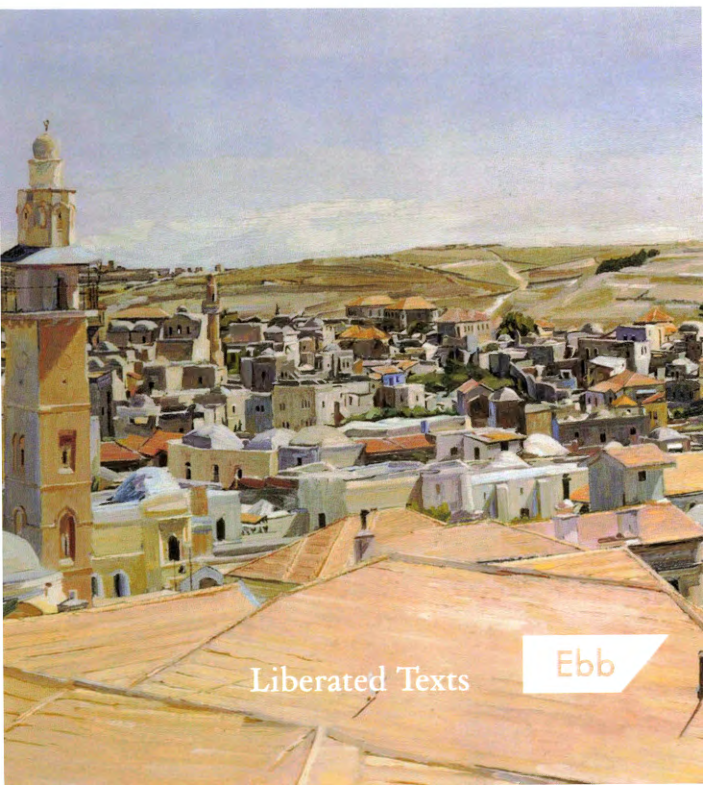


GHASSAN KANAFANI

On Zionist Literature

Translated by Mahmoud Najib



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On Zionist Literature

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Head of Covert Action, CIA, 1961.

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Series Editor, Louis Allday

On Zionist Literature

Ghassan Kanafani

Translated by Mahmoud Najib

Ebb

First published in Arabic, 1967
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Ghassan Kanafani (1936-1972), taken by K. Høver, Denmark

Ghassan Kanafani (1936-1972)

Ghassan Kanafani is regarded as one of the most well-known Arab writers and journalists of the past century. His literary writings, in novels and short stories, are deeply rooted in Arab and Palestinian culture, and have inspired generations during his lifetime and after his martyrdom – both in word and deed.

He was born in Acre in northern Palestine on April 9th 1936, and lived in Yaffa until May 1948, when the war that established Israel compelled him to flee his homeland with his family to Lebanon and then Syria, after which he lived and worked in Damascus, Kuwait and finally, from 1960, Beirut. Kanafani was martyred on July 8th 1972, in Beirut along with his niece Lamees in a car bomb planted by Israeli agents.

Kanafani published eighteen books until his untimely death, along with hundreds of articles on culture, politics and the struggle of the Palestinian people. All of his works have been republished in numerous editions in Arabic after his assassination. His novels, short stories, plays and articles have been collected and published, the literary works of which have been translated into 20 languages. Some of Ghassan's work has been incorporated into school and university curricula; some of his plays have been made into theatrical productions and radio programs in Arabic and other languages; and two

of his novels have been adapted into cinematic features. His work, written during the period between 1956-1972, continues to enjoy increasing levels of interest to this day.

Translator's Foreword

This was a rather unorthodox piece to translate because the Arabic text is unlike the literary work for which the author is better known in the Anglosphere. It seems important to underline the fact that this work was clearly an extension of the author's primary concern of political struggle; and that producing it could not have been a leisurely affair. This was a study motivated not by professional ambition or scholarly pretension, but an urgent desire to understand how the author's enemies had been able to so thoroughly dominate the narrative and justify their cause. As such, the text is rough at times and required a significant amount of editing to clarify the argument, avoid ambiguities, determine the appropriate length of a given paragraph and so on.

This process of refining the text while remaining faithful to it required a deep level of engagement, which was facilitated by Louis Allday's crucial and generous assistance. The experience of reading the Arabic text for the first time approximates that of reading a classical work of drama, where the *dramatis personae* remain non-descript until one becomes well-acquainted with the entire volume. In a similar sense, *On Zionist Literature* contains a number of passages, references, quotations and paraphrases that will not be clear at first glance. It would be unreasonable to expect the English reader to engage with

the text so intimately to fully comprehend it because its objective was not intended to be literary, *per se*.

