical flourishes, the reader is made aware of how soon the Prince is captivated by the beauty and adventurous spirit of the Khalif's daughter Schirene. This is the first hint Disraeli drops of his hero's future deviation from the course of Zionism.

Nevertheless, Alroy proceeds to fulfil his mission and leads the Jews in a successful war against the Khalif. The scenes of blood and death shed significant light on Disraeli's state of mind during his neurotic illness. Alroy's teacher, Jabaster, a militant cabalist and an out-and-out Zionist, sends a warning to the Moslems. He "will burst open your portal, and smite, and utterly destroy all that you have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass."[48] The result is:

> The astounded Muezzin stood with their mouths open, and quite forgot to announce the power of their Deity, and the validity of their Prophet . . .[49] Religion, valour, and genius alike inspired the arms of Alroy, but he was, doubtless, not a little assisted by the strong national sympathy of his singular and scattered people . . . The imperial city of Rhey was surprised in the night, sacked and burnt to the ground . . .[50] But what is a wild Bactiari, and what is a savage Turkman . . . to the warriors of the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob? . . . The battle resembled a massacre rather than a combat. The plain was glotted with Seljuk gore . . . Twenty thousand chosen troops fell on the side of the Turks.[51]

These are serious and clear passages in the sense that in them Disraeli is neither mocking nor ambiguous. His Zionist dream is basically a reaction, and it takes the form of revengeful fancies meant for his personal enemies. That the killing occurs among the Muslims, should not mislead us into thinking that these enemies dwell in the East. Disraeli's admiration of the Turks, for instance, is well documented in his letters. During his years in office he was a staunch Turcophile against the oppressed Christian peoples of the Balkans. It is more likely than not that in the passages quoted above,

Disraeli expresses a grudge against Christians.

The deviation in Disraeli's "brand of Zionism"[52] takes the form of a pan-Judaism meant primarily for a universal domination of the Jews through diaspora. Alroy is satisfied with the metropolis of Islam as his own capital. His change of mind, however, cannot be explained in terms of historical circumstances. Since all this is fabricated history, we should look for the reasons in Disraeli's psychology. His real battlefield is London and not Jerusalem. Baghdad, the modern capital of old Mesopotamia, symbolizes a city of captivity, a new Babylon and can easily take the place of London in Disraeli's subconscious. His "ideal ambition" which he alleges is embodied in *Alroy*, reaches its second and more authentic stage. The first stage represents the author's purely Zionistic aim of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine. The second denotes his desire to conquer London. Alroy is now master of the Arab Empire and Disraeli aspires to be master of the British Empire. In this second stage, Alroy believes that his mission is to establish the kingdom of Israel, but "no matter how, or where."[53] The author is satisfied with establishing his 'Disraelite kingdom' in London.

Disraeli's dualism appears here also. Alroy is surrounded, symbolically enough, by two brothers, the wholly Zionist Jabaster and the wholly assimilationist Honain. In other words, his position is, like Disraeli's, in the middle, the position of the blank paper between the Old and the New Testaments, and he is trying to make it work. Alroy's defence of his new strategy is rather surprising for a Judaist. He maintains that "those reveries," in which he has dreamt of a Jewish state in Palestine, have made him lose "the golden hours at Hamadan;"[54] that "our people are but a remnant, a feeble fraction of the teeming millions that own my sway."[55] The laws of Moses, he says, have been quoted for a thousand years, but never practised. Now, they should be "adopted to these times."[56] In perhaps a more revealing passage, he tells his chaplain Jabaster:

> The world is mine: and shall I yield the prize, the universal and heroic prize, to realize the dull tradition of some dreaming priest, and consecrate a legend? . . Shall this quick blaze of empire sink to a glimmering and a twilight sway over some petty province, the decent patriarch of a pastoral horde? Is the Lord of hosts so slight a God, that we must place a barrier to His sovereignty, and fix the boundaries of Omnipotence between the Jordan and the Lebanon? . . . Bagdad shall be my Sion . . . Universal empire must not be founded on sectarian prejudices and exclusive rights.[57]

Evidently, this is an anti-Zionistic agrument, but not an anti-Semitic one. Having fulfilled, Alroy thinks, the will of God by freeing his people from bondage, he relinquishes his objectives of re-building the Holy City and of re-inhabiting the Holy Land, calling for racial co-existence in Baghdad, and providing an example himself by marrying Schirene.

Two conclusions emerge from Alroy's policy. On the one hand, to be positioned like the blank sheet between the two Testaments bothers neither author nor hero when power is theirs. On the other, neither man cherishes a

genuine admiration for, or a great confidence in, his fellow Jews. In Disraeli's life, there are many instances of anti-Jewish behaviour, most important of which is perhaps his attitude in Parliament towards the Jews. As Rabbi H.A. Fine tells us:

> To be sure, Disraeli was always verbally in favour of the right of the Jews to sit in Parliament. But he succeeded in finding one obstacle after another to delay the passage of the emancipation bills.
>
> In his first Parliamentary address on the subject (December 1847), Disraeli began by agreeing with the most stalwart of the reactionaries that the "principles of religious truth" should carry more weight in government than the "principles of religious liberty."[58]

Alroy's relationship with Jabaster and Honain deserves perhaps further investigation. For, in the offices they hold, the first a grand vizir, the second a special adviser, they represent the conflicting forces in Disraeli's mind. Significantly, Jabaster, who once led a similar but unsuccessful attempt to create a Jewish theocracy, is killed by Schirene, a Gentile, and Honain the assimilated Jew. He remains faithful to his Zionism till his death. He urges Alroy to continue the march towards Palestine on the grounds that:

> "the Lord hath blessed Judah: it is His land. He would have it filled by his peculiar people, so that His worship might ever flourish . . . We must exist alone. To perserve that loneliness, is the great end and essence of our law . . . Sire, you can be King of Bagdad, but you cannot, at the same time, be a Jew."[59]

By "loneliness", Jabaster certainly means separateness, a paramount objective of the Zionist enterprise. In a passionate plea to his master, Jabaster declares the principles of his Zionism:

> "You ask me what I wish: my answer is, a national existence, which we have not. You ask me what I wish: my answer is, the Land of Promise. You ask me what I wish: my answer is, Jerusalem. You ask me what I wish: my answer is, the Temple."[60]

Disraeli may be justly accredited with having recorded for the first time in modern history a Jew's aspiration to nationalism.

Honain, on the other hand, tempts Alroy with the lures of the Gentile world. On his brother's Zionism, he comments:

> My pious brother wishes to lead you [Alroy] back to the Theocracy, and is fearful that, if he prays at Bagdad instead of Sion, he may chance to become only the head of an inferior sect, instead of revelling in the universal tithes of a whole nation. As for the meteor [a supernatural warning to Alroy], Scherirah must have crossed the river about the same time."[61]

It might be suggested that Jabaster and Honain are merely fictional characters and not expressions of the author's dualism. In fact, they are exceptions among Disraeli's portrayals in that they are well-rounded, impressive and objectively drawn. Disraeli's deficiency in building up convincing characters is justly observed by his critics and biographers. Blake believes that Disraeli lacks "the capacity to invent characters, to get inside them and present their development, the power to put oneself into unfamiliar scenes and situations."[62] Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch writes:

> (1) He had the haziest notion of constructing a plot. From first to last he never gets beyond an idea, and a string of episodes. (2) His hero is, for all his recommendation, an invariable nincompoop, and his heroine (Sybil particularly) not of flesh and blood: not even an embodiment of an idea.[63]

The only exception occurs when Disraeli projects himself through his characters. Vivian's political manoeuvres, the only convincing aspect of his character, spring directly from the mind of Disraeli the politician. Contarini's predicament and feeling of alienation, impressively drawn, are Disraeli's. In *Alroy*, there are three fairly convincing characters: Honain with his shrewd and realistic views, Alroy as representative of Disraeli's Zionism, and Jabaster with his consistency of faith. The fact is that each of the three men represents a facet of Disraeli's character. Evidently, Alroy is the most representative: the blank page in a position of power. The other two symbolize the author's conflicting drives towards separateness and assimilation, which he has attempted to reconcile in Alroy. Disraeli was one of the earliest of Jews, in the age of nationalism, to face the necessity of choice between "loneliness" and assimilation. This is a further stage in the development of the character of the good Jew. Jewish self-consciousness, it appears, has grown into a quest for a national identity. Disraeli stopped short of becoming either English or Zionist. His early dream of a Zionist state, as expressed in *Alroy*, is transitory, and, in the words of Bloomfield,

> if ever he dreamt of starting or leading a Zionist movement it was not for long. The whole trend of his thinking was in quite another direction. It might have been otherwise today.[64]

Bloomfied points at an essential factor in the making of Disraeli's Zionism: in the early 19th Century such a movement would have gained as little approval from English Jewry as did Herzl himself in 1896. It needed what Contarini inscribed on the wall of Adam Besso's house in Jerusalem, 'Time'.

Disraeli and race

Disraeli returned to England from his Grand Tour " in famous condition –

better indeed than I ever was in my life and full of hope and courage."[65] He was resolved on conquering London-Babylon. The seriousness of this resolve can be inferred from the extent to which he plunged himself into dandyism as well as his relentless pursuit of a parliamentary career:

> Disraeli used dandyism to legitimate his exoticism, which was his Jewishness. His dandyism merged with his Jewishness. This was the image the public had of him all his life, or at least until he became Lord Beaconsfield . . . He remains forever the Jew at play, overdressed and tongue in cheek, piping a cynical tune. Nothing about him was assumed to be true – except his Jewishness.[66]

On the political plane, Disraeli's four subsequent failures, between 1832 and 1836, to enter the House are indicative of both the Alroy-Contarini dream and the reluctance of the English electorate to vote a Jew into Parliament. Disraeli once more realized that his Jewishness was the real cause of his failure. When, in 1837, he finally got into the House he was forced by scoffs and jeers to put a hasty end to his Maiden Speech. The speech, however, ended with the immortal and ever-quoted phrase: "The time will come when . . ." Fierce as it was, Gentile opposition did not force him this time into the regression he had experienced in the previous decade. He had developed defences against it. In 1846 the time came and he realized that "he had to stake his career upon the ruin of Peel's."[67] Perhaps it is Disraeli's greatest victory, equal even to Alroy's conquest of Baghdad.

Between 1832 and 1847, Disraeli constructed and, in his own right, accomplished a theory of races in which the Jews occupy the most prominent place. Whether Disraeli's Jewishness is, as Jean-Paul Sartre believed, a reaction to the hostile consciousness of others, or whether his perverse claim to Jewishness is the source of Gentile hostility, as Philip Rief contends, is an extremely debatable issue.[68] There is a degree of truth on both sides. Certainly, Disraeli's Jewishness was conspicuous and, in a way, exasperating. But it is also true that public hostility had strengthened in him his claim to Jewishness. His unruly character was, more often than not, interpreted in terms of racial characteristics. Moreover, his racial theory was formed essentially as a reaction to Gentile disparagement. When Alroy forsakes his Jewishness, his enemies defeat him, for even when he is willing to share with them his kingdom they will not forget that he is a Jew. Disraeli seems to have recognized the same fact. He exaggerates his Jewishness to an extent that it becomes "a pleasure, a revenge, a resource."[69]

But Disraeli's attitude towards the Jews is basically ambivalent. He is ashamed of being one of them and, at the same time, is proud of their "marvellous endowments". His grandmother's nagging self-hatred for being a Jewess was transferred to him through his father's "deficiency of self-esteem".[70] From his father he inherited the statusless position of the blank page; for, early in his life, Isaac D'Israeli dissociated himself from Judaism

but never became a Christian. Moreover, it was impossible for Disraeli not to have observed the humiliation his people suffered and accepted as a matter of course. His rebellion against such humiliation was motivated by pride, a sense of injustice and insatiable ambition. This is a peculiarly Zionistic attitude. As we have seen in the first chapter, the element of self-hatred is one drive behind Zionism. Another is the proud self-consciousness in an age of nationalism. Persecution, which is the source of the two drives, has generated the Zionist doctrine, of which Disraeli's racialist theory is in a way a precursor. Leslie Stephen writes of Disraeli's glorification of the Jews in terms of "fixed beliefs":

> Disraeli, undoubtedly, has certain fixed beliefs which underlie and which, indeed, explain the superficial versatility of his teaching... He holds, with fervour in every way honourable, a belief in the marvellous endowments of his race.[71]

Similarly, Paul Bloomfield talks of his "convictions" and "faith":

> He had taken his stand on two convictions from which he never budged. They were faith in what he rather misleadingly called "race", and an absolute assurance that he, Benjamin Disraeli, was cut out for great things.[72]

It must be noted, however, that his honourable belief, or faith, is a product of necessity. In other words, Disraeli has developed his theory of races as a defensive shield against his antagonists and not as an outcome of erudite thinking. As Professor Davies remarks: "Disraeli's theory of race . . . was because he felt the need for a prop to his confidence which he could never have got from trying to behave like a trueborn Englishman."[73]

Racialism is not Disraeli's invention, just as nationalism is not a Zionist discovery. "Race" and "blood", be they Saxon, Norman, Teutonic, German or Latin, are favourite words in the literature of the 19th Century. They denote an idea of national distinction expressed in terms of heredity. As we have seen in the second chapter, Rebecca describes the English as a fierce race. Disraeli's brand of Zionism picks up the idea and applies it to suit what Vivian Grey considers the rudiments of success and power: "Were I the son of a millionaire, or a noble, I might have all. Curse on my lot! that the want of a few rascal counters, and the possession of a little rascal blood, should mar my fortunes!"[74] Vivian's interest in blood is purely expedient. The fact that he decribes as "rascal" what later becomes in Disraeli's philosphy the decisive element of distinction suggests that, in his twenties, the author regarded racial purity with contempt. The drive for compensation, however, forces him to counter-attack his opponents' claim to superiority by similarly boastful contentions. Since the Europeans claim to have a glorious history, which they are always pleased to link with that of Greece, the Jews, under Disraeli's auspices, can also boast of having a distinctive racial history in the glorious past of Israel and Judah. Disraeli

prides himself on being a Jew and considers that Jewish characteristics are his own. Undoubtedly, one of his aims in writing his second trilogy is, in the final analysis, to vindicate himself and his people before a critical public through a theory of race. To achieve this aim he, a faithful lover of extremes, develops the racial theory to create a "great Asian mystery". Most critics tend to scoff at this great mystery. Speare believes that it has "something to do with this Lady of Bethany,"[75] and Dr Taylor declares that "the reason why he [Disraeli] never revealed the mystery was because there was nothing to reveal."[76] In fact, there is no mystery. It is simply the Jewish race and its glories.

In the second trilogy, Disraeli devotes page after page to the narration of the history of the Sephardim (Oriental) Jews and their contemporary national symbol Sidonia, who, after all, is nominally French and not English. Being a Sephardi, he mentions nothing of the history of the Ashkenazi Jews. It appears that his attention is focused only on those Jews who, he thinks, are the aristocracy of Jewry. However, in this narration he concentrates primarily on persecution, which he believes is a purely European phenomenon. The reason why the Europeans persecute the Jews is, he believes, jealousy:

> One of the consequences of the divine government of this world, which has ordained that the sacred purpose should be effected by the instrumentality of different human races, must occasionally be a jealous discontent with the revelation entrusted to a particular family.[77]

Because of this "jealous discontent", Europeans have always attempted the destruction of the Jews, but in vain, for these are protected by God: "Is it a miracle that Jehovah should guard His people?" Eva asks Tancred, "and can He guard them better than by endowing them with faculties superior to those of the nations among whom they dwell?"[78] Eva believes that these faculties have protected the Jews from blending with their conquerors and preserved for them their Jewishness. The contemporary Jewish communities are, she claims, "the descendants of the Ten Tribes, and of the other captivities preceding Christ."[79] Sidonia goes further to declare that the Jews are indestructible, that they are a phyiscal fact. He sardonically asks Coningsby: "Do you think that the quiet humdrum persecution of a decorous representative of an English university can crush those who have successively baffled the Pharaohs, Nebuchadnezzar, Rome, and the Feudal ages?" He goes on to answer:

> "The fact is, you cannot destroy a pure race of the Caucasian organisation. It is a physiological fact; a simple law of nature, which has baffled Egyptian and Assyrian Kings, Roman Emperors, and Christian Inquistors. No penal laws, no physical tortures, can effect that a superior race should be absorbed in an inferior, or be destroyed by it."[80]

Sidonia-Disraeli, then, proceeds to interpret civilization and history, not by

a theory of challenge and response, as Professor Toynbee advocates, nor by the economic factor as Marx claims, but by the qualities of races. Italy, Spain, Germany, France, Portugal, are deteriorating nations because they consist of mixed races. Only England, to the satisfaction of Coningsby and Tancred, is not, because "it is an affair of race . . . All is race; there is no other truth."[81] The individual character, therefore, is but a personification of race, its perfection and choice exemplar.

Disraeli's hierarchy of races is clear: the Jewish Arabs, the Moslem Arabs, the English, are successively at the top and everybody else is at the bottom. The Jews are not only at the very top, but are

> now and always responsible for whatever is great and good in history, despite the attempt of their inferiors to degrade and to destroy them. The Jews, according to Sidonia, are superior by more than force of intellect. The Jews are favoured with genius by nature, as a divine gift . . . They are the intermediaries between man and God, the divine "link" that gives to mankind its humanity, the priestly people in a world that would be best organized as a theocracy.[82]

It is in this hierarchy that Disraeli surpasses Zionism, which calls for the unity of the Jews on the basis of their descendance from the family of Abraham and Isaac, with no professed claims to racial superiority. Disraeli and the Zionists meet at a preliminary step, the belief that the Jews are really an unmixed race. Sidonia explains the unparalleled civilization of the Jews to Coningsby, who is made to ask: "But so favoured by Nature, why has not your race produced great poets, great orators, great writers?"[83] For one thing, Sidonia replies, had it not been for the Jews we might have never heard of the Pharaohs and of Babylon; above all, we might have never heard the word of God. The Jewish race has promulgated knowledge for all races, legislation, poetry, oratory, has produced the lyre of David and given the world Isaiah and Ezekiel, not to speak of Jeremiah and the Song of Songs. In fact the most popular poet in England is not to be found among "the Mr Wordsworths or the Lord Byrons . . . Even to the myriad-minded Shakespeare can we award the palm? No; the most popular poet in England is the sweet singer of Israel."[84] Moreover, there never is a race who has sung the odes of David as the people of England. "It was 'the sword of the Lord and of Gideon' that won the boasted liberties of England."[85] Furthermore, what is Aquinas to Maimonides, and what is modern philosophy but streams of the original spring, Spinoza? Even the life of an English peer is mainly regulated by "Arabian laws" and "Syrian customs".[86] The greatest of legislators, Moses, whose laws are still obeyed; the greatest of monarchs, Solomon, whose wisdom is a proverb in all nations; and the teacher, Jesus, whose doctrines have moulded civilized Europe – all are Jews. "What race, extinct or living, can produce three such men as these!"[87] Disraeli's comparison, scattered here and there in his works, between the Aryan and the Semitic races is brilliantly summarized by Leslie Stephen as follows:

> Modern criticism is nothing but an intellectual revolt of the Teutonic races against the Semitic revelation . . . The disturbance will pass away; and we shall find that Abraham and Moses knew more about the universe than Hegel and Comte. The prophets of the sacred race were divinely endowed with an esoteric knowledge concealed from the vulgar behind mystic symbols and ceremonies . . . The Aryans, indeed, have some touches of a cognate power, but it is dulled by a more sensuous temperament. They can enter the court of the Gentiles; but their moral vesture is too muddy for admission into the holy of holies. If ever they catch a glimpse of the truth, it is in their brilliant youth, when, still uncorrupted by worldly politics, they can induce some Sidonia partly to draw aside the veil.[88]

The result of such comparison is the declaration that the Jews are the old and the new masters of Europe and the world. An example of their unobserved power in England is given in that, though "the Jews . . . are essentially Tories," the Tory Party suddenly loses an important election at a critical moment simply because its opposition to a Jewish project in the country makes "the Jews come forward and vote against"[89] the Tory candidate.

Moreover, "musical Europe is ours," says Sidonia: "The ear, the voice . . . the imagination fervent with picture and emotion, that came from Caucasus . . . have endowed us with almost the exclusive privilege of *music*."[90] Musical companies and orchestras are crowded with the children of Israel. Rossini, Meyerbeer and Mendelssohn (Jacob Ludwig), the leading composers of that time, are of the Hebrew race. The patron saint of the republic of Venice was himself a child of Israel, the Russian minister of finance, his Spanish counterpart, the president of the French Council, Soult, Massena, the Prussian Minister, the Egyptian Prime Minister – all these are Jews, not to mention innumerable names who hold less important offices. Sidonia's letter of recommendation, curiously similar to those we have discussed in *Ivanhoe* and *Harrington*, but far more commanding, "will open Syria to"[91] Tancred. Furthermore, "the thing most valued in Europe," Tancred shamefully confesses to Eva, "is money,"[92] and the richest and most honoured man in Babylon – as she calls London – "is one of your race and faith,"[93] whose brother is the richest in Paris. The conversation between Eva and Tancred ends with the lady's emphatic statement that "half Christendom worships a Jewess, and the other half a Jew," and she adds: "Which do you think should be the superior race, the worshipped or the worshippers?"[94]

Two more points in Disraeli's pre-Zionist conceptions deserve further examination: the relationship between Arabs and Jews, and Palestine. In his history of the Sephardim in Spain, Disraeli describes the Arabs as the Jews' "brethren of the crescent" who rescued the Mosaic Arabs, their cousins, from the tyranny of Spanish rule. He informs us that for a period of nearly eight hundred years the Jews have participated in building cities and administering public life. This is a fundamental change in the views of the Disraeli who wrote *Alroy*. In the 12th Century, all people, including the

Arabs, treated the Jews of Hamadan equally badly. This change is due perhaps to Disraeli's reading of Maimonides and the general history of the Jews among the Arabs, which tells of a great degree of assimilation between the two peoples during the periods they happened to live together. Disraeli may have realized that persecution has not been a feature of the Jewish life among the Arabs. Blake believes that Disraeli has been "curiously hazy about his race," and that his "odd identification" of the Jews with the Arabs "enables him to invoke the desert, which seems to have fascinated him."[95] This is not an altogether accurate statement. The fact is that Disraeli had been fascinated by the desert three years before the publication of *Alroy*, and that he really believes, in *Tancred* and *Coningsby*, that Israelites and Ishmaelites are cousins. The European mind tends to think that, since the Jews have never been viewed as indigenous citizens of the Western countries, they must be similarly regarded in the Arab East. This comment is not, of course, meant to add weight to Disraeli's racial pretensions, but rather to emphasize the fact that Arabs and Jews, until the beginning of the Zionist colonization of Palestine, always lived together in peace and maintained cultural similarity. Disraeli, who toured the Near East, is justified in thinking that both peoples are one "race". But the children of Ishmael are decidedly second in Disraeli's hierarchy of races to the children of Israel: "The gorgeous temple of the God of Abraham," apparently Omar's Mosque, was "built, alas! by the child of Hagar, and not by Sarah's chosen one."[96]

The attraction of Palestine appears to be lessened curiously in Disraeli's second trilogy. The fullest tribute he pays it is a geographical description:

> From Bethlehem to Hebron, Canaan is still a land of milk and honey, though not so rich and picturesque as in the great expanse of Palestine to the north of the Holy City. The beauty and abundance of the promised land may still be found in Samaria and Galilee.[97]

But Disraeli, through Tancred, is infatuated with Jerusalem, "the history of Earth and Heaven", on which he lavishes all love and admiration. The Holy Land, however, is still the only place to which an English, highly-talented, upper-class, political leader of Young England should make his pilgrimage before he may commence solving the riddles and complexities of corrupted public life. For divine communion, it appears, is characteristically a local and not simply a racial quality.

> "Who can believe that a country once sanctified by the Divine presence can ever be as other lands? . . . I [Tancred] am induced, therefore, to believe that it is part of the divine scheme that its influence should be local."[98]

Tancred, like *Alroy* and most of Disraeli's novels, is an ambiguous mixture of wit, melodrama and seriousness. As usual, the tone of the novel is constantly open to different interpretations, but its purpose is clear: the

instruction of English readers into the great Asian mystery. Tancred-Ivanhoe is chosen for the new, but qualitatively different, crusade to the Holy Land in pursuit of the mystery. The young religious enthusiast is anxious to regulate his life, and that of his country, according to a fundamental doctrine.

> "You are going into first principles," said the duke [Tancred's father] much surprised.
> "Give me then second principles," replied his son, "give me any."[99]

It is not only the sense of humour, implicit in Tancred's answer, that renders doubtful the seriousness of his purpose, but also the evident taunt he, alias Disraeli, aims at English life. The taunt is also clear in the following passage:

> [The Duke:] "You are a pillar of the State; support the State." "Ah! if anyone could but tell me what the State is," said Lord Montacute sighing. "It seems to me your pillars remain, but they support nothing . . . They [politicians] do not even profess to support anything; on the contrary, the nothing is to be established, and everything is to be left to itself."[100]

It is impossible to mistake in Tancred's discourse the gibe Disraeli intends at English politicians. The young noble then moves suddenly from sarcasm to a solemn declaration of his aim to leave for the Holy Sepulchre where he will kneel in humbleness and ask: "What is DUTY, and what is FAITH? What ought I to DO, and what ought I to BELIEVE?"[101] The affected tone of the statement is made even worse by the remark of Lord Milford that "there is absolutely no sport of any kind,"[102] not even "a bird in the whole country."[103]

In the Holy Land, Disraeli exposes his high priest to immense spiritual and racial influences which reveal to him at last how his creator wants the English nation to think of the Jews and of Disraeli. One of these influences is, inevitably, the new Rebecca, Eva Besso, with her tantalizing arguments; another is the ecstatic and pious, but ultimately fruitless, reveries before the Holy Sepulchre where solace comes but not revelation; and the last, the most important, his pilgrimage to Mount Sinai. Jerusalem, it becomes clear, is less spiritually important than the barren mountain of Moses where the new crusader experiences revelation with the mysterious angel of Arabia. Eva's conversation with Tancred, from which we have already quoted, is full of taunts directed at the Europeans, and of propaganda on behalf of the Jews. The angel, who speaks a strangely pseudo-archaic English, reminds Tancred of the Arabian principles whose spiritual values "should be set up in the place of the materialism of the Manchester school,"[104] and recommends the pilgrim to "announce the sublime and solacing doctrine of theocratic equality."[105] Tancred, therefore, devises with Prince Fakredeen a new crusade by which the two men will assert the spiritual supremacy of Asia

and conquer Europe at the head of Syrian and Arab races. Tancred will "climb Mount Carmel [in Palestine], and utter three words which would bring the Arabs again to Granada, and perhaps further,"[106] and both men will "establish the happiness of man by a divine dominion, and, crushing the political atheism that is now desolating existence, utterly extinguish the grovelling tyranny of self-government."[107]

Most critics comment disapprovingly on the abrupt, open end of *Tancred*. Once more we are surrounded by Disraeli's ambiguity. His seriousness is again marred by a gratuitous sense of humour and by occasional stumbles into melodrama. R.A. Levine outlines the issue by asking the following question:

> Does this invasion of English tourists point towards the long way the English aristocracy has to go before the symbolic meaning of the great Asian mystery can become fact or is Disraeli rarely willing to completely drop the witty touch – toying with or amusing his readers?[108]

It seems that the correct answer is the simplest one. Having fully instructed his high priest after the Disraelian principles, and having painted the home of his race and vindicated its place in history, Disraeli sees no need for a well-rounded ending to his novel. Tancred's proposal to Eva is one for a marriage between Judaism and Christianity based on a belief that both religions are, racially, therefore ultimately, Jewish products, the second being the completion of the first.

What is Disraeli's argument for such belief? On the one hand, the theological and moral structure of Christianity is derived from the genius of the Jews. As Sidonia explains to Tancred, both Moses and Jesus are children of Israel, they spoke Hebrew to the Hebrews;[109] the prophets and apostles, the founders of the Asian church, and St. Peter whose church "converted this island to the faith of Moses and of Christ"[110] – all these are Hebrews. With yet another taunt, a bitter one this time, Sidonia regrets:

> "Your bishops here know nothing about these things. How can they? A few centuries back they were tattooed savages . . . The church was founded by a Hebrew, and the magnetic influence lingers . . . Theology requires an apprenticeship of some thousand years at least; to say nothing of clime and race."[111]

This sad state of affairs explains why Tancred feels that the Anglican church, though of divine institution, is no longer functioning in the way it should. Its opinions are conflicting, its decrees contradictory, and its conduct inconsistent. When Tancred assures Eva that if she were to be converted to Christianity "the Christian Church would be your guide," she asks him: "Which [church]? there are so many in Jerusalem."[112] Moreover, Eva goes on, humanity is saved by "the apparent agency of a Hebrew prince,"

and because the Jews, in fulfilment of the divine will, "prevailed upon the Romans to crucify Jesus."[113]

On the other hand, Disraeli "did not understand how a Jew could not be a Christian; in his eyes that was to stop half-way and to renounce the glory of a race, which was that it had given the world a God."[114] He thinks of Christ as a young Hebrew prince, and of Christianity as Judaism perfected and granted the world at large. Consequently, he "deplored the fact that 'millions of Jews should persist in believing only part of their religion.' "[115] It is the Jews' divine duty to spread the word of God among Gentiles, for the divine government works only by races, and God has vouchsafed, the Caucasian Semites His word, first through Moses and secondly through Jesus:

> "It was ordained that the inspired Hebrew mind should mould and govern the world. Through Jesus, God spoke to the Gentiles and not to the tribes of Israel only. That is the great worldly difference between Jesus and his inspired predecessors. Christianity is Judaism for the multitude, but still it is Judaism."[116]

The Jews, therefore, should embrace Christianity; and Christians should recognize the Jews as a divine instrument and stop persecuting them. The result will be that the two Testaments will amalgamate, together with the blank sheet between them and put an end to Disraeli's precarious position and painful dualism.

Disraeli's essential purpose in writing the second trilogy is, indeed, to achieve this end. In other words, he is mainly concerned with obtaining for himself the status he aspires to among the English without, at the same time, relinquishing his Jewishness. His endeavour is to justify himself before a hostile public, which does not recognize his high qualifications. His tone, when touching upon these matters, is markedly argumentative and self-justifying. His arguments vary between appeal and provocation, but in them all he is trying to convince some imaginary audience that Disraeli, the Jew, must be vindicated. He, no doubt, feels superior to English politicians, and his feeling is manifest in the analyses he makes of English institutions and public life as well as in his Jewish characters. The representatives of Zion in the second trilogy are far more important than those of England.

Of course it suits Disraeli to blur differences between the two faiths, for, after all, he is seeking recognition as political leader at a time when even his own party will not give him a chance. Proving that there is really no great difference between Judaism and Christianity will remove, he believes, the obstacles his Jewishness has put along his road to power. Disraeli, as Clyde Lewis points out,[117] is a master of expediency. To be sure, one can easily elicit doctrines and principles from his writings, shrewd criticism and brilliant commentary. John Holloway goes as far as to include him in a category of Victorian sages.[118] But one fact remains clear, that the most important of his writings have been prompted by rebellion, and whatever

ideas or analyses these writings contain spring from a deep sense of alienation, which is particularly Jewish and represents a general phenomenon of 19th Century Jewish life. Disraeli has expressed a reaction to such alienation in the form of a predominantly racial-national pride, which is at the core of the Zionist doctrine. By the end of the century, Zionism picks up the idea of nationalism and starts a programme of creating national consciousness among the Jews.

The latent influence of Disraeli's preachings on his fellow-Jews is discernible in the numerous letters he received from many of them expressing their feelings at reading his novels.[119] A Jewish youth wrote "to a descendant of that wandering tribe of Alroy" to assure him that "a stronger feeling than that of mere pride is awakened by the perusal of *Tancred*." Another from New York "begged Disraeli to use his genius to defend the Jews from a charge which has since become lost in the history of their prosecution." A third declared that having read *Alroy* he "dreamed every night for a week after, of the gorgeous grandeur of the Holy City." One, Adam Strachan, "a working man who never was at a School", thought that "you shuld write a new Edition abut [sic] the Lady of Bethany, if she became the Wife of Lord Bellamont & Adam Besso & then comes the poor man of Lebanon the Emir . . ."

Disraeli's debates are best carried in the second trilogy by Sidonia and Eva, who perhaps deserve more attention. Alienation and pride, two important factors behind the birth of Zionism, characterize the life and personality of Sidonia. The author introduces him rather dramatically:

> A flash of lightening illumined the whole country, and a horseman at full speed, followed by his groom, galloped up to the door.[120]

But he is coming alone, accompanied only by "his groom". Disraeli exaggerates his qualifications and achievements to such an extent that his estrangement seems, at least superficially, a logical outcome of his superiority. The superlative, thrice miraculous Sidonia, as Stephen describes him, is an immense repository of human genius. Perhaps no description other than Disraeli's own can do him justice:

> Sidonia had exhausted all the sources of human knowledge; he was master of the learning of every nation, of all tongues dead or living, of every literature, Western and Oriental. He had pursued the speculations of science to their last term, and had himself illustrated them by observation and experiment. He had lived in all orders of society, had viewed every combination of Nature and of Art . . .[121] Sidonia was a man on whom the conventional superiorities of life produced as little effect as a flake falling on the glaciers of the high Alps. His comprehension of the world and human nature was too vast and complete . . .[122] He possessed the rare faculty of communicating with precision ideas the most abstruse, and in general a power of expression which arrests and satisfies attention. . .[123]

> He was lord and master of the money-market of the world, and of course virtually lord and master of everything else . . .[124]

Sidonia may become less mythical and more probable if understood as an embodiment of the author's inflated perception of the Jews, a representative of those of them who, Disraeli believes, hold high offices and exert a tremendous influence all over Europe. With his uncountable wealth, he stands for the Rothschilds of Great Britain, France and Germany. His genius is that of all Jewish scholars, scientists, philosophers, composers, psychologists, sociologists, generals and, of course, politicians and financiers. In short, he is the Jewish national consciousness in a dramatized fictional form. He is also Disraeli's revenge for Fagin and his tribe. Above all, he is Disraeli himself, in both character and knowledge. He displays the same pride in the "Arabian tribes", who, in the five great varieties of physiognomy, as he classifies the human race, rank first and superior. He also believes that the blood of Mosaic and Mohammadan Arabs – no Christian Arabs are included – is as pure as "that of the descendants of the Sheik Abraham," and that "the Mosaic Arabs are the most ancient, if not the only, unmixed blood that dwells in cities."[125] Moreover, he will not marry a Christian, because such a marriage will adulterate his children's blood.

But "action is not for me,"[126] he wistfully informs Coningsby on their first meeting. He is a European, but does not belong to any of the European nations. He is everywhere and nowhere. Disraeli's *Coningsby* and *Tancred* centre on him, but he is a bystander, without a country, without an identity, without government. The impact of English life forces him, as it has forced Disraeli, to take refuge in either evasive sarcasm or resounding hyperbole. He is more established in England than Rebecca is, yet more alien. He is not a crusader, yet; but confident of the future of his race. With the advent of Zionism the obstacle of inaction is removed. In other respects, he has all the characteristics of a Zionist: Jewish national sentiment and pride, worldwide power, and a belief in the Jew's distinctive endowments and racial purity. If he is not a complete Zionist, he is a precursor of one, and, in his racial doctrine, he is an ultra-Zionist. The momentum of European life allows him to study the prevalent conditions of his people, to spare many Jewish families from destitution, save Jewish geniuses from waste, but not to call for any organized form of nationalistic mobilization of either discontented Jews or those who "preferred to 'let well enough alone,' and were the last to exploit their ancestral origins."[127] Sidonia is different from 19th Century assimilated Monteneros, and his problem is not that of gaining a nationality but of confessing one. Self-consciousness among the Jews has not, at that time, reached the point of discovering a nationalism of their own. Most of the Monteneros have already made their choices, but not all of them. Some, like Benjamin Disraeli for instance, feel alien, others are persecuted. Persecution is not always physical, it can be moral and as damaging: "Everything specifically Jewish is of a low grade,"[128] writes George Eliot in 1848.

Eva Besso is interesting insofar as she advances Disraeli's taunting arguments against Christian persecution of the Jews. As a fictional creation, she is a more sophisicated Rebecca. The two females possess nearly the same qualities: they are morally courageous, faithful to their religion, proud of their people, eloquent, good debators whether with fathers or crusaders, and, above all, beautiful; only Eva's qualities are greater, since she is one of Disraeli's creations. She is a houri who has just stepped out of the *Arabian Nights*, with baffling arguments, astounding questions, tender passions and a propensity for fainting. She differs from Rebecca in that she has more to argue against Christians and much more for Jews, and performs her duty to perfection. She is Disraeli's mouthpiece asserting, not Scott's principle of docility and domestic love, but the superiority of the Jews and the barbarity of those Gentiles who persecute them. Like Sidonia, she "stands for the genius of Judaism."[129] Moreover, it is Eva's Ivanhoe who professedly falls in love with her and not the reverse. She nurses him during a dangerous illness and saves his life.

Conclusion

Disraeli's preoccupation with the Jews in his other works follows more or less the same pattern we have discussed in his second trilogy. In his *Life of George Bentinck* (1851) he re-emphasizes his racial-religious doctrine in an essaylike chapter, which looks curiously out of place. In *Lothair* (1870) and *Endymion* (1881), he appears to be more interested in European affairs, especially in what seem to him to be subversive movements, than in the Jewish plight. Towards the end of his life, he is asked whatever has become of Vivian Grey. His answer is significant: "There is no inquest; it is believed that he survives."[130] He refuses to read *Daniel Deronda* on the simple grounds that he would rather write a novel than read one. The replies suggest that his Zionist preoccupation has been a temporary reaction and that the real Disraeli is, in the final analysis, Vivian Grey, the wirepuller and the political aspirant.

However, Disraeli's Jewishness and Jewish attitudes since 1844 never changed. *Tancred* and not *Alroy* was his favourite work, which he used to read frequently.[131] The interest of this research lies, naturally, in the period when his identification with Alroy is predominant. Our purpose in examining his second trilogy has been twofold: first, to trace the dissolution of his Zionism into strong pan-Judaism, and secondly to elicit a picture of a pre-Zionist, self-conscious Jew. Disraeli's Zionism, as expressed in his novels, reaches its acme with the publication of *Alroy* in 1833, after which, notably with the publication of the second trilogy (1844-47), a certain pan-Judaism, an inactive Zionism, emerges and dominates his thinking for the rest of his life. His Englishness was always separate from his Zionist and Judaist enthusiasms. He refused assimilation and alienation, or had to do so, but did not exile himself out of England, which he loved dearly. Most probably,

he retained, or had to retain, his dualism to the end of his life. The inferiority complex in his psychology, to which George Eliot refers in her previously quoted letter, is not an improbable inference. Speare, moreover, refers to a religious reconversion which made him throw caution to the wind. Megalomania and such a complex constitute, perhaps, the main tension of his reaction against Gentile persecution, physical or moral. Not all the Jews, however, could find their desirable seats among English classes; some of those went back to Zion or wished, like Alroy, to do so. The fulfilment of this wish is Zionism. Sidonia, who is Alroy after ten years, utters the most revealing of statements in the second trilogy with regard to Disraeli's Zionism:

> "It is no longer difficult to reach Jerusalem; the real difficulty is the one experienced by the crusaders, to know what to do when you have arrived there."[132]

It is impossible to describe as Zionist a Jew who finds it difficult to know what to do in Jerusalem. Sidonia has no plans for colonizing Palestine. In *Alroy* Zionism leads to a convulsive war. Of course, Zionists have had to wage war, but before that they spent fifty years preparing for it. Disraeli has nothing to say on this subject. He cannot tell us what to do after having "arrived there". The real importance of his life and works, insofar as this study is concerned, is that they present an example of how a Jew in general, and a European Jew in particular, may become a Zionist.

Notes

1. Edmund Wilson, *A Piece of My Mind: Reflections at Sixty* (W.H. Allen, 1957) p.68.
2. Robert Blake, *Disraeli* (Eyre and Spottiswode, 1966) p.49.
3. Quoted by Blake, *Disraeli*, p.38.
4. Richard Aldington, *Four English Portraits, 1801-1851* (Evans, 1948) p.81.
5. Paul Bloomfield, *Disraeli*, (Longman, Green, 1961) p.5.
6. Aldington, *Four English Portraits,* p.95.
7. Quoted by Bloomfield, *Disraeli*, p.22.
8. Blake, *Disraeli*, p.427.
9. André Maurois, *Disraeli: A Picture of the Victorian Age*, trans. Hamish Miles (Bodley Head, 1929, first published 1927) p.178.
10. Blake, *Disraeli,* p.552.
11. J.A. Froude, *Lord Beaconsfield* (Sampson Low, Marston Searle and Rivington, 1890) p.173.
12. In a letter to her son, quoted by Blake, *Disraeli,* p.538.
13. Arthur Quiller-Couch, *Charles Dickens and Other Victorians* (Cambridge University Press, 1925) p.197.

14. Benjamin Disraeli, *Contarini Fleming or a Psychological Romance* (Peter Davies, 1927, first published 1932) p.5.
15. Benjamin Disraeli, *Vivian Grey* (Constable, 1926, first published in 1826) p.17.
16. Ibid. p.18.
17. B.R. Jerman, *The Young Disraeli* (Oxford University Press, 1960) p.50.
18. Disraeli, *Contarini Fleming,* p.182.
19. Jerman, *The Young Disraeli,* p.80.
20. Ibid., p.135.
21. Ibid., p.40 (a footnote).
22. Disraeli, *Contarini Fleming,* p.166.
23. Recorded by Blake, *Disraeli*, p.504.
24. Disraeli, *Vivian Grey*, p.38.
25. Disraeli, *Contarini Fleming,* p.89.
26. Blake, *Disraeli*, p.67.
27. Muriel Masefield, *Peacocks and Primroses: A Survey of Disraeli's Novels* (Geoffrey Bles, 1953) p.75.
28. Walter Allen, *The English Novel: A Short Critical Study* (Phoenix House, 1954), p.146.
29. Disraeli, *Contarini Fleming,* p.362.
30. Ibid., p.363.
31. Quoted by Blake, *Disraeli,* p.542.
32. Jerman, *The Young Disraeli*, p.39.
33. Ibid., p.40 (a footnote).
34. Leslie Stephen, *Hours in a Library* (Smith, Elder, 1909) Vol.II, p.114.
35. Allen, *The English Novel,* p.149.
36. Stephen, *Hours in a Library*, Vol.II, p.113.
37. Blake, *Disraeli,* p.175.
38. Stephen, *Hours in a Library*, Vol.II, p.119.
39. Benjamin Disraeli, *The Wondrous Tale of Alroy,* (Peter Davies, 1927, first published 1833) p.8.
40. Jerman, *The Young Disraeli,* p.171.
41. Disraeli, *Alroy,* p.9.
42. Ibid., p.31.
43. Ibid., p.17.
44. Ibid., the last short quotations are taken from pp.60-3.
45. Disraeli, *Alroy,* p.61.
46. Ibid., the last short quotations are taken from pp.59-63.
47. Ibid., p.40.
48. Ibid., p.120.
49. Ibid., p.120.
50. Ibid., p.124.
51. Ibid., p.125.
52. Rosenberg, *From Shylock to Svengali,* p.180.
53. Disraeli, *Alroy*, p.159.
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4. The Zionist: Discoverer of Self and Nation

> The most important layers that made up the English legend of the Jew were, in chronological order, the theological, the economic, the romantic, and the realistic. To these four, *Daniel Deronda* added a fifth layer, the heroic . . .
>
> Richard Cumberland, Walter Scott, Byron, Shelley, and others idealized this museum-specimen of ancient days, but none of these writers was interested in the future of the Jews . . . *Daniel Deronda* superimposed a fifth layer on the other four . . . the legend of Israel Reborn.
>
> Sol Liptzin, "Daniel Deronda", *Jewish Book Annual*

In 1848, George Eliot wrote a letter to a friend of hers commenting on Disraeli's racialism:

> All the other races (except the negroes) seem plainly destined to extermination, not excepting even the Hebrew Caucasians . . . The fellowship of race, to which D'Israeli so exultingly refers the munificence of Sidonia, is evidently an inferior impulse, which must ultimately be superseded, that I wonder even he, a Jew as he is, dares to boast of it. My Gentile nature kicks most resolutely against any assumption of superiority in the Jews . . . I bow to the supremacy of Hebrew poetry, but much of their early mythology, and almost all their history, is utterly revolting. Their stock has produced a Moses and a Jesus; but Moses was impregnated with Egyptian philosophy, and Jesus . . . transcended or resisted Judaism. The very exaltation of their idea of a national deity into a spiritual monotheism seems to have been borrowed from the other oriental tribes. Everything specifically Jewish is of a low grade.[1]

After this sharp criticism of Disraeli and the Jews, George Eliot began in 1874 to write *Daniel Deronda*, the first partially Zionistic novel in the history of English fiction. In it the possibility of having prophets and leaders among the Jews, after the manner of ancient times, is made evident, the heritage and character of the Jew are presented as glorious and poetic, and above all, the working out of a national, exclusively Jewish republic is shown as not only a possibility but also a duty.

Apart from her admiration for Lessing and his *Nathan the Wise*, there is, unfortunately, too little in either her works, letters or journals to help

trace this fundamental change in her attitude towards the Jews. Most important perhaps is the quotation which Sephardo cites from Jehuda ben Halevi in *The Spanish Gypsy:*

> Israel
> is to the nations as the body's heart:
> Thus writes our poet Jehuda.[2]

These lines suggest a departure in George Eliot's thinking from the notions she held in 1848. Moreover, as Leslie Stephen tells us, the author's initial intention in writing *The Spanish Gypsy* was to present a tragedy that would take place among the Moors or the Jews, but she finally decided on the Gypsies because the "facts of their [Jews' and Moors'] history were too conspicuously opposed to the working out of my catastrophe."[3] In *Middlemarch*, there is Will Ladislaw, whose partially Jewish ancestry (his English grandmother married a Jew) arouses the Middlemarchers' antipathy.

I am inclined to believe that George Eliot's sympathy with the Jews goes back at least to the time of her writing *The Spanish Gypsy*. In his *George Eliot: A Biography,* Professor Haight believes that "her lively concern with the idea of Jewish nationalism sprang directly from her friendship with Emanuel Deutsch,"[4] whom she knew shortly after the publication of *Middlemarch*, and that Mordecai was drawn after him. I would suggest that this "lively concern with the idea of Jewish nationalism" was revived by, rather than sprang from, her acquaintance with that learned and eccentric Jew.

However, George Eliot appears to have relinquished in *Daniel Deronda* nearly all her previous ideas about the Jews. Her being impressed by Scott's Rebecca is evident in that she twice mentions the author and his heroine in her novel,[5] and one cannot help pointing, incidentally, to the curious dissimilarity in religious confession between the crypto-Jewess Berenice Montenero in *Harrington* and the crypto-Christian Daniel Deronda. But it is with Disraeli that George Eliot shares several points of view on the Jews. It is not irrelevant to link Mordecai's desire for a Jewish polity and Deronda's dedication to fulfil it, with Alroy's half-fulfilled Zionist dream. Moreover, Mordecai's statement that "from the Alexandrian time downward, the most comprehensive minds have been Jewish,"[6] strikes a Disraelian note. The author believes that the Jewish faith "had penetrated the thinking of half the world, and moulded the splendid forms of that world's religion."[7] Deronda, still believing himself a Christian, says: "Our religion is chiefly a Hebrew religion."[8] Reckless Hans Meyrick is made to report "Mordecai's notion that a whole Christian is three-fourths a Jew."[9]

In a letter to the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, George Eliot reveals her direct incentive for having written "the Jewish element in 'Deronda' " as follows:

> But precisely because I felt that the usual attitude of Christians towards the

> Jews is – I hardly know whether to say more impious or more stupid when viewed in the light of their professed principles, I therefore felt urged to treat Jews with such sympathy and understanding as my nature and knowledge could attain to. Moreover, not only towards the Jews, but towards all oriental peoples with whom we English come in contact, a spirit of arrogance and contemptuous dictatorialness is observable . . . There is nothing I should care more to do, if it were possible, than to rouse the imagination of men and women to a vision of human claims in those races of their fellow-men who most differ from them in customs and beliefs. But towards the Hebrews we western people who have been reared in Christianity, have a peculiar debt and, whether we acknowledge it or not, a peculiar thoroughness of fellowship in religious and moral sentiment . . . They [Christians] hardly know that Christ was a Jew.[10]

It is clear from this letter that nearly all her ideas in 1848 are reversed in 1876. The last two sentences, however, also remind the reader of Disraeli's racial doctrine. Indeed, the author's projection of the idea of Jewish nationalism in *Daniel Deronda* reveals a far greater comprehension than Disraeli's in several of his books. No wonder Zionist Jews in Russia found the novel inspiring and turned it into a Zionist Bible:

> Four years after the book appeared, a new school of theorists . . . had arisen in Russia; men who, having started life by teaching their co-religionists the doctrines of assimilation, saw themselves in 1880 plunged into the horrors of persecution and massacre, and to them the national-political restoration at once became the only road to human salvation. These writers at once made "Daniel Deronda" their own; translated it into Hebrew; and supplemented it by their own views on the re-colonization of Palestine. These books went through several successive editions and were greedily absorbed by the bulk of Jewish thinkers.[11]

George Eliot's conception of Zionism, however, does not seem to have been fully expressed, or even comprehended, by a number of critics, whose argument over the literary and social value of *Daniel Deronda* is curious and interesting, and is perhaps worth examining if only to show how it comes short of relating the theme of Zionism to George Eliot's general philosophy of man and nature. The Jews were quick to praise the book and express gratitude to the author. Many learned and distinguished members of the Jewish community in England sent George Eliot letters thanking her for her fidelity and scholarly manner in depicting "some of the best traits of the Jewish character."[12] Some of them went to extremes. David Kaufmann, after as much praise as he could afford for both author and Jewish characters in the book, declares "the Jews – the Great Unknown of humanity –" to be far superior to any other people: "The [Jewish] characters seem sometimes to take voice to themselves and cry, Compare your superficial splendour, your frivolous pleasures, your poor, futile amusements, your gnawing passions, and absorbing vices, with the deep contentedness, the all-

satisfying delights and the moral purity of the higher Jewish life, and see if these Jews are, after all, so much more contemptible than yourselves."[13] He goes on to say:

> "Daniel Deronda" is a Jewish book not only in the sense that it treats of Jews, but also in the sense that it is pre-eminently fitted for being understood and appreciated by the Jews; indeed they only are qualified to embrace and enjoy its full significance.[14]

Jewish approval and Kaufmann's appreciation of *Daniel Deronda*, however, do not fully capture what the author has actually envisioned in terms of the future of the Jews. The Victorians' reception shows a similarly defective understanding, though in an opposite direction. They were not prepared to take in such a magnitude of sympathy on behalf of the Jews. "Who can believe in such a prig as Deronda?" they asked, and "Mordecai is a shadow," and, as *The Tablet* put it: "The author commits a literary error when she makes Deronda abandon on learning the fact of his Jewish birth all that a modern English education weaves of Christianity and the results of Christianity into an English gentleman's life."[15] Though this criticism is defensible on literary grounds, it nevertheless denotes a tendency towards comparing Jewish with English characters. In fact, a majority of critics tend to express discontent at the relative injustice with which George Eliot has treated her English characters. Barbara Hardy puts the case elaborately as an attitude of anti-English bias. In her introduction to the 1967 Penguin edition of *Daniel Deronda*, she writes:

> The English are in varying degrees the objects of satire, and the European, especially the Jew, is also, in varying degrees, the object of praise. There are some exceptions, on either side, but the bias is unmistakable. It is in favour of the Jews and of the Jewish community, however dispersed and fragmentary this may be . . . When George Eliot shows a favourable image of English family life, for instance, in the rather over-cosy scenes at the Meyrick fireside, it is worth noticing that the Meyrick family is made half-French.[16]

Hardy has also shown a similar, but less pointed, appreciation in her excellent book on *The Novels of George Eliot*. "The racial antithesis shapes the novel, but there is more in its pattern than antithesis,"[17] she writes, and goes on to elicit some "exceptional cases" of similarlity between representatives of the two races. But, in her introduction, Hardy pronounces this approach in appreciating *Daniel Deronda* unsound and calls for a study of the novel in terms of characterization, plot, dialogue and development of action and psychology.

Dr Leavis believes that *Daniel Deronda* should be divided into two separate novels, for which he provides two titles, *Daniel Deronda* and *Gwendolen Harleth:* the first is "astonishingly bad", the second "has astonishingly contrasting strength and fineness."[18] His idea of disjunction,

stressed again in his introduction to the 1970 Panther edition of the book, has at least one opponent, an Israeli lecturer and man of letters. In an article on "Daniel Deronda or Gwendolen Harleth?" Harold Fisch protests against viewing the novel from a purely English platform, and complains of a series of "disjunctive critics" who have unanimously sentenced the Jewish part to failure simply because the speeches and actions of the Jewish characters, "do not . . . spring out of the social and moral soil of Victorian high life."[19] His main point, as the question mark ending the title of his article shows, is that, bearing in mind

> George Eliot's purpose as a novelist celebrating mighty historical changes in the epic and romantic manner . . . we may well ask: Why introduce the Gwendolen business at all? Why not restrict oneself to the bigger theme? . . . If we are going to claim Daniel as the real (and not merely titular) hero, therefore, we should . . . ask: What is Gwendolen doing in the novel, and why do she and her world pre-empt so much space and attention?[20]

If there is any failure in *Daniel Deronda*, Fisch concludes, then it is due to "the magnitude of the task [which] finally defeated her [the author]".[21]

George Eliot and Zionism

This rapid survey of critical reaction to *Daniel Deronda* is intended to show that this appreciation has not as yet attempted to relate the two ostensibly different themes of Zionism and Gwendolen's moral salvation to each other, and to relate both to George Eliot's vision of life. The idea of having unsurpassably good Jewish characters against unmistakably bad or less good English ones appears to be quite alien to George Eliot's intentions. I would even suggest that, taken as it is, the idea has little to substantiate it. Grandcourt, callous as he is, is essentially no more and no less condemnable than Lapidoth, who has degenerated into a procurer for his own daughter. Similarly, the Princess Halm-Eberstein, eternally doomed to gnawing contrition for repudiating her national traditions, stands afar from the positive regeneration of Gwendolen, whose sin lies mainly in her aberration from the spirit of her "aged nation". And while Deronda is half English by upbringing and half Jewish by birth, Mordecai, aside from his national visions which have nothing to do with English life, does not possess very many great qualities to recommend him. Moreover, Mirah's righteousness, which is entirely for herself, is matched by the Meyricks' generous hospitality.

But, as Barbara Hardy has remarked, a sound approach towards examining *Daniel Deronda* does not lie in racial rhetoric. It is perhaps necessary to stress here George Eliot's basically democratic and egalitarian mind which is definitely unlike that of Disraeli, in whose hierarchy of races, with the Jews at the top, and in whose notion of the purity of the

Jewish blood, George Eliot finds a tendency to "bamboozle". George Eliot considers the Jews as a race but one among others, different but neither superior nor inferior: "Mr Ram . . . was an elderly son of Abraham . . . nature's imperfect effort on behalf of the purer Caucasian."[22] Moreover, not all the Jews are the base people the Gentiles take them to be, for their traditions, poetry and suffering demand respect. Consequently, there is no point in making comparisons and contrasts. This is perhaps best illustrated, briefly, in the dialogue between Deronda and Mirah on their first meeting:

> "Yes [Mirah is speaking], I will tell you. I am English-born. But I am a Jewess." . . .
> "Do you despise me for it?" she said presently in low tones, which had a sadness that pierced like a cry from a small dumb creature in fear.
> "Why should I?" said Deronda. "I am not so foolish."
> "I know many Jews are bad."
> "So are many Christians. But I should not think it fair for you to despise me because of that."[23]

Neither is it sound to cut the novel into two, whether in favour of Gwendolen or of Deronda. When the author protests against cutting "the book into scraps" and affirms: "I meant everything in the book to be related to everything else there,"[24] we should take her statement for what it is and examine the novel accordingly. Relationships between the two groups of Jews and Gentiles are well explained in Daniel Charisi's Zionist conception of "separateness and communication", which suggests that the Jews are different as a nation and a race and connected to other peoples through general human experience; that these relationships are governed by natural characteristics of heredity, tradition and individual differences; and that a discovery of such characteristics is in accord with the laws of nature and is a safeguard in any literary criticism of the novel against shallow understanding of it. Such shallowness of understanding is perhaps best expressed in a common wish for Gwendolen having a man who should exclusively be her own. George Eliot, it must be remembered, never tolerated "silly novels by lady novelists", whose sole object was to get people married in a fashionable manner after the removal of various obstructions. In relating Deronda and Gwendolen to the main theme of the book, the morally regenerating discovery of self and the world, George Eliot establishes a subtle balance of independence and dependence in the two characters' relationships. The difficulty is that what the author intends as a moral theme is interpreted by many in terms of love and marriage. The reason for this is that the author's technique has failed to validate her ideas. Still, according to her plan, Deronda is not Gwendolen's personal salvation and is not meant – in Gwendolen's world – to be more than a factor furthering the inner workings of a nature which, though misguided by bad education and materialistic values, is essentially good and capable of being saved. Deronda's character, therefore, should be examined from the viewpoint that, as a potential and

eventually actual Zionist, he represents an historical movement. The controversy over *Daniel Deronda* stems essentially from a curious neglect of the theme of Zionism resulting in a misinterpretation of what has come to be called, wrongly, "the Jewish half". Critics who admire the Jewish portraits in the novel do so on purely emotional grounds. Leavis and other critics, while presenting a fair appreciation of the book, overlook, by stressing the stylistic and technical failures of the book, the author's vision of the world and of man. In particular they fail to show how Zionism fits in George Eliot's conceptions of nature, morality and nationhood. Zionism is not, of course, one of George Eliot's major preoccupations and is nowhere mentioned in her writings. To study it as a main theme may even do injustice to her greater and more constant themes. However, since the Zionist character is the focal subject of this research, George Eliot's presentation of it is given primary emphasis and is related to the author's larger vision of life.

Zionism and Zionist characters in *Daniel Deronda* are depicted within the broad concept of separateness and communication mentioned above, and this is best shown in Deronda's relationship with Gwendolen. It is not for nothing that the author has snatched the gambling scene at Leubronn from the chain of events in the novel and put it in the opening page. As Sir Hugo placidly comments to Deronda: "There must be an entanglement between your horoscope and hers [Gwendolen's]".[25] The meeting of the two characters in the roulette room, made conspicuous by projecting it first, signifies what George Eliot calls "the mutual influence of dissimilar destinies"[26] as well as "a striking admission of human quality,"[27] which is another way to express the idea of separateness and communication. There is a "dynamic quality" in Gwendolen's glance raising in Deronda a wish felt as "coercion" to look at her again with growing scrutiny and diminishing admiration. His gaze is taken by her as supercilious, ironical and ominous: instantly she begins to lose in her gambling and something in her is considerably shaken.

Daniel Deronda, "young, handsome, distinguished in appearance – not one of those ridiculous and dowdy Philistines,"[28] has always longed, as he tells Mordecai later

> for some ideal task, in which I might feel myself the heart and brain of a multitude – some social captainship, which would come to me as a duty, and not to be striven for as a personal prize.[29]

While he is searching for his Zionist task, Gwendolen Harleth, a beautiful and commanding middle-class girl, is looking forward to social triumph and personal power, despite her frailty at moments of impulse. The movements of the two characters are at the same time contrasting and comparable. Gwendolen moves essentially inwardly, into a deep unfolding of her character where conflicting desires and natural traits, entwined as a "tangled web", entail a masterly portrayed struggle between the good and

bad elements of her nature. Her little but highly significant tragedy is depicted through her experiences with Daniel Deronda, the economic speculations of 1865, and her marriage to Grandcourt. This inward movement is accompanied by an outward and simultaneous one, a movement towards the sublime and the transcendental, towards self-discovery and a reunion with people and nature. The outcome of her twofold movement, in the words of William Steinhoff, is that "she is freed from the bondage of self and has progressed into a larger universe of unselfish duty."[30]

Deronda, whose nebulous yearning for an altruistic "captainship" or "vocation", which has so far isolated him from the larger life, nature and others, tests the validity of his sympathy and self-sacrifice for Hans Meyrick in the satisfaction he feels on seeing Hans win a Cambridge scholarship at the cost of his (Deronda's) failure. He is driven farther by a need for either some external event, or some inward light, that would urge him into a definite line of action, and compress his wandering energy. Afterwards he meets Mordecai and the latter's national exhortations address both his yearning and his altruistic self in a way that makes him embrace, after the discovery of his Jewish descent, the mission of dedicating his life to the Zionist cause.

Like Gwendolen's outward movement, Deronda's is accompanied by an inward one, where his "meditative numbness" and all that is nebulous in him crystallize into a true identity and a definite form of duty with the ultimate unity between self and nation. In both directions, the inward and the outward, Deronda discovers Zionism. He discovers it as a historical cause and as an inner light artificially and temporarily dimmed by unnatural circumstances.

In the process of their experiences, Deronda and Gwendolen meet often and each time their separateness and communication increase in reality and substance. Gwendolen becomes his moral responsibility, and he, a part of her conscience. Their "pathways" (one of George Eliot's significant metaphors) are definitely different, but their final awakening to the outer world is alike. In discovering themselves they discover history, the multitude, a world of less self-centred existence, and in judging themselves they also judge their time and its values, choices, trends, priorities and moral laws. Deronda finds his salvation in dedicating himself to that "pathetic inheritance in which all the grandeur and the glory have become a sorrowing memory,"[31] and Gwendolen finds her own, as she writes to Deronda, in living "to be one of the best of women, who make others glad that they were born."[32]

The idea of separateness and communication, however, is only a frame of George Eliot's conception of a Jewish nation in which her philosophy of freedom and determinism is projected as a complex network of nature. In presenting the movement of Jewish nationalism, she tries "to impart a vision of the world that reveals its whole design and value."[33] The Jewish diaspora is a negative consequence of a vast network of causes and effects of a deterministic character traceable in the monolithic movement of history

and societies, in

> the great movements of the world, the larger destinies of mankind, which . . . enter like an earthquake into their own lives – when the slow urgency of growing generations turns into the tread of an invading army or the dire clash of civil war.[34]

So also is the Jewish recongregation in a national home: it is a restoration of human life to nature, for nature tends to preserve through cause and effect a continuum with man, so long as conflicting causes do not culminate in nullification or discontinuity. Human destinies are arbitrated, for good or bad, by impersonal forces emerging from this movement. Mirah's wretched experiences and Gwendolen's financial wreck are, in a way, effects of an historic movement. The accidents which lead Deronda to save Mirah, to know Mordecai and eventually discover the millions of the diaspora with whom his true identity lies, cannot be improbable or casual; on the contrary, they are necessary and, mystically, a product of the causal-effectual working of impersonal forces. George Eliot makes it clear through the Meyricks that "Saint Anybody" could not have saved Mirah. When Deronda prevents Mirah's attempt to commit suicide, she says: "Perhaps it is God's command,"[35] and "I am commanded to live."[36] Again when Mordecai is told that his sister has been found his comment is: "What was prayed for has come to pass: Mirah has been delivered from evil."[37] It is the Jewish spirit in a new historical movement: far from being dead, its revival is affecting the course of the Jews' life.

But if we have in Mirah's deliverance from evil a happy event wrought by the tangled web of life, other events are not always so happy. The Jews must be aware of the fact that causes and effects work out their predestined course regardless of individual existence, and the Jew has to discover his "pathways" in order to achieve freedom and unity with the world. "The human soul moves in many channels,"[38] George Eliot writes in *Middlemarch*. It is interesting to note how the concept of the "tangled web", George Eliot's main metaphor, branches into a set of other metaphors which expresses the essence of her vision of life. Through such a "web", or "skein" as she sometimes calls it, the Jew must find his "pathways". Mordecai tells Deronda: "Our eyes see some of the pathways,"[39] and: "Man finds his pathways."[40] Later, on knowing that Deronda is in fact a Jew, he remarks: "Daniel, from the first, I have said to you, we know not all the pathways."[41] Pathways are to be found, at least for some Jews, not only outside but also inside them. George Eliot writes in the epigraph to chapter sixteen of "the hidden pathways of feeling and thought which lead up to every moment of action." The Jews, therefore, need a "loving will" like Mordecai's to discover this hidden directive of feeling and thought. Like him, they should be "consciously, energetically moving with the larger march of human destinies."[42] It is the cause that effects their freedom from the "exile" (as is the case with Deronda, Mordecai and

Mirah), or from the "yoke" (as is the case with Lapidoth and the Princess). The "yoke" metaphor is frequently used by George Eliot – as frequently as there are "yoked" people in her novels. Gwendolen "meant to wear the yoke so as not to be pitied."[43] Deronda tells her: "That is the bitterest of all – to wear the yoke of our own wrong-doing."[44] His grandfather has left "what you call his yoke"[45] on the Princess's neck, and Grandcourt "had made a past for himself which was a stronger yoke than any he could impose."[46]

George Eliot's Zionist characters are, despite the impersonal forces, striving consciously or unconsciously to break through the tangled web towards the larger life, and she minutely follows their steps with "terror and pity". For it is the Jew's duty to fight with a noble will and moral righteousness to liberate himself from the determinism imposed on him by external impersonal forces. He remains, no matter how rigidly things are determined, responsible for his choices since "the relation of cause and effect is broken in matters of human choices: thus man is free and therefore responsible."[47] Because there can be no magic prescription to get rid of his degenerate conditions of life, the Jew must take as a daily duty the improvement of his "lot" and the participation with other Jews' endeavours to do the same. Mordecai's insistence on a personal awareness of the inner pathways explains George Eliot's fear that she may "pull the wrong thread, in the tangled scheme of things."[48] Mordecai urges his people to distinguish the "right" from the "wrong threads", because they determine, in effect, the right and wrong pathways, and ultimately either the discovery of their larger life (Zionism) or the submission to the yoke and a life of exile (dispersion). Deronda's "root of indecision" renders him incapable of finding the right pathway for his yearning. Consequently, he lives in exile. Gwendolen is a "princess in exile",[49] and Mordecai is a prophet "exiled in the rarity of [his] own mind".[50] Indeed, *Daniel Deronda* may be said to have presented a "landscape of exile".[51]

The idea of Jewish exile is also used in connection with time. "The exile [of Israel] was forced afar among brutish people,"[52] says Mordecai. A considerable part of the Jew's web of life is wrought by past experiences, whether personal or communal. The Jews' degeneration into a materialistically-minded people is due primarily to their exile from their national home. Deronda's exile from his people is the result of an irresponsible decision taken some decades ago. The author informs us: "Deronda's life could be determined by the historical destiny of the Jews."[53] Mordecai's alienation symbolizes the destiny of his people made miserable some eighteen centuries ago: "Our lot is the lot of Israel,"[54] he tells Mirah. Similarly, the future plays an equally important role in the making of the Jew's destiny; only he should read it correctly. This is why Zionism should be embraced: it represents the future regeneration of the Jews. The break of the present from the past and the future has alienated the Jews, and exiled them. Mordecai's early dedication to his Zionist cause, to re-connect past, present and future, was cut short by his father's evil demeanour, and the cause has transformed itself into gnawing dreams and visions which, together with his people's

irresponsible pity, ridicule or disbelief, have not only estranged him from time and the outside world, but also impaired his health. The exile in which Deronda, Mirah and Mordecai live is, in part, a consequence of their separation from their collective past, where traditions provide them with the necessary moral guidance, and race gives them a character.

The Jew in an English environment

The Jew's salvation from exile, moral stupidity or the burden of the yoke follows three main pathways. These three are by no means separate, they interact and interdepend, influencing one another. As George Eliot writes in *Adam Bede*, "Nature is a vast and complex system"[55] determining human destiny, and man is 'rooted' in it. It is "the way things are", the nexus of manifold and mysterious forces and processes constituting reality. We have seen that the finding of Mirah is considered by her brother as a fulfilment of nature's will, which is God's to Mordecai's understanding, to deliver her from evil. Deronda describes his situation before the revelation of his true parentage in two significant parables. The first is related to his hereditary qualities in their conflict with external conditions of life. He is like "the stolen offspring of some mountain tribe brought up in a city of the plain"[56] who always feels the unnaturalness of his position. The idea that Deronda is drawn after Moses takes substance from the fact that both men were put in an unnatural environment. The power of heredity, which lay within them "as a dim longing for unknown objects and sensations,"[57] drove them to recognize their true race, identify themselves with it and ultimately lead it to salvation. The second parable concerns the power of heredity handicapped by unnaturalness: it is of "one with an inherited genius for painting, and born blind"[58] who always feels that clenching desire to mould his sensations into shapes. "Something like that, I think, has been my experience," says Deronda as a conclusion. For the Jewish spirit follows nature's example in working through the power of race. Deronda's uncertainty stems from a confusion in his nature effected by his separation from "unknown subjects and sensations". He lacks the stabilizing factor which only a consciousness of racial heredity can provide. Logically, and through an analogy between the Popes' nephews and his own life with the Mallingers, he suspects himself to be Sir Hugo's illegitimate son, but, for a mysterious reason, he cannot wholly believe it. Consequently, he can neither find the true vocation he longs for nor accept Sir Hugo's offers (the army, Parliament, or any other vocation that becomes an Englishman). His apparent lack of enthusiasm and ambition, his constant siding with "the Hagars and Ishmaels",[59] his "subdued fervour" and "self-repressed" feelings – all are to be accounted for by an absence of natural links with his race. The princess's agony, which has transformed itself into a mysterious physical pain, is partly explained by refusing her son a Jewish character, and by her second marriage to a Christian Russian, thus betraying her race once more

by giving birth to four children of mixed blood. Kalonymos, her father's intimate friend, was furious and accused her or robbing the dead. Moreover, Deronda, who has inherited his father's psychology and grandfather's mentality and physiognomy, is haunted by a mysterious interest in the Jews, and has a strange inclination to believe Mordecai's firm assertion that he, Deronda, is a Jew. The "moment of naturalness" comes when the Princess, his mother, tells him that he is in fact a Jew. His longing and search for an identity get the reward of a restored union between self on the one hand, nature, nation and history on the other. For, as W.J. Harvey writes: "Our genetic code . . . gives us the vocabulary of our being, but whether we make prose or poetry of it depends on ourselves and on Nature in a much wider sense."[60]

Deronda's perplexity is also due to lack of another natural process, heritage, which goes with heredity. Heritage may be defined as the accumulation of ingenious creativity transmitted from one generation to another. Deronda, therefore, is living in a vacuum. He has received nothing of his own ancestral heritage (Jewish religion, language, traditions, poetry, history), and is made alien, even unfriendly, to it; while he finds very little in English culture to satisfy his natural dispositions (he asks Sir Hugo after an unregretted failure in Cambridge to allow him to go abroad to study international history). Mirah's one known pathway, her Jewishness, saves her from spiritual exile, but only partially: she is always lamenting her ignorance of Judaism, and afraid of becoming wicked because she knows neither Hebrew nor the prayers in the synagogue. The Princess has had to pay heavily for her wilful desertion of the Jewish heritage. She refused to be a Jewish woman and preferred a life of glamour and glory to a natural one in which Jewish traditions provide for her happiness and peace of mind. For decades the "Jew's curse" has haunted her, first through her deceased father and then through her son. Her whole nature is perturbed and ultimately shattered by a mysterious remorse which she refuses to acknowledge. In choosing the wrong thread she chooses condemnation and suffering. Moreover, Mordecai's agony springs from the anguishing fact that only a few of the Jews still preserve and follow the traditions of their race.

A Jewish environment is important in the re-making of a Jewish nation in the sense that it, ideally, provides a natural medium for the promotion and development of Jewish hereditary traits and national characteristics towards a better, larger life. When things go wrong, as they have done with the Jews, the explanation is to be sought in a certain conflict between environmental causes and those of heredity and traditions. This conflict takes several shapes. In Deronda's case, it is one between two dissimilar phases of nature, wherein he belongs in nurture to the English environment and in birth and personal endowments to the Jewish race. The two parables cited before are full of meaning here: his separation from his racial inheritance is aggravated by the influence exerted on him by a non-Jewish environment. In this respect, some critics have perhaps misinterpreted

Deronda's position in English society. In his fine essay on the novel, Graham Martin writes:

> In sum, English society is so constituted that Deronda has to leave it, not because it rejects him, but because, threatening to condemn him to meaningless life, he rejects it.[61]

This interpretation recalls, incidentally, the idea of bias discussed before. Deronda's reluctance to participate in English life stems from a faint but definite feeling that his natural vocation lies elsewhere, in a race yet unknown, and this feeling is the sum of the influence of nature on him. George Eliot has already directed the brunt of her attack on English politics (Martin's appreciation of the novel is predominantly political) through Mr Bult and Herr Klesmer and through suggesting Grandcourt as a candidate governor for a difficult colony; Deronda's case should be understood mainly in the light of George Eliot's late tendency towards the occult. As Robert Preyer finely puts it:

> We want to know why an urgent ethical concern with personal and social salvation, with finding and doing one's duty, should lead a great master of reality into myth, fantasy and, ultimately, into the occult.[62]

It is hereditary forces and not personal judgements that count more in Deronda's apathy to English environment.

Within this tangled conflict exists another thread of the Jew's freedom, for the interplay between stability and change provides a variety of choices in which he finds his chance for shaping his own destiny. Deronda says to Gwendolen: "I don't see why we should not use our choice there as we do elsewhere – or why either age or novelty by itself is an argument for or against."[63] Nature and human character are not finished portraits, there is always room for better additions and more beautiful modifications, which the Jew can achieve, though not without endurance. Mordecai seems to be attracted even by the Cabbala notion of metempsychosis: a regeneration of the one soul in several generations and in different bodies, and the amalgamation of perfect and purified souls with needy ones: "When my long-wandering soul is liberated from this weary body it will join yours, and its work will be perfected,"[64] he assures Deronda. Environment can also be confining and it might reduce past creativity to rigid forms or "diagrams", to use George Eliot's word. The Cohens' worldiness is an effect of environmental influences and rigid social forms stamped on them in the absence of natural links with heritage. In this respect, Zionism presents one of the historical causes by which nature restores its "picture" against the "diagram" of stablilized environment. George Eliot writes in *The Mill on the Floss:* "This wide national life is based entirely on . . . the emphasis of want . . . Under such circumstances there are many . . . who have absolutely needed an emphatic belief."[65] This is perhaps the essence of Mordecai's

visions and Deronda's mission. Mordecai sees with horror the widening gap between "the Masters", the "old glory", the spirit that imbued ancient times, and those who say: "I know not my father or my mother . . . I will seek to know no difference between me and the Gentile, I will not cherish the prophetic consciousness of our nationality – let the Hebrew cease to be, and let all his memorials be antiquarian trifles."[66] His vision of a Jewish nation, expounded in the forty-second chapter, corresponds to George Eliot's conception of redemption presented in *Felix Holt.* Felix Holt is made to say:

> I am a man who am warmed by visions. Those old stories of visions and dreams guiding men have their truth: we are saved by making the future present to ourselves . . . I want you to have such a vision of the future that you may never lose your best self. Some charm or other may be flung about you . . . and nothing but a good strong terrible vision will save you.[67]

And this is related to the epigraph to *Daniel Deronda:*

> Let thy chief terror be of thine own soul: There, 'mid the throng of hurrying desires
> That trample on the dead to seize their spoil,
> Lurks vengeance, footless, irresistible
> As exhaltations laden with slow death,
> And o'er the fairest troop of captured joys
> Breathes pallid pestilence.

The "terrible vision" Felix Holt advocates should be "of thine own soul". It is a guarantee against losing our "best self" or falling victim to "vengeance", "slow death", or "pallid pestilence". In this respect, Mordecai's Zionist vision is an attempt to reconstruct and preserve the positive and creative elements of the Jewish character. Mordecai, true to the nature of heredity and heritage, rejects present conditions of Jewish life believing them to be contrary to the movement of history. His beliefs are confirmed by the fulfilment of his expectation of Deronda, whom he takes to be the new Moses of the Jews. Deronda, driven by that subconscious, racial incentive taking the form of a duty, fulfils Mordecai's expectation on four levels: (1) his physique and social status are exactly what Mordecai has pictured in his mind; (2) his appearance at the bridge on the Thames comes at the moment Mordecai expects it; (3) he is a Jew after all; and (4) he is gradually and steadily reconverted into his national character. Needless to say, his hair is curly and his features and bone structure resemble those of his mother and grandfather. He lives in high-society circles and actually belongs to them, which is extremely important for Mordecai. The meeting of the two men at Blackfriars Bridge is highly suggestive, even symbolic. The river separates and the bridge relates, and Deronda comes with a boat and not along the bridge. His second crossing of the river from west to east

(the first was to save Mirah) to meet Mordecai implies the beginning of the end of his separation from the Jewish people, a crossing to where he really belongs. Mordecai, standing at "the parapet of the bridge" with "startling distinctness and brilliancy",[68] represents the link that is going to connect for ever Deronda with his people. He tells Deronda: "I have been waiting for you these five years."[69] The incident itself, totally unprepared, is a manifestation of a great historical movement: Zionism. "Thus it happened that the figure [Deronda] representative of Mordecai's longing was mentally seen darkened by the excess of light in the aerial background."[70] Although there is an "excess of light" on the "western" background, Deronda is "seen darkened" by it because, "mentally", he does not belong to it. Afterwards, when Deronda dedicates his life to the Zionist cause, the tension which has kept Mordecai alive for years slackens and Mordecai departs from this world like a true prophet, an Elijah, who has fulfilled his mission.

While environment constitutes a second but artificial nature, the Jews' attitude towards it may follow two lines of action. On the one hand, there are those who resign themselves to a fatalistic acceptance of its norms with the ultimate consequence of degeneration (like the Cohens). On the other, there are those who unite their personal destiny with the general course of history, thus exerting a reciprocal influence on their surroundings (like Mordecai and Deronda). "Thus the spiritual growth or decay of an individual may become a microcosm of those limited successes or painful failures."[71]

Threads of righteousness

Two other pathways to the Jew's salvation from exile or the yoke are implicit in his attitude towards others and self. It is no new discovery in literary criticism now that George Eliot's preoccupation with human destiny is essentially moral, and that her compass always points to the magnetic north of moral judgement. As John Holloway puts it: "No one in George Eliot's novels ever sins and escapes."[72] In one of her letters, George Eliot writes: "It is my way . . . to urge the human sanctities . . . through pity and terror, as well as admiration and delight."[73] Jewish characters are charged in *Daniel Deronda* with moral responsibility which is indispensable in the process of Jewish regeneration and which is delineated in situations and scenes with clear symbolic overtones. Exile as a situation with a symbolic bearing has already been referred to, and it goes without saying that it is, partially, a result of the Jew's misbehaviour. Gambling is a highly symbolic action. Deronda explains to Gwendolen why he obejcted to her gambling: "There are enough inevitable turns of fortune which force us to see that our gain is another's loss."[74] The Princess pays a heavy price for gaining out of the loss of her family. Lapidoth, Mirah's father, gains a living at the loss of the dignity and integrity of himself, his daughter and his people. In order to get Christian money he makes a clown of himself, ridicules the

Jews and procures for his daughter. It is interesting to note how George Eliot punishes her sinful Jews and rewards the righteous ones. Because of the Princess's apostasy to her race, she remains incurably ill, physically and spiritually. Lapidoth is brought from Vienna to London in order to show his eternal damnation. Deronda and Mirah, who never gamble and who dedicate themselves to their people, are rewarded by being married to each other and, in a sense, to their people. Mirah is a child moralist, whose "right thread" of righteousness is as powerful a determinant of her happiness as that of her clinging to Judaism. ("One could hardly imagine this creature having an evil thought,"[75] says admiring Mrs Meyrick.) Moreover, Deronda is always ready to give a "little sermon" on morals, and immensely affects Gwendolen's altruistic awakening.

The chosen pathways for a national, moral life of the Jews are, in George Eliot's choice of words, "sympathy", "duty", and "enthusiasm". As Robert Preyer writes: "The conflict between sympathy and selfishness constitutes the staple of her [George Eliot's] moral dramas."[76] It explains perhaps what she means by "character is destiny – but not entirely so."[77] When Deronda reveals to the Cohens the news of his finding a "relation" of Mordecai, a conversation follows between him and Mr Cohen (the other Cohens sit listening, evidently sharing the interest of the head of the family):

> "Relations with money, sir?" burst in Cohen, feeling a power of divination which it was a pity to nullify by waiting for the fact.
> "No; not exactly," said Deronda, smiling. "But a very precious relation wishes to be reunited to him – a very good and lovely young sister, who will care for his comfort in every way."
> "Married, sir?"
> "No, not married."
> "But with a maintenance?"[78]

Mr Cohen's is not, of course, the enthusiasm George Eliot is preaching. The conversation between the two men suggests that many Jews either lack the enthusiasm to assume higher moral responsibilty or are driven hard into money-oriented relations (the Cohens, Mr Ram, the Jewish youth who cheats Deronda in Frankfurt). These are problems that intersect with the doctrine of sympathy, enthusiasm and duty practised as a vocation by Mordecai and Deronda. In such circumstances the Jews' need for an "emphatic belief", a "terrible vision", or Zionism, is an indispensable necessity. The casual and mostly irresponsible responses of behaviour, motive, and will need to be heightened into a sense of duty and ennobling vocation. Since "the human soul moves in many channels," we are sure that the Jews, if taught through "pity and terror", will be, like Mirah, "capable of submitting to anything in the form of duty."[79] Every action or deed, no matter how trivial it looks, is important, and daily life has significance beyond apparent shallowness.

This is perhaps the moral essence of George Eliot's Zionism. Fellow-feeling is manifest in the Mordecai-Cohens relationships, but they are not enough. The magnitude of the required moral regeneration – essentially anti-materialistic – can be measured only by the lack of poetry in Mr Cohen's "taste for money-getting",[80] and the spiritless "dull routine" characteristic of the attendance of "many indifferent faces and vulgar figures"[81] at service in the Frankfurt synagogue. The "terrible vision", or "emphatic belief", is that of Mordecai, the prophetic "vocation" is that of Deronda, and the "inspiring duty" is that of them both to commence the "Messianic time" and establish a "Jewish polity" on moral bases.

An order of nature

John Holloway writes in *The Victorian Sage:*

> It is a significant and largely overlooked criticism of this novel [*Daniel Deronda*] that it does so little to create a genuine vision of an order of nature bringing a moral order as its corollary, and is yet so full of haphazardly introduced models for the details of conduct (p. 140).

This statement is, I think, less than fair to both author and book. In her depiction of Zionism and the Zionist characters in *Daniel Deronda*, George Eliot has in fact presented "a genuine vision of an order of nature bringing a moral order as its corollary," and it consists of the impersonal forces of cause and effect working through time, race, tradition and environment, and affecting Jewish destiny in such a way that duty, enthusiasm and sympathy, on the Jews' part, become indispensable for salvation and for restoration to nature. Moreover, the order of human life is presented in a nexus at the bottom of which are the individuals; then come families, nations or races and finally humanity at large. The main tension underlying the two orders of nature and Jewish life is how to restore and strengthen a continuity between them into an ideal state. The following pages will show how, in George Eliot's treatment of her Zionists, Jewish nationhood, which will conceivably unite individuals and families, is equated with naturalness.

Some hints have already been made as to the relation of some characters, especially the Jewish ones, with their nations. The ultimate awakening of Deronda and Gwendolen has been shown as denoting a deep nationalistic concern in the author's moral vision. It must be understood, she seems to suggest through the themes and multiple plots of her novels, that individual salvation is not enough, that it is connected with the wider life of a society distinguished by national characteristics, heritage and environment, and that self-discovery is always equated with native feelings and that both are equated with nature. Very early in *Daniel Deronda* George Eliot writes:

> A human life, I think, should be well rooted in some spot of a native land, where it may get the love of tender kinship for the face of earth, for the labours men go forth to, for the sounds and accents that haunt it, for whatever will give that early home

> a familiar unmistakable difference amidst the future widening of knowledge.[82]

Daniel Charisi's principle of separatedness and communication with which the author underlines the relations of Jews and Gentiles in the novel, emphasizes an awareness of the Jews' nationhood. Although dim and inarticulate in Deronda, it explains his relationship with Gwendolen. It is also at the core of Mordecai's Zionism. It comprises the Jew's loyalty to race and tradition as the basis for moral action, which is, according to George Eliot, the highest form of duty. We need not go into details to show George Eliot's deep concern with "the world-changing battle of Sadowa" or with the West Indian people. We are told in *The Spanish Gypsy* that Fedalma abandons everything for the sake of creating a gypsy nation in Africa. Also the panoramic setting of *Felix Holt*, though predominantly political, is essentially national. In *Middlemarch*, George Eliot cautions us: "While I tell the truth about lobbies, my reader's imagination need not be entirely excluded from an occupation with the lords."[83] The theme of nationalism in *Daniel Deronda* is evident in the fact that, as D.R. Caroll puts it:

> The novel becomes an organic whole by the way in which George Eliot traces the effects of these two peoples [the English and the Jewish], who represent the two halves of the novel, upon Deronda.[84]

This is also evident in Deronda's answer to his mother's contemptuous question whether he is going to relinquish all that is English in him: "That is impossible. The effect of my education can never be done away with. The Christian sympathies in which my mind was reared can never die out of me."[85] That Deronda is a Jew does not efface the influence stamped on him by another nation, the English. In his essay on *Daniel Deronda*, Graham Martin asks what seems to be an impossible question: "Where does the world of Deronda's extensive aspirations offer a strong, imaginative challenge to the one [the English] he has to leave?"[86] Though Martin takes it merely as a deficiency in the characterization of Deronda, Deronda's status as an "outsider-critic", his "Zionism" and "shadowiness of character", Martin believes, makes the answer clear: "It never does."[87] In fact, George Eliot has never meant Deronda to be a critic, let alone a challenger, of English life. His criticism of English politics is quite incidental and has little bearing upon the main theme of the novel. Judging from George Eliot's philosophy, his Zionism and alienation are not a product of the "unhistoric" state of English affairs, as Martin argues, but rather of the disruption of natural growth effected by his being cut off from the Jewish race and its national spirit. This is confirmed by George Eliot's conception of the English nation, which is described in *Felix Holt* as

> that wealth of science, poetry, refinement of thought and feeling, of manners, great memories and interpretation of great records, which is passed down from the minds of one generation to that of the other.[88]

Daniel Deronda is based, as far as the English are concerned, on the same conviction as Felix Holt. The fact that Gwendolen is essentially good and

capable of awakening to history denotes George Eliot's faith in her nation; only the present state of affairs in England leaves much to be desired. The presentation of an international panorama of scenes and characters intensifies the sense that "outside the 'few people in a corner of Wessex' who do constitute a society, lies something vast, unknowable, arbitrary and menacing."[89] The author wants to urge the imagination of her people to think of greater issues than their local ones. By exposing the mind which late developments make a victim of over-indulgence and temptation, she points at the national maladies which motivate nations to act at the expense of others. Grandcourt's death reflects George Eliot's desire to see the evil element in English society destroyed. This element is seen in the right to rule, colonize, and overcome at will:

> If this white-handed man [Grandcourt[. . . had been sent to govern a difficult colony, he might have won reputation among his contemporaries. He had certainly ability, would have understood that it was safer to exterminate than to cajole superseded proprietors, and would not have flinched from things safe in that way.[90]

It is true that George Eliot has been in *Daniel Deronda* a harder critic of her nation's anomalies than perhaps in any of her previous novels. Her criticism, however, is not engineered through Deronda, nor are the Jews presented as examplary models for the English to follow: they have their own problems which are even worse than those of the English.

The theme of nationalism is more evident, of course, in George Eliot's treatment of her Jewish characters and scenes. The reason is simple: the English are already an "aged nation", as she writes in *Middlemarch*, while the Jews, she hopes, are a nation in the making. In fact, George Eliot believes that the Jews still possess the same characteristics which once made of them a nation, only their present conditions have so degenerated that it takes an Elijah like Mordecai and a Messiah or a Moses like Deronda to restore their national unity.

From what has been discussed of George Eliot's vision of nature and the larger life, it is perhaps clear that the constituents of Jewish nationality are race, religion and tradition. These are viewed as an "order of nature" shaping the human destiny of the Jews through hereditary forces and a continuous national existence. The stamp of race is evident on the faces, hair, hands, psychology and mentality of the Jewish characters. Deronda's hands are exactly like his mother's, only they look masculinely bigger; his mode of thinking is like his grandfather's and his meekness is like his father's. Mirah's miraculous clinging to her Jewishness, despite her suffering for it, is another manifestation of the racial influence. Mirah, in fact, like Disraeli's Eva Besso, is a symbol of Judaism. She tells the Meyricks: "I am not pretending anything. I shall never be anything else . . . I always feel myself a Jewess."[91] George Eliot says of her: "Mirah's religion was of one fibre with her affections, and had never presented itself to her as a set of

propositions."[92] Mordecai says that his and her "lot was the lot of Israel".[93] Both brother and sister are "a personification of that spirit which impelled men after a long inheritance of professed Catholicism to leave wealth and high place, and risk their lives in flight, that they may join their own people and say, 'I am a Jew.' "[94]

Despite the Lapidoths, the Princesses and the degenerate human conditions of the Cohens, the spirit of Israel, especially as the Cabbala doctrine expounds it, is never dead. Daniel Charisi's emphatic belief in the regeneration of Israel is expressed in his desire for "a grandson who shall have a true Jewish heart", and in that "every Jew should rear his family as if he hoped a Deliverer might spring from it."[95]

The "Deliverer", Deronda, comes, but not before a strenuous process of "transmutation of self" from exile into unity with his race. It has been hinted above that a mysterious attraction to the Jews, as a force of nature, drives Deronda, not to the church, but to the synagogue, to Mordecai, to the Cohens and finally to Zionism. It is this mysterious racial impulse, obstructed but nevertheless alive, that makes him wonder "at the strength of his own feeling; it seemed beyond the occasion – what one might imagine to be a divine influx in the darkness, before there was any vision to interpret."[96] Later, Mordecai insists that he, Deronda, has a mission and that "the erring and unloving wills of men have helped to prepare you, as Moses was prepared, to serve our people the better."[97] All this meets with Deronda's sympathy and yearning for a dutiful captainship. In the beginning, he shrinks from Mordecai's claims: "Was there ever a more hypothetic appeal?"[98] George Eliot asks on his behalf. But "inspirations of the world" have come in such a way, she affirms, and Deronda's sympathy and longing for a dutiful vocation gradually intermingle with Mordecai's absolute faith in him. A knowledge of his true parentage remains to be obtained, since only a Jew can be a Messiah. When his mother reveals the truth to him, he says:

> "No wonder if such facts come to reveal themselves in spite of concealments. The effect prepared by generations are likely to triumph over a contrivance which would bend them all to the satisfaction of self. Your will was strong, but my grandfather's trust which you accepted and did not fulfil – what you call his yoke – is the expression of something stronger with deeper, farther-spreading roots, knit into the foundations of sacredness for all men."[99]

Taken in a generalized view, this extract perhaps summarizes George Eliot's concepts of nature and the Jewish nation. Jewish national character, it appears, has the power of destiny, with sacredness that cannot be successfully violated. It is the "effects prepared by generations", with "deeper, farther-spreading roots", which have finally forced the Princess to acknowledge the "sacredness" of Jewish life. At the end, Deronda, disclosing to Gwendolen the news of his imminent departure to the East to acquaint himself with his people, says:

> "The idea that I am possessed with is that of restoring a political existence to my people, making them a nation again, giving them a national centre, such as the English have, though they too are scattered over the face of the globe. That is a task which presents itself to me as a duty . . . I am resolved to devote my life to it. At the least, I may awaken a movement in other minds, such as has been awakened in my own."[100]

It is worth noticing here that George Eliot identifies Zionism with Judaism. She conceives of Judaism as a culture of a race which is doomed to be extinguished without a national existence, of the natural situation of the Jews only as being contained in a national state, and of their present existence in Europe as being unnatural, a negative element of life accompanied by a loss of identity. Moreover, Deronda is obviously meant to be the leader of a Zionist exodus to Palestine. His last address to Gwendolen is full of suggestions to this effect: he is resolved on "restoring a political existence" for the Jews, "making them a nation again" or, at least, "awaken[ing] a movement in other minds".