To that end, I have employed a number of methods to render the English text in an accessible manner without undermining its integrity. One is elementary for any translator: to read the text several times and translate it as faithfully as possible. Then, Louis and I reviewed as many of the referenced sources as possible. After having followed the author's footsteps in researching the book and drafting it, I finally felt confident enough to make the following interjections:

1. I have added transitional words and expressions that either improve the flow of a given paragraph – because it may, for instance, contain a sequence of declarative statements that do not directly gesture toward one another – or as signposts for the causal structure of the argument.
2. I have reconsidered the author's paragraph breaks to guide the reader's attention to the logic of the argument when the original text seemed to lack such structure.
3. I have inserted endnotes that may clarify a given point, correct an error on the author's part or provide relevant background information on a given historical figure or event.
4. To enrich the texture of the translation, Louis and I have replaced the quotations that appear in the Arabic text – much of which the author had translated from English-language source materials – with the original passages. The idea is to avoid translating the

author's translation wherever possible, which may risk losing some of the nuances of the cited text. Such a practice also puts the reader in direct contact with the materials with which the author was conversing, which in turn may elicit a reaction from the reader in parallel to the author's. In a similar vein, I have indicated the instances in which the original quotations and the author's translation of them do not appear to be identical. The differences are rarely more than subtle.

5. I have shared some of the discoveries that Louis and I have made over the course of our research. It is hoped that they will facilitate the reader's comprehension of the message of the book.

I will close by pointing out that our research has not been comprehensive because we were not able to locate all of the author's sources. The process of replacing his Arabic translation with the original source material is uneven, as a result. Last but not least, I thank Hamad al-Rayes for proofreading the translated text, Wafa Hafid for her valuable insights into the original, and Louis for commissioning and facilitating this work.

- Mahmoud Najib

Introduction to the English Translation

Ghassan Kanafani doesn't lend himself to easy categorization. He is well-known to Palestinians, and to those interested in Palestine, but not as a singular figure. He was a Marxist revolutionary, a party spokesperson, a novelist, a political theorist, a schoolteacher, an artist, a newspaper editor, and a committed internationalist. These disparities of perception befit Kanafani's heterogeneous life, and he was accomplished in each of these roles. Kanafani is less known for another vocation at which he also excelled: literary criticism.

Throughout his short life Kanafani reviewed and analyzed creative writing in multiple genres, having been a student of literature at the University of Damascus where he met his mentor George Habash, founder of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), a Marxist-Leninist organization that was of significant size and influence in the 1960s and 1970s. In addition to *On Zionist Literature*, Kanafani authored two books critiquing Palestinian literature. Unlike his novels and short stories, these works have not been translated into English.

As *On Zionist Literature* illustrates, Kanafani was a searing and incisive critic, at once generous in his understanding of emotion and form and unsparing in his assessment of politics and myth. We cannot adequately comprehend his literary criticism without also delving into the political

sensibility he brought to the enterprise; it helps, as well, to examine the strictures of the enterprise itself. Literary criticism is not supposed to be “political.” This may sound absurd on its face – the sort of thing no serious reader of literature has ever considered possible – but the stricture isn’t an axiom so much as a kind of ideological coding. In particular, it functions to reinforce intellectual and economic orthodoxy. By consigning “political” criticism to a lesser category of cultural labor, standard-bearers of academe and the arts inhibit revolutionary thought within institutional settings. Anything that threatens centers of power earns the label of “political,” perforce a negative evaluation, and the disrepute that comes along with it. Power therefore comes to embody the apolitical. This sort of environment is unwelcoming of critics such as Kanafani.

Running afoul of bourgeois customs was no issue to Kanafani however, who wanted his critical approach to inform Palestine’s struggle for national liberation. His approach is less an arbitrary choice than a result of his thesis that Zionist literature is itself deeply political (in the crude sense of the term). Kanafani identifies a “colossal scheme” among Zionist leaders to conscript a wide range of artistic work into service of their colonial project. He marshals a long list of examples to make his case: Yael Dayan’s *Envy the Frightened*, Ahad Ha’am’s essays on Zionism and Judaism, Leon Uris’s *Exodus*, and a variety of other creative and historical material.

Nor is his critique limited to the texts themselves. Kanafani examines the publishing industry and associated cultural institutions as sites of imperial politics. The Nobel Prize committee comes in for an especially harsh

evaluation: “Why did the Nobel Prize committee reward a reactionary and chauvinistic author [Shmuel Yosef Agnon] in 1966, whose writings lack all of the requisite literary standards for such an award?” For Kanafani, the Western literary scene is not an open forum based on meritocracy, but a tightly controlled marketplace meant to satisfy the predilections of a voracious ruling class. Many would-be authors with revolutionary devotions have tried to navigate the industry and reached a similar conclusion.