The concept of separateness and communication characterizes also Mordecai's theory of a Jewish nation (expounded in chapter xlii): a nation that absorbs the thoughts of other nations and gives them back to the world as a new wealth. "Each nation has its own work, and is a member of the world, enriched by the work of each." However, Jews must be clear and wary of the difference between communication and assimilation. He who has already been assimilated "is a character of selfish ambition and rivalry in low grade. He is an alien in spirit, whatever he may be in form; he sucks the blood of mankind, he is not a man." To get mixed with the Gentiles is "a fresh garment of citizenship" which cannot "weave itself straightway into the flesh and change the slow deposit of eighteen centuries." This deposit has made Israel, "as Jehuda-ha-Levi first said . . . the heart of mankind, if we mean by heart the core of affection which binds a race and its families in dutiful love." Thus "a new Judaea, poised between East and West", will be "a covenant of reconciliation". What Lilly, one of "the Philosophers" in the Hand and Banner Club, says, that "as a race they [the Jews] have no development in them", is "false". "Let their history be known and examined," replies Mordecai. "Where else is there a nation of whom it may be as truly said that their religion and law and moral life mingled as the stream of blood in the heart and made one growth?" The reason why the Jews seem to be going into a "fusion of races", as Pash believes, is that "dispersion was wide, the yoke of oppression was a spoked torture as well as a load; the exile forced afar among brutish people." The advantages of separateness will be clearer if the Jewish "race take on again the character of a nationality". And the Messianic time is that when Israel shall achieve the "planting of the national ensign".

What ensign? Pash and the others seem to be asking. Mordecai's answer constitutes the first Zionist plan for the colonization of Palestine. He says:

> Let the wealthy men, the monarchs of commerce, the learned in all knowledge, the skilful in all arts, the speakers, the political counsellors, who carry in their veins the Hebrew blood . . . say we will lift up a standard, we will unite in labour hard but glorious like that of Moses and Ezra . . . They have wealth enough to redeem the soil from debauched and paupered conquerors; they have the skill of the statesman to devise, the tongue of the orator to persuade . . . There is a store of wisdom among us to found a new Jewish polity . . . a republic where there is equality of protection . . . Then our race shall have an organic centre . . . the outraged Jew shall have a defence in the court of nations, as the outraged Englishman or American . . . Difficulties? I know there are difficulties. But let the spirit of sublime achievement move in the great among our people, and the work will begin . . . [101] And let there be another great migration, another choosing of Israel to a nationality.[102]

On the practical, political plane, Mordecai's vision suggests a programme of (1) financing by wealthy Jews, (2) information and propaganda, (3) union in a form of political organization, (4) colonizing Palestine, and (5) convincing the West that Israel is its cultural link with the East. This is precisely what the apostles of Zionism were to promulgate in their first Zionist Conference in 1897.

Perhaps it is needless to say that George Eliot has never viewed this programme on political grounds. It stems directly from her vision of nature, and from a conservative tension which she has had late in her life. We shall see later how she has come to think of the past as an ideal of the human life. Her view that race, religion and tradition are the foundations of Jewish nationhood is based on the fact that such was the state of affairs among the Jews some thirty centuries ago when they had a state of their own at one time, two at another. After that, she believes, the Jews have lived in unnatural conditions, in a discontinuity with history and a constant deterioration. Evidently, she believes that the Jews, as a race, have not changed ever since, and that they are, or can be, what they were through the working out of Mordecai's scheme.

Deronda: a failure of characterization

Yet, something has made Deronda, Mordecai and Mirah a "Jewish burden" in *Daniel Deronda*, as Henry James's Constantius says. Whether "at bottom cold",[103] as Constantius feels, or a product of "a triumphant pressure of emotion",[104] as Leavis believes, the presentation of the three characters has been regarded as a failure by a series of eminent critics, starting with Henry James.

Constantius says: "Instead of feeling life itself, it is 'views' upon life that she [George Eliot] tries to feel," and that the author "meant apparently to make a faultless human being."[106] But one feels, he goes on, that "one has

been appealed to on rather an artificial ground of interest,"[107] that the Jews "have other fish to fry" and that this "is not the way they take themselves."[108]

In addition to a "defective sense of humour" in the Deronda group, Leslie Stephen believes that Deronda "would have embodied her [George Eliot's] sentiments more completely if, instead of devoting himself to the Jews, he had become a leading prophet in the church of humanity."[109] Stephen does not believe that "the writer who starts from the abstract can by industrious study so incarnate his ideas that they be as vivid and real as if he had started the opposite way."[110]

Leavis adds that George Eliot "didn't need to reconstruct Anti-Semitism or its opposite: the Jews were there in the contemporary world of fact, and represented real, active and poignant issues."[111] Joan Bennett affirms that "no modern reader can accept Deronda's mission unquestioningly as a valuable service to mankind,"[112] though "to her [George Eliot] the creation of a Jewish national home in Palestine seemed a non-political, non-controversial cause for her hero to embrace."[113]

One can go on citing more samples from literary criticism, but I think this is sufficient to denote that George Eliot "proceeds from the abstract to the concrete"[114] and that this procedure has failed in the case of Deronda, Mordecai and Mirah. I want to add that Stephen refers to her seclusion from society in later years, that contemporary critics felt uneasy about her increasing gloominess in *Middlemarch* and *Daniel Deronda*, and, more important, that Professor Haight, in his *George Eliot: A Biography,* comments more than once on her growing "conservatism" in that it reveals, in part, a new preoccupation in her life, namely, that things are perhaps getting irrevocably worse, which is implicit in her last two novels in graver pessimism and sharper satire than have been exhibited in previous works. In *Daniel Deronda*, her faith in "the glorious possibilities of human nature" intersects with another of fear that the world is becoming too impersonal and deterministic for man. After all, we are not sure whether Gwendolen will not be another resigning Dorothea Brooke, or whether Deronda will succeed in his mission (many critics, Philipson, Stephen, Modder and Rosenberg, believe he will not). Consequently, George Eliot's faith, which has never deserted her in spite of her regret that "only man is vile",[115] has grown in magnitude and abstractedness in order to meet, at least in her imagination, the increasing coercion of reality, of the facts created by the impersonal forces of the present over those glorious possibilities. The recurrence of an idealized character (Romola, Felix Holt, Fedalma, Dorothea Brooke and Daniel Deronda) signifies that persistence of faith over reality perhaps weakens her work artistically. And the more disappointing things are the more powerful her tension becomes, and ultimately the farther away her presentation of noble characters goes from the facts of life. In Deronda's case, two main sources of pressure have probably been acting on her. On the one hand, a feeling of hopelessness had been so deep in her that she could not, though she might have wanted to, believe he would be

able to survive the "tangled web" if she was to expose him to a world of practical realities, as she did with Gwendolen:

> Deronda of late, in his solitary excursions, had been occupied chiefly with uncertainties about his own course; but those uncertainties, being much at their leisure, were wont to have such wide-sweeping connections with all life and history that the new image of helpless sorrow easily blent itself with what seemed to him the strong array of reasons why he should shrink from getting into that routine of the world which makes men apologise for all its wrong-doing, and take opinions as mere professional equipment – why he should not draw strongly at any thread in the hopelessly-entangled scheme of things.[116]

This is a key sentence for the understanding of the character of Deronda. His "solitary excursions" have revealed to him "uncertainties" which affect "all life and history" in such a way that makes him "shrink" from going into ordinary human experiences. Added to this is a "strong array of reasons" why he should refrain from making choices or adopting attitudes in "the hopelessly-entangled scheme of things". The author, with Gwendolen's example vivid in her mind, is not sure that Deronda will emerge from these experiences without indelible scars on his character, scars which she definitely does not wish him to have: she is primarily determined on presenting a faultless, immaculate man. On the other hand, her sympathy towards the Jews seems to have "tangled" her in the belief that by glorifying them she might do justice to an oppressed people. Though one cannot be absolutely sure, the most possible explanation of the author's failure in her characterization of the three main Jewish figures is that her sympathy for the Jews has paralysed her otherwise formidable sense of self-criticism in connection with literary creation. Most probably, she might have thought that the greater the stress put on the ideal Zionist character, the more sympathy and understanding she would enlist from her readers in favour of the Jews, thus turning her talent to what Leavis terms "daydream unrealities". Hence the feeling of some critics that Deronda is unlikely to achieve anything in Palestine. Leavis accuses her of insincerity. His judgement is that "so intelligent a writer couldn't, at that level, have been so self-convinced of inspiration without some inner connivance or complicity: there is an element of the tacitly voulu."[117] This, I think, is not fair as far as George Eliot's faith and rectitude are concerned. In addition to sympathy, she has evidently taken support from deeper beliefs in the determining power of race, religion and heritage which tell of a complete reversion from her 1848 belief in the fusion of races and her agnostic moralism.

In what follows I shall attempt to show where George Eliot fails to actualize and externalize Deronda, Mordecai and Mirah, and to examine a few of her concepts that are directly related to *Daniel Deronda*.

In proceeding from "the abstract to the concrete", as James writes, there is clearly the possibility of verisimilitude disturbing the structure of ideas

and feelings she wants to delineate, and vice versa. This is to say that she has been aware of the dangers of presenting an ideal character and has tried to avoid them without lessening the perfection of that character. Some of the little technical tricks have already been discovered by James's Pulcheria: "Deronda clutches his coat-collar, Mirah crosses her feet, Mordecai talks like the Bible."[118] Deronda's jealousy of Hans Meyrick's admiration of Mirah, a temporal repulsion for Gwendolen, which he feels twice in the novel, his meeting Mirah before Gwendolen, are some others. But all these tricks bring about the undesired effect of showing Deronda out of character rather than an ordinary human being: tens of pages have been written about him before any action takes place for the exclusive purpose of portraying him as a "seraphic boy", a "Titianic portrait", an "angel Gabriel", a "Buddha", a "Prince Camaralzaman", a "Moses or Mohamet", a "high priest", in short as an ultra-human who lives by standards high above those of everyday human life. Gwendolen discovers that "his face had that disturbing kind of form and expressing which threatens to affect opinion – as if one's standards were somehow wrong."[119]

With the idea of presenting a Messiah in her mind, George Eliot lavishes on Deronda every fine adjective in the language, believing this to be the real character of a predestined leader who should be above the multitude. By such presentation, she has confined Deronda to static superiority. He is not very different from Sidonia, in that both men are incapable of action. But while Sidonia is caught in the dilemma of what to do, Deronda falls prisoner to his own good qualities: "His early-awakened sensibility and reflectiveness had developed into a many-sided sympathy, which threatened to hinder any persistent course of action."[120] Moreover, the receptive tendency in his character constantly dominates the supposedly active one, showing a person to whom things happen, one without troubles and errors and personal wishes which teach one the really suitable vocation he is not only longing for but fit for. There is no way of counting how many times he "shrank" from an action, an attitude, or a feeling, or of telling why his "fervour" and "enthusiasm" (as countlessly mentioned) have always been "subdued" or "self-repressed". ("He shrank from the prospect." "He shrank from appearing to claim the authority . . ." "He shrank with dislike from the loser's bitterness." "It was his characteristic bias to shrink from . . ." "Before modish ignorance and obtuseness, Deronda shrank. But he also shrank from . . ." Something "made him shrink from admitting that wish." "He shrank from speech.")[121] Any leader who will shoulder the responsibilities of establishing a nation is unlikely to be an introvert. Furthermore, Deronda is not only an introvert but also, essentially, a feminine character. Carol Robinson writes:

> Deronda should have been a woman, as, indeed, are all his counterparts in George Eliot's earlier works. As a child Daniel shows "the same blending of child's ignorance with surprising knowledge which is oftener seen in bright girls" . . . . He has [an] "ardent clinging nature" . . . he is "moved by an

> affectionateness such as we are apt to call feminine". When he meets his mother Daniel feels himself "changing color [sic] like a girl" . . . "all the woman lacking in her was present in him." Later Daniel pities his mother with "perhaps more than a woman's acuteness of compassion."[122]

The author's incessant labour to render Deronda masculine has produced a preacher always ready to give a little sermon to women. Sir Hugo tells him, jocularly but nevertheless with a ring of seriousness: "You are always looking tenderly at the women, and talking to them in a Jesuitical way."[123] Towards men, he is peculiarly reluctant. Moreover, the many superb qualities the author has endowed him with have made him, not a character, but a heap of contradictory traits:

> It happened that the very vividness of his impressions . . . had contributed to an apparent indefiniteness in his sentiments. His early-awakened sensibility and reflectiveness had developed into a many-sided sympathy, which threatened to hinder any persistent course of action . . . His plenteous, flexible sympathy had ended by falling into one current with that reflective analysis which tends to neutralise sympathy. Few men were able to keep themselves clearer of vices than he; yet he hated vices mildly . . . With the same innate balance he was fervidly democratic in his feeling for the multitude, and yet, through his affections and imagination, intensely conservative; voracious of speculations on government and religion, yet loath to part with long-sanctioned forms . . . Deronda suspected himself of loving too well the losing causes of the world.[124]

A very few people, perhaps, will recognize the credibility of such a character.

Three other main reasons account for the relative failure in actualizing the abstract idea from which Deronda has emerged. First, "the author's voice", to use Barbara Hardy's phrase, is used in his favour to the point of nullifying possible chances for externalizing him, setting him at a distance from his creator's moral consciousness where he could contact with others on his own account, as Gwendolen has done. Perhaps a few quotations will make this clear: "Excuse him: his mind was not apt to run spontaneously into insulting ideas."[125] When he is looking for the Ezra Cohen who may be Mirah's brother, George Eliot writes: "I confess, he particularly desired that Ezra Cohen should not keep a shop."[126] His high regard for Mirah is obviously behind this desire; but it is unfair, George Eliot realizes, to shopkeepers, consequently she "confesses" it as if it were she and not he to blame for this moral mishap. Moreover, the author makes the following plea on behalf of Deronda quite directly: "Pray excuse Deronda that in this moment he felt a transient renewal of his first repulsion from Gwendolen."[127] While there is nothing inhuman or damagingly sinful in feeling a repulsion, particularly a transient one, George Eliot thinks that this will blemish Deronda's perfect sympathy and fellow-feeling. Yet, though "he is

described and analysed to death", as James's Pulcheria complains, his perfections are never put to test in action, not even shown in his contact with other people.

The second reason lies in another, very effective, technical trick, but it relates to George Eliot's conception of the tangled skein and the threads that compose it. In order to sustain her presentation of the all-determining power of hereditary forces, to show us as probable Deronda's embracement of Zionism through the working of these forces, and in order to qualify Mordecai's visions as directly related to nature, George Eliot has kept the secret of Deronda's true parentage in abeyance until his conviction of his moral responsibility towards the Jews is consolidated and his acceptance of the task becomes dependent only on the revelation of that secret. This abeyance is intended to show Deronda's commitment as purely impelled by the hidden, natural influence of hereditary forces working within him. However, the author's technique has shut him from a genuine conflict through which the authenticity of his choice may be discovered. Had he been brought up with the consciousness that he is a Jew and left to choose through the moral conception of the tangled web – and not by contrasting Jew and Gentile – he, like Moses, would have gone into the world with a substantial conflict within himself making both his character and his ultimately natural choice more qualified and convincing, the way Gwedolen's are. That a possibility of a real conflict of choices exists in Deronda being informed earlier of his Jewishness is clear in his declaration to Mordecai:

> "If this revelation [of his parentage] had been made to me before I knew you both [Mirah and Mordecai], I think my mind would have rebelled against it. Perhaps I should have felt then – "If I could haven chosen, I would not have been a Jew."[128]

Deronda would have preferred assimilation, at best, had the secret of his parentage been "revealed" to him before meeting with Mordecai. The latter, it appears, has had a hypnotic influence on him, and Mirah, one of love. Option for Zionism, as we have seen in chapters one and three, has been prompted by actual circumstances, and not by the mysterious impact of race and heritage. The above quotation implies that George Eliot, from a realistic point of view, has made her hero choose Zionism for the wrong reasons. Instead of presenting him with a real conflict such as Disraeli has had, she has confined him to abstract concepts of nature and moral perfection, and led him by the hand until he is delivered to another conception of leadership, in which, as shown above, his character does not fit.

The third reason for the author's failure in actualizing Deronda lies in the fact that while he is being led to discover the great movement of Zionism, he falls upon subordinate characters (the Meyricks) and two other abstractions (Mordecai and Mirah). The Meyricks' main business in the novel is to tell Deronda how wonderful Mirah is and to tell Mirah, directly or indirectly,

how incomparably accomplished Deronda is, and to tell the reader that the two are made for each other. The Misses Meyrick "watched and registered every look of their brother's friend [Deronda], declared by Hans to have been the salvation of him, a fellow like nobody else, and, in fine, a brick. They so thoroughly accepted Deronda as an ideal, that when he was gone the youngest set to work . . . to paint him as Prince Camaralzaman."[129] They tell themselves – Mirah is listening – that "no woman ought to want to marry him . . . fancy finding out he had a tailor's bill and used boot-hooks, like our brother."[130] Mrs Meyrick, always pointing to or explaining the correctness of Mirah's thinking, tells Deronda: "She is just a pearl: the mud has only washed her."[131]

Mirah, "Queen Budor", can easily be described as "an article in a new magazine",[132] as Pulcheria says, or even as a parrot with limitless vocabulary to form sentences beginning with "I" and then proceeding to tell how marvellous her mother, brother and Judaism are. But this will not do, as Herr Klesmer is likely to say. Not only does she fall in line with Scott's Rebecca and Disraeli's Eva, but she is far more abstracted than they are: an innocent child of nature, a symbol of age-old suffering and of alienation from history and the world. That she "is attached to the Judaism she knows nothing of",[133] as the Princess tells Deronda, is the author's way of presenting Judaic influences on the Jews which survived the workings of destructive forces by sheer intrinsic originality and power of endurance. Mirah is also a princess in exile whose ultimate unity, like Gwendolen's and Deronda's, is with both her nation and a consciousness of history. The reason why she does not feel, as Gwendolen does, "well equipped for the mastery of life"[134] lies in that her race, unlike Gwendolen's, is scattered "all over the world".

But this does not make of her a Gwendolen, a living flesh and spirit. Except for her escape from the influence of the destructive forces, she does, or can do, actually nothing to restore herself to nature. We have not forgotten that she was about to commit suicide in her despair. The conflict among impersonal forces brings about her happiness, not she. Like Deronda, she is someone to whom things happen, and had it not been for him she might have sunk in the Thames unnoticed. Symbolically, this rescue of her signifies Deronda's future mission, yet it is a chance meeting effected or even destined by external forces within which both characters are moved as receivers not as doers. Neither of them struggles with the world of things and self as Gwendolen does, and this is an outcome of George Eliot's late conception that pure morality is primordial to experience. It will appear rather a strange conception when we look into George Eliot's agnosticism, where experience is the touchstone of ideas and principles. Here two explanations offer themselves. The first is the author's late sense of hopelessness previously referred to, which has overcome her faith in the future and made Gwendolen's a bitter victory. The second, which is probably a consequence of the first, comes from the author's interpretation of Zionism in terms of the occult and the supernatural rather than of an actual reaction

to undesirable facts of life. Her view that the Jewish spirit directs Deronda's steps towards Zionism becomes arbitrary and fanciful when we remember that persecution, and not the mystical quality of the Jews, was the greatest force behind the rise of Jewish nationalism.

Mordecai's vision has emphatically come to be a political issue; a fact which makes analysis rather embarrassing. However, it is not far from the truth to say that Mordecai too is an ideal. That people may have prophets is not altogether impossible, especially among the Jews who are curiously endowed with such a tradition. And George Eliot, most probably, has relied on this Jewish characteristic in her presentation of Mordecai. But such presentation lies beyond, not "novelistic forms" as Robert Preyer believes, but her own experience. There is no need for Mordecai to talk "like the Bible" or go through trances in order to convince Victorian Jews that they must seek a national unity to stop the European abuse of them. In fact, some Victorian and European Jews had been thinking of colonizing Palestine for at least three decades: in the 1840s, "the first 'Zionist' organization [in Palestine] was called the Montefiore Society."[135]

Like Deronda and Mirah, Mordecai is kept away from inner conflicts which may sustain and unfold prophetic qualities. His personal history in the novel begins when he has already started his Zionistic mission, and, strangely enough, he quits it for the sake of a single Jew, his mother. Having failed to convince any of his fellow Jews in England of his message, he, during the last twelve of his thirty years, becomes a recluse whose bread and water, as it were, are visions and evocations. His speeches in the club are markedly dissociated from the heap of opposing arguments the "Philosophers" pour forth on him: he is interested only in Deronda, and Deronda only in him. What he actually offers to Deronda's abstract idealism is another abstract idealism.

Moreover, the development of these three characters is built on a series of conincidences, which we have to take for granted if we are to believe in their reality. We have to accept that Deronda, and nobody else, is destined (as conversation with the Meyricks shows)[136] to save Mirah. Then we have to accept that the power of the Jewish spirit has impelled Deronda and Kalonymos to meet in the synagogue and Deronda and Mordecai to meet at the bridge on the Thames; then that the name "Ezra Cohen" leads him to discover Mordecai as Mirah's brother, and Mordecai to discover the man of his vision; then that the Princess who has contrived to conceal from Deronda the fact of his Jewish birth, surrenders to her feeling of guilt at the right moment that the story requires to make Deronda accept Mordecai's claims.

Coincidences, it can be argued, are effects of some causes we do not know; but, in fact, the causes are known, and here lies the main criticism. If we are to accept the construction of the Deronda-Mordecai-Mirah plot, we have also to accept George Eliot's concept of the metaphysical influence of heredity and heritage. As Leavis justly writes:

> The religion of heredity or race is not, as a generalizable solution of the problem [of Deronda], one that George Eliot herself, directly challenged, could have stood by.[137]

Hans Meyrick's important question to Mirah as to "what does it signify whether a perfect woman is a Jewess or not?"[138] is dismissed by the author as frivolous or irrelevant. Metaphysical also is the racial influence of Judaism: Deronda is led by a mysterious power into, not the church, but the synagogue; this happens shortly after his rescue of Mirah and before he comes to know anything about the Jews. Not only this, but in the synagogue "he had probably been alone in his feeling, and perhaps the only person in the congregation for whom the service was more than a dull routine."[139]

We must understand, of course, that Deronda's feeling is one of the "deep immovable roots"[140] of nature implanted in man, and that his real self is an organic part of the Jewish past. But one wonders whether George Eliot has not taken more into account than logic. According to her own philosophy, human will, on which she lays a great stress, is altogether reduced in the Deronda group to passive reception of racial "revelations". George Eliot's essential conservatism is revealed here in that restoration and not innovation of change is affirmed as the only solution to human problems. Only by excluding facts, however, can we go on telling that those Jews of the synagogue, the Cohens, the Jews who refused Mordecai's message, are cut off from nature, that their hereditary characteristics are immobile, that they are so fallen that it takes a leader and a prophet to redeem them, and that Jewish life is not to be intrepreted, like Gwendolen's, as a living body of experience but as the sum of remote hereditary conditions. Some consideration, I think, should be given to Mr Cohen's complacent statement: "I wouldn't exchange my business with any in the world . . . I like my business, I like my street, and I like my shop."[141]

It is perhaps through this conservative concept of restoring the past, in which agnosticism leaves its place to mysticism in the case of the Deronda group, that George Eliot's much-regretted failure in artistry and sensibility can be explained.

There are some other minor, but nevertheless important, examples in the novel of how George Eliot's mysticism departs from the facts of life and blurs her moral judgement. In the club scene (chapter xlii), neglected by almost all critics, each of "the Philosophers" presents his viewpoints with regards to the position of the Jews in Western societies. Pash is an assimilationist and is proud of his Jewishness, but "I don't see why our rubbish is to be held sacred any more than the rubbish of Brahmanism or Buddhism." Buchan wants to steer inevitable change along progressive lines. Gideon is for "getting rid of all superstitions" before "melting gradually into the populations we live among", and believes that "the connection of our race with Palestine . . . has been perverted by superstition till it's as demoralizing as the old poor-law." Miller does not believe in Mordecai's talk about "the great things of the past the Jewish people have

played in the world". None of these ideas receives its due, if any, attention from the author.

Moreover, the half-committed crimes of Gwendolen and Mirah are judged differently. While Gwendolen is permeated by agony for being late in her attempt to save Grandcourt, Mirah's attempt to commit suicide is excused by the following argument:

> "I thought it [suicide] was not wicked. Death and life are one before the Eternal. I know our fathers slew their children and slew themselves, to keep their souls pure."[142]

One does not expect of George Eliot, whatever the causes are, to take suicide for martyrdom.

The case of the Princess is more conspicuous, or perhaps made so by the author's presentation. With the idea of the metaphysical value of loyalty to race and tradition in her mind, George Eliot sentences the Princess to spiritual and physical agony. But the Princess, in fact, presents a very powerful defence, with admirable precision of expression and consistency of belief, against her father's restrictive, even fanatic, demands. She is one of the rare examples of a character rebelling against the author's moral judgement, winning all along the reader's sympathy far more than George Eliot has either expected or wanted. Her case becomes the more excusable when compared to that of Catherine Arrowpoint, who, with the author's blessing, disobeys her parents on the same grounds.

One final point concerning George Eliot's shift from realism to mysticism: as Joan Bennett rightly remarks, "the claims of the Arabs in Palestine did not enter her head."[143] Had she examined the realities of life, George Eliot might have seen a sort of "gambling" in supporting the idea of Palestine as a national home for the Jews.

Notes

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3. Quoted by Leslie Stephen, *George Eliot*, (Macmillan, 1907) p.160.
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5. George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, (Blackwood, 1876) Vol.I, ch.xvii, p.291 and Vol.II, ch.xxxii, p.127.
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7. Ibid., II, xxxii, p.137.
8. Ibid., II, xxxii, p.148.
9. Ibid., III, lii, p.148.
10. Haight, *Biography,* p.487.
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29. Ibid., III, lxiii, p.315.
30. William R. Steinhoff, The Metaphysical Texture of *Daniel Deronda, Books Abroad,* Vol.35 (Summer 1961) p.223.
31. Eliot, *Daniel Deronda,* II, xxxii, p.134.
32. Ibid., III, lxx, p.407.
33. Quoted by Holloway, *The Victorian Sage,* p.112.
34. Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, III, lxix, p. 398.
35. Ibid., I, xvii, p.288.
36. Ibid., I, xvii, p.290.
37. Ibid., III, xlvi, p.39.
38. George Eliot, *Middlemarch* (Blackwood, 1872), II, xlii, p.224.
39. Eliot, *Daniel Deronda,* III, lxiii, p.313.
40. Ibid., II, xl, p.343.
41. Ibid., III, lxiii, p.313.
42. Ibid., II, xliii, p.406.
43. Ibid., II, xxxv, p.226.
44. Ibid., II, xxxvi, p.264.
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63. Eliot, *Daniel Deronda,* II, xxxv, p.213.
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65. Quoted by Holloway, *The Victorian Sage*, p.112.
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72. Holloway, *The Victorian Sage,* p.127.
73. Quoted by Holloway in *The Victorian Sage,* p.111.
74. Eliot, *Daniel Deronda,* II, xxix, p.90.
75. Ibid.,I, xx, p.312.
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77. Quoted by Hardy (ed.), *Critical Essays on George Eliot,* p.49.
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100. Ibid., III, lxix, pp.397-8.
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125. Ibid., I, xix, p.308.
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127. Ibid., III, xlv, p.21.
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129. Ibid., I, xvi, p.275.
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135. Modder, *The Jew in the Literature of England*, p.245.
136. Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, II, xxxii, p.140.
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5. The Zionist: Pioneer and Colonist

> The land without people to the people without a land.
>
> Israel Zangwill

> From the moment that he came to Palestine he was haunted by the ideal of the kvutza; for him it was always the unit of a new, just, regenerated life, the basic unit of the new country, and he saw the country itself as a unit in the family of mankind striving towards peace, liberty and justice.
>
> Joseph Baratz, *A Village by the Jordan*

> "You are a bloody Machiavelli," said Joseph.
>
> "It is the logic of the ice age," said Bauman. "We have to use violence and deception, to save others from violence and deception."
>
> Arthur Koestler, *Thieves in the Night*

Unlike George Eliot in *Daniel Deronda*, Israel Zangwill presents his Zionist character in a real Jewish environment. George Eliot draws her Jews from a moral consciousness tinged with sympathy and occultism. Zangwill makes no secret of the idealism of Raphael Leon, in fact he enjoys commenting humorously on it, but he manages to keep his character true to life. While Deronda, at the end of the novel, sets out for the East to make the acquaintance of his people there, Leon realizes from the start that his real mission should commence in the London East and West Ends.

Zangwill understands his people intimately, and conceives of them as ordinary human beings, who, neither saints like Reah and Deronda nor bogeys like Fagin and Melmotte, have the ordinary human virtues and vices. With photographic accuracy, he reveals in *Children of the Ghetto* (1892) the background that has brought Leon to Zionism. Jewish manners, customs, traditions, spiritualism, materialism, splendour and sordidness are presented in so thoroughly objective a manner that it is quite difficult to discern the author's own views in specific terms. Again unlike George Eliot, he does not lead his characters, whose number exceeds two score, towards a definite goal other than the will to improve the conditions of their life. He makes clear the fact that persecution and pogroms have alienated the Jews

all over Europe and made their "their own Ghetto gates".[1] Even in a relatively tolerant environment like the English, they live in fairly complete separateness, where, amid their "squalor" and "narrowness", their "fierce industry and their desire to accumulate", they preserve "their poetic dreaminess, their steadfast obedience to a burdensome law, their admirable household discipline, and their undying hope of a lovely future which would yet be a future on this earth and in this present state."[2]

This book is divided into two parts dealing, significantly, with both ends of London, the East where the destitute Jews live and the West where the rich enjoy an English way of life. Needless to say, the most conspicuous feature of the East End environment is abject poverty. It is not unusual for the Ansells, for instance, to live a whole week on one loaf, or for the unemployed to go begging, thus forming a noticeable class of "schnorrers". Applicants for charity soup and bread crowd every day at the Institution in Fashion Street with famished stomachs and shivering bodies. Those who have regular, but scanty, meals are keepers of small shops, stalls or barrows. The old-clothes man, traditional in English fiction, is a well-known figure in the streets, with his wan visage and worn-out copy of the sacred law. Another feature is a traditional cliquishness, which reflects the profound differences in character between the Jewish communities in the various countries of Europe. More fundamental, of course, is the still existing division into Sephardim, mainly Spanish and Portuguese, who look down upon all others, and Ashkinazim, Central and Eastern Europeans inhabiting the East End. Among the latter group, cliquishness branches into as many sub-groups as the countries from which they have come. "I always said, no girl of mine should marry a Dutchman," says the Russian Mr Belcovich. Nothing can "prevent the Pole and the Dutchman from despising each other". The "Pullock" "looks down upon the 'Litvok' or Lithuanian" with "a sense of superiority almost equalling that possessed by the English Jew, whose mispronunciation of the Holy Tongue is his title to rank far above all foreign varieties."[3]

Yet, the author shows us a vein of brotherhood running beneath all these divisions: affliction has taught the Jews the necessity of solidarity, and, in an attempt to preserve fellow-feeling and co-operation, they, chiefly the rabbis, apply the Law of Moses to all particulars of their life from the moment of birth to that of death. Moreover, in obeying the Law, they have so far found consolation and shelter from the harsh realities of life. This however, has created yet another deeper breach among the Jewish communities, that between old and new. Having moved into a country where not only the right to live is guaranteed but also the chance to enjoy equal rights and privileges with the English is offered, the new generations turn their backs on Judaism and seek assimilation with the Gentiles. Actually, the Law has been turned into rigid formality and strict rituals ranging from "kosher" food to intermarriage. The Talmudic heritage, therefore, is facing the liberal and more practical Western culture. The problem is aggravated by waves of immigration from Central and Eastern

Europe, in the aftermath of successive pogroms. The new arrivals passionately adhere to the instruction of the Torah and the Talmud, and will not tolerate any modification: to do this means to stop being Jews. Hannah, through her father Rabbi Shemuel's literal interpretation of the codes, loses the only opportunity of marrying the Jew she loves and is left to live with a broken heart. Esther Ansell, the chief female character in the novel, who is raised by Mr and Mrs Goldsmith from the status of being daughter of a "schnorrer" (beggar) to that of a London University graduate, exposes the terrible facts of her ghetto life in a novel. Levi Shemuel, in company with a Gentile girl at the Seder night, refuses to recognize his father, who, from now on, considers his son dead.

An outcome of this struggle is the rivalry between the Reformed Synagogue and the Kensington Synagogue. Not surprisingly, the first is sponsored by bourgeois Jews, the latter by orthodox, lower-class Jews. Through their Western culture, the rich English Jewry have come to realize the advantages of modifying strict traditions, while the newcomers have clung to them as the sole means for self-identification. The tone of the novel suggests, however, that Zangwill is in favour of modernization, but the West End group he presents are following their personal interests in maintaining a balance between practicable Judaism and modern modes of life.

Also unsurprising is the fact that Zionist and other doctrines, aiming at solving the problems of the Jewish life, emerge from these bourgeois classes. For an all-absorbing present in the East End leaves no room for thinking about the future. It takes a wealthy family and an education at Eton and Oxford to produce a Raphael Leon, who can afford time and effort to think and devise solutions. He knows the predicament of the Jews and views it at an historical and comprehensive level, but he has not gone through the experiences which have made Esther Ansell feel that Judaism is an insufferable burden. He believes that fundamental Judaism is an all-embracing philosophy, capable of saving the Jews and wide enough to include socialism. When Esther, surprised, asks him: "What! do you find Socialism, too, in orthodox Judaism?" his confident answer is: "It requires no seeking."[4] Very much like Disraeli and George Eliot's Mordecai, he believes that:

> "The ancient faith that has united us so long must not be lost just as it is on the very eve of surviving the faiths that sprang from it, even as it has survived Egypt, Assyria, Rome, Greece, and the Moors . . . Who knows but that it will be born again in us if we are only patient? Race affinity is a potent force; why be in a hurry to dissipate it?"[5]

He tells Esther not only that the truths of Judaism are eternal and deep in human nature and the constitution of things, but that Israel has a peculiar mission and the Israelites are God's witnesses. Like Disraeli, he believes that the Jews are sanctified to His service, "that we have taught the world

religion as truly as Greece has taught beauty and science,"[6] that "God made a choice of one race to be messengers and apostles, martyrs at need to His truth,"[7] that God teaches through a great race as through a great man, and Israel is that chosen race. The mission of Israel, which is the reason why the Jews should exist as a separate race, is, therefore, to "spread the truth of the Torah till the earth is filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the Sea."[8] To his cousin Sydney Graham's remark that the Jews do not spread God's truth, Leon retorts: "We do. Christianity and Mohammedanism are offshoots of Judaism."[9]

An inflated national consciousness is perhaps clear in Leon's statements. However, as in Mordecai's vision, race, religion and traditions are the components of Leon's nationalism. To preserve and promote their impact, assimilation, especially intermarriage, must not be tolerated. Things might have been different if the Jews had a country of their own, but since they do not they have to preserve their "human boundaries" till the mission is fulfilled. Esther asks him: "But surely you don't also long to return to Palestine?" And he answers: "I do. Why should we not have our own country?"[10] Having "our own country" is the most urgent need before the satisfaction of which the mission of Israel cannot be executed.

Again unlike George Eliot, though his purpose is completely different, Zangwill allows for other than Zionist views to be expounded with equal force. In addition to the rebellious Esther and the assimilationist Sydney Graham, Strelitski, a powerful preacher at the Kensington Synagogue and a former inhabitant of Russian and London ghettos, realizes that his position has made him the fief of an anachronistic Rabbinate drugging his audience and himself with "the opium of orthodoxy". He tells Leon that ceremonialism has become the coffin of Judaism, the "primitive mix-up of everything with religion in a theocracy", and that "the Mosaic code has been largely embodied in civil law, and superseded by it."[11] He goes on to say:

> "In every age our great men have modified and developed Judaism. Why should it not be trimmed into concordance with the culture of the time? Especially when the alternative is death. Yes, death."[12]

His argument is that Jews should admit their acquisition of a new nationality, more precisely, of new nationalities: "You are an Englishman, I am a Russian,"[13] and "the Judaism of you English weighs upon my spirits."[14] The Jews should have no country, they belong to the world. They are only "sons of the law" as others are sons of England, France or Italy, and the salvation of Jewry is not the national home in Palestine:

> "May we not dream nobler dreams than political independence? . . . To be merely one among the nations – that is not, despite George Eliot, so satisfactory an ideal. The restoration to Palestine, or the acquisition of a national centre, may be a political solution, but it is not a spiritual idea."[15]

America and not Palestine, Strelitski believes, is the place to which streams of the persecuted Jews should be directed, where they can establish the nucleus of the brotherhood of man.

Leon insists that the Jews should have a country of their own, for "if the Jews have the future you dream of, the future will have no Jews . . . . George Eliot was right. Men are men, not pure spirit. A fatherland focuses a people. Without it we are but the gypsies of religion."[16] Against this background and with such beliefs, Leon commences his practical dedication to Zionism with a definite aim: to spread national consciousness among the Jews with the ultimate objective of preparing them for an exodus into Palestine. He is "content to raise Judea an inch."[17] Through his leaders in a newspaper he tries to shift emphasis from kosher meat and cheese, and better supervision of sales, to a wider sphere of spirituality and stimulating ritual. He draws lines between Judaic parables and allegories on the one hand and actual facts on the other, pointing out that what the Rabbis and Teachers have written or taught is meant rather as moral guidance than to instil a literal belief in demons and supernatural happenings. He is affected by his own call, and his outlook towards orthodoxy becomes modified. He realizes that the great meanings of the faith are hidden from everyday practices and that certain aspects of Judaism should be modernized. Zangwill avoids going into details concerning the nature of Leon's change. Unlike George Eliot, he never explores the psychology of his hero.

However, Leon's activities extend beyond his work in the newspaper. He spends most of his evenings lecturing or participating in meetings, where he is able to do "a little mild propagandism" for the national homeland. Since "socialism is at least as important as Shakespeare,"[18] property in the future country should be organized after "land nationalization and a few other things which would bring the world more into harmony with the Law of Moses."[19] The machinery of competitive society works badly for the Jews, not only because thousands of them do not get the basic necessities of life but also because it undermines their moral and religious fibre by forcing them to accept the values of an individualistic doctrine. Reference to Leon's extra activities, however, is made only incidentally, and he is never presented doing any of them. Here again, Zangwill does not show us how Leon's proposals for a Zionist form of government may counteract, either in theory or in practice, the powerful pressure of the assimilation process.

The controversy aroused by Leon's leaders comes to a turning point when Mr Goldsmith, the owner of the paper, decides to dismiss him. The reason as Mr Goldsmith writes, lies in the

> many symptoms . . . of your [Leon's] growing divergency from the ideas with which "The Flag of Judah" was started. It is obvious that you find yourself unable to emphasize the olden features of our faith – the questions of kosher meat, etc. – as forcibly as our readers desire. You no doubt cherish ideals which are neither practical nor within the grasp of the masses to whom you appeal.[20]

But he succeeds in converting to nationalism one person at least, Esther Ansell, who agrees to return to England after her intended departure for the United States, and, like Mirah with Deronda, share with him what has become their common mission.

Zangwill's main objective in writing *Children of the Ghetto* is to present Jewish life and ideas, with all their diversity, to the English reading public. Evidently he is not trying to impart a particular moral vision as George Eliot is in *Daniel Deronda*. However, it is not difficult to sense his support for modernizing Judaism and turning it into a vital national force. The most conspicuous issue, whether to migrate into Palestine or the United States, assumes at the end of the novel a symbolic significance. To leave for the States, as Strelitski advocates, means assimilation after the Mendelssohnian principles; to leave for Palestine, as Leon propounds, means a state and a national home. Significant is the fact that most emigrants leave for the United States, which implies a public preference; but Zangwill's sympathy, though faint, is with Leon's nationalism. It is to be expected that Leon will continue his pioneering work for Zionism, despite the fact that these efforts are dissipated and thwarted by conflicting personal and group interests. He belongs to that class of unknown Jewish intellectuals, who having opted in favour of nationalism, spare no effort in arousing a national sentiment among the masses of Jews, not only in England but on the Continent as well. He is another fulfilment of Mordecai's longing for a rich, educated and good-looking man who will verify his visions, and who actually does.

One reason why characters are not fully developed in *Children of the Ghetto* is perhaps that Zangwill wrote his book at an early age, when his moral vision was immature. Zangwill's Zionism, moreover, was a short-lived commitment. A few years after his warm welcome of Dr Herzl in 1896, he participated in establishing the anti-Zionist Jewish Territorial Organization and "broke away with his counter-movement that sought settlement for Jews in Uganda, Mesopotamia, Cyrenaica, and hearkened to an invitation to Mexico."[21] In other words, he adopted Strelitski's views. His Zionism does not recur among his later schemes, whether in novels or plays, and even in *Children of the Ghetto* it is not a powerful incentive.

The Zionist pioneer

Joseph Baratz, who dictated his life story in *A Village by the Jordan* (1954) to another person, presents a fuller and more vivid picture of the Zionist pioneer than that of Zangwill. With him, the scene shifts from Europe to Palestine, and the central figure, Baratz himself, assumes the new character of colonist. The story covers a period of more than sixty years, sharing with *Children of the Ghetto* a similar, though harsher and more severe background in a different European country, Russia. Like the East End, Kishenev, in the southern Ukraine, has been a centre of Jewish

communities where traditions are very much the same, economic status is as low, and a seeking for a better life is as necessary and urgent. The wealthy minority of Russian Jews, like their counterparts among the English Jews, are well up the Russian social ladder:

> They often rose to prominence as successful lawyers, doctors, merchants or bankers – became 'assimilated', Russianized; they lost touch with their own communities.[22]

The lower classes of the Jews, isolated and lacking the means for social mobility, have remained where they were born, with the rabbis indulging in their fervent scatter-brained discussions and enjoying the highest prestige. Consequently, "many thousands of Jews emigrated to the free, emancipated countries of Western Europe or America."[23] Younger people have joined Russian political parties, especially the Bolshevik, working for the overthrow of the Czarist regime, and have been influenced by socialist thinking and the works of the great poets Pushkin and Lermontov.

As we have seen in the discussion of *Daniel Deronda*, the Zionist movement started in Russia in the early 1880s, attracting the imagination of many Jews towards the making of a Jewish way of life on a national independent soil. Baratz, being "more traditional than the Western Jews",[24] was in favour of Palestine, and after the drastic failure of the Russian Revolution of 1905, together with all hopes of a constitutional government, he, then fifteen, made up his mind to migrate to Palestine:

> In the early days Palestine had been thought of mainly as a refuge, though much had been written about the new country and the new culture we were to build; now we felt that in order to construct our country we had first to reconstruct ourselves.[25]

The reconstruction of self, one of George Eliot's main themes, is Baratz's ultimate aim. To him, immigration is not merely a transfer of body from one place to another, but rather a change of character and conditions of life. The essential difference between him on the one hand and Deronda and Leon on the other is one between theory and practice: Deronda wants to make the acquaintance of his people in the East and see what he can do to give them a national centre; Leon wants to build up a Zionist national consciousness among the Jews of the East End; Baratz is already living the experiment of the new life. This is not to say that Deronda and Leon are hopelessly theoretical, though their characters are idealistic, for we see the former at the onset of his mission and the latter at the heart of a pioneering work; but the "creation of facts", to borrow a journalistic phrase, is Baratz's.

A determination to "create facts" is perhaps behind the dissatisfaction Baratz feels with the life of the old settlers. Rothschild and other Jewish millionaires have bought land and turned it into Western oases, Richon le Zion being the most famous among them:

> "Who are these?"
> "Biluîm"
> "And who does the work?"
> "Arabs."
> "And what do the Jews do?"
> "They're managers, supervisors."
> It was a great shock to us. I said to myself: "This isn't what I've come for", and I could see that the others were disappointed as well.[26]

The "others", by which Baratz means the "halutzim", the pioneers, are members of the second "aliyah", immigration, who have also come from Russia to build a country. To them, all that has been done by older settlers is objectionable on the grounds that Jewish labour, meant to create a new man and a new nation, is not employed and that Baron Rothschild has wasted his millions on colonies lacking a Jewish character. Similarly awkward are the orthodox Jews who are suspicious of everything, especially of the "halutzim" for having free ideas of the boys and girls eating and dancing together.

The "kvutza", a small communal village, is a landmark in the history of the Zionist colonization of Palestine, and Degania, where Baratz's story takes place, is the first successful experiment of its kind. Influenced by socialistic ideals, and eager to construct a country of their own, Baratz and eleven other halutzim set to work on a piece of land beside Galilee obtained for them by the National Fund. The land is disconcertingly different from that of the Ukraine:

> It was a desolate place and one of the worst malarial swamps in the country. The Arabs were all sick, the women suffered most. At night the mosquitoes came and the fever rose.[27]

The whole country, in fact, Baratz says, "ceased being the Land of Milk and Honey", and that is "because the goats had eaten up the trees".[28] "We had found the land barren after centuries of neglect;"[29] and: "The country was wretchedly poor and nothing was done to help trade or agriculture."[30]

Added to these external difficulties is the problem of adjustment, for the halutzim, despite their zeal and deep faith, are afraid to settle and strike new roots. This feeling is not unnatural in the early stage of immigrants' life. The countries Baratz and his comrades have come from are in a way homelands though far from being loving ones. It is but natural to feel a certain nostalgia for the place of one's childhood as well as a certain fear of the new country one is going to make a homeland. What makes the halutzim cling to the new instead of the old country is a belief that life elsewhere is not the one they are looking for, and that their future will be decided by the amount of work and production they are capable of. The magnitude of their vision inspires in them a fear of failure. They think of the kvutza as "the unit of a new, just, regenerated life, the basic unit of the new country", which is "a unit

in the family of mankind striving towards peace, liberty and justice".[31] They cannot afford to fail, and their latent feeling of attachment to Europe is matched and surpassed by their vision of the new life. A relationship is established gradually between them and the land, transforming the paradox of their previous life, of attachment and detachment, into a sense of having been exiled for two thousand years, during which the land became arid and the Jews lost their naturalness: "What had happened while we were in exile?" Baratz asks, and goes on to answer: "The land had lost its fertility and it seemed to us that we ourselves, divorced from it, had become barren in spirit."[32] The new belief entails a new understanding of their previous life which is strikingly similar to that of George Eliot: "We had been cut off from nature, from our roots, and everything had been distorted by the need for security."[33] Dwelling upon times of persecution and pogroms in Russia, Baratz comes to the conclusion that in order to buy security the Jews have become alienated from themselves. Material prosperity has been accompanied by spriritual dearth and a drain of human faculties.

What Baratz means exactly by "nature" is not always clear. At times it is any land, sometimes it is the natural environment, in most cases it is Palestine. However, he stresses the idea that exile has impoverished not only the Jews, but the country as well, for it seems that only the Jews can take care of the land and at the same time become enriched by it. His insistence on the barrenness of the land contrasts, incidentally, with Disraeli's description of Palestine sixty years before.

> From Bethlehem to Hebron, Canaan is still a land of milk and honey, though not so rich and picturesque as in the great expanse of Palestine to the north of the Holy City. The beauty and abundance of the promised land may still be found in Samaria and Galilee.[34]

Perhaps the real Palestine is less fertile than the Ukraine. Certainly, it does not match the biblical image cherished in Baratz's imagination. Consequently the hardships of working on it appear to be greater than they really are, and the achievements more gratifying. However, the halutzim have many good reasons to take pride in what they have done. Urbanized as they are, and inexperienced in an unknown land and a different climate, they have started the pioneering business of communal life where everybody works for the community, owns nothing, carries no money and builds up an example for other immigrants to emulate. After a short period of training, a self-supporting programme is put into practice by which crops and vegetables are raised, trees and flowers are planted, water is pumped and a water tower is constructed, epidemics are successfully fought, houses, a dairy, a cowshed and a stable are built. The halutzim, doubled and trebled with the passage of time, spend ten years before they come to understand fully their new profession. Not only are they practising agriculture and farming for the first time, but also they are planting and growing themselves as well, their future, affections, relationships, traditions and all that establishes normal human life.

There are other human problems. "We still thought women could only cook and wash."[35] But the two women in Degania feel unhappy because their ideal of working and living a normal life is not given a proper chance. "We are worse off than our mothers were in their small towns,"[36] they say. The problem is solved by gradually allowing women to participate in men's work. Another crucial question is whether or not the halutzim should marry and have children. Some of them maintain that it is impossible to have children in such extraordinarily difficult circumstances. People die of malaria, and the Bedouin intermittently raid the settlements for food and cattle; peace and hygienic environment are to be found nowhere in this part of the world. But Baratz and Miriam, deeply in love and determined on defying difficulties, get married and later have seven healthy children, who together with other children are looked after in a separate communal house.

The need for new immigrants, after the expansion of Degania, becomes urgent, and those are brought from Europe by any means possible. "The British knew and didn't know about it – they closed their eyes."[37] The ships carrying the immigrants anchor in little hidden places along the coast where "young men gave them their papers so that they should have legal passports to show in case they were stopped."[38] With the increase of population, political organizations are formed heralding the establishment of the future state. Kvutzoth, small commues, and kibbutzim, big communes, form Kibbutz Federations, which organize all institutions in their member groups, themselves members of the Histadruth (trade union federation) and of either Mapai or Mapam parties.

The most decisive incident in the life of the Degania colonists is their victory over the Syrian army in the wake of the declaration of independence. The Syrians came with tanks, armoured cars, artillery and planes sweeping across armless divisions of Degania, but a boy-settler with "Molotov cocktails jumped up and began to throw them at the tanks one after another. The two officers were killed and the tank burst into flames, so did the trees around it. When the Syrians saw the flames and realised that their commanders were dead they began to retreat."[39] This miracle, as the Rabbi of Tiberias calls it, is a step towards myth-making. The description Baratz gives of the Syrian army makes it hard to believe that such a modern and highly well-equipped army could be forced to retreat when faced with Molotov cocktails. Baratz tends to attribute Degania's successful experiment to the uniqueness of the men who have started it. In so doing, he dismisses the importance of the massive aid given by different institutions such as the Jewish National Fund and the Palestine Colonization Fund. Baratz feels moderately proud of the Degania achievements, and rightly so. After all it has been a "transmutation of self", as George Eliot writes in *Daniel Deronda*. Perhaps the need for creating a myth is deeper in the halutzim's souls than their complacency in actual achievements. We need not go through the history of affliction and, to a certain extent, of dehumanization the Jews have lived for long centuries in order to understand their overriding need to feel themselves as human beings. As Hector Bolitho writes in his

Beside Galilee describing these colonists:

> It is simple and true that peasants who till the soil catch some divine essence from their husbandry: it seems to change their texture and make them different from all other men.[40]

Because of their present experience and their memories of it, the halutzim believe that their achievements are unique and miraculous.

Behind this aura of facts mingled with fancies is the figure of Aaron David Gordon, a Ukrainian Hebrew writer and experimentalist, well-known among the Zionists, who says: "Give me ten despairing men and I will transform the world."[41] Despair is connected with the Jewish Diaspora, it is the state of having reached the point of no return in the Jews' relations with the world, a feeling of having nothing to lose if they start a new life. Prompted by such feelings, the Jews, Gordon believes, will work miracles. His belief is that the Jews in exile have lived as parasites, filling the void of their existence with artificial gratifications such as money and property until artificiality has become second nature to them. To restore originality and creativity, the Jewish nation "must have in it people who work on the land and who have a living relationship with the soil and nature: people who truly know the joy of a good harvest, and the grief of a poor crop, and the changing of seasons. Only on this foundation could a true culture arise."[42] The religion of work, in its pioneering application on the kvutza life, brings Gordon very near to socialism, which he understands to be a commitment to an honest and working life. His socialism lays primary stress not on economic conditions but rather on man as the source of both good and evil, as the image of God and the slave of power. In this respect, the Jew must preserve the image and resist the "hypnotism of power".

With this self-consciousness of a man tilling the soil, the halutzim of Degania, sharing Gordon's thinking and practices, esteem their colonization experience as exemplary, where struggle against human and physical nature is mainly taken as an inspiration of self-will. The halutzim, contrary to the Russianized or Anglicized Jews, and to Disraeli's Spanish Jews who cultivated land and built cities, come to believe that in fact they are throwing off "two thousand years of Diaspora,"[43] and say "now we must give it [the land] our strength and it would give us back our creativeness."[44] The return to land is the return to naturalness and historical continuity. Like George Eliot, Baratz believes that it is exile and not persecution that has estranged the Jews from the rest of mankind and drained their naturalness. A bridge has to be built connecting the halutzim with the life of the ancient Hebrews.

Relations with the British and the Arabs

Two important aspects which Baratz does not fully describe are the halutzim's relationship with both the British and the Arabs. During the First World War the Zionist International Organization formed "the Jewish

Legion and the Zionist Mule Corps which later fought at Gallipoli"[45] with the British Army. Under the British Mandate for Palestine, starting in 1920, and the Balfour promise of a Jewish home in the country (1917), great numbers of Zionists made their way towards the Holy Land. The Balfour Declaration made the halutzim "nearly mad with joy"[46] and they "thought that the Jewish State was already in existence – [they] had understood the Balfour Declaration to mean that."[47] During the 1930s the famous British White Paper specified the number of immigrants to be admitted into Palestine and generated a furore among the Zionists.

Baratz casually mentions some historical facts concerning Anglo-Zionist relations, but practically nothing of the human aspect of them. More detailed is the information he gives on those between the colonists and the Arabs. Generally, good relationships have been maintained by both sides. When the ship bringing Baratz from Russia anchors outside Jaffa harbour, "Arabs in long white shirts came in little rowing boats to take us off."[48] Old settlers employ Arab workers and peasants in their farms, and "Arab villages near the settlements lived on good terms with the colonists; they pilfered a little – not for political reasons but because they were primitive people who picked up what lay about."[49] The first planting of Herzl forest is done by Arabs. The halutzim of Degania start their new career in an Arab village, Umm Jumi, which the National Fund has bought from the landlord, and the Arabs "who had been on the land . . . had been compensated and gone away. The others lived on good terms with us."[50] The remaining Arabs welcome Miriam's visits to learn from the wife of a local Arab sheikh how to look after cows and milk them, and they attend Baratz's and Miriam's wedding party. The halutzim have good relations even with the Arabs living in Damascus and Beirut. The only trouble comes from small groups of nomads who raid the settlement or ambush settlers, killing and getting killed. In order to stop bloodshed, the Arab sheikh acts as host and mediator for both parties and brings them into his house for a brotherhood-making ceremony.

This friendly relationship, however, does not go on smoothly for long. "It was in the thirties when there were troubles and no Arabs would come near the villages."[51] The seeds of suspicion are sown when the Arabs begin to see the colonists as potential land dispossessors, and they become outraged when the idea of establishing a Zionist state is voiced, forcing them to realize the difference between giving land and giving a homeland.

On this subject Baratz is curiously reticent. Hector Bolitho, a British journalist from New Zealand, who visited the country in 1932, records his memories as a "Gentile" in his previously-mentioned book. In Palestine he sees himself as "bustling in the Zionist settlements and languishing in the villages of the Arabs."[52] The main virtue of the book resides in the honest recording of the viewpoints of all sides, including the author's own. Bolitho's admiration for the halutzim is nowhere hidden, and he, more often than not, contrasts them to city-dweller Zionists with very little regard for the latter party. The halutzim "have formed an order which is communal and peaceful

coloured with ideals of friendship and the simple duty of living together in peace."[53] And:

> The young Zionist of the farms is the crown upon Zionism. He is the idealist, the dreamer who has dreamed a dream. But he is also willing to dig and work, to sow and plough, from dawn to sunset, to make his dream come true and to win Zion back for the Jews.[54]

City-dwellers are disobliging propagandists with ready-made arguments and long lists of statistics on economic progress in Palestine.

Bolitho thinks that the Zionists' claim of kinship with the "brave colonists" of New Zealand, Australia or South Africa appears to be exaggerated. Compared with the record of pioneering life in those remote places, "the story of the Jewish settlement of Palestine is one of peace and ease."[55] For the primitive raids of the Bedouin into the colonists' settlement are easily rendered futile by the advanced European methods and means of warfare with which the settlers are well acquainted. The main difference – an important one – between the Zionists and other colonizers, Bolitho maintains, is that "the Zionists have turned their backs upon European terrors to seek security. The British colonists turned from English security to seek terrors."[56] The more dramatic phenomenon is, of course, the feelings of the Zionists towards the British and the Arabs. In the beginning, there is gratitude for the British: England has been first and foremost in her enlightened view of the Jews; Queen Victoria made one of them, Disraeli, her Prime Minister; the Balfour Declaration has turned the eyes of every Jew in Germany, Poland and Russia towards the country of tolerance and justice. But now, "Great Britain has antagonized the Jews of the world with her treatment of the Zionists in Palestine. You made a promise in the Balfour Declaration, and you have not kept it."[57] The reason why the Zionists are shocked by the White Paper is that they feel the world is indebted to them because of the affliction the Jews have suffered everywhere. In their pursuit of a home of their own, their eagerness "blinds them to sane consideration of their neighbours", and consequently "they become cruelly selfish."[58] They turn to Britain with bitter accusations and ask for bounty and protection but "never . . . consider how many troubles have been heaped upon us [the British] in the past few years."[59] In vain Bolitho tries to hear from them of one virtue or kindness in the history of the British Mandate in Palestine: English politicians "have made the English taste like gall to the Jews".[60]

A similar intensity is noticeable in the Zionists' attitude towards the Arabs, though the feeling is mostly one of contempt and superciliousness. We have seen that Baratz considers them "primitive", but the Zionists whom Bolitho describes reveal their mistrust and hatred in a rather striking way. He tells us of a request made by Arabs living in Galilee to lay a pipe for carrying water from a Zionist kvutza to their almost waterless village:

> It seemed to me that the Arabs were trusting and ingenuous people to accept the tap end of the Jewish water-pipe . . . .
>
> But the Jews did not see it this way. "If you give the Arabs one thing, they will ask for more," they said.[61]

A city-dweller, a nurse from Tel-Aviv, observing the sleepy and lethargic state of Bolitho, advises him: "'You should go out each morning and shoot an Arab. That would stimulate you.' Her eyes were so cold and her expression was so serious that I knew she meant what she said. That I was shocked did not matter to her."[62] England, Bolitho feels, seems to fail both her adopted Hebrew and her sponsored Arab children. The author regards as impossible the task of bringing together the "limp Arabs crouched upon their backs"[63] and "people brought from far scattered countries, speaking a dozen different languages, sharing no traditions of religion, government, or social life."[64] An Arab tells Bolitho of the aggressive policy of the Zionists which goes contrary to the nature of his people and their characteristic quality of absorbing foreigners and living peacefully with them. Jews, he says, "were unmolested, and nobody begrudged them the Wailing Wall and what it meant to them. But when the war passed, when the Jews became Zionists, it was a different matter."[65] The Arab's understanding of the Zionist character is interesting. He tells Bolitho:

> "It would be a sad day for the Jews if they did have a national home, for their virility has been made by adversity, and, when adversity ends for them, decadence will begin."[66]

In this polemical, tragic situation the author reads an absence of justice. Anglicized or Europeanized Jews have already become natives with only a faint Semitic element, but these who are not assimilated view the entire world as a militant and hostile environment. Their human qualities have been, therefore, drained. They feel enmity and hatred towards the Arabs, who resist giving them a homeland in Palestine. While with the Arab "enmity is a luxury", a kind of "caviare", "with the Jew, it is a trade . . . enmity is daily bread".[67] Bolitho has no idea of how the antagonism between Zionist and Arab may be solved. His is a moral solution based on the Judaeo-Christian heritage. He recalls the words of Hillel, the Jewish Babylonian sage, addressing a proselyte who came to him to know what Judaism was all about:

> "I will teach you all the Law while you stand on one foot," he said. "What is hateful to thee do not unto thy fellow man: this is the whole Law. The rest is mere commentary."[68]

This pearl, as Bolitho calls Hillel's teaching, is handed on to Jesus and Mohammed, but followers of the three religions seem to spend their time unlearning the revealed, simple truth.

The author ends his diary by narrating an encounter with a German Jew living in Oberhessen who refuses to join "the great army of Zionists" in Palestine on the grounds that "if it is all Jews there wouldn't be any Christians to do business with".[69]

Three types of pioneer

The three writers discussed so far present Zionist characters in search of meaning and security in their life, after having come to the conclusion that even such bridges as George Eliot has deemed retainable with Western environments are irreparably broken and no new ones can be constructed. All of them practise one form or another of pioneering work ranging from awakening a national consciousness through lectures and writings to the establishment of a new, communal life. The characters these three writers present, though different in background and outlook, are possessed with the dream of having a homeland and building it anew, hence their insistence on everything Jewish, past and present. Leon sees in the Jewish emigration to the United States a step in the wrong direction, and calls for strict application of a slightly modified orthodoxy. To sustain his argument he investigates Jewish history and brings into the light all that is of glorious and lasting value. However, he sometimes enlarges his vision of Judaism beyond the limits of the acceptable, whether in the inclusion in it of the doctrine of socialism or in claiming that it embraces all humanity. Strelitski is perhaps more justified in maintaining that Judaism lays a task on the Jews to perform in the societies they dwell among. But Strelitski is an assimilationist who advocates the fusion of his race with other races; whereas Leon is an ardent nationalist seeking the creation of a Jewish nation. With Baratz, emphasis on Judaism is far more nationalistic than religious. It expresses a pride in the race with no pretention to internationalism or all-inclusiveness. In fact, he often stresses differences in thought and tradition from all others, including the Bolsheviks whose vision of the future society the halutzim try to implement in their kvutzoth and kibbutzim. The Judaism to which inhabitants of the East End and of Kishenev stick so passionately is a far cry from the new type of life and character the colonists have built in Degania. Its possessive quality, evident in Leon, is transferred with Baratz to the land, where a powerful sense of ownership is derived from day-to-day contact with the soil and climate. "It was all, all for the Jews,"[70] Yehil Weizmann tells Bolitho in objection to the latter's wish to buy a piece of land in Palestine. It seems that all repressed feelings and reactions have found an outlet in the new faith and in the possession of land. The element of myth-making stems perhaps from this intensity with which the pioneer colonist views his new life. Having made a choice, he is inclined to consider it the only "pathway" to a regeneration unique in both character and achievement. To him the colonization of Palestine is an unexampled phenomenon since it is made by those

"despairing men" who have nothing more to lose and everything to gain. As he approaches the new vocation, whether in the case of Leon or Baratz, the Zionist is imbued with a spirit as of prophecy impelling him to its purpose. The comparison Bolitho makes between the Zionist and other colonists, which appears quite reasonable, sounds strange to the Zionist. More than once, Bolitho points to this possessiveness which blinds the colonist to the consideration not only of his neighbours but also to the fact that behind his remarkable achievements lies a world-wide Zionist organization.

Still, the portrait of the Zionist pioneer is incomplete in the works of the three writers. Leon is shown only partially as a pioneer and Baratz surveys more than fifty years of pioneering and colonization without really presenting a comprehensive portrait of the colonists' life. Bolitho records, more or less, testimonies of antagonists which do not amount to any degree of character study.

An account of the whole situation, including new developments in the life and character of the Zionists, with an intensity as strong as that of the colonists' life, is attempted by Arthur Koestler, whose *Thieves in the Night* will be examined in the following pages.

Arthur Koestler

As in Disraeli's case, some knowledge of Koestler's life is perhaps necessary to understand his novels. For the most part, he has written of either his experiences or his ideas. His father, the son of a Russian Jew, and his mother, a restless Viennese, lived a life of exile in Austro-Hungary, where, mostly in Budapest, the young Arthur was recognized as an "infant prodigy". Early in his life he had shown genuine inclination to science, psychology and politics. Before obtaining his degree, he left for Palestine. He spent three very trying years there, enduring hunger, homelessness and rough jobs. While still there, he cultivated the friendship of Vladimir Jabotinsky, the leader of the terrorist movement in Zionism to whom Koestler dedicates *Thieves in the Night* and who wanted to take the country by force and not through buying land. He felt fascinated by Jabotinsky and his dream of establishing a Jewish home, but was unable to remain there for ever. Like Disraeli, he was overwhelmed by the austere landscape of Jerusalem, but unlike him, he sensed in the "haughty and desolate beauty" of the city a "tragedy without catharsis".[71] This ostensibly curious feeling of a Zionist towards Jerusalem is an early and indirect indication of the author's ambivalent attitude towards his Jewishness. His work in Kvutza Heftseba, hewing wood and drawing water, ended with the commune's decision that he would not make a good settler. His Zionism, however, faded giving place to Communism. In 1932 he joined the languishing German Communist Party, and shortly afterwards he spent a year in the Soviet Union as a tractor driver. The Party officials decided that his journalism would do the cause more good and sent him to Spain to report on

the atrocities of the Fascist Franco regime. John Atkins describes his political and social criticism of Franco's Spain as "entirely propagandist and does not represent a serious contribution to our understanding of the Fascist cult."[72] Despite increasing awareness of differences between the Party and his own vision of life, Koestler's sense of duty and his need to belong constrained him to write propaganda in the full consciousness that he was distorting the truth, as he later confessed to the British Consul in Seville. In 1939 he published *The Gladiators*, and in 1940 *Darkness at Noon*, which marks a final breach with Communism. In 1940, having been twice rescued from death sentences by the British, he settled in England where he lived until his death in 1983.

Koestler's life was erratic and full of bustle. In a sense, he had been a modern Wandering Jew until his retirement from politics in 1955 and dedication to his early passion for psychology and science. Early in his life, he tells us in *Arrow in the Blue*, he developed a sense of the mysterious and the absolute, intensified by a complex of guilt.[73] As G.B. Bantock writes:

> Both in his life and in his writings, which, it is safe to assume, are closely related, Arthur Koestler presents an interesting version of the cosmopolitan intellectual – rootless, dispossessed, one whose contact with his fellows is almost exclusively through the interchange of abstractions, ideas, based on a self-consciounsess that has tended to inhibit emotional relationship.[74]

His main tension springs from an awareness of his restlessness which drives him to action and imbues his imagination with utopian visions. His abortive experience as a colonist in Palestine and his seven strenuous years in the Communist Party, together with fervent participation in European politics between 1930 and 1955, resulted in a sardonic feeling of detachment conflicting with a struggle for security and against alienation. In *Arrow in the Blue*, he describes himself as suffering from "absolutitis".[75] Through his absolutism he sees things dramatically and in pairs: facts are made hypotheses, situations are problems and differences are opposites, which he dichotomizes in either-or groups. There is arrival or departure, a yogi or a commissar, darkness but at noon, a god but a failing one, an arrow hunting for the absolute but in the blue. His "pilgrim's regress from revolution",[76] as V.S. Pritchett puts it, ends with a sudden reversion to Zionist commitment, which is apparently his last attempt to hold on to a political faith before he writes *The Age of Longing*. He describes his joining the Communist Party as being wrong for the right reason. Throughout his vacillation between "either" and "or", Koestler has been preoccupied with the question of ends and means in building "utopias". His departure from the Communist Party is a result of the latter's perpetual justification of morally destructive means for dreamed-of ends. In a later work he puts forward his theory of the "yogi", who "believes that the end is unpredictable and that the means alone count at the ultra-violet" end of the spectrum, and the "commissar", who "believes in change from without at the infra-red"[77] end. Leaders of the

Soviet Communist Party are appallingly commissars who, by sacrificing all values to achieve ends, have transformed the promised socialist utopia into Hades.

Koestler's preoccupation with ends and means, together with his metaphor of the yogi and the commissar, are undercurrents in his first three novels: *The Gladiators, Darkness at Noon* and *Arrival and Departure* (1943). He calls the three books a triology in which, he tells us, "the central theme . . . was the ethics of revolution".[78] *The Gladiators*, in the words of Raymond Mortimer, "is a brilliant essay upon the nature of revolution and the revolutionary".[79] The masses who support Spartacus as leader are incapable of salvation; they are driven by convulsive rebellion and satisfaction of lusts. Spartacus is appalled and, consequently, brought down by the necessity of being a tyrant. In *Darkness at Noon*, Rubashov, by frequent betrayal of honest but uncompromising comrades, is gnawed from the inside, and has to surrender to the new Neanderthal-Commissar, Gletkin, in despairing willingness, giving the impression that the revolutionary process is in itself corrupting. Party leaders, from Stalin down to Gletkin, have inflicted sacrifices on the people dearer than any utopia will be able to compensate, and created human conditions in which no utopia is ever likely to exist. In *Arrival and Departure*, faith and reason give way to Peter Slavek's love of action for action's sake, and commitment is explained in terms of neurotic craving for martyrdom. In this trilogy, Koestler's attention is primarily focused, not on the personal relationships of individuals, but rather on illuminating ideological arguments, which render his fiction a platform for conveying ideas and his characters virtual mouthpieces. Himself far more embroiled in issues than his characters are, he is constantly arguing for one thing against another, driving each point home with a vigour and insistence characteristically his own. The force and intensity evident in varying degrees in the three novels derive from his tensions of rootlessness and utopianism, with the thesis and antithesis raging through the pages until the end. A synthesis, however, is not arrived at; rather the analysis of the situation ends with regression to either thesis or antithesis, a state mostly of despair and surrender as in Peter's battle cry "reasons do not matter", or in Rubashov's admission of the fabricated charges laid against him by the Neanderthal-Commissar, Gletkin.

In this atmosphere of disillusionment, coinciding with the end of the Second World War, Koestler's Zionism comes to the forefront. He has, so far, reconciled himself to what George Orwell calls a "short-term pessimism": a time-span equal to an individual's life is definitely hopeless, and the best thing to do is to "keep out of politics. make a sort of oasis within which you and your friends can remain sane, and hope that somehow things will be better in a hundred years."[80] This stance is more or less an outcome of a bustling life rather than a philosophical theory. In 1945, Orwell correctly observes that Koestler has been mostly on the side of action:

> Actually, if one assumes the Yogi and the Commissar to be at opposite points

> of the scale, Koestler is somewhat nearer to the Commissar's end. He believes in action, in violence where necessary, in government, and consequently in the shifts and compromises that are inseparable from government.[81]

Spurred by his love of action, which emanates from his rootlessness, utopianism and a sense of indebtedness, Koestler, awakening with the rest of the world to what has become a Palestinian tragedy, alters his tone of short-term pessimism to engage his most intense feelings and elaborate thoughts in a one-sided commitment in an affair which, to quote G.D. Klingopulos, "is an ugly example of international expediency and cannot even be discussed in ethical terms."[82] Disillusioned by Soviet Communism, he turns towards another "ism", in the hope that Zionist commitment might fulfil his utopian dreams or, at least, lessen his sense of indebtedness.

Thieves in the Night (1946) is, as the sub-title tells us, a "chronicle of an experiment", which probably contains a great deal of the author's experience in Palestine in the 1920s and his reports as a journalist during 1937. Its intensity and strained tone, which seldom lapse, originate from the author's need to attach himself to a cause rather than from the topical and, in a way, singular situation in Palestine. As usual in his previous novels, he divides the situation into two poles, the Zionists facing Arab terrorists and apostate English. Both Zionists and Arabs are also divided into terrorists and moderates, with a rootless central figure on the first side and many hypocrites on the other. Each character is assigned a specific and different role, which adds considerably to the total effect of the novel through the unfolding of the main theme: a justification of Zionist terrorism.

Contrary to his theme in *Darkness at Noon*, and perhaps diametrically opposed to it, Koestler is trying to defend the famous saying "ends justify means" in the case of the Zionist colonization of Palestine, and goes on to declare that this end can be achieved only through violence. This is what the author describes in his postscript to the novel as "the ethics of survival".

Another reversion of stance is Koestler's new belief in nationalism. In *The Yogi and the Commissar* he writes with implict disappointment:

> One of the most powerful emotional factors is xenophobia, from its totemistic tribal form to modern nationalism. This factor, too, is largely independent of real self-interest; thus the socialist workers of Warsaw took arms against the Russian Revolutionary Army in 1920; thus the Arabs of Palestine took arms against Jewish infiltration which economically brought them enormous benefits.[83]

One year after Koestler had described the Zionist movement in Palestine as "Jewish infiltration" and nationalism as a form of "xenophobia", *Thieves in the Night* came out with an unmistakable stamp of nationalism. Following the line of Deronda, Leon and Baratz, the pioneering colonists of Ezra's Tower, in Galilee, set out to establish a commune, similar to Degania,

which will be a further contribution to the establishment of a Jewish national home. Simeon, on the first day, is reading Isaiah: "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice."[84] Many famous ancient Jews are referred to as heroes and exemplars, with a definite emphasis on their national character. Religion is reduced to insignificance. Disraeli's glorification of Judaism, and of Christianity as its offshoot, Mordecai's preoccupation with the teachings of Moses and the Masters, and Leon's stress on the mission of Israel, all are absent in *Thieves in the Night*: "Yes, thought Joseph, we shall rebuild Galilee, whether God takes a personal interest in the matter or not."[85] Rabbi Greenfeld is presented as an itinerant marriage-maker safely entrenched behind his anachronistic biblical world. Joseph, the central figure, arguing for the necessity of terrorism, cites the example of Jacob's acquisition of the land by trickery and fraud:

> "Our ancestor, name of Jacob, got his blessing and the Land with it by cunning and crookedness. It's a disgusting story. He swindled the guileless Esau; he helped himself, so God helped him too. Had he been more scrupulous in the choice of his method, we wouldn't have got the Land – it would have fallen to the fur-skinned hunter of the deserts."[86]

Jacob is no longer a prophet, but a master of expediency.

Instead of religion there is an incessant emphasis on the idea of race. Joseph, who is only half-Jewish, explains in his diary how he feels himself a Jew:

> However, according to the laws of probability, there must be a fraction in me which is directly descended from him [Joshua]. Inside my testicles there are some complicated but stable groups of molecules which were handed down to me from him with their pattern unchanged.[87]

Yet Dina does not understand his choice of race, which has deprived him of a happier life "among the others": "By race you only half belong to us,"[88] she says to him. He, and Koestler also, exultingly refer to Jewish "messiahs from Jesus to Marx and Freud",[89] frequently dwelling on their Jewish character as offshoots of "this proverbially clever race".[90] Reuben asks where comes "the chosen race" in Joseph's theory of evolution. But there is some noxious quality about Jewishness, and Joseph, with slight modification, borrows Jabotinsky's famous credo to describe Zionist colonists as having "ceased to be Jews and become Hebrew peasants".[91] Similarly, the author seldom uses the word "Jews"; they are "Hebrews", having been transformed into a new character continuing and consummating the old one that lived before Christ.

A new conception has emerged of the colonist's nationalism which is not known to either Disraeli, Deronda or Mordecai: Zionist nationalism is basically socialist. Leon has discovered that socialism is an intrinsic part

of Judaism, and Baratz carefully distinguishes between Zionist and Bolshevik socialism on nationalistic bases. The colonists of Ezra's Tower, again divided into two groups, argue about Zionist socialism with fervour. Moshe affirms that in the hundred settlements the pioneers have built up, pure rural communism has been put into practice for over thirty years, that the Russians should in fact send delegates to study true communism in the only place in the world that has it. Max sniffs against Moshe's bragging as being a "typical chauvinistic conceit".[92] Felix with his sympathies lingering behind in the "first socialist country", excuses Russia's defective socialism on the ironic grounds that it has been imposed on a backward population, "whereas our Communes were built by a picked élite of volunteers".[93]

Both groups, though a small minority among the other non-socialist immigrants, are building upon the myth initiated by the Degania colonists. Jewish history in the Bible is always with them, but not the Holy Bible, and they derive from that history the spiritual strength they need to conquer Palestine in the same way that the Hebrews captured it from the Canaanites. The intensity with which the book opens comes perhaps from the author's feeling of the extraordinariness of a choice that has to be made. The first sentence impinges on the reader's imagination with a strong expectation of death:

> "If I get killed today, it won't be by falling off the top of a truck," Joseph thought.[94]

A few lines later, the author describes Joseph as "a horizontally crucified figure on a rocking hearse under the stars", while the Great Bear is also "curiously sprawling on its back and the Milky Way clustered into one broad luminous scar across the dark sky-tissue". The beginning and the choice of words and names denote the gravity of the experience. Here is again the technique of opposite pairs: crucifixion and hearse in a journey intended to construct a new life; the Great Bear (reminder of Joseph) and the Milky Way (the way of the colonists), which is a "scar across the dark sky-tissue" (the world antagonistic to the Jews). Aside from the murder of Dina, this is perhaps the only presentation of an authentic intensity of situation in the novel; other presentations made through political dialogues between the various opposing pairs are stamped with the author's temper of mind. Other instances are presented with an unmistakable tone of debate, for Koestler is not concerned with a human condition in which characters and relationships are paramount, but rather with an argument and a dialectic, in which characters are assigned specific functions. An instance of this is a significant, but cursorily treated theme: "The Thing to Forget", by which the author refers to the Zionists' experiences and memories in Europe, but which is presented neither as a background of a particular human tragedy nor as a starting point for character development. Very seldom in the book are the "Incidents" which brought about the "Thing to Forget" actually depicted as the primary cause

of the emergence of Jewish nationalism, a kind of personal Wailing Wall which inspires the Zionists' attempt to construct a new Jewish way of life. It is used to accuse Europe and to support the case for Zionism.

Similarly oriented is the description of land: the Arab land is either desert or swamps; the colonists' either gardens or green fields. Many critics have observed the detailed description of scenery in *Thieves in the Night* which is absent from the author's previous novels. There are perhaps two reasons for this unprecedented preoccupation. First, Palestine is connected with dear memories, especially the author's colonization experience. Secondly, and more important, it serves as a means of contrast between the Palestine of the Arabs and that of the Zionists; a contrast which has already been made in Baratz's *A Village by the Jordan*, and which further gives additional weight to the myth of colonization. The idea of reclaiming the land is always present in *Thieves in the Night*, and Reuben believes, like Baratz, that it "has borne no crop since our ancestors left it",[95] that the Arabs have so neglected it that the terraces have fallen to ruin and rain has carried the soil away. The difference between Baratz's myth and Koestler's is that the first springs from a genuine feeling of one's own achievements, while the latter is intended to support an argument against the Arab claim to Palestine. Such argument converts, for instance, a stout American journalist, Dick Matthews, from unbridled anti-Semitism into dauntless Zionism.

The novel links together three generations of colonists, that of Baratz, the group the author discusses, and the Palestine-born generation, the "Sabra". The pioneers of Degania (Koestler writes it as Dagania) have already become a legend. They were the first to put theory into practice, living in Arab mud huts and fighting against barren land, robbers, malaria, typhoid and "Egyptian diseases", and building the first experiment in rural communism after the example of the Essenes. They had to drain the swamps, plant trees in the sandy dunes, carry the stones away from the fields and recultivate the hills. Old Wabash, with his childish face and rabbinical voice, has come to represent Degania in the "First Day" of the new settlers' life in Ezra's Tower as one of the "Helpers": "He dwelt repeatedly and sorrowfully on the 'masses' and the 'millions' and seemed to derive a grievous satisfaction from words like 'tragedy' and 'persecution'."[96] The newcomers, though facing the same climate and waste land, have followed a different course. Mostly university graduates, they have been trained for five years according to a scheduled programme which is meant to transform them into peasants. The men have become less talkative, more sober and deliberate in movement, the women coarser in appearance with "strong hips and breasts" and both more knowledgeable about farming and grazing and nearly completely detached from Europe and "petit bourgeois" life. They consider these five years as a prelude to the "Day of Settlement", and now the day has come.

The new generation, the Sabra, will be discussed in the next chapter. However, Joseph, towards the end of the chronicle, sums up the case of the three generations in a typically Koesterlian parable. He tells Reuben that

once the perfect creation of nature had been the fish, swimming happily in the seven seas. Later, a certain force drove some of the fish to the shore, and thus the amphibians were created, waddling and wobbling "on their bellies through swamps and muck". They are suffering their debasement, but trying to compensate for it. The Arabs are likened to the fish in that they reject development. The Zionists are represented by the amphibians, who suffer in order to attain a higher form of life. A conflict between Arab sterile spiritless stability and Zionist creative evolution is inevitable: "For behold, we are the force that drives the fishes ashore, the nervous whip of evolution."[97] Joseph's parable perhaps summarizes Koestler's view on the Zionists' situation in Palestine. The Arabs prefer to "lead a timeless, carefree, lackadaisical life", and do not want "the nervous whip of evolution" to drive them ashore. For this reason the English tend to like them and dislike the Zionists. The tragedy is that English and Arab likes and dislikes are not only hampering the Zionist force of evolution, but also raising the issue to a battle of life or death, survival or extinction. Koestler presents the case in simple terms: in Europe the Nazis are leading a genocide campaign against the Jews; other countries – as Simeon's paper-cuttings show – refuse to give them refuge. In Palestine, the only place left for them, both Arabs and English are trying their best to prevent them coming there. The question of morality and self-righteousness hardly applies to "the ethics of survival", with all peoples of the world seeking their own salvation in an "ice age" of the "post-Genevan world", and where expediency is the supreme master of events.

Almost all main characters in the novel react according to the hypothesis of the "ice age". There are, of course, the yogis and the commissars. On the one hand, most of the Arabs are yogis by nature, while some of them have turned commissars. On the other, most colonists are yogis by virtue of their peaceful evolution and peaceful approach. They are indifferent to the ice age, and oppose the terrorism of commissar Zionists. The English, in their restriction of immigration to a certain limit and in their toleration of Arab terrorism, are siding with the commissars of one party, also according to the expediency of the ice age. Towards the end of "The First Day", which takes up a quarter of the book, the characters assume their specified places in the debate on violence, and the plot diverges into a kind of *roman à thèse*. To cut things short, the author has summarized each character's biography in a few decisive sentences and then stated the case for terrorism. More often than not, "The Thing to Forget" in the case of the colonists is the only biographical hint given of what has made them Zionists. The phrase is capitalized to suggest "Incidents" too terrible to tell. Koestler relieves himself quite easily of presenting a relevant background for his Zionist characters; except for Dina, whose biography is given in two pages. Moreover, the idea that the author's description of Palestinian landscape is motivated by political rather than artistic considerations is confirmed by his description of the characters' physiques. Usually, one of the novelist's methods of presentation of the main characters is to describe their physical

features, or some of them. It makes the characters seem more human and credible in this respect. *Thieves in the Night* suffers an artistic deficiency in connection with its central figures, who are all Zionists. Out of approximately thirty Zionists only three minor characters are described, and those only minimally (Dasha, Ellen, the terrorist boy), while Arab and English characters are almost always described as ugly and repulsive (the Mukhter, his son Issa; the Assistant Chief Commissioner). Evidently, the author's intention is not to create substantial characters but rather to use physical description for political ends: to present the Arabs and the Englishmen in a dehumanized form.

Moderate yogi colonists share the common attitude of being cut off from the world outside their commune. Their sole objective is to "rebuild Galilee". They do their work and leave the rest for "the big heads" in Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv. To them, work on the land is more effectual than political muddle. Among themselves they have their own cliques and quarrels, similar to those in *Children of the Ghetto*, where small divergences in viewpoints make for the many political organizations within the Zionist labour movement. The members of the commune are, without exception, socialists with double responsibilities: building socialism and coming to terms with the Arabs. The first phase of this responsibility is quickly passed by the author. After one year has elapsed, of which only "The First Day" is narrated directly, Joseph's diary records only financial difficulties and political arguments. The colonists at work are described only twice and as a background to two visits made by an Arab delegation and District Commissioner Newton. The author supposes, perhaps, that it is enough to give an impression rather than a portrayal of colonizing life.

The second phase, coming to terms with the Arabs, is based on the argument that Jews are poor, and so are the Arabs, and it is in both peoples' interest to unite under the Leninist principle. Reuben, the "communal Jesuit", finds this objective unattainable in its utopian form, but he is proud of having, together with other pioneers, "liberated the child from parental tyranny, and the parents from economic tyranny".[98] He takes himself as a transitional figure in the process of national transformation, and is described as

> neither witty nor brilliant; he completely lacked vanity and ambition. His leadership was based mainly on his lack of negative qualities, on a kind of neutral personality which offered no points for attack and made him the socially ideal type for collective life.[99]

When Bauman splits the Haganah, the illegal defence army, and joins Jabotinsky, Reuben condemns the deed as destructive to trade unions, the Labour Party and communal life. But the terrorist movement, sharply repudiated by most collectivists, has scarcely any effect on their life. They work hard and have no time for politics, except sometimes during the evening rest. When they get around to discussing political issues they mostly

think of their Arab neighbours. Max states that they have to win over the Arabs, a duty as sacred to him as the Ten Commandments and an authentic substitute for terrorism. Moshe not only talks of the necessity of fostering Arab trade unions, but explains that, in practice, there is no need for terrorism: the settlers know that the Chamberlain government would like to get rid of them, that some Arabs are shooting them, but they have become too strong to be eradicated, and have proved it. They are "one third of the country's population and more than two thirds of its economy" and there is no argument in suggesting violence while their job is merely "to buy another acre and another cow".[100]

Other non-collective Zionists are not proportionately presented in the novel. However, "Glickstein and Co.", the Zionist officials in the administration, follow strictly the instructions of their shadow cabinet which maintains a non-terrorist policy, while Kaplan accuses the English administration of deliberately hindering the education of the Arabs to keep them ignorant of the advantages of the Zionist colonization. He tells Newton:

> "You can't come to an agreement with a fanatical horde of illiterates. I want to get some sense knocked into their heads so that we shall have a mentally grown-up partner to deal with."[101]

Kaplan's impassioned statement reminds one of Bolitho's comment on the Zionist's blindness to the interests of others and of Baratz's supercilious attitude towards the Arabs (he describes them as "primitive"). Professor Shenken of the Hebrew University is a different, even opposite case. He tells the Arab Kamel Effendi:

> "I was always opposed to this provocative talk about a Hebrew State which only upsets our Arab friends. For me, Zion is a symbol. A state! What is a state? A selfish, old-fashioned prejudice . . . .
>
> "Our young fanatics . . . want a Jewish majority. What is this talk? A provocation. What are numbers? What are quantities? It is the spirit which counts. We must come in a spirit of friendship and understanding to our Arab friends. The Jews abhor violence. It is our historical mission . . . ."[102]

To the Zionist yogis, Arab attacks on their settlements are, in the words of Jenni Calder, "an accepted part of the hazards of construction. They do not think in terms of reprisal, but concentrate on making themselves invulnerable."[103] But the author's sympathy is not with the angels. It seems that he does not believe in patience. While Reuben says the Jabotinsky terrorists have not built a single settlement, Koestler terms their arguments and actions "the ethics of survival". The justification is given indirectly through the tragic end of Naphtali who, having vehemently opposed any violence against the Arabs and called for emancipating the peasants and having them join the Zionist trade unions, gets killed during the first attack

on the settlement. Bauman, the first dissenter in the book, is shown from the beginning to harbour a deep dissatisfaction with the yogi camp. Joseph is made at first to argue against his terrorist doctrine (Chapter 16), but the author's sympathy is clearly with Bauman. Like Herzl, Bauman, a social democrat, once thought "Jewish nationalism [was] just as bloody as any other, and the Return a romantic stunt."[104] But when a certain "Incident" happened to him he thought everything over and came to believe that he could not wait until socialism would reform the world. To an Arab delegation, who come from the neighbouring village to explain their right to the land, he says: "What is this nonsense about the land not being ours?" Later, he rejects Joseph's plea to see the Arabs' argument: "We cannot afford to see the other man's point."[105] Towards the end of the novel, when he is already leading terrorist actions from Jerusalem, he tells Joseph:

> To see both sides is a luxury we can no longer afford. We are moving into a political ice age. We have to build our Eskimo huts and national fires, or perish . . . .[106]

Like those of Bolitho's Zionists, his short sentences convey an air of decisiveness in which reconsideration finds no room. His training of young terrorists has already fostered in them a fanatical willingness for martyrdom, which the novel presents in a highly favourable way. But, unlike Peter Slavek in *Arrival and Departure*, Bauman and his small army know what they are fighting for. They have reasons, a faith, and a land:

> "You are a bloody Machiavelli," said Joseph.
>
> "It is the logic of the ice age," said Bauman. "We have to use violence and deception, to save others from violence and deception."[107]

Simeon, who is also shown from the start as austere and uncompromising, and who joins Bauman later, describes the situation as one that "has nothing to do with ethics. The concept of revenge is archaic and absurd. We have to counter terror by terror for purely logical reasons."[108] He has a "Thing to Forget", the murder of his sister in Europe. But there are added reasons: while convalescing in Tel-Aviv, he shows Joseph newspaper cuttings reporting the tragic condition of the Jews under Nazi Germany and the prohibition by almost all governments of their immigration to any corner of the world; the result is annihilation. The British government, in an attempt to appease the Arabs, he argues, is letting the Jews down, as it has done to the Czechs to appease Hitler. Bauman thinks that Simeon's "cool, concentrated hatred" for the English is not enough, but something more should be done. He expounds his policy of dealing with the English in terms of mutual interests. The English, it seems, do not realize the advantage of having what King Faisal I has approved of: a Jewish state. By favouring the Arab side, they are marking an end to their dominion of Iraq, Palestine and Egypt, because if Palestine becomes an Arab state they will have to with-

draw before the rising Arab nationalism; but if it becomes a Zionist state the Arab homeland will be split in the middle never to unite again. To carry on this mutually advantageous project, Bauman argues, the Zionists have to persuade the English to do business with them, and to silence Arab terrorists, by the only language the ice age understands.