Kanafani makes it clear that Zionism isn’t coterminous with either Judaism or Jewish people. He identifies ruptures in the movement’s self-definition and its popular definition owing to its provenance in Western imperialism. He unambiguously implicates Jews in Palestinian suffering and considers it an abrogation of intellectual honesty to exculpate Jews qua Jews of Palestinian dispossession, but shows that mainstream notions of Jewish peoplehood are refracted through systematic normalization of Zionism, which brands itself as a natural occurrence. While Zionism does not in fact emerge from scriptural tradition or cultural practice, it insists on its own supremacy as the primary model and final arbiter of Jewish peoplehood. This effort was not the sole domain of Jewish people. The imperial powers and philosemitic luminaries played an important role. Kanafani does not treat Zionism as a natural response to European antisemitism, instead exploring intracommunal dynamics around class and religious devotion. His summary of Jewish integration into modern Europe is perhaps the most controvertible part of the book, but his key point warrants serious consideration as it inverts the common narrative of Zionism as an existential necessity. For Kanafani, Zionism was

ultimately a choice borne of internalized racism and a supremacist inclination to seek power in the service of imperial domination and accumulation at the expense of rank-and-file Jews. He argues,

While opportunities for social integration and assimilation were increasing, we can nevertheless note a rising chauvinistic current among socio-economically privileged Jewish circles. The constant stream of Zionist literature that began to appear by the middle of the century finally broke into the mainstream by the century's end, leading up to the consolidation of political Zionism at the First Zionist Congress in Basel in 1897.

Well-read in Jewish literature beyond what he conceptualizes as the Zionist variety (a category that in any case includes Christian authors), Kanafani evinces an impressive understanding of liturgical traditions, secular narratives, and linguistic developments. Scholars of Judaism will no doubt find great provocation in Kanafani's sweeping historical summaries, but his sharp acumen, from the perspective of the colonized party, is the book's most compelling quality. We would do well to focus on his argument that Zionism is neither a cultural inclination or a political necessity. It is a material phenomenon rooted in chauvinistic ideas of culture and politics that tried to squash revolutionary and communist Jewish politics in Europe. Kanafani's historical overview illustrates the movement's deep-seated contradictions.

To understand Zionist literature, then, the critic must analyze the painstaking and often contradictory process of forging a notion of singular nationhood from dispa-

rate (and in some cases ill-fitting) communities. This is so because Zionism's crude political goals could not achieve dominion of the Western imagination without the dexterity of literature and other creative media.

Rewriting and revision were crucial features of the strategy for the Zionist-imperialist domination of Palestine. Movement leaders mined the past in order to create a viable pretext for settling the Levant. By and large they turned to the bible for source material, a practice that has inspired a large body of scholarship, but Kanafani shows that much of the decisive labor of invention occurred through cultural artifacts. Those artifacts – creative writing, primarily – either directly informed the Zionist project or were conscripted into the service of Zionism by ideologues and various bourgeois tastemakers. Authors mobilized for the cause included well-known Victorian figures such as Benjamin Disraeli and George Eliot. One of many astounding extracts that Kanafani highlights as he analyses the early development of Zionist tropes is the moment a character in Eliot's novel *Daniel Deronda* calls explicitly for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine more than seventy years before such a thing became a reality:

the world will gain as Israel gains. For there will be a community in the van of the East which carries the culture and the sympathies of every great nation in its bosom: there will be a land set for a halting-place of enmities, a neutral ground for the East as Belgium is for the West.

In some ways, Kanafani's approach prefigures the emergence of cultural studies in the following decade,

particularly its British variant. Influenced by Marxist scholars such as Stuart Hall and Raymond Williams, critics felt less constrained by pretensions of objectivity and began exploring literature as an ideological commodity, particularly in terms of its uses in propaganda campaigns against communism. Anyone who believes in a neutral cultural marketplace will likely find trouble with *On Zionist Literature*, which treats that kind of attitude as silly and unserious. The cultural marketplace is a site of accumulation like any other capitalist industry, only its products enter the economy in states of abstraction. That marketplace is the aesthetic foundation of hegemony, the raw material of political common sense.

On this basis, Kanafani suggests that adherence to Zionism precludes apprehension of Zionist literature. Indeed, to even recognize the category is a sort of intellectual reconditioning. The great irony of Zionist literature is that it becomes legible only through rejection of Zionism. Otherwise that literature presents as a natural occurrence in the modern world. Zionist literature has to appear purposeless in order to accomplish its purpose. Such is the ideological coding Kanafani spends so much time uncovering. The literature is both precursor and postscript to the colonial project. The two phenomena are mutually constitutive. You have to understand both in order to understand either.