Less reasonable than Simeon and Bauman, but more passionately and helplessly determined on violence, is Dina whose "Thing to Forget" is related in a two-page chapter in the same curt and cursory style as others' are. The Nazis arrested her to blackmail her father, and during her imprisonment the "Incident" happened and made her wince "in suppressed panic" at a man's touch. Joseph describes her as the only person in the Commune who "retained the chastity of hatred".[109] This hatred finds expression in supporting Bauman and Simeon during the evening discussions. Her sentences are short and straight to the point, and suddenly burst with vitriolic bitterness and virulent sarcasm that, with the reader's awareness of her beauty, tragedy and Joseph's despairing love for her, make her character both pathetic and dislikeable at the same time. The reader's sympathy for her is further deepened by her murder at the hands of three Arabs.

With Joseph the issue of terrorism is raised to the level of inflated rationalization. It is viewed in terms of race and historical necessity, as well as of personal contradictions. Joseph is a complex character. To identify him with Koestler, as some critics have done, is justifiable on several grounds. In his novels, Koestler tends to express his own views through one or more of his characters. Rubashov's criticism of the Party leaders and his analysis of the revolutionary process in *Darkness at Noon* are Koestler's, as is Peter's irrational drive for action in *Arrival and Departure* and Nikitin's state of despondency in *The Age of Longing*. Joseph, judging from J. Nedava's biography of the author, as well as from various criticisms of the novel, is Koestler on Judaism and Zionism. Joseph's utopian choice of Zionism is strikingly similar to the author's at the age of twenty-one:

> He [Joseph] no longer ran away from something, but ran forward towards an aim. It had the lure of an exotic country, the fascination of a romantic revival and the appeal of a social utopia, all in one – almost too good to be true.[110]

"Too good to be true" is a subtle phrase. It implies, but does not express, the germ of doubt which has developed into discontentment with Zionism felt by both author and hero. In the final stage, both prove to be detached and rootless and great lovers of action. Joseph's throwing of himself into terrorism is not, as he thinks, due to a dedication to Zionism, but to his complex psychology. When he is sure, on the first night, that he has killed an Arab terrorist he "suddenly felt the tears shoot into his eyes. Oh, it was good to be approved of."[111] Bauman's dissension charges him with an electric restlessness. Zionist commitment has not satisfied him; but violence does.

Moreover, both author and hero enjoy the same wide knowledge of languages, sciences and psychoanalysis, even the same information about District Commissioner Newton. Both are ex-communists, write in the same style, use the same metaphors and parables and harbour a similar ambivalence towards Jews and Zionists. One of the reasons why the novel's tone is fairly consistent is that the "author's voice" is almost identical with that of Joseph. They both also display the same vacillation between the yogi and the commissar, ending with the choice of action. Joseph's biography is, in effect, also like the author's: he is half Jewish and has an "Incident" to forget. Some of Koestler's relations were massacred as Jews, and Joseph, a student at Oxford, is humiliated by a British black-shirt woman for his circumcision.

Our emphasis on the autobiographical element in the portrayal of Joseph is meant to explain why most critics find him a misfit among Zionists, British and Arabs. The following pages will try to show that, because of this element, Joseph is a very special type of Zionist and cannot be taken as representative. The point is not, of course, as simple as that. Koestler, despite his cosmopolitanism, has never forgotten his moral responsibility towards the Jews. In *Thieves in the Night*, he attempts to clear his debt to, but at the same time keep his detachment from, Judaism and Zionism. However, he tries to integrate his central character with the group of Ezra's Tower by means of the Incident, and through the latter's love for Dina. A sexual humiliation such as the one he has received may well drive him to a racial awakening. He is a typical outsider whose alienation finds expression in both action and ambivalent relationships such as his love for Judaism and his contempt for Jews. In both cases, he is profoundly, but not absolutely, satisfied to live with the colonists. Ezra's Tower sustains in him a sense of belonging to a community, whose pioneering experience meets with his utopian predilection. His love for Dina reveals the same pattern of relationship. Edmund Wilson maintains that this love "is scarcely real – for the author seems hardly to take it seriously".[112] The fact is that such an affair is to a utopian a stimulus to attain the unattainable. Utopians do attach themselves to hopeless relationships, and Joseph is one of these. The author's attempt to integrate him in the drama he is writing fails when he shifts from the theme of regeneration to that of terrorism, making both Incident and love affair appear extraneous to Joseph's choice of violence. What matters in the process of making such a choice are not these two sub-themes, which are reduced to technical devices, but rather his psychology. His envy of Simeon's capacity for hatred has very little to do with either the Incident or the hopeless love affair, but it is indicative of his lack of genuine passions. He feels "like a cheap actor, even if there was no audience present".[113] Utopians, like Joseph, are so because the greater the dream the greater their inability to achieve it, which is to them a good justification of failure. Great causes fascinate Joseph, but the responsibility of shouldering them is too hard for him. He is further hampered by his constantly rationalizing mind. He is torn by a love for action as a means to end his

uncertainties, and a futile rationalization, together with a rootlessness critical of all that he does or witnesses. Irrational action seems a relevant solution to his predicament. Some critics refer to Dina's death as a factor precipitating his drift to violence. But it must be stressed that it does only precipitate, and not determine, his terrorism, as some other critics think. When at the point of joining Bauman, he writes in his diary:

> But all this has nothing to do with Dina. I do not wish to avenge her any longer. If I decide to quit and join Bauman, it will not be for this reason. Dina, you are out of this. "Into thy hands I commend my spirit." Ah, if it were as simple as that.... My spirit, yes – but my reason I deny you."[114]

He is able to "commend" his spirit to Dina; but not his reason, which is preoccupied with rationalization. A yogi by his mirror-writing and mental habit, and a commissar by dint of his nature, he faces the dilemma of a detached commitment to Zionism, and violence relieving his mounting tension. His ambivalence towards the Jews, an expression of his psychological conflict, is presented with considerable artistry. Tolerance and persecution, he has found out, have both made the Jews "a race of eternal tramps",[115] diluted or hardened their substance, given them a strange combination of pride and cringing and sick homelessness, and dispersed them to the point of losing their identity. In short, Joseph does not blame the Gentiles for hating them. He cannot bring himself to love them either, whether Jews or Zionists: "I became a socialist because I hated the poor; and I became a Hebrew because I hated the Yid."[116] Their ugliness always strikes him: "It was not the first time that he had noticed it, but tonight his revulsion against this assembly of thick, curved noses, fleshy lips and liquid eyes was particularly strong. At moments it seemed to him that he was surrounded by masks of archaic reptiles."[117] His description of the young "Hebrew Tarzans" bears a similar stamp of ambivalence. Reuben tells him:

> You are engrossed in Judaism but don't like the Jews. You love the idea of mankind but not the real man. You have lived with us for six years and still we are objects to you, not subjects."[118]

Reuben's analysis is confirmed by the author, when brooding on the emotional components of Joseph's psychology: "Perhaps if Ellen [Joseph's wife] has been the unattainable one and Dina the mother of the child, his feelings, too, would have been reversed."[119]

Against such a psychological set-up Joseph's reason is ineffectual, even paralysed. His justification of violence is in fact an attempt to get rid of his inner conflicts. It neither convinces him nor makes his choice a moral one:

> "But I don't want to be reasonable," I [Joseph] shouted. "I have had enough of being reasonable for two thousand years while the others were not.... I

> am through with your reasonableness."[120]

His refusal to be reasonable has another important reason: the moral dilemma of having a homeland in "a Canaan which was never truly ours". In the penultimate page of the novel he writes:

> We are homesick for a Canaan which was never truly ours. That is why we are always foremost in the [human] race for utopias and messianic revolutions, always chasing after a lost Paradise.

This is not the only anti-Zionist element in Joseph; his previous views on the Jews, which imply their loss of character, are another. But realizing he has given himself away, he goes back to the Zionist argument justifying the necessity of having a Jewish homeland:

> Defeated and bruised, we turn back towards the point in space from which the hunt started. It is the return from delirium to normality and its limitations. A country is the shadow which a nation throws, and for two thousand years we were a nation without a shadow . . . .[121]

The moral crisis involved in the Zionist claim to "Canaan", which, as the name indicates, is another people's country, soon fades in the light of a consideration of the Jews' need for a national "shadow". Such crisis is totally absent from the life and minds of pioneers such as Baratz, Hillel, Wiezmann, Bauman and Reuben. When Reuben and Max insist on justice for the Arabs and on co-operation with them, Joseph reminds the two of the way Jacob swindled the land, and shouts at Max:

> "You talk of good will and understanding, but in fact you elbow your way in, whether they [the Arabs] like it or not. That's what you do, you bloody hypocrite."[122]

A typical Zionist will not, I think, declare his colonization of Palestine to be swindling, or term as hypocrisy his efforts to come to an understanding with the Arabs. Later, Joseph

> felt sick of it all: Judaism, Hebraism, the whole cramped effort to make something revive which had been dead for two thousand years.[123]

He therefore picks Bauman's theory of the ice age, i.e. expediency comes before morality, or the ends justify the means, and with it the view that "we cannot afford to see the other man's point". His decision to join Bauman implies a moral suicide, and, as Klingopulos remarks, is not presented in "a frame of total wisdom", but, at best, as an escape. The obsessive need for action presents itself as a physiological reality, like thirst or hunger: "I shall either get a stomach ulcer, he thought, or join Bauman's terror

gang". He feels a drive to "bite", otherwise he will become, just like the whole race, "ulcerated in the bloodiest literal sense".[124]

Still, Joseph cannot abandon his rationalization. He comes to think of the intermittent Arab raids against the colonists, which demands retaliation, and of the British apostasy to their promises, which necessitates punishment. Terrorism, thus, is similar in quality to any war which everybody justifies in the ice age. However, he manages a *modus vivendi* by performing both terrorist and communal duties, satisfying in this way both reason and compulsion "with relative ease" as Jenni Calder concludes. But Joseph's satisfaction is only apparent. There can hardly be any "case" in this dualism, unless he succeeds in the impossible task of relinquishing rationalization. This is perhaps why Joseph, as Calder writes, "is let off more lightly than most of Koestler's heroes".[125] This is true in the sense that he still does not belong to the novel, or the novel does not belong to him. But Calder's remark is not, I think, quite true if it is meant to denote a deficiency in characterization. Joseph is portrayed in terms of extremes. He is an incurable misfit who always finds himself in the wrong place, no matter where he is. It is ironic how he, when analysing the Jewish character, does not realize that he is analysing himself. He is the Dead Sea which he takes to be a symbol of the Jews in its concentrated saltiness, its lack of an outlet (except violence) and its biting alkaloids. He is an apple from Sodom, a dissatisfied outsider, whose security resides not in identification but in alienation, no matter how immense his efforts to approve and be approved of. At heart, he is still the Wandering Jew who belongs everywhere and nowhere. As a Zionist he is a failure in terms of regeneration. He is unable to transform himself into the new man George Eliot and Baratz have written about. Despite the fact that, at times, he takes the Arabs out of any human category, he still sees "the other man's point" and cannot feel his Zionism is a moral choice or a successful means for regeneration. And, despite his belief in the edifying effect of having a homeland, his detachment still gets the better of him. At times, he becomes sick of Judaism, Hebraism and Zionism, because commitment to them is either too demanding or unconvincing. At other times, he envies Simeon's ability to hate because his lack of hatred deprives him of the power and blind faith essential in the ice age. But Joseph is hardly developed as a character. The author's presentation of him relies mainly on unfolding and revelation rather than on development.

Political rhetoric

The presentation of English and Arabic characters renders their testimony hardly acceptable in the contest of views the author is engineering. A European or American reader of *Thieves in the Night*, who usually knows very little about the tragic conflict in Palestine, will infer that the Englishman is a strange combination of yogi and commissar of the lowest moral fibre, that the Arab is a kind of prehistoric creature unworthy of

owning his land, and that only the Zionists deserve to be masters of the country.

The Arabs are presented with such contempt and derision as to make it hard for any audience to take them seriously. They have, the author tells us, an old tradition of perjury which has become part of their psychology (the Arab witness in court), an older heritage of killing and murder which has become second nature to them (the Hamdan and Abu Shaouish families), a devilish way of cringing and double-crossing (Tubashi the Arab District Officer), a contented backwardness and indolence (Walid the shepherd and the Arab delegation from Kfar Tabiyeh to Ezra's Tower). Arab men are invariably either sexually impotent or homosexual, and Arab women are bought like merchandise.

The Arabs are "not even Arabs, but the descendants of Canaanites, Jebusites, Philistines, Crusaders, and Turks, with a good deal of Jewish blood". As a nation:

> They are a relic of the middle ages. They have no conception of nationhood and no sense of discipline: they are good rioters and bad fighters, otherwise none of our isolated settlement could have survived.... If treated with authority they keep quiet; if encouraged, they make an infernal nuisance of themselves.[126]

If any of them climbs up the social ladder he is either a monster like the Mukhtar (elder) or a parasite like Tubashi. They are supine yogis or sham and blackmailing terrorists. The only sign of humanity the Mukhtar shows comes in "a warm surge of generosity" during which he decides to "buy Issa [his son] a good wife, regardless of cost".[127] Issa has "close-set, slightly squinting eyes" and a "pale, pock-marked face".[128] which tells of a mean and subservient nature. His bestial disposition reveals itself in a kick he gives a "pariah-dog" sending him "sprawling on his back, with blood trickling from his muzzle".[129] He is waiting for the happy day when his father will be either hanged by the government or shot by the Arab patriots, to take his place as Mukhtar. District Officer Tubashi is an ambitious parvenu whose education at the American University of Beirut has made him realize the potential advantage to his career of collaboration with the British. Kamel Effendi is an ostentatious braggard who always begins his babbling with a foolish "Bbah", and wrongly assumes that the Arabs have received the Jews as guests to save them from persecution. Only two Arabs are favourably sketched, and this is because the first believes the Arab peasant is made of the "donkey's dung" and the second illustrates the Arabs' complacency and fatal inertia.

Arab patriots, the commissars, are represented as mercenaries who spread terror but never achieve any victory. Joseph describes their first attack on Ezra's Tower as "bluff and bluster, like everything these Arabs do".[130]

Similarly satirized, but with more subtlety and circumspection, are the

English. They are presented as already accused of selling out the Zionists and violating the Balfour Declaration. It is not politics, Joseph says, but a nostalgia for a permanent weekend, for a lost paradise, that makes them love the Arabs and dislike the Jews. They prefer the Arab duplicity to the straightforwardness of the Zionists, the Arabs' convincing lies to the Zionists' irritating candidness, the Arabs' native inefficiency to the colonists' industriousness. The author has two of his characters, Joseph and Matthews, explain the inner workings of English pyschology. As a child, the Englishman is "thin-limbed, sensitive, and rather too imaginative, rather too keen on poetry and all that". In his adolescent stage he becomes

> a completely transformed person with a jutting Adam's apple and a breaking voice, in the painful process of having his sensitivity derided and his reflexes conditioned so that repression came before impulse and second thoughts preceded firsts;

and ends up with

> an adhesive armour the more impregnable as it was not something put on, but the crustification of formerly living tissue transformed into supple callousness . . . .[131]

With such a background of forced maladjustment, each of the English characters is satirized in a singular way. Miss Clark is always gasping, partly because of her narrow-mindedness, partly because of her ridiculous admiration of her chief. Mrs Newman is held in contempt for her unforgivable lack of esteem for the settlers and her racial hatred, Mr Newton is despicable for no apparent reason save that he is always beaten in chess by the Zionist Kaplan. The Assistant Chief Commissioner, whose importance emanates mainly from his office and not from his personality, and who is referred to as "A. Ch. C.", has a pair of eyes of different colours and the strange habit of unnecessarily complicating things which "will bring the world greater disaster than the ravings of lunatics",[132] as Matthews tells him.

Koestler further shows his bias in his contradictory handling of the question of ends and means in *Thieves in the Night* and *Darkness at Noon*. Gletkin can easily exchange arguments with Bauman and Simeon. They are contemporaries of the same ice age – the 1930s – and dreamers of utopias. Rubashov's parable of the Neanderthals is rephrased by Joseph, with the amphibians instead. As we know, the Neanderthals are an advanced development of the human species, so are the amphibians with regard to the fish. But while the Neanderthals (the Gletkins) are symbolic of callousness and brutality, the amphibians (the Zionists) symbolize "the nervous whip of evolution". It is rather doubtful whether Koestler really embraced communism as a faith. A true believer is unlikely to desert his faith simply

because others misrepresent or falsify it. Equally doubtful is his preoccupation with the question of ends and means. To abandon communism and expose it as a corrupting process of revolution is not an exceptional event; to substitute it with a theory justifying terrorism in the same way the Gletkins justify oppression is unconvincing evidence of clear-sighted morality. The Zionist colonization of Palestine is presented as morally condemnable, and the Zionists are rarely shown at work. We accompany them during two years without knowing what transformation the new home and the new vocation have brought in them. With the exception of fostering terrorism, itself a regrettable outcome, the "nervous whip of evolution" does not produce decisive effects. The colonists are still Europeans. Joseph is unable to strike new roots for his wandering soul, and cannot overcome his sense of repulsion for the Jews. Dina is not cured of her sex phobia; on the contrary, she becomes increasingly helpless, violent and hateful. Yogi colonists live in a dream-world and assume a Pharisaic air of righteousness.

The fact that Zionists are categorized as pacifists or terrorists, with scarcely any sympathy for either, indicates that the author's interest is in the debate rather than in the characters. He is committed to engineering an argument and determined to win it by "whatever means" he finds "expedient", as Simeon says.

Koestler perhaps needs to be committed, for commitment, to him, is a refuge. He does not, however, interest himself in the human condition, nor does he refer his characters to humanity. He feels indebted to his Jewish half, and is keen to relieve his conscience of its sense of indebtedness. This is not the first time he has been haunted by such a sense, which has been, as he tells us in *Arrow in the Blue*, the phantasm of his life. J.G. Weightman's comment on Koestler's conception of commitment is interesting:

> In *The Age of Longing* two or three neuroses were at work, and the reader had the embarrassed suspicion, so often inspired by modern novels, that the writer could surely not realize how transparently he was giving himself away.[133]

In *Arrow in the Blue*, the author does not, in fact, leave much room to doubt whether he is "giving himself away". He wants to know himself, and is unabashed at the declaration of what he discovers.

The author's purpose in writing *Thieves in the Night* is perhaps neither ideological nor rational, but more a blend of a sense of guilt and indebtedness and of a tempting hope that perhaps this time he will find in Zionism what he has missed in communism. This hope seems to have imbued him with vigour and continuity of breath down to the end of the first quarter of the novel, after which Joseph and Dina, together with pioneering and communal life are "shrugged off", to use Jenni Calder's expression. Joseph is henceforward used as a mouthpiece, and Dina is kept waiting for her tragic end, which is meant to remind the reader of the Nazi concentration

camps. After "The First Day", the author's tension relaxes and falls under the pressure of direct political events, a pressure which makes T.R. Fyvel feel that

> Mr Koestler could not have put the finishing touches to this novel, a study of British-Jewish conflict in Palestine, very long before British G.H.Q. at the King David Hotel, Jerusalem, was blown up – an event which started off a new, more ominous and ugly phase of Middle East history.[134]

Always drawing on his own experience, the author cannot see the colonists from a distance. Political events seem to have recharged him with the necessary impetus. He was in Palestine as a journalist during 1937, and in the novel he combines his findings at that time with his personal experience during the 1920s. To pay his debt and feel attached, he chooses to take sides in the triangular conflict. One may, incidentally, recall a similar bias in his *Spanish Testament*. With a journalistic bent, he knows what to present and what to omit, where to be brief and to elaborate, where to inflate and where to deflate. Since his theme has shifted from an experiment to an argument, and in order that he may carry the day, he disfigures the Arabs and satirizes the English. He appears to be uncertain about the final judgement, and a possibility that he may lose the argument drives him to use two devices, stylistic and technical. In the words of Fyvel, "rather than appeal to the imagination, Koestler, in his direct style, seems to assault the reader's intellect with hardly contained impatience and with phrases that at times reveal a journalistic touch."[135] The reader is given neither the chance to think over the issue nor the alternative to the author's premises. Moreover, in case some reader might attempt an independent interpretation of either the British or the Arab point of view, the author has used a technical device to stop them from doing so. When the Mukhtar or Tubashi are faced with disgracing accusations they try, for an unknown reason, to justify instead of negating them. If they happen to state their views, a disgruntled British, pro-Zionist ex-colonel steps forward in fiery agitation, discredits their views and unveils their deceit. When Kamel Effendi explains the Arabs' acceptance of the Jews and refusal of the Zionists, a hot-tempered Dick Matthews, who believes that all the Arabs have produced in the last thousand years is "cabarets and filthy postcards, from Tangier to Teheran",[136] is made to lecture Kamel at length:

> "There never was a house here. There was a desert and a stinking swamp and pox-ridden fellaheen. You were the pariahs of the Levant and today you are the richest of the Arab countries. Your population was on the decrease for centuries because half your babes were dying from filth in their cradles, and since the Jews came it has doubled. They haven't robbed you of an inch of your land, but they have robbed you of your malaria and your trachoma and your septic childbeds and your poverty . . . ."[137]

Still, the relentless Kamel Effendi does not give in. He wants his homeland, not money nor hospitals nor fertilizers, and refuses, as an Arab, to pay for the European persecution of the Jews. At this crucial moment, when the real situation is about to come to the forefront, the author draws the curtain and directs the course of events to another uncompleted theme; this time to the "A. Ch. C.". The Assistant Chief Commissioner, Mr Gordon-Smith, is allowed to state his government's policy in a subdued tone and with calculated presentation. But the moment his argument assumes a considerably powerful conviction, the reader is reminded, not without symbolism, of his differently-coloured eyes, and Matthews is made to flare up in his face accusingly and not without national prejudice. In both cases, British and Arabs are allowed no humanity.

So far as suspense and the "making out of a retrospective case for terrorism"[138] are concerned, "*Thieves in the Night* does not contain a dull page. It is a masterpiece of propaganda."[139] But Koestler's "ethics of survival" fail to establish a climate of honesty, and, in the words of Klingopulos, "his creation of monsters is merely a confession of failure to present the human situation."[140]

Subordinate to the effect of Koestler's intentions is that occasioned by the false statements the author allows some of his characters to make. Kaplan, for instance, points out that the Jews pay all the taxes while the Arabs pay nothing; this is not true.[141] Bauman and Matthews refer to King Faisal's acceptance of the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine; this is again not true.[142] Also untrue is the notion of Weinstein, the Zionist lawyer, that Palestine has been granted the Jews as a national home "by international agreement".[143]

More serious than the untrue statement are the premises on which, without any discussion of them, the thesis of *Thieves in the Night* is constructed. First, Koestler maintains that Palestine is "twice promised" to the Zionists. We know that one of the two promises is the British; the second is not clearly indicated, but judging from frequent references to King Faisal it is presumably one given in the name of the Arabs; a point which has been discussed above. The first promise, the Balfour Declaration, is, as Richard Crossman wrote, summarizing the orthodox British view, "a misguided act of imperial generosity, bound from the first to end in ruin and disaster".[144] The fact is that a country has been promised by the British, who do not own it, to the Zionists, who do not belong to it.

Secondly, Jewish immigrants to countries other than Palestine far outnumbered Zionist immigrants to Palestine at this time, a fact which invalidates Simeon's newspaper reports. Moreover, the author, through Bauman and others, gives the impression that even dead Arabs have been counted in the process of buying the land, and this process has been followed in acquiring every inch of it. He does not mention, however, that the purchase of land came in 1944 to only 6.5% of the total area of Palestine,[145] and this has been purchased from absentee landlords, most of

whom never saw the land. Joseph seems to realize this fact and he challenges Reuben's and Max's pacificism by mentioning the way the Zionists are getting into the country. Furthermore, the frequent mention of the barrenness of the land, discussed above, is certainly surprising to the Arabs who have been living there. It is rather disappointing to observe how *Thieves in the Night* leaves out the real testimony of the Zionist's achievement – his industriousness and transformation of self – to beat the drums of propaganda.

Thirdly, the British attitude towards the Jews in general and the Zionists in particular is contrary to what the novel shows. British sympathy with the Jews is too well-known to re-emphasize. No nation in Europe, perhaps, has treated its Jewish citizens better than the British, and for six years the British fought the government which included in its objectives the total extermination of Jewry. Moreover, without the British Mandate in Palestine, Zionist immigration could not have been easy, and it is doubtful whether the Zionist state could ever have been established.

Fourthly, it is not true that the Nazi concentration camps made necessary the Zionist terrorist movement. Jabotinsky, its founder, had started the business of terrorism before the author met him in the 1920s. Koestler's simplification of the question of ends and means to a question of Nazi persecution inevitably producing a terrorist wing in the Zionist movement is hardly relevant to Zionism. The opposite of the hypothesis is true: had there been no Nazism the Zionists would still have had to wage war in order to take over Palestine.

Koestler's description of Arab misery and poverty, appalling and breathtaking in its details, is engineered to create the opposite of sympathy. Such description has led John Atkins, and many other readers ignorant of the real situation, to think that the Arabs, "supine" and "disloyal" to the Allies, "would regard Jewish or any other non-violence as cowardice, especially provided by Allah as an occasion for a display of their own chauvinism."[146] Atkins, who frequently warns his reader not to make any judgement in such a three-ply mess of a tragedy, especially not to take sides, dismisses the Arabs' claim to Palestine too easily by despising their faith and reading chauvinism in Arab nationalism, and accepts Zionist nationalism too readily as seeking survival, reading in Zionist terrorism "an analogy with the starving man who steals food – and I believe he [the Zionist] has a moral right to do so."[147] If we accept Atkins' strange moral view, the question arises: Whose bread is the starving man to steal? Is it the food of another starving man, and how much of it? (An Arab woman in the novel is shown boiling herbs in order to give her starving children the illusion that some food is being prepared.) Bauman, the terrorist leader, explains:

> "Boy, oh boy . . . . Give me five years and we shall have another half-million in, and with it the majority in the country. Once we have the majority the rest is easy."[148]

What "the rest" may be is not difficult to imagine; it is the whole loaf of bread. Two of the newcomers give a numerical illustration:

> "Once we have irrigated the southern desert we can bring another four millions in."
>
> "That still leaves twelve millions out," a man said.[149]

Conclusion

Between Raphael Leon and Joseph there are forty-five years. Leon's Zionism is, like Deronda's, based on religion, race and traditions. His perspective of a Jewish nation is, more or less, conservative and restorative. Apart from the idea of land distribution, his socialism tends to be vague and romantic in its visions of justice. With Baratz, socialism replaces religion, and the implementation of his Zionist dream replaces the orthodoxy of Zangwill's rabbis. Religion is presented only as the paraphernalia of a national consciousness. Transformation of self is nearly accomplished, though shallowly portrayed. With Koestler's *Thieves in the Night*, religion is dropped altogether and emphasis on race is further stressed. The clash bound from the beginning to take place between Arab and Zionist nationalisms, which previous writers have not recognized, is presented in terms of political rhetoric rather than as a human tragedy.

Notes

1. Israel Zangwill, *Children of the Ghetto: A Study of a Peculiar People* (Macmillan, 1902, first published 1892) p.x.
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3. Zangwill, *Children of the Ghetto*, p.13.
4. Ibid., p.451.
5. Ibid., pp.336-37.
6. Ibid., p.342.
7. Ibid., p.343.
8. Ibid., p.336.
9. Ibid., p.336.
10. Ibid., p.349.
11. Ibid., p.511.
12. Ibid., p.511-12.
13. Ibid., p.514.
14. Ibid., p.515.
15. Ibid., p.517-18.
16. Ibid., p.518-19.
17. Ibid., p.519.
18. Ibid., p.450.

19. Ibid., p.451.
20. Ibid., p.521.
21. M.J. Landa, Israel Zangwill, the Dreamer Awake, *The Contemporary Review*, Vol.130, (July-December 1926) p.320.
22. Joseph Baratz, *A Village by the Jordan: The Story of Degania* (The Harvill Press, 1954) p.4.
23. Ibid., pp.4-5.
24. Ibid., p.6.
25. Ibid., p.8.
26. Ibid., p.13.
27. Ibid., p.24.
28. Ibid., p.38.
29. Ibid., p.63.
30. Ibid., p.86.
31. Ibid., p.77.
32. Ibid., p.44.
33. Ibid., p.45.
34. Disraeli, *Tancred*, p.231.
35. Baratz, *A Village by the Jordan*, p.52.
36. Ibid., p.53.
37. Ibid., p.132.
38. Ibid., p.137.
39. Ibid., p.142.
40. Hector Bolitho, *Beside Galilee: A Diary in Palestine* (Cobden-Sanderson, 1933) p.111.
41. Baratz, *A Village by the Jordan*, pp.81-2.
42. Ibid., p.83.
43. Ibid., p.83
44. Ibid., p.44.
45. Ibid., p.72.
46. Ibid., p.90.
47. Ibid., p.91.
48. Ibid., p.11.
49. Ibid., p.17.
50. Ibid., p.49.
51. Ibid., p.78.
52. Bolitho, *Beside Galilee*, p.11.
53. Ibid., p.65.
54. Ibid., p.112.
55. Ibid., p.113-14.
56. Ibid., p.114.
57. Ibid., p.50.
58. Ibid., p.109.
59. Ibid., p.109.
60. Ibid., p.110.
61. Ibid., p.53.
62. Ibid., p.124.
63. Ibid., p.64.
64. Ibid., p.90.
65. Ibid., p.72.

66. Ibid., p.75.
67. Ibid., p.125.
68. Ibid., p.170.
69. Ibid., p.183.
70. Ibid., p.108.
71. Arthur Koestler, *Arrow in the Blue*, quoted by V.S. Pritchett, Books in General, *The New Statesman and Nation*, 8 November 1952, p.550.
72. John Atkins, *Arthur Koestler* (Spearman, 1956), p.111.
73. Ibid., p.90-4. See also J. Nevada, *Arthur Koestler* (Robert Anscombe, 1948) first few pages.
74. G.B. Bantock, Arthur Koestler, *Politics and Letters* (Summer 1948) p.41.
75. V.S. Pritchett, Absolutitis, *The New Statesman and Nation*, 18 August 1956, p.189.
76. V.S. Pritchett, Arthur Koestler, *Horizon*, May 1947, p.247.
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79. Raymond Mortimer, Arthur Koestler, *The Atlantic Monthly*, (November 1946) p.132.
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82. G.D. Klingopulos, Arthur Koestler, *Scrutiny*, Vol.XVI (June 1949) p.90.
83. Koestler, *The Yogi and the Commissar*, p.139.
84. Koestler, *Thieves in the Night*, p.13.
85. Ibid., p.12.
86. Ibid., p.152.
87. Ibid., p.167.
88. Ibid., p.75.
89. Ibid., p.147.
90. Ibid., p.309.
91. Ibid., p.147.
92. Ibid., p.95.
93. Ibid., p.94.
94. Ibid., p.9.
95. Ibid., p.39.
96. Ibid., p.24.
97. Ibid., p.325.
98. Ibid., p.163.
99. Ibid., p.58.
100. Ibid., p.153.
101. Ibid., p.132.
102. Ibid., p.201.
103. Jenni Calder, *Chronicles of Conscience: A Study of George Orwell and*

Arthur Koestler (Secker and Warburg, 1968) p.215.

104. Koestler, *Thieves in the Night*, p.280.
105. Ibid., p.41.
106. Ibid., p.280.
107. Ibid., p.283.
108. Ibid., p.59.
109. Ibid., p.151.
110. Ibid., p.79.
111. Ibid., p.74.
112. Edmund Wilson, Arthur Koestler in Palestine, *The New Yorker*, Vol.22 (16 November 1946) p.110.
113. Koestler, *Thieves in the Night*, p.12.
114. Ibid., p.259.
115. Ibid., p.119.
116. Ibid., p.261.
117. Ibid., p.57.
118. Ibid., p.163.
119. Ibid., p.323.
120. Ibid., p.151.
121. Ibid., p.333.
122. Ibid., p.152.
123. Ibid., p.243.
124. Ibid., p.216.
125. Calder, *Chronicles of Conscience*, p.217.
126. Koestler, *Thieves in the Night*, p.155.
127. Ibid., pp.31-2.
128. Ibid., p.25.
129. Ibid., p.135.
130. Ibid., p.75.
131. Ibid., p.209.
132. Ibid., p.211.
133. J.G. Weightman, A Child of the Century, *Twentieth Century*, Vol.153, (January 1953) p.72.
134. T.R. Fyvel, To the King David Hotel, *Tribune*, 25 October 1946, p.14.
135. Ibid., p.14.
136. Koestler, *Thieves in the Night*, p.208.
137. Ibid., p.203.
138. Ronald Hayman, The Hero as Revolutionary: An Assessment of Arthur Koestler's Novels, *London Magazine*, December 1955, p.59.
139. Mortimer, Arthur Koestler, *The Atlantic Monthly*, November 1946, p.136.
140. Klingopulos, Arthur Koestler, *Scrutiny*, Vol.XVI, p.92.
141. Mortimer, Arthur Koestler, *The Atlantic Monthly*, November 1946, p.136.
142. Faisal, King of Syria (including Palestine) from 1919 to 1920, agreed with Haim Weizmann to encourage Jewish immigration to Palestine, provided that Arab rights were protected. In his own handwriting Faisal added a condition which has been ignored. It said: "Provided the Arabs obtain their independence as demanded in my memorandum dated the 4th of January,

1919, to the Foreign Office of the Government of Great Britain, I shall concur in the above articles [of the agreement]. But if the slightest modification or departure were to be made [in relation to the demands of the Memorandum] I shall not be bound by a single word of the present agreement which shall be deemed void and of no account or validity . . . ." See, John. H. Davis, *The Evasive Peace: A Study of the Zionist-Arab Problem* (John Murray, 1968) p.15; and George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement* (Hamish Hamilton, 1945, first published 1938) p.439.

143. Koestler, *Thieves in the Night*, p.226. See Chapter 1, pp.15-16.
144. R.H.S. Crossman, Palestine Regained: From Weizmann to Bevin and Ben Gurion, *Encounter*, Vol.XV, No.1, (July 1960) p.37.
145. See *Survey of Palestine*, a report prepared on the Institution of Sub-Committee 2 of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian question, p.376.
146. Atkins, *Arthur Koestler*, p.202.
147. Ibid., p.202.
148. Koestler, *Thieves in the Night*, p.312.
149. Ibid., p.331.

6. The Zionist: Sabra

> They were a tough, wonderful, exciting group of young people, and if they had surrendered formal religion, they had found a substitute equally demanding: they were dedicated to the creation of a Jewish state that should be called Israel and that should be founded in social justice.
>
> James A. Michener, *The Source*

There are several reasons why a shift of emphasis is necessary in this chapter. So far, the study of the Zionist character has been referred to each author's moral vision and creativeness. With novelists who have presented the Zionist as Sabra, this approach is impracticable, perhaps irrelevant. For one thing, the Sabra is not a central figure in their works, except in Leon Uris's *Exodus*. For another, they are numerous, and to attempt an assessment of each of them through his literary production, which in the case of Robert Nathan amounts to forty books, will carry this study beyond its scope. Added to this is the fact that, so far, they have written on a variety of unrelated themes, which do not lend themselves to any form of generalization. Moreover, these authors are still writing books, in which case it would be unsafe to draw conclusions about them. Furthermore, the works which will be discussed in this chapter are indeed of small literary merit. They belong to what is called "popular fiction", and the tiny space left in *Thieves in the Night* for a relatively fair hearing of the antagonists has been filled with a regrettable defacement of British and Arab characters and an irresponsible mishandling of facts. More important is perhaps the fact that the Zionist character itself, whether Sabra or non-Sabra, has become all but legendary. On the literary plane, it is a portrait which is more of a caricature, in an opposite sense, than that of Shylock or of the Wandering Jew. The reader must remind himself constantly of Bolitho, Baratz and Yaël Dayan in order to preserve the sense that he is reading about human beings.

The question arises: Why study these writers at all? The answer is, simply, that no study of the Zionist is complete without the inclusion of the Sabra. After examining the Zionist character as both pioneer and colonist, a further investigation should of necessity busy itself with the children of the colonists, those born in Palestine itself.

A new type of Jew

An incidental reference to the Sabra has been made in the previous chapter. The term is a modification of the Hebrew word for cactus, "tzabbar", and is generally applied metaphorically to describe the Palestine-born Zionist. A Sabra, as several scattered hints in various books suggest, is simply hard on the outside and soft inside. The new breed of Zionists have had to carry on the life their parents initiated, and to shoulder the responsibility of sustaining the new state of Israel. Consequently, they have had to develop a hard crust that is immune to pleasurable temptations and will endure exceptional circumstances. In the meantime, their tenderness of heart and appreciation of beauty are kept vividly alive, though under strict control.

There is, however, a slight misapplication of the metaphor "tzabbar" to the new generation of Zionists. The rind of the fruit, itself quite soft, is spattered with small pores full of minute but harmful thorns. The edible interior is half full of small indigestible pips. The tree usually grows in deserts and semi-deserts where, naturally, it has to have a thick skin in order to survive sand-storms and dry weather. Probably, the likening of the Palestine-born Zionists to cactus is due to this geographical characteristic. As we have seen earlier, Palestine did not prove to be the land of milk and honey which had imbued the imagination of the colonists, and politically it proved a greater disappointment. The colonists have had to carve out their existence on the land amidst an Arab population. The Sabras, therefore, have had to grow, like cactus, in a difficult environment where dunes, sand-storms and hostile indigenous inhabitants are the hard realities to be dealt with.

The Zionist objective of natural growth implies, of course, the fostering of the new type of Jew. It has been hoped that this new type will live to embody the values of Zionism, the reality that the Zionists have a homeland of their own and they have ceased to be the childen of the ghetto. Baratz tells of how children were of primary concern to all settlers and describes the communal way of bringing them up to share the same dwelling, the same food and the same spirit. His description, however, is restricted to the early years of childhood, and in no way amounts to a character study. Koestler, through Jospeh in *Thieves in the Night*, presents a vivid account of the Sabras as adolescents. Joseph is frightened by the new generation. Through the machinery of "our propaganda in schools", they have been brought up to love farming and communal life. That they are socialists is only natural, since "the Teachers' Trade Union sees to it that no right-wing heretics creep into the flock"[1] and contaminate their thinking with the lure of bourgeois life. The nebulous experiment of the colonists has cohered into an institution. This is shown by the fact that the Sabras are highly consistent in their pursuit of a stable, Zionist pattern of life. They "know all about fertilizers and irrigation and rotation of crops; they know the names of birds and plants and flowers; they know how to shoot, and fear neither Arab nor devil."[2] So far, they represent a living personification of the Zionist dream:

> This of course is exactly what our philosophy and propaganda aims at. To return to the Land, and within the Land to the soil; to cure that nervous overstrungness of exile and dispersion; to liquidate the racial inferiority complex and breed a healthy, normal, earthbound race of peasants. These Hebrew Tarzans are what we have bargained for.[3]

But Joseph, who is almost Koestler himself, is not quite satisfied with the generation of "Hebrew Tarzans". "The snag is not in the institution, but in the human quality of the new generation," he writes in his diary. He is unhappy with

> these stumpy, dumpy girls with their rather coarse features, big buttocks and heavy breasts, physically precocious, mentally retarded, over-ripe and immature at the same time; and [with] these raw, arse-slapping youngsters, callow, dumb and heavy, with their aggressive laughter and unmodulated voices, without tradition, manners, form, style . . . .

Joseph also regrets the Sabras' sketchy knowledge of world literature and European history and languages. He makes an interesting comparison between the Sabras and their parents:

> Their parents were the most cosmopolitan on earth – they are provincial and chauvinistic. Their parents were sensitive bundles of nerves with awkward bodies – their nerves are whipcords and their bodies those of a horde of Hebrew Tarzans roaming in the hills of Galilee. Their parents were intense, intent, over-strung, over-spiced – they are tasteless, spiceless, unleavened and tough.[4]

His final judgement is that "these young Tarzans are a step backward and that it will take a series of generations until we catch up again."[5]

Joseph appears to dislike in the Sabras what our present group of writers appreciates most: their chauvinism, bad manners, coarse features, tastelessness, aggressiveness and uninhibited psychology. James Mitchener's Sabras take pride in their ignorance of Europe and of the world. Instead, they are well versed in their national history, as narrated in the Torah, and know everything about cultivation, fertilizers, cows and fighting. In *Exodus*, Joseph's regret appears to be groundless, for Uris's Sabras talk and write perfect English and are able to make themselves understood in one or two other languages. None of these writers, however, is inconvenienced, in the manner of Koestler's hero, by the word "Jew" or attempts to substitute for it "Hebrew". In fact, their Sabra speaks in the name of Jews all over the world and considers himself responsible for them.

The essential difference between Koestler's presentation of the Sabra and those of other writers resides in the fact that Koestler's is static while the others' are set in motion. *Thieves in the Night* describes the Sabras at a time of relative peace; later novelists present them in the decisive period

immediately preceding and following the declaration of independence. Around the year 1948, all Zionists had to fight, and Sabras were the main fighting body. Still, Koestler's point of reference, his cosmopolitanism, helps him to judge his Sabras from a critical point of view; later writers show no such inclination; to them the Sabras are remarkable in both attitudes and achievements.

The fact that the present group of writers comes from the United States reflects a special tendency to view the Jews through an American perspective. As Sol Liptzin writes: "American readers were becoming fed up with narratives of talented Jewish intellectuals and cosmopolites . . . . Readers were hungry for portraits of heroic Jews like those of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising . . . or like the Sabras of Israel whose exploits were filling the front pages of the daily press in the closing months of 1956. Military chronicles of Jewish exploits . . .were insufficient to sate this hunger."[6] In order to present such a gratifying, much-desired portrait of the Jew in general and of the Sabra in particular, these writers tend not to criticize their characters in any serious way. For them the Sabras are in fact "what we have bargained for", as Joseph writes. They are identified with Zionism, and are its justification. If they fail, then Zionism in a sense fails, and vice versa. Consequently, they must succeed, since these writers are certain of the validity and justness of Zionism. Koestler, whose Zionism was a transient vision, can afford to see "the snag in the human quality" of the new generation. Other writers, aware on the one hand of the state of Israel and, on the other, of a conscience cornered for moral and material support in the United States, have made the Sabra a unique embodiment of a new faith actuated in superior qualities. His one-sided views and aggressive manners are presented in an aura of individual distinction and national glory. He is always right, successful, courageous, knowledgeable, goes straight to the point and is present where he is needed most.

Nevertheless, these writers generally present a consistent portrayal of the Sabra. Predominantly, he is of Ashkenazi ancestry; the father is usually an immigrant from Russia, sometimes from Poland or Germany. His distinction is soon felt, and his character stands out in sharp contrast to that of the helpless, servile ghetto Jew. In *A Star in the Wind*, Malvois observes:

> "I receive the impression that the gaze is proud, the features strong and even merry, and the entire expression one usually associated with the Aryan type . . . ."
>
> There is a particularity at work, a refinement which is the result of courage and hard labour, pride, orange juice, and the knowledge that one is armed for the first time in centuries!"[7]

Mickey (David) Marcus, in *Cast A Giant Shadow*, writes to his wife:

> I have yet to see anywhere in the world so inspiring a group as the children of

> Palestine – I mean "children" from 3 to 23. What a spirit – what energy – unspoiled, eager to learn, courteous, serious, understanding, alive to the situation, fearless in a true sense, modest.
>
> They are physically and mentally a new breed of men. Yes, a different kind of Jew is being born.[8]

Sabra girls scorn cosmetics as being the pastime of purposeless women, and take on as an act of faith the wearing of very short skirts. They refuse to shave their armpits or let loose their hair. Their main preoccupation is with how to take advanced training in the management of machine guns and field mortars.

A decisive war serves as a touchstone against which the Sabras are tried in a most crucial way. Almost always, the young Zionists are outnumbered by at least ten to one, and while their enemy rushes to exterminate them with modern equipment, including tanks and planes, they manage to avert a threatening fate and snatch victory with a poor, home-made Sten gun. Their courage, which amounts to an almost superhuman quality, is brought to light through their responses to historical challenge. It is a kind of mystique, inexplicable but nevertheless undeniable. In Thomas Surgue's *Watch for the Morning*, and in James Michener's *The Source*, the Sabras move from one battle scene to another singing Palmach songs and reciting historical incidents from the Bible, while five Arab armies are beleaguering the whole of Palestine. Arieh, in *A Star in the Wind*, together with a handful of Palmachniks and a few volunteers from the kibbutzim, succeeds in halting the advance of an Iraqi division and finally steals the gun of one tank and destroys the other, thus forcing the Iraqis into disarray and ultimate defeat. In *Exodus*, Ari Ben Canaan is presented as an Achilles with invulnerable heels. All this, three of the four writers tell us, is set against a real historical background. Uris and Michener inform their readers that events in their novels pertaining to the present century are based on documented facts. Uris writes on the acknowledgement page: "Most of the events in *Exodus* are a matter of history and public record." And "The space covered in my gathering of material for *Exodus* was nearly fifty thousand miles. The yards of recording tape used, the number of interviews, the tons of research books, and the number of film exposures and vanished greenbacks make equally impressive figures." Likewise, Mitchener not only lists some of the documents he has used, but also, throughout the novel, gives figures, dates and statistics, which make a similar claim. But the combined effects of an epic atmosphere and documented material produce a confused impression as to the authenticity of character presentation. While both authors' chief means for make-believe is in fact their representation of historical circumstances, nine-tenths of the historical background on which *Exodus* and *The Source* are based go contrary to fact. Consequently, the credibility of the Sabra character in both novels becomes highly doubtful. An example of this, which amounts to a contradiction in terms, is the rather

dramatic description Cullinane gives in *The Source* of the utterly corrupt Egyptian army, the greatest threat to the new state of Israel, shortly before Isidore Gottesman and his Sabra wife, Ilana, end their arithmetical calculations with the finding that for each Zionist there are 40.1 fighting Arabs.

Added to this deficiency is another far more important one. Sabra characters created around historical incidents are almost impervious to human emotions. They never experience fear, doubt, weakness, regret or a feeling of having been wrong in one or another of their deeds. They are supposed, of course, to be fearless, strong and self-confident. But to present such attributes as a mechanism of automatic responses leaves much to be desired in terms of characterization. It rules out a relevant display of the inner workings of the self, to say nothing of the inner conflicts, which make a character appear substantially human. It also omits to give an account of the developments in the Sabra character which have brought about such responses, despite the fact that, in the two more important of the four novels, *Exodus* and *The Source*, biographical details are abundantly given. Instead, we are presented with an Ilana (*The Source*), an Ari Ben Canaan (*Exodus*) or an Arieh (*A Star in the Wind*) whose inexorable characters show a supreme command over what would otherwise be impossible situations. The atmosphere of extraordinary odds, therefore, falls short of creating a genuine tension. There is hardly any expectation of defeat. The Sabras are all along victorious. The magnitude of their enemy's force seems more apparent than real, and the value of their struggle diminishes with each exaggeration heaped on them.

More inflated, perhaps, is the four writers' view of the fighting ability of the Sabras as being a quality inherited directly from Gideon and Deborah, and not as a reaction to a ghetto consciousness or as a result of severe training:

> This was no army of mortals. These were the ancient Hebrews! These were the faces of Dan Reuben and Judah and Ephraim! These were Samsons and Deborahs and Joabs and Sauls. It was the army of Israel, and no force on earth could stop them for the power of God was within them![9]

The Sabras' dedication to their cause, their willingness to die for it and their fervent devotion to the land are presented in *Exodus* as a divine endowment such as we read of in the Old Testament. In *The Source*, the 19,000 Arabs of Safad, who number fifteen times as many as the Zionists, are possessed by a mystical, Sabra-inspired terror which propels them to flee the entire region not even able to hear Gottesman entreating them to come back. Only once, in Nathan's *A Star in the Wind*, Joseph Victor, a sympathizing American Jew who finally commits himself to Israel, does come near to a realistic consideration of the state of affairs:

> Their [the Sabras'] duty was to kill. What was going to become of them? Was

> it possible for a young boy, a girl, to face death, to shoot down other human beings, and not have it affect them? Would they grow up without hearts, with only sadness where their hearts ought to be?

The author soon realizes that he has allowed his central character too much meditation. He therefore goes on to propagandize:

> But even as he questioned and wondered, he thought of the faces he had seen around him all day – the frank, high-spirited looks, the gentle expressions of the women, the lofty, devoted faces of the men; and he remembered that they had no hate for the enemy, only a love for their land and for the company of mankind in which – in the world's despite – they proudly and obstinately counted themselves.[10]

The fear Joseph Victor has as to the effect on the Sabras of their duty "to shoot down other human beings" is only too soon dismissed: "they had no hate for the enemy, only a love for their land and for the company of mankind." It is hard to believe this is the true case, not only because Joseph Victor is at the end of his first week in Palestine and is unlikely to have fully acquainted himself with the Sabras (this is clear in the author's description of the "gentle expressions of the women" and of the men's "lofty, devoted faces), but also because the act of killing, whether done with love or with hatred, is bound to leave an indelibly negative effect on the psychology of those who commit it. The questions Joseph Victor asks constitute in fact the staple issue in the life of the Sabras, and on the answers given to them depends our understanding of the Sabra character. Unfortunately, such questions are raised by none of the other writers. The Sabras appear to be immune to the impact of death on the human conscience.

The same tenor of inflated presentation is also traceable in the Sabra's emotional life. The four writers have over-dramatized the manner in which the Sabras love and get married by making it appear strikingly simple and straightforward. The following quotation of a conversation between a sixteen-year-old Sabra girl and a Western journalist will probably make this clear:

> "Do you never want a man?" . . .
>
> "If you mean, do I have a lover," she said simply, "then the answer is yes. He is with Yigal Yadin in the south."
>
> "A lover?" exclaimed Kastler, in a shocked tone of voice. "At your age?"
>
> It was Deborah's turn to be confused. "But," she protested, "you asked me, only a moment ago . . ."[11]

Reuben's proud belief, in *Thieves in the Night*, that the pioneers have by their new approach towards life liberated their children from sexual complexes finds expression in Deborah's statement of fact in the above

quotation. Whether or not Reuben's notion of liberation means, in Deborah's case, freedom to have a lover, and not a life-partner, is a matter for conjecture. The above conversation is intended to "shock" not only Kastler but the reader as well. Deborah's apparent innocence, suggested by "her turn to be confused", is calculated to avert a possible inference by the reader that her having a lover at the age of sixteen might well lead to sexual laxity amounting to a psychological complex. The author's purpose, however, is not to portray this particular phase of the life of the Sabra girl, but rather firstly to dazzle, then to amuse.

A similar treatment of the Sabra's experience of love is also obvious in *The Source*. At their first meeting, Ilana, sixteen years old, and Gottesman, a German immigrant, decide to get married. At their second meeting, moreover, Ilana brings him into her room and sleeps with him, regardless of the embarrassed objection of her father. The father feels called upon to marry them, Gottesman being a Jew, and that he does himself. The effect the narrative builds up is one of wonder and amazement. Likewise, Jordana and David in *Exodus* slip away from a dancing hall to an old Saracen castle to make love. The naturalness of the scene is rendered superficial by the way in which description of minute physical responses are interspersed with quotations from the Song of Songs. What the situation is likely to reveal in terms of character study is overlooked for the sake of presenting the two Sabras as being identical with the two figures in the immortal poem. Instead of the poetry of feeling elevating the lover's appreciation of the beloved's body to aesthetic rapture, the author has reduced to a state of mere physical exercise what might otherwise have been a similar situation to that in the Song of Songs. Leon Uris has even failed to produce a sense of the extra-ordinary which the other two writers have achieved. In all three cases, however, one gets the impression of wild animals who do in fact need, as Koestler's Joseph remarks, a series of generations to catch up. Their passions are responses to physical needs, and the way two of them love each other is too functional to display a sense of compassion and companionship.

The Sabras are educated, of course, to dislike sentiment and to regard it as a symptom of weakness totally unbecoming to a dedicated generation. They speak harshly and behave as tough and aggressive people. In *Exodus*, five years pass before Ari Ben Canaan is able to tell Kitty Fremont that he needs her more than anything else, and no sooner does he utter the words than he warns her not to expect "I can ever again say that my need for you comes first, before all other things . . ."[12] This is probably the real case with the Sabras. As a human condition, however, it is investigated neither in terms of character portrayal nor in the light of social ideals, but rather it is sketched to strike a note of uniqueness and admirable non-conformity in contrast with the established norms of human life. The result is a popular-film hero applauded for being eccentric and unfashionable.

Another important aspect of the Sabra character is its relationship with the Jews and the Old Testament. Zionism is the political movement which has undertaken the task of gathering the Jews into Palestine on the

assumption that this country is their historical homeland. The question of what relation exists between 20th Century Jews and the Hebrew Twelve Tribes[13] is answered by a hypothesis of racial purity which is not far from racialism. James Michener has written one thousand and thirty pages to prove, among other things, that the ruling class among the Jews has been from time immemorial composed of white men: they invariably have blue or green eyes and brown or blond hair. Consequently, the Sabras in the four novels, predominantly leaders of a profound posture, are white men and women, or, at least, display "Aryan" features, as Malvois has observed in *A Star in the Wind.* It appears that, to a racialist Zionist, Ashkinazi Jews, who are mostly white men, pose a critical problem, since the Semite Jew is generally regarded as being dark or swarthy. In *Exodus*, Uris entangles himself in patent contradiction when, in relating the family history of Ari Ben Canaan, he tells us that some Babylonian Jews succeeded in the 2nd Century AD in converting massive numbers of the Caucasians to Judaism and from these converts is decended Jossi Rabinsky whose son, Ari, talks proudly of his great grandfathers Joshua and Saul. The narration of the Rabinsky family history is obviously intended to emphasize what is considered to be the Jews' historical claim to Palestine and their relationship to the ancient Hebrews. Once this relationship is established, no matter how superficially, the Sabras are made to talk about biblical Jewish life as a series of documented facts. To a Sabra, every stone on the land, every wadi and mountain top bears witness to an episode of ancient Hebrew life. The present conquest of Palestine is likened in every instance to that of Joshua, Saul and David. This is a definite, almost complete, shift from the formative trends in early Zionism. In the beginning, Zionism was, in a sense, an anti-Jewish reaction prompted by anti-Semitism.[14] With the Sabras as presented by the four writers, it has established inseparable, emotional links with the people of the Old Testmanet. Ilana, in *The Source*, says: "We are Jews . . . and it is our job to reconquer Palestine."[15] Her behaviour, the author is sure, is the same as her ancestors':

> She slapped food on the table as her ancestors must have slammed it on the wooden boards in their tents four thousand years ago in this very spot.[16]

The Old Testament is intensively studied as the national history book, and to the Sabras is real indeed. They recall battles and battle scenes, and analyse King Saul's fatal mistake in keeping his troops at Gilboa instead of moving them to Shunem.

The Sabras' preoccupation with the Torah as the history book of the Jews is understandable. It provides them with a sense of belonging to an ancient people, with whose life they may identify theirs. It would be a mistake to interpret this phenomenon as purely political, for the Sabras genuinely believe that their Book is as authoritative as documented history, and that their descent from ancient Hebrews is unquestionable. This belief has sustained, it appears, their chauvinism and racialism. David Ben Ami,

in *Exodus*, says: "Joshua made the sun stand still at Latrun. Perhaps we can make the nights stand still [at the same place]."[17] On another occasion he tells Ari:

> "I must never stop believing . . . that I am carrying on a new chapter of a story started four thousand years ago."[18]

He goes on to narrate the ancient history of the Hebrews and concludes that, as Bar Kochba fought the Roman Empire in Palestine, the Sabras, right on the same spot, are fighting the British Empire. Ari picks up the narrative from him and, in minute detail, dwells on the massacres the Romans inflicted on the Jews at various places and times.

On the psychological plane, such belief appears to be more intricate. The fact that to right a mischief (against the Jews) one has to commit another (against the Arabs) is constantly negated by emphatic assertions of the right of the Zionists to take Palestine for themselves. It is interesting to note that such assertions almost always come from Ashkenazi Zionists, including of course the Sabra generation. This is illustrated by the figure of a Sephardi Sabra, Nissim Bagdadi, whose parents have come from Iraq. Bagdadi "seemed noticeably out of place"[19] among several Ashkenazi Zionists plotting to conquer the Arab town of Safad. His odd position is due not only to vast differences in features and bone structure but also to the fact that, while Ilana and others are fitfully remembering sites of battles between Tiberias and Safad, he, "apparently unbothered by history, pressed on and the ancient battlefield was left behind."[20] Bagdadi does not have to bother about history; it is in him, a process hardly interrupted. Wherever he moves he is at home, and to him remembrances are needless. He and Mem Mem, as Sephardi and Ashkinazi, make a contrast. When he ingratiatingly announces: "Believe me, Gottesman, you may not think so now but this state [of Israel] really needs the Sephardim. To build bridges with the Arabs when the war's over," Mem Mem says: "Kill enough Arabs now and worry about the state later."[21]

Closely associated with the Sabra's strong belief in the Torah history is their supreme love for the land which is in line with that of the pioneers. The four novels give the same impression of the mystique surrounding the relationship between Palestine and the Sabras. Kitty Fremont, the American nurse in *Exodus*, feels the impact of the country enveloping everybody, including herself, and is perplexed by her inability to explain it. Ari tells her that only Jews can understand how the Palestinian soil becomes an integral part of man's self. Pointing to the stretches of land around them, Dr Lieberman explains to her why the Sabra generation feels attached to the land:

> "In all directions we are surrounded by history. Across the valley you see Mount Hermon and near it is the site of ancient Dan. I could go on for an hour . . . The eternal longing of the Jewish people to own land is so great that this is where our new heritage comes from."[22]

In *The Source*, Michener informs us that "the Sabra [Ilana] loved Galilee as the soil from which her people had sprung through generations uncounted."[23] With Ilana, love for the land is an obsession. To her, the land is a living tissue the preservation of whose healthiness is incumbent upon the hands treating it. Alien hands have caused its deterioration into malaria-ridden swamps and naked hills. It is the duty of the Jews, she tells her husband, to win it back and make it fertile again. Bewildered by her husband's reserve, she asks him: "Don't you believe that God has chosen us to tend this land?"[24] The author, once more referring Ilana's character back to the ancient Hebrews, explains:

> It was apparent to him [the husband] that Ilana had come to identify God with the land, not differentiating between the two. This must be the way people believed five thousand years ago when the long progression to monotheism started.[25]

The author relates Ilana's obsession to what he believes was the pantheistic origin of Judaic monotheism:

> "God is the land, therefore, we shall worship this hill," [ancient Hebrews said] and almost at once they discovered that between God and His land there had to be some agent of mediation, whereupon they invented priests and the priests led to rabbis, and the rabbis led to all that Ilana hates.[26]

The ancient Hebrews, he maintains, did not worship idols, as their neighbours did, simply because the God-land figured too large for representation by insignificant statues. They regarded the land as one vast identity impregnated with the invisible presence of God, and from this oneness sprang monotheism and the concept of a chosen race. The God-land spiritually has descended, with other things, to Ilana through racial channels. She breaks into tears whenever she sees the devastating effect of foreign presence on "Eretz Israel". In *Exodus* and *A Star in the Wind*, sick children are cured by the mysterious power of a single medicine, the mention of the two magic words "Eretz Israel". David Ben Ami loves Jerusalem as a strange mistress. It overwhelms and frightens and haunts him, and yet it gratifies him with joy and inspiration. Ari drives Kitty over northern Palestine for four days during which the tales of innumerable battles fought on every spot of the land never end.

The importance of the land and the Torah is stressed over and over again by the four writers to provide a sense of the historical continuity of the racial and spiritual relationship between the Sabras and the ancient Hebrews. One should not expect, however, a similar emphasis on religion. The Zionist character from Baratz onwards has manifested an increasing divergence from Judaism. With Koestler's *Thieves in the Night* religion is omitted almost entirely, and with the Sabras the attitude is one of deliberate renunciation. This attitude is perhaps due to two general factors. First,

Judaism, as interpreted and codified by the rabbis, has become an insufferable burden and has legitimized the ghetto patterns of life. In both cases, the pioneers and the Sabras feel that it has become a symbol of slavery. Second, the European mentality behind the bringing up of the Sabras is either distinctly liberal in religious affairs or, predominantly, deeply influenced by socialistic ideas, which, in principle, consider religion as "the opiate of the masses". It is only natural, therefore, that the Sabra would stand openly against religion. Their passionate love of the Torah is strictly a nationalistic feeling; for institutionalized religion they harbour a deep mistrust. A sharp distinction exists, however, between the Torah as a history book of the Jews and as a holy book. This may seem paradoxical and, indeed, some writers hold a contrary view of the Sabras' religion while others tend to be silent. Nathan, for instance, goes as far as to mention that the Sabras are brought up "to be strong and healthy, to praise God, and to respect themselves and one another."[27] Uris is never preoccupied with the issue. On the whole, his Sabra characters are shown as unobservant of their religion, though they do not confess an anti-religious attitude. However, neither presentation is true of the real state of affairs, and this is perhaps due to the author's ignorance of the Sabras or to the fact that they take care not to shock orthodox Jewish readers in the United States, who expect the Israelis to be as pious as Isaiah. The true presentation is, more or less, Michener's in *The Source*, where a belief in the human, as opposed to the divine, element in Jewish history has supplanted religious faith. Ilana frequently describes religion and the rabbis' business as "Mickey Mouse crap".[28] She is brought up among people who discuss the Bible "as the historical background of her people".[29] The author gives us a specific statement of the situation:

> They [the Sabras] were a tough, wonderful, exciting group of young people, and if they had surrendered formal religion, they had found a substitute equally demanding: they were dedicated to the creation of a Jewish state that should be called Israel and that should be founded in social justice.[30]

That the Lord used to go before the hosts and deliver their enemy to them means simply that the Hebrews did the fighting themselves without supernatural assistance. The wars the Hebrews went through to conquer Canaan were actual historical events and not divine performances. Similarly, "not God nor Moses nor some rabbi",[31] Ilana believes, will bring about a Jewish state in Palestine; only fighting will achieve this. Even Ari Ben Canaan, for once permitted by the author to blaspheme, regrets: "The old men in here . . . don't quite realize that the only Messiah that will deliver them is a bayonet on the end of a rifle."[32] But Ilana's attitude is counteracted by the relentless belief of orthodox Jews, especially rabbis, that only the advent of the Messiah, in a literally religious sense, will redeem Israel. Consequently, they refuse to fight the Arabs or to defend themselves against them. "It is the will of God that Israel should be punished for its sins,"[33] Rebbe Itzik

informs Ilana in Yiddish. In the past, he says, God used the Assyrians and Babylonians to punish the Jews, now he is using the Arabs. In any case, the Arabs should not be fought during the Passover feast. Ilana shouts at him: "We'll get the state, then we'll worry about God and his passover."[34] She hits Rebbe Itzik on the face, tells him he is an "old fool" and brushes her hand across his wife's wig knocking it down on the floor and exposing the rebbetzin's shaved head "in all its knobs and veins".[35]

Ilana's is not merely a display of psychopathic behaviour. To understand it one has to understand the effect of European ghetto life on the Zionist psychology. In a true George Eliot sense, life in the ghettos has dehumanized the Jews so much that it has estranged them from normality. Baratz's determination to regenerate both self and the land has been hammered into the Sabra mind to the extent that it has become a mania. Yiddish and Ladino, the two corrupt forms of German and Spanish spoken by Ashkinazim and Sephardim respectively, are looked down upon by the Sabras as symbols of debasement. Equally shameful, Ilana feels, are the wigs Jewesses used to put on after they had had their hair shaved in order to avoid rape by Gentile lords. The submissive attitude of orthodox Jews is an effect of humiliation inflicted on their brethren in central and Eastern Europe. But the greatest source of rage to Ilana is the huge sets of laws and instructions the rabbis have for centuries elicited and ramified from the Torah. Ilana feels that by such works the rabbis have institutionalized slavery and made it pass for divine punishment. Every law mentioned by the rabbis is ruled out by her as being a stigma of dehumanized ghetto life.

Ghetto psychology has bred in the Sabras a fierce opposition to the practices of Jewish life in Europe. Sabras will not go to the synagogue and hold in contempt those who do. Their place of worship is the land, and synagogues do not exist in kibbutzim and moshavs. Also, they will not marry according to ceremonial Judaism, and refuse the blessings of rabbis on wedding days. When a boy and girl love each other, they decide to live together in one room, despite the fact that, for political reasons, their marriage and children to be are considered illegal by the Israeli law.

Of the four novels with which this chapter is concerned, only Uris's *Exodus* has a Sabra as its main character. *Exodus*, in the words of *The Manchester Guardian* reviewer, is "a very passionate piece of collage" but is "virtually non-existent as a novel".[36] Uris, as Jon Kimche correctly observes, has "put sex, success and 'James Bondism' into Zionism".[37] On the same page Kimche confirms Liptzin's notion of the American readers' hunger to read about Jewish heroic exploits: "He [Uris] gave the Jewish masses of all income groups the image they had been longing for. He showed them that the new Jew could follow the Gentile pattern and emulate it. He did more: he also confronted the non-Jewish reading public with this image of the new Jew – and, outside England, they liked it." Again, Coleman's comment on the novel is illuminating:

> What completely destroys one's confidence as the actual post-war narrative

> unfolds is the stultifying conventionality with which the principals – the good, tough Americans Mark and Kitty, the wicked British major, and the superb godlike Ari Ben Canaan – are presented. It is the same black-and-white simplicity we met in *The Ugly American*; Mr Uris has incredibly devalued his heroic material by the vacuity of his interpolations. The law of libel and the rewards of fiction being what they are, we may have more such phoney documentaries before the fad passes, and it is necessary to see that a book of this order may do some social good, by creating debate and lengthening the convenient shortness of our memories, while recognizing that the means it deploys are death, in the last resort, to all those qualities of intelligence, judiciousness, and charity that make literature itself something more than an exodus from life.[38]

The book takes in nearly every landmark in the history of the Jews during the last eighty years before its publication, and sometimes goes as far back as the beginning of the Christian era. Against such a vast and detailed background the character of Ari Ben Canaan is presented as fuel for the machinery of amazing adventures the author is engineering. And Ari functions quite well in the mosaic of newspaper reports and tracts from history books out of which Uris has compiled a novel.

Ari is born in a kibbutz, and brought up in a moshav – a kibbutz run on the principal of individual ownership of property – where he is taught to love the land and be essentially a farmer. At the age of seventeen he is fully one of the Sabras "with their large mustaches and the stamp of aggressiveness".[39] He is six feet tall, strong as a lion ("Ari" means "lion") and conversant with half a dozen languages. He displays Sabra characteristics similar to those sketched in *Thieves in the Night*, and Uris even applies Koestler's metaphor, "Hebrew Tarzans"[40] to describe him and his sister Jordana. Koestler, as we have seen, is upset by the new generation, but Uris, because of these same characteristics, appears to hold it in the highest regard. His presentation of Ari is mostly done in hyperbole ("Ari is quite real. He is the product of a historic abortion"[41]) or as resembling a cow-boy figure in American novels:

> Ari snatched Bar Israel out of his chair, spilling the chess board to the floor. He held the little Oriental [Sephardi] by the lapels as though he were a weightless sack. "You are going to take me to Ben Moshe or I am going to snap your neck."[42]

His Ashkenazi superiority to the "little Oriental" is not all that distinguishes him. Uris displays an amazing taste for the perverse in human nature. He wishes us to admire Ari as "the coldest human being", "the son of a gun . . . the scorner of sentiment and emotion", moving around "something deadly about" him, being always "his cold expressionless self", "a mechanical monster", "a machine" and an "efficient, daring operator", "a mechanical animal", and commander of "The Beasts of the Negev".[43] His

conversation with Mark, the American journalist, is typical:

> [Mark] "That's nice. I didn't know you felt sorry for anyone."
> [Ari] "I feel sorry that she has let her emotions get the best of her."
> "I forgot. You don't know anything about human emotions."
> "You are nervous, Mark."
> . . . "What do you want? Kitty has suffered more than one person has a right to suffer."
> "Suffered?" Ari said. "I wonder if Kitty Fremont knows the meaning of the word."
> "Damn you, Ben Canaan, damn you. What makes you think that Jews own a copyright on suffering?"
> "Fortunately you're not being paid to like me and I couldn't care less."
> "How could you? You see, I like people with human weaknesses."
> "I never have them during working hours."[44]

The above conversation is intended to make us criticize Ari's coldness, as well as admire it, in certain respects: and we are meant to sympathize with Kitty, as well as to criticize her weakness. But in fact we do neither – with either character – because the presentation of their feelings is so trivial and banal that we end up caring little for any of them. The appalling decisiveness of the last sentence of the quotation above is perhaps sufficient illustration of an essential lack of depth and true sympathy. For Ari's working hours are endless, and, ever since he was thirteen, he has always been charged with a grave mission the failure of which will imperil the future of his people. Circumstances have constrained him to action, otherwise he would rather have stayed at his father's farm and lived as a farmer. To the historical challenge laid before his people he has responded with heroism far beyond what the Gentiles may expect of a Jew. In fact, it is because of his being a Jew that he displays such remarkable attributes. This comes, basically, from Ari's strange obsession that the entire world is either antagonistic to the Jews or is exploiting them. He warns David Ben Ami against the "crocodile tears" and lip service of the Gentiles:

> "We will be betrayed and double-crossed as it has always been. We have no friends except our own people, remember that."[45]

That he considers all suffering other than the Jews' to be negligible may be understandable, though not acceptable, on the basis of historical events and personal views. His consideration, as well as his entire character, is explained by the crucial condition in which he is fighting with an elemental instinct for self-preservation. But the author misses the psychological link between condition and response, and relies heavily on a gross exaggeration of reality. Circumstances which have fostered Ari's traits and attitudes are overlooked for the sake of portraying an infallible hero. Ari's aggressive character and utter mistrust of all "goyim" are, perhaps, the more

significant themes novelists might depict, with the ghetto tragedies and Zionist ideals serving as an equally impressive background. However, the author's intention, once more, is to strike and dazzle rather than to embody a human experience.

An infallible hero is what *Exodus* presents, and this is done through interminable clichés. Ari works with the principle of "An Eye for an Eye", is "Awake in Glory", and flies "With Wings as Eagles".[46] He always gets "right to the point", has "a practical eye" that grasps a situation at a glance, has an "unmistakable towering figure", is "extremely clever", and is distinguished by the "quality of leadership"[47] in him. At the age of fifteen he is a prominent Haganah fighter, and at the age of twenty he is the Haganah commander who clears Galilee of the Arab terrorists and chases them into Syria and Lebanon. At the age of twenty-five, and during the Second World War, he smuggles a great number of Jews from his headquarters in Berlin and convinces senior Nazi officials that it is in their interest to let the Jews emigrate to Palestine. He comes back to fight a Vichy army near Damascus, equipped with tanks and artillery, and causes the death of 400 enemy soldiers. In Cyprus, he commands, disguised as a British officer, a most elaborate and daring operation by which he smuggles 302 Jewish children into a ship, despite British troops and secret-service men. It takes four sleepless days to arrange the whole business and two hectic weeks to get the children aboard. He threatens to blow the ship up with dynamite to prevent the British from forcing it back into the harbour, and goes with the children on a hunger-strike lasting for 85 hours, threatening that volunteers will commit suicide in tens, thus compelling British authorities in London, under pressure from an international furore, to allow the ship to land on the Palestinian shore. Finally, he forces the Arab population of Galilee to emigrate from the entire area.

Throughout these fairy tales, the character of Ari is protrayed by statements, theatrical gestures and adventurous, but always successful, blunders. Moreover, the author, apparently carried away by his vulgar characterization of Ari, grotesquely emphasizes the hunger strike by italicizing its hourly progress.

Once more we are introduced to the human triangle of Zionists, British and Arabs. Apart from the author's notion that Ari and the Sabras are fighting the British Empire, Ari is armed with the astonishing question, the answer to which is, no doubt, a capital NO: "Have they [the British] more right to be there [in Palestine] than the survivors of Hitler?"[48] He follows that by reciting a long quotation from Ezekiel. The basic struggle for Palestine is thus transformed with ease from one between Zionists and Arabs to one between Zionists and British. The author fails to see, or chooses not to see, the actual struggle between Arabs and Zionists. He also fails to see, or chooses not to, that neither Zionists nor British have a moral right to be in Palestine. In both cases, the author, again by direct statements and assertions, overlooks the fundamental and stresses the peripheral, clipping the basic issues or totally nullifying them. Ari does not question his

right to displace Palestinians and get their land. We are supposed to understand that the Nazi crimes furnish a sufficient justification for such displacement. There is no other place for the Jews to go to, Ari argues, and is enraged by clumsy Arabs who will not pay for another's crimes. He emerges as the typical ugly colonist, whose interests are imposed as prerogatives and whom the indigenuous population unwittingly does not accept as its lord. He is happy with little Arab boys offering him their sisters ("Maybe you like my sister? She is virgin")[49] but when Taha, his Arab "brother", sensing the ensuing evacuation of his people from the Galilee, refuses to co-operate with him – and also refuses to fight him – Ari is enraged beyond reasonableness. He accuses Taha of treachery and apostasy. Taha appears to have taken Ari's brotherhood society seriously. He asks for Jordana to be married to him as a token of brotherhood, and Ari's fist strikes his mouth and sends him sprawling on the floor. Later, Taha is killed by the Palmach and his village is destroyed on orders from Ari. As far as Ari is concerned, Taha has received his just deserts. And "the story of *Exodus* goes on", as the advertisement at the end of the novel tells us. No wonder "one of the most representative Israelis" said "he had forced himself to read it. It was a vulgar book but it was good for American Jews,"[50] he added.

A final comment on the four novels discussed in this chapter is perhaps necessary. The fact is that the figures of Shylock, the Wandering Jew and the ghetto dweller hover like ghosts in the background of character presentation. It appears that the authors are struggling against a sense of shame, for such figures are, to them, incompatible with the infallibility of their Sabra and other Zionist characters. Their endeavour is not to study them in their effect on the Sabra psychology, but rather to outweigh the impact of such figures on public imagination by creating a superficially more forceful legend out of the life and character of the Zionist.

Notes

1. Koestler, *Thieves in the Night*, p.145.
2. Ibid., p.147.
3. Ibid., p.147.
4. Ibid., p.146.
5. Ibid., p.148.
6. Liptzin, *The Jew in American Literature*, pp.223-4.
7. Robert Nathan, *A Star in the Wind* (W.H. Allen, 1962) p.172.
8. Ted Berkman, *Cast a Giant Shadow* (The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1967) p.32.
9. Leon Uris, *Exodus* (Corgi Books, 1971, first published 1959) p.358.
10. Nathan, *A Star in the Wind*, p.220.
11. Ibid., p.219.
12. Uris, *Exodus*, p.599.

13. See Chapter 1, pp.14-15.
14. See Chapter 1, pp.9-10.
15. James A. Michener, *The Source* (Corgi Books, 1967, first published 1965) p.896.
16. Ibid., p.893.
17. Uris, *Exodus*, p.541.
18. Ibid., p.25.
19. Michener, *The Source*, p.900.
20. Ibid., p.902.
21. Ibid., p.954.
22. Uris, *Exodus*, p.343.
23. Michener, *The Source*, p.883.
24. Ibid., p.899.
25. Ibid., p.899.
26. Ibid., p.899.
27. Nathan, *A Star in the Wind*, p.202.
28. Michener, *The Source*, p.894.
29. Ibid., p.895.
30. Ibid., p.897.
31. Ibid., p.894.
32. Uris, *Exodus*, p.56.
33. Michener, *The Source*, p.929.
34. Ibid., p.931.
35. Ibid., p.932.
36. Anne Duchene, A slight smell of unicorns, *The Manchester Guardian*, 17 July 1959, p.4.
37. Jon Kimche, Reluctant Confrontation, *Jewish Observer and Middle East Review*, 27 April 1962, p.22.
38. John Coleman, Proper Study, *The Spectator*, 10 July 1959, p.44.
39. Uris, *Exodus*, p.355.
40. Ibid., pp.350-1.
41. Ibid., p.194.
42. Ibid., p.422.
43. Ibid., pp.42, 44, 56, 108, 163, 320, 445, 573 respectively.
44. Ibid., p.162.
45. Ibid., p.24.
46. Titles of chapters in *Exodus*.
47. Uris, *Exodus*, pp.21, 43, 50, 55, 59.
48. Ibid., p.178.
49. Ibid., p.334.
50. Kimche, Reluctant Confrontation, *Jewish Observer*, 27 April 1962, p.22.

7. The Zionist: Israeli

> If war hadn't been in the air, it would have been necessary to invent it.
>
> Yaël Dayan, *Envy the Frightened*

> "You have killed her," Marko said. He was not accusing; it was a statement.
>
> "It wasn't me. They did it. They didn't have enough . . . maybe one was missing in their books and so they took her away. She chose to go and fill the gap."
>
> "Yes, you killed her. You could have saved her, couldn't you? It's gone on for a long time."
>
> "A long time . . . Yes. Generations. It was a pure death."
>
> Yaël Dayan, *Dust*

The difference between Yaël Dayan's presentation of the Zionist character and that of the non-Israeli writers discussed in the previous chapter is great. Though her four novels depict the same types of Zionist, there is hardly any other common ground on which a study may treat them together. As we have seen before, the Sabra characters, like all others in part, have been shown as nearly infallible, exhibiting super-human energy, and throughout constructing an unparalleled new model of life for themselves and their people. Dayan's Zionists display no such superiority, and for the most part they are sick people, both morally and psychologically, with an irredeemably troubled conscience. The Zionist's characteristics which have been applauded by non-Israeli writers are revealed in her novels as anomalies effected by an over-powering death-wish in the Jewish character.

Basically, the difference is one of background and intention. Herself a Sabra and daughter of a Sabra father, Yaël Dayan describes an environment of which she is, to a great extent, both a product and a witness. Her knowledge of Zionist society, unlike that of the non-Israeli novelists, is first-hand and authentic. Moreover, she is not interested in propaganda, and does not seek to enlist sympathy for the beleaguered state of Israel. She is confident, as she clearly shows in her novels, that her people are strong

enough, not only to defend themselves, but also to achieve victory in any confrontation with their enemy, and her confidence is perhaps a principal reason why she feels free to criticize her society. This is not, of course, to suggest that she is prompted by hostile feelings to expose the people to whom she belongs; her sympathy for, and commitment to, them are evident throughout the five books she has so far written, and it is, perhaps, within this perspective of sympathy and commitment that her presentation of the Israeli character is best understood.

It is rather a grim presentation, almost devoid of any sense of humour that might soften the tragic effect it builds up, with the theme of death, physical or spiritual, predominant in the last three novels. Not surprisingly, Yaël Dayan's novels explore the Israeli character in retrospect. The first two present Sabra characters before and after the establishment of Israel, the third deals with Sabra and immigrant Israelis, and the fourth – published in the United States simultaneously with a diary on the June war, 1967 – describes the life of Jewish immigrants in Israel. The author is not following the political history of Zionism or the different stages in the life of the Zionists, but rather recording the discoveries she has been able to make about her fellow Israelis. The fact that she is chronicling the conscience, rather than the history, of her characters is illustrated in her first novel, *New Face in the Mirror* (1959), which deals with the tiny circle of an adolescent's self-discovery.

With an evident autobiographical element, *New Face in the Mirror*, which the author wrote at the age of nineteen, tells the story of an eighteen-year-old Israeli girl, Ariel Ron, during and after her military training. The similarity of background between heroine and author is of little, if any, consequence to the purpose of this study, since both are Israelis and the experiences presented in the novel, whether autobiographical or not, belong to an upper-class girl. However, Ariel's problems and discoveries apply, more or less, to a great many upper-class girls in sophisticated societies. Ariel, in this case, appears to represent the latest development of at least part of the Sabra generation, for whom the atmosphere of defending the destiny of Israel has apparently given way to a fairly peaceful life.

The narrative portrays two aspects of Ariel's life, that of a soldier and that of an individual. As an army trainee and, later, as an officer, she is all but perfect: she is chosen "Number One Cadet" of her course, she is an exemplary commander of a unit of new woman-recruits, and an excellent commissioned lieutenant at the border. Ariel tells us how she manages to succeed in these performances. She draws a line on a sheet of paper, which represents her, dividing it into two halves: "One half was the future lieutenant Ariel. The easiest way for that person to get on well would be to play a new game, to be sociable, helpful and always kind. To volunteer for things, never to complain, to co-operate humbly. It might be as well to make friends, but only on the surface."[1] She is unaware of her personal need "to get on well", and assumes all along that she is performing a duty which has very little to do with her own dream-world. But she realizes the possibility of

gaining dinstinction, which she needs and looks forward to, and decides to play the game as best as she can. Since everyone in her unit is a "screw", "I determined to be a clever screw."[2] She accepts her loss of identity in the army: "It made me feel more important because, in being forced to be like all the others, I became more conscious of my superiority."[3]

Ariel's army training is a secondary theme in the novel. Her success in it affects none of her more significant and more tangled affairs, which lie partly in Tel-Aviv and partly in Jerusalem. Muriel Spark has, I think, read too much into too little when, in her review of the novel, she refers to Yaël Dayan's "effective use of the symbol of the gun".[4] Muriel Spark does not tell us what the gun symbolizes, though she quotes the novel twice to support her argument. In fact, the gun is mentioned only in the first eighteen pages of the book, with hardly any significance. In two instances it is referred to as one of the many objects onto which Ariel's psychology is projected. In another, Ariel keeps her mate's gun near hers for better protection: "And so to the collection of objects in my bed I added another long-barrelled gun, next to mine."[5] In a fourth instance, Ariel tells us: "My hand recoiled as I touched the cold metal [of the gun]."[6] And finally, Ariel, writing a letter for her comrade, Rachel, informs Rachel's parents that their daughter "loves her gun".[7] In all these instances, the heroine artificially magnifies her interest in the gun because, as a self-opinionated adolescent, she wants everything that belongs to her to appear important and full of meaning. There is no self-identification with the gun on her part, and the influence she seeks to exercise over other people is of a kind which arms cannot help her to achieve.

Ariel is not the fighting sort, nor is she preoccupied with the defence of Israel, like Ilana in *The Source*. Her army comrades are even less enthusiastic about the army than she is and wish they could do without military training. Naturally, she loves her country, but in the normal way people love theirs: "One loves one's country, good or bad."[8] Her real self, the other half of the white sheet of paper, will follow a purely personal course: "On leave every other weekend I would be my other self, my true self, as bad as I wished, doing unkind things, harming or hurting as I pleased, or blessing and making happy . . . . I would get all I wanted whatever that might be."[9] Ariel loves to play games, especially harmful ones, in order to prove herself and impose her seemingly superior character on the others. In the same dialogue with herself, she reveals her thirst for power and the sinister drive in her to dominate people: "But what did I want? My hand wrote power on the paper . . . the power to influence people, to pull the strings and make them dance to my rhythm."[10] Her designs to control other people involve almost all those whom she knows: her lower-class army-mate, two Christian brothers, her parents and Peter Bent, her family friend. Ned, one of the two brothers, tells her: "There's something dishonest about you, and rather dangerous,"[11] while Bill, the other brother, describes her as "a calculating scheming bitch".[12] Her father bitterly rebukes her: "In fact, you're what the Americans call a double-crosser."[13]

It takes an arrogant and conceited person to think that other people can be played with like dummies, and Ariel makes no secret of her self-admiration: "I looked at myself approvingly in the mirror: straight features, small nose, the mouth a trifle mocking, top lip curving upwards; never a full smile, always a doubting one."[14] But there is more in Ariel than the cruel, designing and dispassionate young woman. She is incapable of making friends and is "a perfectly good soldier but, in a way, a dead one".[15] She notices her lack of feelings ("you are afraid of feeling, and you need to feel", she tells herself), but puts on superior airs and tries to be carefree ("I began whistling, then singing"). Her recruiting commander spots her deepest tension and asks her: "What frightens you?"[17] Later, Ariel realizes that she is in fact afraid, and gives herself several answers to the commander's question. Most of all, "I feared death, and I feared my father."[18] When asked in her unit, as part of her training, to write a letter to imaginary parents who have lost their daughter in battle, she gets into an hysterical state, laughing and crying, and runs out of the room into the wilderness.

Ariel is not, however, incapable of self-criticism. Frequently looking in the mirror, she comes to understand more and more about herself and her behaviour. The failure of her "Pygmalion experiment" teaches her that "what I have been doing to Rina was cheap, trivial and base".[19] But she still believes she will succeed in the future, and goes on experimenting, completely unconscious of the evil drives working within her. At moments of drastic defeat she confines herself to her unit, devoting her time to it and ultimately achieving success there. Looking in the mirror imparts little self-knowledge to her at this stage. She is still engrossed in her schemes and unable to realize their terrifying results. It takes a blunt revelation of facts concerning her conduct, this time made by her father, to force her into a semi-awareness of herself. With Peter Bent, she finally comes to see a "new face" of herself "in the mirror". Bent pulls "her out of her wilful shell",[20] and forces her, by patience and forgiveness, to come to peaceful terms with herself and the world around her. She discovers love, humility and tears.

Yaël Dayan's observation of her heroine is close and detached at the same time. All through the analyses of Ariel's psychology, the reader is kept aware of her ability to survive morally the awkward age of adolescence and her inherent confusions. But the process of change from which she finally emerges as a humanized person, is not satisfactorily dealt with. The reader is led to expect that her experience with Bent will resolve her problems with herself, but is not shown how. Despite the author's warmth towards her at the end, Ariel's story comes to a sudden conclusion, and the letter of repentance she writes to her parents sounds less than convincing.

To consider *New Face in the Mirror* as a representative story of the new Israeli generation will certainly involve a risk. The only similarity between Ariel and other of Dayan's main characters is that, to them, the army is a refuge. As we have seen above, Ariel, when trapped by her own misdemeanour, confines herself to her unit and tries to excel there. We shall

see later that Nimrod, Daniel and some other minor figures also find refuge in the army, though in a more complicated manner. But this is peripheral to the main theme of the book, in which there is little that can be described as purely Israeli. Ariel's background and education, extremely important to the understanding of the Zionist character, are nowhere discussed in the novel, and she is not unlike Francoise Sagan's Cécile in *Bonjour Tristesse*, except in her final redemption. The novel, however, with its main theme of self-discovery, may be regarded as Yaël Dayan's first step towards greater and more revealing discoveries about the Israeli character, which she has examined at length in her three subsequent novels.

"Who is strong?"

Between 1961 and 1967, Dayan produced three novels in which a fairly comprehensive study of the Israeli character is presented. The fact that this presentation starts with the modern Israeli and moves retrogressively to the old Jew, and not the other way round, may be attributed to the author's widening awareness of Israeli society and its roots in history. Dayan, like Ariel, has gained her knowledge of the world through her immediate experience of it. Her second novel, *Envy the Frightened* (1961), explores the Sabra character, and it is interesting to note some basic similarities between its main character, Nimrod, and Ari Ben Canaan in *Exodus* and Ilana in *The Source*. The characteristic stamp of aggressiveness is there, and so is the morbid need to gain power and achieve military victory. The three characters have the same tough appearance and hardened personality, are reared in an aura of national rebirth, and are brought up as farmers in either a kibbutz or a moshav. But although the characters are similar, the moral judgement of Dayan is totally different from, if not opposite to, that of both Uris and Michener. The "snag" which Koestler has observed from the outside, in *Thieves in the Night*, is investigated in *Envy the Frightened* from the inside and from the very beginning to the inevitable end.

The main theme of *Envy the Frightened* is stated in the first page. "Who is strong?" is the game the children of Beit-On, a Zionist village in Galilee which can be any village, play in different hidden places, and its ultimate result is spiritual and/or physical death. This game, in a sense a training for the exceptional circumstances which the Sabra generation will have to face in future life, is perhaps as important and serious as the Zionist dream itself. In *Exodus* Ari's father frequently regrets the absence of normal conditions from his children's life and hopes that one day they will be able to live as true farmers. He never neglects, however, instructing little Ari in how to use the whip in taming Arab children. Emphasis in *Envy the Frightened* is not laid on circumstances, though their importance is obvious, but on education: the deliberately ossifying process of bringing up a strong generation. The underlying principle of the Sabra education, like that of Koestler's Zionists, is change, more specifically, change from a Jew into an

Israeli, in view of the historical mission of each Zionist generation. Nimrod, after "conquering" Mount Chermon (Hermon), writes in his diary: "Ivri dried the marshes, Gideon fought the wars, and he [meaning himself] climbed Mount Chermon."[21] Each generation is supposed to perform the duties laid down for it by the previous one, and to achieve this objective it is of primary importance to educate the young as early as possible to meet the requirements of the future.

The idea of change is stressed in the novel in a sharply contrasting polarity. On the one hand, there is old Lamech, an ex-rabbi, who has emigrated from Russia and who takes Nimrod to the synagogue and presents him with a toy rabbit on his ninth birthday. On the other, there is Ivri, Nimrod's father, himself a son of a Russian rabbi who, having changed his name, Motl, wants his son to be the new, strong type of Jew. Ivri cannot understand Lamech, and thinks he is a misfit in Zionist society: "I wonder why he didn't stay behind [in Russia] as he hasn't changed."[22] He wants to keep his son away from the "silly old man" because "I don't want him to be like I was in my village."[23] To Ivri, Lamech represents all that a Zionist abhors and wants to forget: "You haven't changed, Lamech, immigrating here hasn't really meant much to you. You don't care for the land, your skin isn't tanned, you're so, so – Jewish!"[24] But Lamech has his own views on the immigration to Palestine and on the principle of change, and he answers Ivri back: "How dare you Ivri! Motl, the son of Rabbi Pimchas, how dare you! Why do you think you are here? You think I love the land and the sun and the freedom any less than you do? I love it with my heart, not with my mind. Changing one's name doesn't change one's personality, and you are frightened as Motl the son of Pimchas was."[25] He has no great faith in the new Jew. While aware of the difficulties ahead of his people, he is apprehensive lest the preparation for facing them will drain the human quality of Nimrod. "Change to what?" he seems to ask himself, and cannot provide a reassuring answer. However, Lamech dies, and the undesirable Jewishness he represents fades into oblivion.

The children on Beit-On continue their "Who is strong?" games, which gradually become war games. Gideon, the Rock, sneers at Nimrod's curls, calling him "mother's boy", and asks if he, Nimrod, is going to faint while climbing a mountain. Ivri, triumphant over Lamech, especially after the latter's death, presents his son with a "shabriah", a pocket dagger, and has him clean a gun on Saturdays. It is perhaps necessary to mention here that Nimrod possesses the natural tenderness and innocence of a normal child. Lamech appeals to him greatly, with his fairy tales about God, Moses and Russia. As late as his early teens, Nimrod still vacillates between the influence of Lamech and that of Ivri and Gideon. But the impact of Sabra education on him is increasingly felt, and by the age of fifteen he is already the new type. Ivri keeps asking him, "Are you afraid?" and admonishes Miriam, the mother, for calling "Nimi". "You are an Israeli. I was only a Jew,"[26] he tells him. The little child realizes that it is shameful to be afraid, and feels inferior when another child surpasses him in a display of courage.

In a long and revealing passage, very similar in content to Ari Ben Canaan's views, Ivri explains to him what an Israeli should be:

> "You're to trust nobody, there are no real friends, you should never expect anything of people." . . . "That's your only friend. Strength. You are a man. You don't need friends. Beware of kindness, tenderness and warmth. In most cases they lead to disaster. If people fear you, they respect you, if not, they'll overpower you and you'll be left at their mercy . . . . See, son, we can't afford weak ones and cowards. If they are old, like silly old Lamech, let them die in peace. But among the young ones it's rocks we need."[27]

Ivri's philosophy, which appears rigorous and cruel, has its roots in the Zionist colonization of Palestine. Ivri's generation, the pioneers, has fought the land and conquered it, as we have seen; Gideon's generation has fought in the Second World War; and now both are instilling their experience into Nimrod's generation:

> Both injected their spirit and strength into Nimrod's generation on a national scale. It wasn't necessary to be a better person, to educate onself and find happiness – what was needed were better sons of a land, ready not to answer human needs in the everyday sense, but national ones in a large campaign.[28]

With Gideon's body shattered in the war, and with the games of "Who is strong?" going on, Nimrod acquires the title of the Rock and becomes leader of the boys. The other Nimrod, the tender and the innocent, disappears, as does Lamech's influence. His fears and emotions are subdued, and life becomes physical for him. He constantly seeks to prove his strength and is fascinated with his body. When wounded in a night raid on an Arab village, he watches his trickling blood with awesome delight. "It's strange," he thought, "the blood feels good on my arm."[29] He develops a new kind of smile, sinister and sad, with an air of mocking superiority. He is frustrated because, due to his under-recruitment age, the army did not take him in for the 1948 war. The battlefield is the real test of fearlessness, he believes, and he is looking forward to joining the army in a future war. Consequently, the enemy becomes an object towards which he has no definite feelings, save that it constitutes a more substantial target for the war games of "Who is strong?". Nimrod believes that his real objective is peace, and that the trip he makes to Mount Chermon inside Syria is simply motivated by the fact that the enemy "owns a beautiful object which I want to touch and stroke".[30] He is exasperated by the Tel-Aviv intellectuals' talk about peace with the Arabs, and sarcastically comments: "As if we want war." The author goes out of her way to tell us directly:

> This was a lie. He did want action, and right then more than ever. Again this double Nimrod was stretched to extremes. He wanted to jump into fire and

> prove himself and act, or else to fold himself and inset his body back in Miriam's womb or in Elli's arms.[31]

Actually, Nimrod conceives of himself as an agent of history; his enumeration of the previous occupants of the mountain,[32] from Canaanites onwards, ends with him, "Nimrod of Beit-On, son of Miriam and Ivri,"[33] and he feels "at peace with the mountain and nature and myself because I conquered them all."[34]

The drive to conquer is basically a need to prove himself. He is addicted to the drug of conquering fear, an urge which his father has injected into him, and the more he labours to gratify it the more demanding it becomes. Lamech asks Ivri: "Do you know what he's [Nimrod] afraid of?" and goes on to say: "To be afraid – this is the fear that masters him."[35] Another respect in which Nimrod feels called upon to prove himself is his relationship with the land. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the land has become an obsession, out of which a pantheistic concept has emerged in the minds of Ashkenazi Zionists, Bagdadi, and other Sephardi Zionists, tend to think differently. Originally belonging to the land, they develop no supernatural concepts about it. The same situation is presented in *Envy the Frightened*, with Zaki, a Yemenite Jew, as the contrasting figure. Zaki will not even consider "conquering" the Chermon, and thinks it is madness. He asks Nimrod: "What for?" and "Nimrod could never answer this one [question]. Going to the white mountain was all his past and future put together. It was so simple and obvious, and yet he could never explain it to himself."[36]

To these two aspects may be added a third, Nimrod's childhood sensitivity, which, though impotent and inarticulate, is not altogether dead. On occasions, he feels that life is going wrong, and comes to play with the toy rabbit, a muffled sense of peacefulness awakening in him for a few moments. The impact of these occasions is, nevertheless, powerful enough to disconcert him and arouse his blind fear, and he escapes into action to prove himself again.

The ultimate effect of the Sabra education on Nimrod is stated by the author herself:

> The sabra fruit is a warm, large, juicy summer fruit, but it shrinks in time. It loses both the juice, the sweetness and the prickly outside. With Nimrod the sharp outside turned inwards to kill and choke and suffocate the sweet.[37]

This is further illustrated by Nimrod's relationships with his family and the people around him. At the age of ten he teaches a Tel-Aviv group of boys the game of "Who is strong?" and incites one of them to cross the street before a fast-moving car. The car smashes the boy's leg. Nimrod does not care, for this is the game and the boy has failed to prove himself strong. The lack of compassion governs his responses and attitudes towards the people he knows. Early in his life he is made ashamed of showing emotions, and later he lacks them altogether. He starts calling his parents by their first

names. In a way, they represent a challenge to him, parental authority, and he rebels against them and tries to impose himself on them. Ivri is satisfied, for this is the son he has wished for; Miriam is frightened and incredulous. Both resign themselves to a colourless everyday life leaving all decisions for him to make, and he takes for granted his superiority over them. Like everything else, they become objects to him. When Miriam approaches death, the old, suffocated sensitivity stirs inside him, this time violently. His cool, calculated reasoning, when he reveals the fact to Elli, his wife, is only one side of his struggle to master a difficult situation. The other is helpless realization that he cannot conquer death. His attempted nonchalance fails to settle his inner disturbance, of which he is the least aware, and the conflict between his subconscious sensitivity and conscious self-will ends in an escape, a flight to climb another mountain. His early childhood comes alive in his memory, interspersed with waves of anger and agonizing, unanswerable questions. And in a last, great effort to conquer his turbulent vision of death, he holds tenaciously to the image of his future son.

Ivri lives, physically. He is stricken with a sense of guilt for bringing up his son the way he has. But guilt is not a feeling Nimrod understands. He is the last to recognize the gnawing change inside his father even though he is uneasy about the old man's loneliness. When Ivri admits that his life and educational principles have been a mistake he will not repeat with his grandson, Nimrod becomes furious and bitter.

Nimrod's relationship with Elli is different, but equally significant. Like the Sabras in the previous chapter, he is both a baby and an animal when making love to her. Again, she is an object to him, like the mountain or the lake. In making love to her he exercises his love for his body, "and the object of his love happened to be Elli."[38] He influences her thinking with his ideas on strength and fearlessness to the extent that she becomes incapable of understanding his predicament in moments of weakness.

Nimrod, however, is worn out by contradictions at an earlier time than his father and Gideon. His father withers away, Gideon commits suicide, and he collapses. The reviewer of *The Times Literary Supplement* has chosen to describe Nimrod's collapse in terms of redemption:

> Our spartan, however is redeemed and begins to learn how "to cry and love and sing."[39]

This seems to be a misinterpretation of the last chapter of the novel. When Nimrod catches sight of his little son swimming across the Jordan's torrential water, an upsurge of all the fears he has suppressed takes hold of him, and in a totally impulsive effort he jumps into the water and lifts his child up. Little Gideon is playing the traditional "Who is strong?" game but Nimrod will not consider that. It is in this moment of impulsiveness that Nimrod "knew how to cry and love and sing."[40] Two pages later, in the penultimate paragraph of the book, the author writes:

> There he was alone. It was not the loneliness of the strong and superior. It was the loneliness of the weak and helpless . . . . And if he was the living among the dead ones, he had died a sudden death today and was doomed to death among the living.[41]

The author's moral judgement on the Sabra education is perhaps clear by now. It is also expressed in the epitaph quoted from the Bible: "Happy is the man who feareth always." She sees in the Sabra a lack of humanity tantamount to moral and spiritual death, and, in Gideon's case, leading even to physical death. This judgement is accentuated by the contrast she draws between Nimrod and Elli on the one hand and Yoram and Rina on the other. The latter couple lead in the city of Tel-Aviv a peaceful and happy life, and Yoram harbours no illusions about strength and fearlessness. Rina, less hardened by kibbutz life than Nimrod, relishes life with Yoram and finds it incomparably more human than that of the kibbutz. It is to her house that Elli comes when she runs away from Nimrod, and not to any other kibbutz house. All this is perhaps indicative of the fact that the author does not condemn human beings but the doctrine according to which they are brought up. In such a doctrine she sees destruction, no matter what achievements it brings about. The Sinai military victory of 1956 appears to her hollow and inhuman:

> They [Israeli soldiers] swept through the wilderness of the Sinai Peninsula where thousands of shoes were scattered and the crows flew over the corpses.[42]

And that is the result of the aggressive environment in which the Sabras live, and not of a conflict between enemies: "If war hadn't been in the air, it would have been necessary to invent it."[43] It is interesting to observe here how each of the "strong" men in *Envy the Frightened*, Ivri, Gideon and Nimrod, is presented as a witness against, and a victim of, this environment. Most outspoken of these is Gideon. After his arm and the lower half of his body are mangled in the World War, he realizes how fatal is the emphasis in his society on being fearless and strong and starts his futile and acrimonious arguments with Nimrod. He informs him:

> "It's not so easy to leave it all behind and call yourself new. It takes a slow, slow process and we are all dead because we hurry to swallow before chewing, so we strangle ourselves . . . ."
>
> "We fed you on sand and now when the grains have united we wonder why you throw up stones instead of cakes."[44]

His letter to Nimrod, which he writes before committing suicide, is mostly a harsh attack on the principle of fearlessness:

> I know I killed the good in you – the fear. I set you a wrong example. I killed

> you because I was killed in the same way earlier . . . .
>
> It takes courage to be afraid and we don't have this kind of courage. So I end here and you are doomed to tread this earth with this load of inhuman, ugly, fearlessness until you die. And in the process you'll dry and kill and abolish all around you.[45]

The spartan spirit of the Sabras is viewed by the author, with dismay, not only as a self-destructive force, but also as a source of bloodshed. The logical conclusion to be drawn from Nimrod's irresistible urge to conquer is that he, or his children, may one day find the Nile, for instance, "a beautiful object which I want to touch and stroke". And since they will invent war if it is not there, the Sabras are indeed pursuing a dangerous course. The author obviously prefers the rabbit to the pocket dagger, for while Nimrod, having realized his spiritual death, lies on the grass, the rabbit lies in his son's room "staring at the ceiling with one eye, neglected, unwanted, but superior".[46]

Chorus of the dead

Yaël Dayan's investigation of the Israeli character goes a step further in her third novel, *Dust* (1963), which presents a death relationship between a Sabra girl and a young immigrant. The novel is a terrifying exploration of the psychology of both made more striking by way of contrast with the enigmatic and symbolic figure of Leni, a Gentile who has come to Israel in search of the new type of man. In appearance, Yardena, the girl, represents what Baratz and the novelists discussed in the previous chapter want us to know about the Zionist character. She comes from the fertile part of Israel, formerly malaria-stricken marshes and barren hills, to continue the pioneering mission of turning the desert into gardens and orchards by building a new city in it. Little is revealed of her background, except that she is an ordinary Israeli, comfortably settled in her village, "a social, vivacious, well-adjusted creature".[47] But somehow she feels she has been "escaping to my imaginary world to complete the picture and thus avoid disappointments".[48] She understands that the mission of her people is to overcome nature and conquer reality, to actualize dreams and not indulge in them. Yet early in the novel, she discloses the real reason why she has come to participate in the building of the new city:

> It would be dishonest to pretend that I went because I wanted to turn the desert into a garden or to realize dreams that were thousands of years old. I went because it was different, because I had nothing else to do, and because it was a road that might have an end . . . . I knew I would take the road back one day, but perhaps carrying with me a particle of the night's silence, or the day's honesty.[49]

Yardena is searching for a reality beyond unconvincing pretentions that

might bring her peace of mind and moral satisfaction. Her search is "a test for myself", for which she is ready to give all she has, not by way of charity but in order to prove herself and move further "towards the centre".[50] At the very outset she faces the first of two challenges that eventually destroy her. Leni, an infinitely mysterious figure, is there in the desert before her, "not by ancestral right or religious duty", as the Zionists think of themselves, but because "he belonged where he chose to belong".[51] Yardena does not feel that she belongs as naturally to the place ("I was hopelessly brushing against its [the land's] blind surface and so hooked to it forever"),[52] and her attempt to prove her belonging is, in a way, a negation of it. She is tormented by her awareness which came to her like a revelation the day Israel was declared an independent state:

> "I didn't know until then that these towns, these hills and lakes and shores were not really ours, that they were promised but never given, dreamt about but never obtained, and when the State was proclaimed, they told me it meant war, but that night I was dancing the Hora."[53]

She cannot take in Baratz's mystical feeling on interrelationship between the land and himself, though, like Ari Ben Canaan, she has been taught all along to believe that "The Land is Mine".[54] She wants to prove her right to exist on the land by building the desert. But Leni will not leave her in peace. He does not fight her back, he simply exists there. He does not mind her, in fact he talks to her and falls in love with her because, to him, she represents the Israel he has in mind. A lone wolf who spends his days gathering beautiful stones and giving them names, he lives near the Bedouins' tents and is "already a part of the scenery".[55] His answers to the questions of the city builders are puzzles which they cannot understand since a sense of the absurd has no place in their thinking. His personal history is simple: he has been betrayed, but to Yardena no other history can be more significant. Like Joseph in *Thieves in the Night*, she comes from a people who have always been betrayed, and the fact that Leni has reconciled himself to life and virtually mastered it, while she has not, as yet, moves her to indignation. She envies him his ownership of the beautiful stones and his identification with the desert. He assures her that the builders will overcome nature ("They will not merely accept nature; they will claim it")[56] and he will have to go away. But it is a tantalizing assurance: "We control the nature outside so we deceive ourselves that we can control human nature ourselves . . . .But it works, and they all need it."[57]

The narrative moves from beginning to end on two intertwined levels. On the realistic level, there are the city site, the builders, Yardena the schoolteacher and the immigrants. On the psycho-analytical level, there are Yardena's emotions, illusions, struggles and disturbances. Dayan's prose is suited to each, her style varying from a realistic description of facts and situations to an impressionistic analysis of Yardena's conscious and subconscious drives. The comment of the reviewer of *The Times Literary*

Supplement, that her style "often seems pretentious",[58] appears to me to be less than fair when we come to consider the author's attempt to use language that will express Yardena's afflicted conscience. For Yardena, as the end of the novel reveals, is a strange amalgam of life and death, of realities and fancies, and the novel registers with no small degree of success her drift towards her doom. Coming to participate in the building of the new city, in changing "dust" into fertile land, her great faith in both the present and the future of her people is only slightly shaken by a vague aim of gaining "a particle of the night's silence, or the day's honesty". Her aim sounds ominous, nevertheless, considering that she is a Sabra and a member of a new pioneering society. Leni's challenge, namely that all this is absurd and destructive, intensifies her sense of life and her determination to give. Her tension, since she is the narrator, affects her language and metaphors, especially when the "test for myself" materializes in her love for David.

David, a Jewish immigrant, is a meaning and a test, as it were. His life story under the Nazis is the familiar one: his family have perished in a gas chamber and he is left only physically alive. When Yardena asks him why he has chosen to come to the new city, he simply asnwers: "Because you have no cemetery and no flowers."[59] His eyes are expressionless, "deep and black and dead",[60] with no traces of either joy or sadness, and his hands are "metallic". His conversation is curt and laconic: "I don't like children," he tells Yardena, and: "We haven't met yet."[61] To him, Leni is real, and that is a rare happening. Soon, David dominates Yardena's full attention. He warns her that the password to his personal world is "Death", and she considers him "my conscience, my unknown past, my challenge, my God".[62] Dayan cannot, perhaps, be more precise in describing what David is to Yardena. As a Jewess, Yardena feels responsible for him, more so as a Zionist, since Zionism is meant to relieve the Jews from adversity by finding them a home. But as a Sabra who has not witnessed the Nazi horrors, who has come to know the past history of her people only through reading, she sees in David her "unknown past". As a new type of Jew, willing to give boundlessly, she accepts David's spiritual death as a challenge, a test for herself, and he dominates her entire life like a god. She decides to take "him back in the land of living things".[63]

With David a different Yardena emerges. As narrator, she begins to imbue things around her with extraordinary characteristics, projecting her intense feelings on them to such an extent that a tree is hardly a tree but a creature, "old, wise, and as superior as the black earth and the smells".[64] Her perceptive feelings towards nature may be attributed to the common feeling, discussed before, of the Ashkenazi Zionists towards the land. But Dayan's application of it to the main theme of the novel lends a symbolic dimension, an emphasis upon life. Yardena, trying to take David "back into the land of living things", warms towards trees and black earth, in the hope that his feelings will thaw under the influence of nature and her love.

The fact that she is giving David life and receiving death from him is suggested directly after they have made love in the orchard of her village house. The ghosts of his deceased family creep under her hand as she touches his body:

> We knew we were not alone, and when I touched his hair it was Rivka's [his late sister] hair for a second, and when my hand rested on his thin shoulder it was Avram's [his late brother] shoulder . . . .
>
> There were our bodies, reacting, responding, alive, and there was the chorus of the dead, envious, scolding, not interfering, but unable to leave us alone.[65]

David reacts, he strokes her face, and there are tears in his eyes, but in his dreams she becomes a member of his family. The irony of the situation is that while she is happy to appear in his dreams, he is terrified because he does not want her to join the chorus of the dead. Returning to the desert, she "wanted to be treated badly, so that I could answer back",[66] and begins to doubt the value and the meaning of the city: "would the people in it be any better?"[67] The balance in her psychology between reality and illusion is disturbed, and the nightmarish appearance of David's family, who to Yardena seem all but tangible, occupies her mind more and more frequently. David's family symbolize death, and they are getting closer to her. Leni advises her to leave David: "The minute you do get to know him – and you are allowed a glimpse already – it means destruction."[68] She refuses. She will not admit that she is "the result of some dreadful misunderstanding",[69] and insists on being happy and in love. Her love for David, Leni tells her, is partly masochistic and partly a habit. At its conscious level it is calculated and emotionless, at its subconscious level it is a road to death. She is incapable of any kind of response towards Leni's attempt to rape her, and she treats David the way she treats the desert, an object which she expects will change its nature. She wants to irrigate him as she does the desert, to plant grass and saplings, as it were, in him. Stripped of her pretentions by Leni's challenging attempt to rape her, she tries to ridicule him and underestimate his influence on her. "Who was Leni anyway?"[70] she asks herself deprecatingly. She refuses to acknowledge the inner disturbances which Leni and the ghosts awaken in her, tells herself she will return to normal and goes as far as to deny the relation between herself on the one hand and the ghosts and the Jewish history they symbolize, on the other:

> I wasn't inventing the ghosts, nor were they products of my distorted imagination; I was quite sane when they appeared, aware of myself and my real surroundings. Neither were they symbols of my Jewish consciousness.[71]

The ghosts are in fact symbols of her Jewish consciousness, of her "unknown past" the reaction to which, that is, Zionism, has produced the

Yardena of the black earth and the new city. But David and the ghosts drain her naturally limited capacity for love and doing good, and instil in her the dust she is fighting. It is an ironic exchange of destinies, since David gains what she is losing, and it is more so because the main struggle is one over dust. David confirms Leni's analysis of her character and tells her to go to him in his tent, otherwise she will go to pieces. David appears to have gained some normality, and he is thankful to her. His strangled humanity moves inside him, but in a wild manner similar to the gushing of water, which the builders finally succeed in obtaining from the desert. His attempt to make love to her, however, is seen by her as a rape, and from now on she can respond to his love only because "to my horror I shut my eyes and imagined Leni making love to me".[72] Her description of the imagined Leni on her body is terrifying in its sensual effect. David becomes a beloved object.

Leni is not a destructive challenge to Yardena. In fact, he upholds the better part of her, the ability to live and to give. By advising her to stay away from David, and by taking David's place in her sexual imagination, he is sustaining life in her. But this very sustenance awakens and activates the death-wish in her. David is Leni's opposite in character. Both of them are Yardena in so far as she is a composition of life and death. She loves David because he is a Jew and because he is death. She wants him "back in the land of living things", and yet she is unable to respond to his needs, which, she is subconsciously afraid, are destructive. Once she asks to have a child by him. He refuses: "Our children would have nightmares,"[73] he says. Later he expresses the same wish and now Yardena refuses: "My children would have nightmares,"[74] she says. She dislikes Leni because he is a challenge, yet she needs his presence. He can endure what she cannot, a sense of the absurdity of life; and he is alive. She is looking for a meaning and a vocation in a way that reminds one of Daniel Deronda; while he is advocating emotion, acceptance of life as it is, and warm human relationships uncluttered by self-imposed ideals. Both dance at the discovery of water in the desert; David does not. Leni enjoys the discovery in an ordinary way, but goes back to the crater, where he lives, and talks to the devil. Yardena is gratified, she dances and wants everybody to dance, whilst her exaggerated expression of happiness betrays a desperate need to believe in the reality of her feelings. David is happy, but it is a passive happiness.

As in *Envy the Frightened*, the author accentuates the case of her central character by means of contrast. Leni and Rita, a noble whore who follows him to Israel, are matched against David and Yardena. The first couple make love at the crater, the gaping hollow in the desert, where Leni is both Faust and Mephisto bargaining with himself over his own soul; the second make love on the black earth and in the new city, both are the "land of living things". Rita conceives and Yardena does not. Rita gives her body freely and she is called a whore; Yardena has many love affairs, especially the meaningless one in Tel-Aviv, but she is considered a decent girl. Moreover, Rami, a commander of a military division and Yardena's ex-lover during

her military service, is brought in to shed more light on the characters of David and Yardena. His conversation with David comes to an impasse. When he says it is his duty to kill the Arabs, David excuses himself and leaves the house. Yardena explains her love for David to Rami. She knows all about songs, tanks and the road to Gaza, but wants to learn about the other side too. Paradoxically, he is sadly impressed, and reminds her of their previous life of escapism:

> "When we were together we opened doors, and removed barriers, and stepped into rooms on tiptoe; if we liked what we saw inside we drank it in. We leapt through other doors if what we found was distasteful. You have gone into a different room, with no door marked 'Exit'."[75]

Furthermore, the architect of the new city, who is in a way another Rami, warns her not to "play at soul-saving. It's a deadly, unworthy game."[76]

Yardena's movement towards death is presented mainly through her relationship with David's family. Whenever David's impassiveness causes her mental disturbance, his family appear to her. They sit in the corners of her room, or near her on the bed, they even touch her. A change occurs when her own family replace David's in successive death scenes, thus conveying the idea that the death-wish is as strong in a Zionist family as it is in a purely Jewish family. The ghosts of both families appear alternately, enveloping her more and more in an atmosphere of death to such an extent that she is unable to realize the danger of taking too many sleeping-pills. In her balanced moments, she comes to ask herself: "Was it my conscience?" and to remember that "that was what Leni thought".[77] The answer is given by the two families, one dead, the other alive, appearing to her in death hallucinations. When Leni leaves the new town because the place is too small for him, Yardena is left alone with the reality of death. All the others look like dwarfs to her, and David, "my saint, my martyr, became a man, the man I wanted him to be . . . . I felt sick. I was cheated."[78] Her suicide comes as an expected conclusion:

> My conscience was waiting to be collected, and next to it stood the chorus of the living dead. I knew the way, and perhaps I could guide them to a resting-place, to Mount Olive maybe, or Jerusalem, or my village.[79]

The irony is that the way to death she knows leads to Mount Olive, Jerusalem or her village. In the Zionist enterprise, these three places signify national rebirth. David, who finds Yardena dead, sits beside her body all the night, unable to cry or pray or fight with God:

> "You have killed her," Marko said. He was not accusing; it was a statement.
>
> "It wasn't me [David]. They did it. They didn't have enough . . . maybe one was missing in their books and so they took her away. She chose to go

and fill the gap."

"Yes, you killed her. You could have saved her, couldn't you? It's gone on for a long time."

"A long time . . . Yes. Generations. It was a pure death."[80]

Yardena dies because David has awakened in her a dormant death-wish which has overpowered life and has been there for generations. But has David won salvation? Throughout the novel, there are indications of his improvement, even recovery. He comes to need Yardena, and is jealous when Rami kisses her. He adapts himself to Shoshana, an immigrant child, though with difficulty, and performs with her the Passover ritual. His address to the new immigrants is impassioned and hopeful. He is conscious of his gradual recovery and is striving to overcome his predicament. Even Yardena realizes he has become the man she has wanted him to be. Nevertheless, what appears to be his salvation is in essence an escape: he has learnt to ignore his past and, like Rami, and Nimrod for that matter, to leap "through other doors if what we found was distasteful". He tells Yardena once: "The cross is heavy and large, but humanity has developed a magic way of ignoring crosses."[81] He is a Wandering Jew in that he is ordained to live; his family have died for him and "they think one should go on breathing and staring and sensing for all of them, and I was selected not to die."[82] But David's case is more complicated than that of the Wandering Jew. Not only is he doomed to live, but also his life is maintained through the death of others. In a concentration camp, he escapes death by sacrificing the life of a young Pole, and in Israel he gains salvation, if salvation it is, by destroying Yardena. "He felt no guilt,"[83] the author tells us:

> He took his bag. He left Yardena's hair and the family photos in the room, and he walked away along the asphalt road towards the horizon . . . . And the dust covered the grave, the marble, the red stone and his footmarks.[84]

One may ask how morally and psychologically valid this salvation is, and how different, if at all, it is from that of Bauman and Simeon in *Thieves in the Night*. The above quotation shows that it is all dust. David's questions, when telling Yardena the story of the Pole, are relevant, not only for him, but for all humanity:

> "Yardena, where does one stop being an animal? . . . Is the wish to live a justification of murder? . . . Where shall I take my guilt? Who is the God who can judge us all? . . . Who is the God who wants one person to live and another to die?"[85]

Perhaps this is the irony of the whole situation. *Dust* is a novel of ironies, the most tragic of which is Yardena's destiny. The silence and honesty she is looking for come to mean the silence of the grave and the honesty of a confession of total failure. The "land of living things" is revealed to be the

land of dead things. Black earth accepts dead bodies, the sand does not. The new city is built near a crater, and its inhabitants are hoping to have the first birth before the first death; an unfulfilled hope. It is interesting in this respect to compare the beginnings of the first and the last chapters. The first opens with a description of the future city:

> The city was yellow and its substance was dust. Its pulse-beat was infinity and it had no name as yet. They called it "the new city", but there was something ancient and immense in its non-existence, in its smallness.
>
> It lay there in our imagination, between the plan and the reality, the said and the committed, the desired and the possible, like an hallucination of colour and structure and towers and streams.[86]

The last describes the city a year later:

> The city was yellow, and its substance was dust. Its pulse-beat was infinity and it was one year old. It had a name and an identity, it had meaning and shape, and it spread in white and blue squares as far as the eye could see.
>
> It had sounds and smells and the dust hid in courtyards, among paving-stones, in women's hair, and on the leaves of the trees we had planted a year ago.[87]

Both chapters are entitled "Dust". A fuller, though too simple and rather superficial, sense of irony emerges when one regards the titles of the nine chapters comprising the novel. After "Dust" and "Ash" come "Grass", "Seeds" and "Water", and we are made to believe that the hopes the new city symbolizes, including Yardena's, are coming to fulfilment. "Sweat", the title of the sixth chapter, lends ambiguous overtones, but when we move on to "Stones", "Ash" and "Dust" again the irony becomes complete. The cyclical movement from dust to dust suggests that Yardena has all the time been spiritually dead and that the building of the new city, which symbolizes Zionism, is "vanity of vanities".

The symbolism in all this is fairly clear and direct, sometimes even intended and not artistically achieved, except with Leni. Although the scope of this study does not include an examination of Gentile characters, Leni's impact on the novel is worth referring to. His ostensibly coincidental return on the day Yardena dies is highly ironic. He comes back, it seems, to witness the first death, Yardena's, and to put a red stone on her tomb, before seeing the first birth, his child's. His acceptance of the absurdity of life breeds fertility, while Yardena's principled attempt to conquer nature and give life to others ends in a tragedy. He stands for certain meanings (the absurd, fertility, the right to be in Palestine), but lacks substance, and his character appears to be too abstract, compared to Yardena and David. He may be regarded as a symbol of life (Yardena and David, of death), or of the afflicted Gentiles, since he strikingly resembles the Pole whom David has

sacrificed to save his own life. At times he is presented as Faust, at others as a combination of both Faust and Mephisto. His talks with the devil may denote a choice to live without values, but the devil will not accept his soul. Nevertheless, the author's uncertainty concerning the character of Leni does not lessen his impact on the atmosphere of death the novel creates.

'Who is saved?'

Dayan's exploration of the Israeli character is completed in her fourth novel, *Death Had Two Sons* (1967), which centres on Daniel, another David, with whom the death-wish in the Jewish character is traced back to its earliest origins. Again, the narrative moves on two levels, the realistic and the symbolic. On the realistic level, we have the familiar story, at least apparently, of a Jew who has escaped the Nazi concentration camp and become an Israeli at an earlier age than David, and the effect of Israeli life on him is far greater than it is on the latter. Joining the group of the "adopted children", he "was initiated in the way of life of Gilad and he seemed to accept it neither happily nor sadly."[88] His lack of response to exceptional events is essentially similar to David's. He receives the news of his father's escape from death with typical nonchalance. He would "take a shower",[89] he tells Rina. His step-sister is "just another woman in the Café Tikva . . . wondering if her father would survive."[90] Only he is more cynical than David and rather effeminate in character.

There is also a Yardena in his Israeli life, though a different one. Rina "scratched the surface and reached the soft flesh he cared not to expose, or admit was there at all."[91] But she does not go further, and he is unable to give her a chance. To her confession of love, he, unlike David, answers: "I wish I could give something in return . . . . I can't say what you want to hear."[92] She has no intention of taking him back to "the land of living things", and realizes "he was unapproachable".[93] She goes to Yoram and the two become lovers.

A similarity exists between Daniel and Nimrod, too, in that the army is a refuge for them. Like Nimrod, he "discovered the ease with which he could kill . . . the thoughtless automatic obedience which resulted in a lifeless lump of a body."[94] After the death of two of his army-mates, a "jealous hatred was evoked [in him] by the sight of the dead and automatically he released hand grenades into the caves and followed in with the machine-gun's scathing fire."[95] The Sinai victory of 1956 temporarily relieves him of his permanent tension, but when Yoram is gratuitously killed by a mine explosion he, unlike Nimrod, realizes the hollowness and absurdity of it. He is more flexible than Nimrod and far less aggressive. He can withdraw where Nimrod cannot, though both are escapists, each in his own way.

As far as characterization is concerned, similarities betwen Daniel and Dayan's other literary figures are either general or marginal. Daniel's relationship with his father puts him in a different position. That his father

has chosen him to die is a haunting conception of life which overshadows every other human conception. Since then, he has been spiritually dead and, as a human being, misplaced among the living. Rina tells him: "You are not really there [in Poland] . . . and you are not really here [in Israel] either."[96] The novel opens with an atmosphere of imminent death: the father is lying in a hospital bed and everybody around him knows it is only a matter of days. But to Daniel, he died a long time ago, and now is dying again of cancer:

> You died on that winter day, Kalinsky [his father]. You took Shmuel [his elder brother] with you and you died for me and now you are dying again and perhaps all that happened in between doesn't matter.[97]

The only feelings he is capable of are those connected with death. Not that he hates, or even resents, his father, since he understands it is not the latter's fault, but he sees in the father's choice a senseless destiny. He cannot call him "father", but "Kalinsky", as if he loathes to think that an instrument of death is related to him. And the fact that he has lost a father generates in him lasting bitterness, which fills his mind with terrible questions:

> What do they [doctors] do with the tissue they extract, Kalinsky? After the biopsy, do they keep it in the lab so that it continues to live on after you? Do they burn it the way they burned witches and prophets? Will the X-rays be on file when you are gone, so we can add them to the family album as "the last photograph taken of our father before he died"?

It is not difficult to detect in these questions an agony culminating in self-torture, for Daniel's morbid state of mind indicates a vindictiveness directed not only towards his father but also towards himself. His stance as a dutiful son is made meaningless by his inability to behave like one. The consequence is that he remains in Rina's flat unable either to cross to the other side of the street where his father lies in hospital, or leave and go back to Gilad. His mind is constantly preoccupied with memories of death, with the moment when Kalinsky had to choose one of his two sons and give him to the Nazis, with Yoram's death, his own child's death and with Nechama.

It would have been more bearable for him, perhaps, had his father remained in Poland, for the distance in this case would have helped him to pursue his Israeli life. He has a few, everyday problems, but neither ambitions, nor emotions, nor complaints; and he can forget. He performs whatever is required of him without questions. A lack of a definite atttitude towards people, things and events suits his introverted character best. But Kalinsky is in Israel, and Daniel has to face the fact of his presence. The son involuntarily diverts the original source of his bitterness to one of a meticulous observation of his father's traits and manners. Kalinsky is a common man of "average height and looks and habits and temper".[99] Neither

exceptional nor dull, he has joined his father's trading firm, married, had two sons and grown a little more prosperous. However, he has had an uncommon moment once, the choice of which son to send to his death, and this makes him, in Daniel's eyes, distinguished and special. In Israel he is a great contrast, as far as patterns of life are concerned. He still displays the fear and the diffidence of a diasporic Jew. His case is not unfamiliar among immigrant Israelis of his age, but Daniel, finding in it an outlet for his inner feelings, registers with considerable distaste every movement and utterance of his father. He comes to know a detestable man, preoccupied with headaches, pains, the language, prices, taxes, debts and credits. Daniel's attitude has developed during ten years of correspondence with Warsaw, and has been strengthened after his father's arrival in Israel. Above all, he is repelled by his discovery that Kalinsky has remained a Jew:

> Like those plants, grown up north and then transplanted south, they don't die, but the sand absorbs the water and the salt eats into the roots and they degenerate until they hardly resemble their brothers in the fertile north. They exist, that's all, and you [Kalinsky] managed an existence in Beer-Sheba.[100]

Daniels' judgement of his father is not, of course, without substance, for the latter has never changed his diasporic character, or his conception of Israel as the biblical land in which rabbis are respected. He is very similar to Lamech in this respect, though far less suggestive. But a different Israel from the one Kalinsky has expected does not make him feel the less Israeli. When his son offers him tickets to go back to Warsaw he slaps him. The incident shows the extent to which Daniel's estrangement from his father has developed. To him, Kalinsky is

> a man who lost his dignity many times along the road to salvation and gave up his child.[101]

He is an embodiment of a memory that burdens Daniel's conscience, and it is better to get rid of it and plunge entirely into Israeli life:

> My life began in Bari, I was born in Bari on a boat and I grew up in Gilad and all that happened before Bari should be erased from my brain and conscience. You brought to me the years I happily lost.[102]

This kind of loss is not salvation for Daniel, of course. The irony of the situation is that his likening of Kalinsky to half-dead trees that degenerate in the desert applies to him as well. Kalinsky's judgement on him, that "your mind isn't capable of existing even in the small circles you exist in,"[103] confirms Rina's similar comment given ten years ago.[104] The fact is that the father's choice has irredeemably impaired the son's conscience, and Dayan traces the effect of this choice on him through his Israeli life. One of the reviewers of the novel expresses regret that in exploring "the Nazi

persecution", "its effect is dispersed in unnecessary peripheral events."[105] Saul Maloff, another reviewer, also thinks that "almost as if she [the author] has forgotten about this [Nazi persecution], she provides an altogether different ground for the son's intransigence."[106] It seems that both reviewers have assumed, for some unknown reason, that Dayan is writing about the Nazi holocaust with regard to the Jews. There is hardly any evidence in the author's treatment of her characters to support this assumption. The novel is least concerned with exposing Nazism or enlisting sympathy for those who have suffered at the hands of the Nazis. The author's main interest is the Israelis, Jews or Zionists. Daniel's Israeli life is not a series of "unnecessary peripheral events" or a "ground for the son's intransigence", but one of great significance. The fact that, even in Israel, he lives in an atmosphere of death from which there is no escape and because of which he cannot establish normal relationships with the others, is presented in four major experiences in his Israeli life. His experience with the army ends with an impasse. First he is glad to escape to the army and forget about everything else. Afterwards, a sense of the proximity of death overwhelms him, and realizing that survival is not to be taken for granted, he shoots to kill, deliberately and with hatred. At the end, it is all meaningless and agonizing:

> He remembered the excitement of war, the dreary disappointment of war, the price to pay, the sterile corridors, the prisoners' sheds, Mount Sinai beautiful and meaningless to him .... What was tiring was not the road already travelled but the absence of a road ahead.[107]

Connected with his army experience, is David's affair with Nechama. A lost woman whose true lover was killed in war, Nechama gives her body to any soldier who wants her. Making love to her has often been the kiss of death, for her lovers are soldiers on their way to fight either a major war or in skirmishes along the border. It is a game of war, sex and death. Early in his relationship with her, Daniel discovers that "she waited for death and fed on it",[108] and he "pushed her away and he ran, breathing heavily."[109] Nevertheless, he cannot resist the impact on him of the very truth he discovers, and one day he finds himself visiting her again.

Daniel's third experience ends with the death of his child. When Nili, his mistress and extreme opposite, becomes pregnant she immediately has an abortion, and tells him of it in the same vociferous manner with which she has first received him. He is outraged and embittered, and feels unable to forgive. His position is similar to his father's in that it is helpless and morally damaging. It does not always take a Nazi to kill, for death can be as gratuitously effected in an operation-theatre. Later, in profound despair, he comes to the conclusion that "if he had the right to reject his own father, Nili had the right to reject his child."[110]

The last and probably the most momentous of his experiences is his unique relationship with Yoram. Yoram is the kibbutz schoolteacher of the

"adopted children", and with Daniel he in no time replaces the father thought of as dead and for ever needed. He becomes Daniel's Zionist father. When he goes abroad to escort another group of refugee children, Daniel feels lost and waits for him on the road leading to Gilad. When Daniel grows up to be a man, Yoram becomes his only friend and, in effect, his only living link with the country. After the conquest of Sinai, they meet and, allowing Yoram to inspect a bridge instead of doing it himself as part of his duty, Daniel sends him to a gratuitous death. Yoram's body is mangled in almost the same way Gideon's was in *Envy the Frightened*. The theme of dust depicted in the previous novel, is voiced here in an ironic form of a prayer over Yoram's tomb and further illuminates Dayan's conception of the death-wish in the Zionist character:

> "Dust unto dust, the Lord gave and the Lord has taken, blessed be the Lord . . . ."[111]

The accident has a shattering effect on Daniel, and he keeps recalling it in a self-tormenting manner:

> What do they [doctors] do with the limbs they cut off? Do they bury them, burn them, keep them in jars, use them for experiments, ask the patients whether they want them as souvenirs?[112]

He feels totally lost and bitter, "another grain in the unfamiliar desert".[113] The author, by means of flash-back technique, matches the effect of the death of Yoram, Daniel's Zionist father, on the latter with that of the death of Kalinsky, Daniels' Jewish father, not simply by presenting them on the same page but also by making it evident that both deaths mean an end to whatever attachment Daniel has had. With Kalinsky dying in hospital, the author feelingly sums up Daniel's predicament:

> When Yoram died it was a passionate anger, it was revolt, it was a world shaken and crumbling pillars. When he lost Nili, when Nili gave up his baby, it was self-pity and hurt vanity. And now sadness entered the corridors of his being, ignoring the open doors to rooms cluttered with unhappy memories and settling in.[114]

Together with the realistic level of the narrative, a symbolic and equally powerful one is established. Continuing her investigation of the death-wish in the Jewish character, Dayan presents in *Death Had Two Sons* a figure who traces it back to Abraham, supposedly the first Jew. The title of the book suggests that both sons are taken by death, as does the book itself. The epitaph which the author quotes from a Cretan lament, "Oh, that death had two sons so I might take one away," expresses a wish which is impossible to fulfil. That Kalinsky has two sons, that the novel begins when he is about to die, that Abraham, who had two sons, was, like Kalinsky, asked to sacrifice

one – all this suggests that in fact Kalinsky-Abraham is himself an embodiment of a death-wish, which spares neither of the two sons. The paradox is that Kalinsky-Abraham gives his children, not life, but a living death, and the irony is that Yoram, the anti-death, Zionist father, meets a tragic end. In the book, Shmuel, the elder son chosen to live, is killed, and Daniel, chosen to die, is one of the living dead. In sacrificing Daniel, Haim Kalinsky, whose personal name ironically means "life", is subordinated to an unchallengeable authority. Abraham was likewise commanded to give up a child by an unchallengeable authority. And both lived their last years in Beer-Sheba, Abraham's city. The point is not to make comparison between divine will and Nazi tyranny, nor to explore the theological implications of the figure of Abraham. The principal interest of the book is not good versus evil, it is the effect of the experience rather than its cause. Whether divine or human, the experience, according to Daniel, has generated death in the psychology of the Jews. In a silent soliloquy, Daniel addresses his far-away father as "you were Abraham, and you were God",[115] at the moment Kalinsky made his choice. He is Abraham because he has suffered the same ordeal as Abraham, and he is God because he has passed the effect of his experience onto his offspring as their destiny. And if such is their destiny, and even though Isaac and Daniel did not die, "who is saved?"[116] The question is ironic, for Daniel, pondering on the fate of Shmuel and his mother, both meant to live, already knows the terrible answer. In his imagination, he again addresses his father:

> You lost me once, you said, and you could not bear to lose me again, not realizing that when you lost me in the backyard and I was six, it was forever even if my ghost met you in the port of Haifa so many years later.[117]

The cycle of transmitting death from one generation to the other is completed when Daniel listens helplessly, as his father has once done, to Nili's executed sentence of death on their baby. But, "suppose Isaac had had to sacrifice his father, would it have held as much meaning, he [Daniel] wondered and pulled the chair to the window."[118] In fact, this is precisely what Daniel does to Yoram, his Zionist father, and the accident holds "as much meaning". It is the same act of transmitting death, done in reverse, including this time both Jewishness and Zionism. Daniel remains physically alive, but he is not saved. Like David in *Dust*, he maintains his life at the expense of another. The fact that he is "a citizen of the independent state of Israel"[119] has not brought him salvation, and the novel ends in total despair.

Saul Maloff, whom we have quoted above, after deploring Dayan's English, goes on to say:

> Yet even that is a minor folly, or vanity, alongside the gross moral and aesthetic affront of mindlessly and tastelessly exploring the [Nazi] holocaust for marginal melodramatic purposes, as a sure-fire way of filling a void. Ill-used, both biblical myth and historic catastrophe become forms of emotional blackmail, unearned increment.[120]

This is an unjustifiably harsh attack. Maloff seems to have missed Dayan's purpose. The author is not "exploring" the Nazi holocaust, but rather using it as an instance of fateful events, which, according to Daniel, have ingrained an unconquerable element of death in the Jewish character. What the critic refers to as "emotional blackmail" in using "biblical myth and historical catastrophe" is nowhere to be seen in the novel. The author's observation of her hero is quite detached, and it appears that Maloff has misinterpreted sincerity for emotionalism. His last remark which follows the quotation above, that Daniel repents and says a few words by way of prayer at his father's tomb, is another example of his misinterpretation. The world of the Kaddesh (*Yitgadal veyitkadash shmei Raba*)[121] that Maloff thinks Daniel utters in prayer are:

> words strange to him [which] echoed and rolled down the hill past Yoram's tomb, flowed south with the Jordan and filled the valley.[122]

Daniel does not believe in God, has not been Bar-Mitzvahed and is not sorry about it, has never been to a synagogue in Israel and has not learnt any form of prayer. He never repents, not only because he does not feel guilty, but also because he is past the stage of repentance. The words of prayer are the climax of the irony towards which the book has been building. With Yoram's tomb in his mind, and with similar memories of death the Jordan retains, all that Daniel can do is to utter what to him are meaningless words and think of death as hovering over tombs and valleys.

The absence of God

A minor theme which appears frequently in the four novels discussed above is Judaism. All of Yaël Dayan's central figures, and most of those in the background, are unbelievers. More precisely, God and the Holy Scriptures affect neither their lives nor their thinking in any religious manner. Although there are synagogues, they never go into them, except for once when Lamech takes little Nimrod with him. They consider religion a relic of an unpleasant past, an anachronism obstructing the accomplishment of Zionist ideals. Even Haim Kalinsky does not believe in God, and goes to the synagogue only to perform a social duty. The attitude of other characters, which amounts to deliberate rejection of religion, is basically a reaction against the old type of Jew. They are seeking another god, who at times is identified with the land and at others is a vague spiritual need. In her lonely moments, Ariel, in *New Face in the Mirror*, thinks:

> It was the loneliest moment I had ever known. Only God was left and I got myself into panic because it wasn't my god. My god had crept behind the doors, melted into corridors and dark paths, and wasn't there any more.[123]

Obviously she finds no refuge in "God" and she is looking for one who will be her own. Her dialogues with her shadow, a temporary god, end when she finally discovers love, tears and humbleness, values which are the essence of her long sought-god.

In *Envy the Frightened*, a conflict between Judaism and land-worship deeply affects the character of Nimrod. Ivri and Gideon want him to do "something productive on Saturday morning, like feeding the cattle",[124] and not go to the synagogue. If he wants to pray, Ivri tells him, "pray to the sky to bring rain to our land and not virtue to our souls".[125] In this novel, the author is on the side of the synagogue, but only as an institution that teaches fear. She is protesting against the ruthless pursuit of power in Israeli society, rather than preaching a religious doctrine. The rabbit toy and the pocket-knife are contrasting symbols of current national orientations, the former vanishing, the latter gaining momentum.

In *Dust*, the author has no clear voice of her own as regards religious convictions. However, Yardena, after being told of the tragic death of David's family, contemplates:

> God will not answer you [David], for God is shamed by you and cannot answer your dead stare .... He would fall and disappear as he did before Job.[126]

David fights with God four times a year, commemorating the date each member of his family was taken to death. He asks God bitter questions and receives no answer to them. His "fighting", while implying a kind of recognition of an omnipresent power, denotes neither a religious faith nor an acceptance of the divine will. He and Yardena have never been to a synagogue. In a rare moment, Yardena appreciates the observance of the Sabbath wine-drinking, but only as a tradition, and regrets that "tradition in my family was buried in the black earth and suffocated with the smell of jasmine".[127] Moreover Daniel, in *Death Had Two Sons*, has turned his back on Judaism ever since he came to Israel at the age of seven and was initiated in kibbutz life.

The status of the believers in Israel, as shown in Dayan's fiction, is not a favourable one. Lamech, an old rabbi who has become a shoe-maker, is derided by the villagers. In *Death Had Two Sons*, "two old beggars were sitting in front of the high wall surrounding the hospital, offering prayers for the sick for as little as a few piastres."[128] More significant, perhaps, is the story of a Warsaw rabbi which Kalinsky wants to tell his son as a warning. A saint-like figure, the rabbi has been an inspiration and a moral and spiritual force to the Polish Jews who have visited him. In Jerusalem, Kalinsky thinks, "something was fading away [from him], the mystery was gone, the journey had ended."[129] When two men meet, the rabbi says:

> "A Godless city [Jerusalem]. Petty politics, one rabbi against the other, and the word of God is lost between the struggle for votes and fighting the

> unorthodox, but it was God's will to bring me here and I shall manage. Perhaps we are not fit yet to witness the return of Zion."[130]

In a wistful manner he adds: "Must it be the book or the land? Can't it be both for us?"[131]

The question of religious belief, it is true, is ruled out of the life of the main characters in the four novels. However, its recurrence in one way or another in the minds of these characters further illustrates the troubled conscience of Dayan's Israelis. They are burdened with memories of death, and, especially in the last three novels, they are carrying within themselves an element of death, are unable to adjust to life and are aware of their predicament. Because of this, they always feel a need for a god which cannot be fulfilled. Even orthodoxy has become a political game, the rabbi regrets. One is justified, perhaps, in concluding that in the last three novels at least, Zionism has failed as a substitute for Judaism, although it has succeeded in bringing up one generation after the other of non-believers. The reason for this failure, the last three novels suggest, may be attributed to the inherent death-wish in the Jewish character. Kalinsky, with his Abrahamic choice, could not be saved, and he died in Israel a stranger, a Wandering Jew. Daniel sends his child and his Zionist father to gratuitous death, refuses his Jewish father and is himself one of the living dead. David manages to remain physically alive at the expense of other people's lives, the quality of death in him proves fatal. All three are spiritually dead and their life is meaningless. The Sabras, the pure Israelis, are represented by two central figures. Death as an inherent wish in them is depicted in the character of Yardena, who actually commits suicide. And death as an outcome of the preaching of Zionism is depicted in the character of Nimrod, who dies "a sudden [spiritual] death" when he realizes the impossibility of being redeemed.

The question arises as to whether or not Dayan's Israelis are representative. The answer is not easy to determine. On the one hand, the author is highly critical of her society, especially of its basic ideology as presented in *Envy the Frightened*, and of its militant spirit as presented in the last three novels. Although emphasis is laid mainly on the ideological content, the conclusions concerning the effect of such ideology on people are most pessimistic. It appears as if Zionism has only channelled into a new direction what Dayan regards as a death-wish in the Jewish character. In the last two novels, criticism gives way before total pessimism, from which, one may infer, there is no "Exit", as Rami tells Yardena. On the other hand, three points should be taken into consideration before an answer is attempted. First, the characters in the background apparently do not always agree with the central figures. In *Envy the Frightened*, people are divided into two clear-cut categories, the strong and the meek. The kibbutzniks, who have made Israel what it is, are the strong, the doomed and the people on whom the author's moral judgement falls most heavily. The city-dwellers, like Yoram, and the purely Jewish, like Lamech and Nimrod's

mother, are the meek. Moreover, Yoram appears to be an exception. In a Tel-Aviv scene, in the same novel, Dayan launches a sarcastic and personal attack against café intellectuals, of whom Yoram is one, who talk of peace, beauty and art:

> Artists who seldom painted, writers whose last novel had come out ten years before, and journalists who wrote for whoever paid well, laid humanity on the small tables, and . . . tore it to bits, and patched and fixed and rebuilt it to destroy again.[132]

In *Dust*, both Rami and the architect, two junior pillars of Israeli society, reveal, when talking to Yardena, certain characteristics which, if investigated in the same way Yardena's have been, may lead to the same conclusion the novel has reached. Rina, in *Death Had Two Sons*, reminds the reader, as we have seen before, of Yardena, but she ends her courtship of Daniel by switching to Yoram[133] before we are allowed a glimpse into her conscience.

Second, in *A Soldier's Diary*, published in the same year with *Death Had Two Sons*, there is a rather different Dayan. The book is mainly a description of the June war of 1967 between Israel and the Arabs. It has nothing of the resounding propaganda found in other books on the same topic. The atmosphere is one of war, and the author's attitude is one of confidence and pride. She is an ordinary Israeli soldier, a lieutenant by rank, recording her own army-comrades' words and actions, their enthusiasm and readiness to die, their strength and ability to achieve victory. There is sympathy for the Egyptian soldiers, and an overwhelming joy in victory. Nevertheless, the book is in no way a work of fiction; it is rather a journalistic report which might be of interest for historians or professional soldiers. It reveals no more than an ordinary observer can tell by watching the Israeli soldiers in action. Its moral effect is dubious, and Dayan, in the words of Patrick Brogan, "gives no insight of what it was like to be a soldier".[134] The June victory is, of course; a momentous one, but so was the Sinai victory in which Nimrod and Daniel took part. We have seen the moral and psychological effect of the Sinai campaign on both men. One may even recall Dayan's menacing statement in *Envy the Frightened*: "If war hadn't been in the air, it would have been necessary to invent it." *A Soldier's Diary* was received with interest in some parts of the English-speaking world, but probably because it followed the aftermath of the June war. In an interview, the author comments: "I'd hate the novel [*Death Had Two Sons*] to be dimmed by the war book,"[135] a comment which does not satisfactorily answer the question of representativeness raised above.

Third, the pessimistic atmosphere of Dayan's fiction, at variance with the surface image of Israel, is part of a general phenomenon in Israel's modern literature. Amos Elon, whom we have had the pleasure of quoting before, examining "the works of some outstanding young [Israeli]

authors",[136] comes to the following conclusion:

> The moral or existential anguish elicited by the paradox and contradictions inherent in the Zionist empire frequently dominate the tone and content of modern Israeli letters.[137]

S. Yizhar, a leading Israeli writer and a member of the Israeli Parliament, "has portrayed his heroes (mostly teenaged soldiers of the 1948 war) as harassed by debilitating doubts and morose moral agony."[138] Avraham B. Yehoshua's *Facing the Forests* is "clearly symbolic of the new Israeli society that has been established upon the ruins of another,"[139] its main theme being the impetuous and irrational desire of an Israeli watchman to set fire to a "new forest" planted on the remains of an Arab village. Of the fiction of Amos Oz and A.B. Yehoshua, Elon writes:

> The observer of Israeli life stands perplexed at this outburst of bleak, depressive pessimism amidst a new achievement-orientated society largely predicated on a brilliant dream.[140]

Reviews of the English translation of Oz's *My Michael* (1972), confirm Elon's interpretation of the novel. "The trauma is the trauma of a fortress Israel,"[141] in which Hannah, the heroine, lasciviously dreams of being raped by two twin Arab guerrillas. "I am a Zionist, but a sad Zionist," says Oz, and adds: "I am not going to be the first one to give up nationhood . . . I shall be happy to be the second or third for once."[142] David Spanier, commenting in *The Times* on the Israeli self-confidence exposed by the novel, writes:

> Deep within it [Israeli self-confidence] lurks an ancient feeling of Jewish dread. It manifests itself in the sense of guilt which many Israelis feel about the Arabs, and leads in the case of the heroine of his novel to ravaging fantasies.[143]

There is more in the novel, of course, than the "sense of guilt", for Hannah is very much like Yardena in *Dust*, though she does not commit suicide. In the words of Robert Alter,

> the protagonist's sexual obsessions are only the primary symptom of her need to achieve a sense that she herself is real, that someone or something outside herself can be real, that her reality and another's can engage, hold tight together.[144]

Yaël Dayan's fiction adds considerably to this phenomenon of modern Israeli literature. The fact that her themes are purely Israeli and Jewish, and that her novels are almost devoid of Arab characters, places her in a unique position among the Israeli writers whom we have reviewed above and who are only "some outstanding young authors", as Elon writes. With them,

nevertheless, Dayan represents a post-Zionist group of writers, who have come to consider the achievements of the Zionist movement. They display a tendency towards self-criticism and penetrating evaluation which previous Zionists have not attempted.

Notes

1. Yaël Dayan, *New Face in the Mirror* (Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1959) p.43.
2. Ibid., p.21.
3. Ibid., pp.11-12.
4. Muriel Spark, New Novels, *The Observer*, 5 July 1959, p.11.
5. Dayan, *New Face in the Mirror*, p.9.
6. Ibid., p.8.
7. Ibid., p.18.
8. Ibid., p.23.
9. Ibid., p.44.
10. Ibid., p.44.
11. Ibid., p.87.
12. Ibid., p.92.
13. Ibid., p.111.
14. Ibid., p.31.
15. Ibid., p.26.
16. Ibid., p.34.
17. Ibid., p.21.
18. Ibid., p.119.
19. Ibid., p.49.
20. John Coleman, Wolfe's Clothing, *The Spectator*, 26 June 1959, p.918.
21. Yaël Dayan, *Envy the Frightened* (Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1961) p.114.
22. Ibid., p.13.
23. Ibid., p.15.
24. Ibid., p.35.
25. Ibid., p.35.
26. Ibid., p.31.
27. Ibid., p.54.
28. Ibid., p.55.
29. Ibid., p.128.
30. Ibid., p.110.
31. Ibid., p.102.
32. Incidentally, Mount Hermon and the area around it have been occupied and inhabited by the Israelis ever since 1967.
33. Dayan, *Envy the Frightened*, p.110.
34. Ibid., p.116.
35. Ibid., p.36.
36. Ibid., p.106.
37. Ibid., p.103.

38. Ibid.
39. Calculated Lunacy, *The Times Literary Supplement*, 3 February 1961, p.69.
40. Dayan, *Envy the Frightened*, p.158.
41. Ibid., p.160.
42. Ibid., p.154.
43. Ibid., p.55.
44. Ibid., p.142.
45. Ibid., p.149.
46. Ibid., p.160.
47. Yaël Dayan, *Dust* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1963) p.36.
48. Ibid., p.36.
49. Ibid., p.15.
50. Ibid., p.36.
51. Ibid., p.109.
52. Ibid., p.13.
53. Ibid., p.56.
54. Title of Book 2, *Exodus*.
55. Dayan, *Dust*, p.13.
56. Ibid., p.24.
57. Ibid., p.24.
58. Pioneer, *The Times Literary Supplement*, 15 February 1963, p.105.
59. Dayan, *Dust*, p.29.
60. Ibid., p.28.
61. Ibid., p.31.
62. Ibid., p.43.
63. Ibid., p.46.
64. Ibid., p.48.
65. Ibid., p.54.
66. Ibid., p.65.
67. Ibid., p.66.
68. Ibid., p.74.
69. Ibid., p.75.
70. Ibid., p.78.
71. Ibid., p.79.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid., p.139.
74. Ibid., p.148.
75. Ibid.
76. Ibid., p.140.
77. Ibid., p.107.
78. Ibid., p.151.
79. Ibid., p.152.
80. Ibid., p.153.
81. Ibid., p.59.
82. Ibid., p.37.
83. Ibid., p.154.
84. Ibid., p.155.
85. Ibid., p.114.
86. Ibid., p.9.

87. Ibid., p.149.
88. Yaël Dayan, *Death Had Two Sons* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1967), p.25.
89. Ibid., p.70.
90. Ibid., p.51.
91. Ibid., p.37.
92. Ibid., p.74.
93. Ibid., p.86.
94. Ibid., p.88.
95. Ibid., p.101.
96. Ibid., p.34.
97. Ibid., p.29.
98. Ibid., p.56.
99. Ibid., p.58.
100. Ibid., p.152.
101. Ibid., p.131.
102. Ibid., pp.131-2.
103. Ibid., p.186.
104. See quote 96, p.
105. Two by Two, *The Times Literary Supplement*, 25 May 1967, p.433.
106. Saul Maloff, Daniel Was A Lout, *The New York Times Book Review*, 17 December 1967, p.23.
107. Dayan, *Death Had Two Sons*, p.122.
108. Ibid., pp.107-8.
109. Ibid., p.108.
110. Ibid., p.186.
111. Ibid., p.123.
112. Ibid., pp.56-7.
113. Ibid., p.170.
114. Ibid., p.183.
115. Ibid., p.23.
116. Ibid., p.131.
117. Ibid., p.84.
118. Ibid., p.109.
119. Ibid., p.33.
120. Maloff, Daniel Was A Lout, *The New York Times Book Review*, 17 December 1967, p.23.
121. "Glorified and sanctified be His name."
122. Dayan, *Death Had Two Sons*, p.191.
123. Dayan, *New Face in the Mirror*, p.114.
124. Dayan, *Envy the Frightened*, p.29.
125. Ibid., p.31.
126. Dayan, *Dust*, p.34.
127. Ibid., p.143.
128. Dayan, *Death Had Two Sons*, p.11.
129. Ibid., p.116.
130. Ibid., pp.156-7.
131. Ibid., p.157.
132. Dayan, *Envy the Frightened*, p.97.
133. Dayan uses certain names in more than one novel, e.g. Rina in *New Face in*

the Mirror, Envy the Frightened and *Death Had Two Sons*; Yoram in *Envy the Frightened* and *Death Had Two Sons*; Rivka in *Dust* and *Death Had Two Sons*; Gideon in *Envy the Frightened* and *Dust*.

134. Patrick Brogan, Battlefield, *The Times*, 2 December 1967, p.20.
135. Yaël Dayan Here to Launch War Book and Novel, *New York Times*, 1 November 1967, p.4.
136. Elon, *The Israelis*, p.267.
137. Ibid., p.268.
138. Ibid., p.275.
139. Ibid., p.271.
140. Ibid., p.274.
141. Eric Silver, Sad Son of Zion, *The Guardian*, 24 April 1972, p.8.
142. Ibid., p.8.
143. David Spanier, Amos Oz: Exposer of Israel's secret fears, *The Times*, 29 April 1972, p.14.
144. Robert Alter, An Apolitical Israeli, *The New York Times Book Review*, 21 May 1972, p.5.

8. Conclusion

A rapid survey of the material discussed above from Disraeli's first trilogy to Dayan's *Death Had Two Sons*, will probably show an incongruous group of Zionist characters. This seeming incongruity may be explained simply by referring it to the profound variance of the writers' purposes and points of emphasis, and by recalling the fact that during the relatively long period of time between *Alroy* (1833) and *Death Had Two Sons* (1967), the Zionist character has changed considerably. The aim of this study, however, has been neither to draw a lineal graph of the Zionist character nor to analyse comparatively the various authors' diverse presentations of it. Although some comparison is inevitable, the following pages attempt to point out some major and common characteristics of the Zionist figures.

Idealization

In terms of characterization, the most important feature of the Zionist portrait is perhaps that it is more idealized than realized. Except for Dayan's, other Zionist characters are embodiments of either a vision, an idea or a prefigured conception. Disraeli's vision of the semi-Zionist Jew, be it Alroy, Sidonia or Eva Besso, includes much of the author's wishful thinking and inflated self-reflection. Alroy may be an expression of a transitory dream. Sidonia, however, personifies, more or less, the author's idealization of himself, and among other characters described in this work, only Ari Ben Canaan is allowed to make an equal claim to perfection and superiority. Deronda and Mordecai are moulded upon a moral, mystical ideal. Leon, Baratz and Joseph are trying to actualize an ideal of life which either transcends or rejects reality. Their judgements, choices and actions stem directly from their conception of what Jewish life should be. In them, the Zionist concept becomes actualized and does not remain simply a vision. But the tone of self-aggrandizement is also marked in them.

The realistic, or seemingly realistic, backgrounds of the narratives, intended to substantiate the idealized portrayals of the Zionist, often produce the undesired effect of making their abstract quality more obvious. Sidonia is conspicuously out of place in *Coningsby* and *Tancred*. His sense

of alienation is hardly explained by the social environment in which he is situated and which appears to have accepted him. Although his alienation may be regarded as a sign of national awakening, nowhere in the two novels is indication given of the factors which have prompted such an awakening. Eva Besso's rather aggressive manners should have bewildered Tancred in that the latter is in no way responsible for the atrocities committed against the Jews. As far as *Coningsby* and *Tancred* are concerned, the reader feels that Sidonia and Eva are merely propagandizing an irrelevant issue. Disraeli's personal experiences, which have caused him to create these semi-Zionist characters, are not delineated in either of the two novels. The same discrepancy between the Zionist figure and the background against which it is portrayed exists also in *Daniel Deronda*. George Eliot's strenuous efforts to relate Deronda and Mordecai to a living historical movement have so widened the frontiers of realism as to include mysticism and occultism. Instead of presenting the already existing factors which have given birth to the Zionist character, the author envisions a resurrection of the ancient Jewish character achieved by the metaphysical power of race and heredity. Deronda and Mordecai can be convincing in as much as this metaphysical power is convincing; set against the English and Jewish backgrounds, in the novel, however, they appear to be all but abstractions. Leon and Baratz are more realistic in the sense that as characters they belong to an identifiable Jewish background; but while the former is imbued with visions to the point where he is unable to recognize the significance of actual Jewish life, the latter attempts to make a myth out of an ordinary colonial experiment. Zangwill emphasizes his hero's idealistic predilection by presenting another non-Zionist idealist, the Russian Strelitski, who believes in a different, but equally abstract, mission of the Jews. Baratz, after renouncing his Russian background, moves into a new environment, but his description of it appears to be partial and selective compared with the description a neutral Englishman like Bolitho gives. Koestler's Joseph, unlike the two previous figures, is at odds with both his Jewish and Zionist backgrounds. His utopian yearning becomes increasingly incompatible with the Zionist institutions established in Palestine, and his dissatisfaction and rootlessness are accentuated by the rigorous demands to adapt himself to the pioneers' life. Baratz's myth, however, is modest compared with that which the four American writers create. As is the case with Disraeli's *Alroy*, the essential incredibility of their Zionist characters is made more palpable by the incredibility of the excessively and romantically detailed backgrounds of their novels.

The several idealized representations of the Zionist, again with the exception of Dayan's characters, display different, but not necessarily contradictory, features, in accordance with each author's terms of reference. Disraeli's grandiose self-portrait, first as Alroy and second as Sidonia, is basically a reaction against humiliating experiences. Reaction is the basis of Zionism, and is traceable in the characterization of many of the Zionist figures this study has depicted. With Disraeli, it is expressed either

by a glorification of the self through glorifying Sidonia and the Jews, or by a dream of conquering the Gentile world under the pseudonym of David Alroy. With Ari Ben Canaan, both glorification of the self (his infallibility) and conquering the Gentiles (the British and the Arabs) are evident. But while Disraeli's purpose is merely to vindicate and aggrandize himself, the American writers aim at achieving much more. They want to show the Gentile world that the Jew, especially the Zionist, is no longer the odious money-lender, the legendary Wanderer, or the infamous coward, but on the contrary, an impeccable hero. Sidonia, Alroy and the Sabra share with Baratz the quality of being almost mythical figures. Baratz's principal purpose, however, is to establish as a reality an ideal vision of self-regeneration through labour. Self-regeneration is also George Eliot's theme in *Daniel Deronda*. Although it envisions the Jew of the future, it is nevertheless based on an idealized conception of ancient Jewish life tinged with occultism. Zangwill's Leon is a feeble creation. The author's interest in writing *Children of the Ghetto* is chiefly to introduce the London Jewish environment of the late 19th Century to the reading public. His treatment of the various Jewish characters, including the Zionist Leon, is documentary and lacks imaginative profundity. It is interesting to note how the two figures of Leon and Joseph, both Zionists from England, differ because their authors' purposes are different. Joseph's ambivalence towards the Jews and his complex psychology conflict with his commitment to Zionism. The conflict is never solved but only given outlet sometimes through violence, at other times through rationalization.

The time factor also explains, to a certain extent, the difference between the early and later portrayals of the Zionist. When Disraeli rebels against the European Gentile world in 1833, his idea of Palestine as a substitute home for England is only a passing dream. He still feels that Europe is his home though not a perfectly convenient one. When Deronda and Mordecai discover themselves, their nation and history, they think of Jerusalem and the whole of Palestine in terms of a Jewish polity to be established there. The ingredient of socialism renders Leon's conception of Zionism a little more concrete than Mordecai's. The four figures, however, do not display personal characteristics that we are apt to call Zionist. They are embodiments of ideas and conceptual thinking rather than exemplary creators of new patterns of life. Unlike them, though still essentially idealized, 20th Century Zionists from Baratz onwards are generally viewed in terms of achievements: conquest of the land, kibbutzim and moshavs, trade unions, the Sabra generation and, most important, the establishment of Israel. Their idealism becomes practical rather than imaginative, and their heroic qualities are revealed in what they do as much as in what they believe.

A reaction against Jewishness

Nevertheless, most of the Zionist figures share, in varying degrees, characteristics which are perhaps the essence of the Zionist character. A

certain aversion towards the Jews and Jewish life is noticeable in the attitudes and thinking of almost all of them. Disraeli's self-hatred for being a Jew is not fully revealed in his novels, but it is unmistakeable as one of the causes of the psychosomatic illness which threatened his life between 1828 and 1830. All through his life, he realized that his Jewishness was a permanent disadvantage in his career. In *Alroy*, the hero complains of the Jews' submission to their humility. When he becomes king of a large part of the Middle East, he declares his contempt for the Jews in surprisingly acrimonious language. In *A Village by the Jordan*, Miriam and two other women vehemently protest against the traditional Jewish manner in which the men of the kvutzah treat them. They are determined to create new ways of life totally different from the degrading ones in Kishenev. Many of the later Zionists show what sometimes amounts to an antipathy for the European Jewish life and character. Ilana is openly and resolutely opposed to every form of pre-Zionist Jewish life. Her neurotic fit in Rebbe Itzik's house indicates, not only her rejection, but also her genuine dread of traditional Jewishness. Dayan's Ivri, Gideon, and Daniel feel a personal shame for their own and others' Jewishness. Ivri finds the difference between himself (only a Jew) and his son (an Israeli) a sufficient source of pride for the latter. When he comes to express his disgust of Lamech he finds no better way than describing him as being "so Jewish". Daniel finds Kalinsky's Jewishness a convenient justification for his deep-rooted aversion to his father, who, being a Jew, has delivered him to death. Koestler's Joseph allows himself more consideration of the Zionist-Jewish relationship, viewing it in an historical perspective. His feelings towards the Jews, essentially ambivalent, are a mixture of tenderness and revulsion, sympathetic justification and ruthless criticism. When his rationalization gets the upper hand, he realizes that the Jews are a victimized race. In Eastern and Central Europe they have been forced to live in extremes to such an extent that they have lost normality: extremes of fear, pride, cringing, industriousness, etc. In Western Europe, their substance has been diluted by tolerance, and they are neither completely Jews nor fully Europeans. In both cases, the word "Jew" does not lend itself to a specific definition, except in negative terms. It appears that part of Joseph's predicament is a lack of identity, whether in England or in Palestine. When his inner impulses chance to be released, he shows an intense hatred even for the Zionists. He tells Matthews that he does not blame the Gentiles for their anti-Semitism. The Jews, he regrets, carry their ghettos within them wherever they move. The reason why he became a Zionist is that he hated the Yid. Later, he comes to hate the Zionists as well. Ezra's Tower, in fact the entire Zionist Palestine, is now a new form of a ghetto. Nevertheless, Joseph still clings to his utopian hope that Palestine will somehow heal the Jews of their sickness.

20th Century Zionists, including most of Dayan's characters, reveal a persistent aversion to the most salient feature of Jewish life: religion. This aspect of the Zionist character has been described at some length in the

previous chapters. It remains to be said, however, that 19th Century Zionists display a definite attachment to the Jewish religion which varies according to each author's views. Although Disraeli regards Christianity as the perfection of Judaism, he considers the Mosaic dispensation to be the *fons et origo* of all European religious and ethical thought. Deronda's initial antipathy towards the Jews thaws the more he comes to know about Judaism. Receiving his grandfather's locked box, which contains the Torah, the Talmud and Charisi's own contribution to them, he feels that he is reunited with his true culture. Mordecai, of course, provides him with a more comprehensive instruction, which he gradually accepts, about the message of Judaism and the works of the great masters.

The Zionists' attitude towards contemporary Jewish life should not be confused with their feeling about the ancient Jews. As we have noted, the Zionists derive from the Hebraic history, as it is written in the Old Testament, a proud sense of identity. They reject its religion but accept its mythology. The idea of a chosen race explains the belief of most Zionists that between them and Palestine there has always been a metaphysical relationship. It also explains their view that the ancient Hebrew history is unique among histories. All Zionists, moreover, associate themselves with the ancient Hebrews not in terms of a cultural continuity, but in terms of race and hereditary characteristics. The racial mystique delineated in *Daniel Deronda* is still the underlying hypothesis of the later Zionists' claim of nationhood and of Palestine. George Eliot's conception of it, however, though unrealistic, is basically humane and egalitarian, whereas that of Baratz, Ari, Ivri and Nimrod is xenophobic and chauvinistic.

Alienation and homelessness

Another common feature of the Zionist characters is their profound sense of alienation. Needless to say, they have never been allowed a full opportunity to feel at home in Europe, especially in Eastern Europe. Perhaps Disraeli's experience in this respect illustrates all others, except the Sabras'. His experience is distinctive in that the alienation it reveals is twofold: alienation from the European Gentiles and estrangement from self. With but a faint Semitic trace, the Zionist's character is chiefly European. But he is definable only in negative terms: he is neither fully European nor distinctly Jewish. Disraeli's position, likened to that of the blank paper between the two Testaments, is a product of such a condition. Deronda's deep Christian sympathies and controlled emotions are basically English. Leon and Joseph are as much English as they are Jewish. Strelitski complains of Leon's English Jewishness, and Joseph, after seven years of pioneering life, still refers to England as his home. Baratz differs from Disraeli in that he is trying to create a new identity for himself. In other words, his decision to relinquish his Russian character unveils to him a void in himself which his Jewishness cannot satisfactorily fill. All these figures

are, in fact, trying to prove themselves in one way or the other, to know what they are. The world points at them as being Jews without knowing what the word "Jew" precisely means. Aware of this unnatural condition, they feel a desperate need to establish an identity of their own. Since they cannot become fully Europeans, being denied the opportunity, and will not revert to traditional Jewishness, they become Zionists. In this respect, their Zionism is an attempt to combat a profound sense of non-belonging.

The Sabra and the Israeli represent, at least in theory, the new identity of the self-made Jew, who has a homeland of his own, and belongs to a nation with which he identifies himself. A logical inference from the new situation is that the Zionist, especially the Sabra of the sixth chapter, no longer feels estranged from himself, though his relationship with the non-Zionist world is still essentially the same. Ari, Ilana, and Arieh know exactly what they are, and would talk endlessly about themselves and their nation and history. Instead of a troubled feeling of being excluded from the Gentile world, they harbour a deep mistrust and hostility towards it. The early Zionists' sense of alienation from the non-Jewish world has, with the Sabras, developed into an aggressive attitude aiming at excluding the Gentile world from their own. Since they could not join the Gentiles, it appears, they rejected them.

With the sense of alienation goes one of homelessness. The Zionist logic tends to consider the first as a product of the second, and not vice versa. Mordecai, Leon, Baratz and Joseph refer the anomalies of Jewish life to the fact that the Jews do not have a homeland of their own. Their argument is, of course, based on an assertion of the idea of Jewish nationalism. When Russian, Canadian and Yemenite Jews believe themselves to belong to one nation they will naturally look for a homeland, and until they find it, they will feel dispossessed and misplaced. The Holy Land becomes important as a political, and not merely religious, centre every time the dissatisfied Zionist feels that no other land is likely to become his home. Disraeli's "ideal ambition" has always been described as a dream; but not Deronda's. With 20th Century Zionist figures, the idea of a Palestinian Jewish homeland becomes a belief, which the pioneers pass to their children as an historical truth.

In its fictional form, the 20th Century Zionist logic of homelessness shows an apparent inconsistency. On the one hand, Baratz and the Zionists presented in the sixth chapter, speak of a certain mystical link between Palestine and the Jews the interruption of which has caused the degeneration of Jewish life. The country is not to be described in geographical terms but rather as a living body. It flourishes when the Jews live on and with it, and decays when non-Jews occupy it. It follows that invading the land and "liberating" it from the Canaanites of the 20th Century is not only a necessity but a moral duty and an act of justice. On the other hand, Joseph and Yardena realize that "Canaan" has never really been theirs, and that whenever the Jews wanted it for themselves they had to fight for it. Joseph links the present Zionist endeavour to capture the country

to Jacob's swindling of the divine promise from the guileless Esau. The shock of Yardena's awareness that the land is not hers is swept away by the cruel inevitability of waging war to gain it. Yardena and Joseph never really feel at home. Despite the former's participation in building a new city, which is symbolic of Israel, and the latter's constant rationalization, their laborious efforts to gain peace of mind and a sense of honesty prove a failure.

The discrepancy between these two lines of logic is perhaps fairly clear. But there is more in the attitudes and thinking of Baratz and other like-minded figures than meets the eye. The very fact that they incessantly claim the land and mythologize about their relationship with it strikes a doubtful note as to whether they genuinely believe what they so emphatically assert. Early Zionists, with their heads in the clouds and their feet on European soil, think of Palestine in simple and abstract terms. They have not, as yet, been confronted with the realities of the situation in the country. To later Zionists, the fact of an Arab existence on the land becomes pivotal. Baratz gives a short account of the issue: the Arabs were compensated for their land and sent away. When the Arabs refuse to be sent away, however, Ari Ben Canaan, Ilana and other Sabras kill or expel them and burn their villages. This situation indicates that the Zionist's sense of homelessness is indeed more powerful than his moral impulse. The only "Exit", to use Rami's word, is for the Zionist to accept the Bauman-Simeon theory of the ice age or to be blind to other people's interests, as Bolitho observes in *Beside Galilee*. It is highly unlikely that the Baratz-Ari group of Zionists is unaware of the human problem involved in claiming Palestine for the Jews. Whether or not their responses to the problem are moral is, of course, an important matter. The hushed remarks of Joseph Victor, the mythology of the Zionist colonization, the hypotheses of racial purity, the hysterical fit which grips Gottesman while imploring the deliberately evacuated Arabs to come back – all these and many other instances indicate the Zionists' intense need to establish a legitimacy for their claim to the country. It appears that the Zionists are combating an awareness of the injustice of such a claim firstly by establishing themselves on the land as a physical fact and secondly by attributing a supernatural characteristic to the Zionist-Palestine relationship. The idea of relinquishing their claim never occurs to them, despite the fact that most of them realize, in one way or another, the "contradictions inherent in the Zionist enterprise", to re-quote Amos Elon's phrase. The reason has been explained by Aaron David Gordon, whom Baratz admiringly describes as the ideologue of kibbutz life. It is the psychology of despair, the accumulated, life-long frustrations in Europe, mingled with the possessing ideals of a new state "that should be founded in social justice", as James Michener writes in *The Source*.

Ashkenazi and Sephardi

This and other characteristics of the Zionist figure will perhaps become

clearer if we examine them in representatives of the two main divisions of Zionists: the Ashkenazim and the Sephardim. The 19th Century Zionist figures are mostly Sephardim. To Disraeli, the Sephardim are the aristocracy of Jewry, who are the aristrocracy of the world. Deronda and Charisi are not described as such in specific terms, but George Eliot's account of their ancestral dwelling and physiological features clearly denotes a Sephardi origin. Leon belongs to the middle-class Jews of England who, Zangwill informs us, look down upon the Ashkenazi Jews of Central and Eastern Europe. Judging from fictional works, one may assume that Zionism has first emerged from Sephardi minds. Such an assumption is simply untrue, not only because the author's purposes do not include a presentation at the Ashkenazi-Sephardi division, but also because this division was of no consequence in 19th Century Zionism. Ashkenazim, however, dominate the 20th Century works on Zionism from Baratz to Dayan's Daniel as the major figures. The only doubtful case is perhaps Joseph, whose ancestry is nowhere indicated. Among scores of Zionists peopling the Palestinian fictional scenes, there are only six minor Sephardi characters. Two of them, a Syrian and a Yemenite, appear in *Thieves in the Night* only once. They execute the death sentence passed on the Mukhtar by the terrorists. No further information is given of these characters other than their perfect knowledge of Arabic. One of Dayan's two Sephardi characters, described as "the black", is likewise presented without any special significance: he is killed at the Egyptian front. The traits and attitudes of Bagdadi (in *The Source*) and Zaki (in *Envy the Frightened*) have been discussed in the sixth and seventh chapters. Far more revealing in connection with the differences between Sephardi and Ashkenazi Zionists is Michener's description of the Sephardim's celebration of Elijah's Cave, and their lamentation over the state into which they have fallen. The celebrators, together with Bagdadi, Zaki and those whom Tabari describes in *The Source*, display a strikingly different character from that of the Ashkenazi Zionists. Their conviviality and easy-going manners stand in sharp contrast to the stern industriousness of the Ashkenazim. They exhibit an inherent naturalness which Baratz, for instance, is only striving to generate in himself, and a characteristically Eastern blend of voluptuousness and refined spirituality which neither Joseph, Ari nor Yardena shows. They are passionate but lacking in practical efficiency, congenial but not very reliable, imbued with an inborn sense of historical continuity but unable to make history, free from the ghetto complex but uninfluenced by Western culture, and, above all, they regret, lament, protest against but do nothing to abate the appalling socio-economic discrimination in Israel of which they are victims. There is little social contact and few marriages between them and the Ashkenazim, Michener informs us. The Ashkenazim regard them as the backward element in the Israeli society which has to be impregnated with the values of Western Zionists, because they are much closer to the Arab population of Palestine. Moreover, the sense of alienation they show is not an inheritance

from their pre-Israeli life but rather a product of the new one they have chosen. They neither shrink from Jewish traditions nor feel there is a gap between Jewish and Zionist modes of life. Their attachment to the land is normal and genuine, the mythical element lacking in it but not the feeling of being at home. Shulamit, the Sephardi Israeli, and Tabari, an Arab with Israeli citizenship, are good friends, and maintain a better relationship with each other than they do with the Ashkenazim. Much of the celebration of Elijah's Cave is performed in a typically Eastern manner, and Shulamit does her best to explain this to Cullinane.

The cultural differences between Ashkenazim and Sephardim are brought into focus only in *The Source*. Sephardi characters, however, are all minor in 20th Century Zionist novels, and always come second best in comparison with Ashkenazi characters. Their appearance in some novels is not intended to represent them as the Zionists who have created Israel. The "creation of facts" is always shown to be the business of the Ashkenazim. The regeneration of self, therefore, which is the underlying principle in the thinking and practices of the Zionist, is chiefly associated with the Ashkenazim. Although George Eliot's vision of the new Jew is based on the same principle, it does not appear to apply to the Sephardim, who are only minimally presented and whose Zionist character is simply a continuation of their Jewish one. The actual fulfilment of the principle as a regenerated self, therefore, will be examined below only in connection with the Ashkenazi figures.

Regeneration and estrangement

Regeneration of the self is the ultimate objective of all Zionists from Deronda onwards. 19th Century Zionist fiction expresses it in its embryonic stage: as a wish, a hope or a vision of redemption. According to George Eliot, who has given this vision a far better expression than all the others, it is the return to continuity between contemporary and ancient Israelites, and the uplifting of the morally deteriorating life of the Jews so that their gains will not be the loss of other people. In the 20th Century, the vision coheres and the function of Zionist fiction changes from prophecy to description. We are able, therefore, to perceive the character of the Jew reborn as a Zionist. The colonists are plainly a transitional generation who live between dream and reality. They are aware of their position, and conscious of their attempt not to step out of their dreams but rather to preserve and realize them. Their entire life is dedicated to the implementation of these dreams in their daily practices and relationships, as well as in their children. It does not follow, of course, that they lack an ordinary sense of reality, or are unable to recognize the facts which, in one way or another, go contrary to their dream-oriented course of life. They simply refuse to acknowledge the authenticity and permanence of such conditions on the grounds that man is the creator or the nullifier of facts. This is perhaps the innate dynamic

of the Zionist character which reveals itself in compulsive efforts to change, if necessary, the entire structure of the world and create a new one suitable to the Zionist's temper and needs. The intensity of the vision of regeneration is indicated by the Zionists' willingness to endure whatever hardships their colonial experience will entail. It is also illustrated by their fierce industry on the land, their determination to create a new type of life and by their total preoccupation with their interests. They have succeeded in establishing themselves on the land, with the communes as manifestations of the new life they intend to live. On the political plane both colonists and Sabras have organized themselves in trade unions and parties, and, above all, they have established the state of Israel. On the whole, their new life is solidly founded on a unique basis of nationalism in which the concept of "nation" merges completely with that of "race" and socialism is purely agricultural.

The degree of change, as a measure of regeneration, is the criterion by which the colonists judge themselves and their achievements. Specifically, it is a change from a ghetto Jew to an impeccable Zionist. The Sabras are the most important manifestation of this change. They represent a singular example of how ideology, consciously applied in everyday life, can affect the nature and growth of the human being. In *Thieves in the Night*, the Sabras are what the colonists have bargained for. To the American writers, they are the living proof of Jewish superior qualities. To Baratz and Ivri they are the ultimate personification of a much striven-for ideal. But they also represent an example of how education may become coercion and eventually result in abnormal growth. As far as change is concerned, the Zionists seem to have fully achieved their aim, for the Sabras are radically different from the Jewish generation of the same age in Europe (compare, for instance, Rami with David in *Dust*). Nevertheless, regeneration, especially in the George Eliot conception, appears to be another matter. Indeed the reader is faced with the critical issue of whether such a change may be conceived at all in terms of regeneration. On the face of it, the American writers' presentation of the Sabra character sharply contrasts with that of Koestler and Dayan. For the American writers, the Sabras are peerless, unconquerable and infallible. *Thieves in the Night* pictures them as subnormal, while Dayan's portrayal of them furnishes a tragic vision of either a death-loving Yardena or a spiritually dead Nimrod.

At the psychological and moral levels, the Sabras of the sixth and seventh chapters are in fact the same. Whether Hebrew Tarzans, sons of guns or Rocks, they are profoundly estranged from normality. Such estrangement is primarily an outcome of the pioneers' conscious and heedless attempt to mould the new generation according to their own ideals. Every society, of course, exerts a tremendous influence on the shaping of individual characters. With the Sabras, this influence appears to have exceeded natural limits and become a coercive process, which Joseph, Ivri, Gideon and Barak Ben Canaan seem to have realized. They either regret or lament it. It is all too well to describe the Sabras in heroic terms and then connive at, or be blind to, the morbid psychology that constrains them to

heroic action. The American writers have relied solely on the reader's willingness to accept first impressions without examining them. Ari, Ilana and Arieh do in fact play Nimrod's "who is strong?" games and quite seriously, with almost the same regrettable consequences affecting their humanity. Like Nimrod, they are victorious, invulnerable, dispassionate and aggressive. Like Nimrod and Yardena, they are trying to prove themselves and to feel that they are real by displaying super-human qualities and performing exceptional feats. The irony is that they are unaware, for the most part, of the fact that their Spartan character displays a fearful lack of humanity. Nimrod, Ari and Ilana are of course capable of conquering the Hermon, Acre and Galilee, but are incapable of maintaining normal human relationships with other people, whom they tend to regard as objects and not subjects. Jordana, the typical Sabra girl in Uris's *Exodus*, is totally baffled by the Gentile Kitty and finally admits that, as a female, her approaches to life and love are the wrong ones. Ilana's eccentricity and fervour fail to create the impression of a healthy regenerated character. There is more than blind patriotism in her harsh treatment of Rebbe Itzik, or her obsession with the capture of Jerusalem. In both cases, her behaviour reveals a profound dread that the unpleasant facts and possibilities can no longer be ignored, that Palestine may turn out to be another shambles or, at best, another large-scale ghetto. The ghetto dread reveals itself in a drive to expand (Ari evacuating Galilee, Ilana evacuating the area of Acre, Nimrod conquering Sinai and Yardena conquering the desert).

If regeneration is to be construed as the ability to build a new Tower of Babel, or as the change of a submissive Jew to an aggressive Zionist, then regeneration has been achieved. Zionist fiction has indeed confronted the imagination of the reading public, acquainted with Jewish figures through reading *The Merchant of Venice* and *Oliver Twist*, with characters who show the finest qualities. Nevertheless, George Eliot's vision of the new Jew is fulfilled in neither colonist nor Sabra. The story of the Zionist appears to be one of exodus and not of genesis, a search for an "Exit", or for "a particle of the night's silence, or the day's honesty". This is perhaps a result of the basic Zionist attitude towards life termed as the "creation of facts". It is important to draw attention to two kinds of realities which appear to play havoc with the Zionist psychology. The first includes exterior facts, the most salient of which is the presence of another people on "Eretz Israel". The Zionist mythology concerning the relationship between the Jews and the land of milk and honey has not succeeded in establishing a moral right to, or a peaceful ownership of, the country. The Zionist response to this failure is manifested in either terrorist actions or idealistic daydreams. The Bauman camp also includes, on a generalized basis, Ari, Ilana, Nimrod, Rami, Yoram and Daniel. These adopt a morality which justifies the achievement of their ends by whatever means possible. Other Zionists are veiled in utopian dreams of a just and peaceful society. Their half-hearted attempt to reconcile contradictory facts result in yet greater

dreams (Moshe and Max think of fostering trade unions among the Arabs) or in a tragic end (Yardena realizes her inability to gain peace and a sense of honesty). The second kind of realities pertain to the Zionist's life itself: he has to kill, disdain emotions, rely on power and conquest for safety, dwell in a bigger ghetto, live in a national split between Ashkenazim and Sephardim – these necessities still exist in the face of brilliant achievements and great victories, and do not indicate a wholesome life. The Zionist condition, traceable in almost all the Zionist characters from Baratz to Daniel, appears to be one in which conflicting facts, physical, psychological, and moral, are juxtaposed in a way which leaves no chance for normality to thrive. The Zionist condition is one of predicament rather than potential regeneration, and the Zionists are trying, consciously or subconsciously, to combat it.

Koestler and Dayan are, to my knowledge, the only writers who explore this Zionist predicament at any length and from various aspects. The petrifying process of transforming a Jew into a Zionist is shown in the Hebrew Tarzans, Ivri, Gideon, Nimrod and little Giddy. The theme of violence finds expression in Bauman, Simeon and Joseph, and in Nimrod, Rami and Daniel. The dilemma of conflicting convictions is presented in Joseph's ambivalence towards Judaism and Zionism, and in Yardena's fatal sincerity. The capacity to ignore unpleasant facts is displayed by Max, Sarah, Moshe, the architect, Rami and David. But while Koestler's Joseph believes that this predicament has always existed in the life of the Jews, Dayan goes further and sees in it an ancient and lasting Jewish death-wish of which Zionism is the latest expression.

One final point concerning Dayan's presentation of the Zionist character deserves special mention. In *Dust*, the figure of Leni dominates the conscience of both Yardena and David. That he is a Gentile is certainly not purely coincidental. The author's intention of introducing him among a score of Zionists in her novels appears to be the holding of a contrast between a Gentile and two Zionist Jews. On the one hand, Leni symbolizes life in both its absurdity and fertility. It is reasonable to assume that the life of a Gentile hinges on the absurd (Leni's beautiful and coloured stones), but it is equally reasonable to assume that this life is beautiful, productive and enjoyable (Leni comes back to witness the birth of his child). On the other, Yardena's life is characterized by construction (the new city) and by self-destruction (her suicide). David describes Leni as being real, while we know that he, David, is only a shadow of a man. Leni sustains life in Yardena; David destroys it. Leni's sense of the absurd, moreover, appears to be true to life and more humane than the Zionist ideology is, and his ability to enjoy life even on the sands points to the Zionist's tragic inability to embrace it. The obvious conclusion to draw from this contrast is, as Dayan seems to suggest, that only through becoming Gentiles can the Jews achieve their desired regeneration.

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HANI AL-RAHEB

This book is an exploration of the emergence and development of Jewish, and later Zionist, characters in English fiction between 1817 and 1967. Professor al-Raheb argues that, until Maria Edgeworth's *Harrington* (1817) and Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* (1819), Jewish characters were modelled on negative stereotypes — Shylock-type figures, the Wandering Jew, and the like. But these two early 19th Century works pioneered a new conception of the Jew as a 'good' character. This attitude has been generally in the ascendant ever since, as typified in the works of Benjamin Disraeli and George Eliot or — in our own century — Arthur Koestler and Israeli novelists like Yaeel Dayan.

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While conceding the literary qualities of the novels concerned, the author skilfully draws out their social and political implications, including the impact they have had on favourable present-day attitudes towards Israel in the West.

Hani al-Raheb is the author of four novels and two collections of short stories in Arabic. He obtained his doctorate at the University of Exeter in 1973, and subsequently joined the Department of English at Damascus University. He is now an Associate Professor at the University of San'aa in North Yemen.

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