Where might this approach lead us in terms of intellectual and political labor? This question will probably remain in the reader's mind throughout the book. Kanafani leaves us no choice but to contemplate questions of liberation. The urgency and occasional hyperbole of his tone don't allow for apathy or disinterest. And his

methodology isn't conducive to any kind of detachment, an attitude Kanafani would have found alien considering the revolutionary mood among Palestinians and Arabs more generally in the recent aftermath of the 1967 War. Palestinians were sorting the pain of defeat into new and more urgent forms of resistance – the PFLP was only months away from its formal establishment – and, aged only 31, Kanafani was filled with a vigor that practically jumps off the page. His is an analysis of political material but also a material analysis of politics. *On Zionist Literature* resonates with the contemporary reader, within and beyond Palestine, but it's also a document of its time, intent on subverting the popular mythology of a plucky, besieged Israel surrounded by aggressive Arab hordes. Yet because many of the conditions Kanafani addressed continue to exist, and in many cases have gotten worse, it does no good to view this book as a mere artifact. While it is of its time, specific to the political and economic circumstances of Kanafani's era, it speaks to ongoing forms of colonial violence and dispossession central to the Palestinian experience in the present moment. Then as now, that experience has a universal dimension. Kanafani's fierce counterpoint to Zionist literature aims to show that Palestinian revolutionary sentiment and national liberation are indispensable to the creation of a better world. He pursues this aim in a moment of Zionist triumphalism, when even the left in the Global North had largely swallowed Israel's self-victimizing narrative. Kanafani and the Palestinian cause were not without allies in the Global South, however, on the contrary. In the same year that *On Zionist Literature* was written and released, Beirut – the city where Kanafani had lived since

1960 – hosted the Third Afro-Asian Writers' Conference. Kanafani almost certainly attended this event¹ that upon its conclusion declared a resolution on Palestine that appealed directly to all Afro-Asian and progressive writers around the world to “stand in the face of the wide cultural conspiracy launched by the Zionist movement”. A separate resolution that stressed the need to counter imperialist and neo-colonialist infiltration in the cultural field more broadly listed the Zionist movement – “an imperialist tool used to serve the imperialists aggressive interests” – as a prominent example of this trend.²

Therefore, it's crucial to figure out how to make sense of Kanafani in English – and in the Western milieu summoned by this translation. One of the challenges of consuming translated material is constant awareness that the text was composed in a different language and then trying to imagine its particular resonance in the original. Even the most faithful translation will have difficulty conveying the precise context of certain words and phrases. This issue is doubly complicated in the case of Palestinian writing in Arabic, which rendered into English enters a linguistic and geopolitical framework constitutionally hostile to Palestine.

This isn't to say that *On Zionist Literature* should not have been translated. To the contrary, translation is a tremendous benefit to people unable to read the book in its original language. Broadening Kanafani's audience also broadens access to the sensibilities of Palestine's national struggle, which can get watered down among diasporic communities. Readers, then, should bear in mind that Kanafani spoke a revolutionary language completely legible to Palestinian society – unapologetic

in its dignity; assuming a certain level of comprehension and knowledge; and resonant in the Indigenous tongue. He wasn't concerned with assuaging liberal sensitivities in the United States (or in Palestine, for that matter). His audience consisted of Palestinians and comrades to the Palestinian cause. This translation allows a new generation to struggle for that cause, as well.

This point about Kanafani's audience is not minor. He spends a lot of time on Zionism, but a discerning reader will understand that the book is actually about Palestine and Palestinians. Kanafani knew that it is impossible to write about Israel without also writing about its native population, even when that population goes unmentioned. In such times that the Zionist author does acknowledge the native population, "they chose to take a position of almost declaring that the Arabs are a people that do not deserve to live in the first place." In both instances, the Palestinian ends up dehumanized.

Before ushering you to the main event, it seems useful to say a few words about the author. Since his murder by Israel in 1972, at age 36, Kanafani has endured as an icon but in this role his legacy can become rather complicated. Photographs and video clips of Kanafani circulate frequently on social media. Evidently, he is very much alive in Palestine's cultural and political imagination, yet at times Kanafani exists in the abstract, displaced from the material circumstances that defined his work and the revolutionary principles that characterized his ideology. The PFLP meanwhile is less prominent than during its heyday of the 1960s and 1970s, but it persists, on the ground and in analysis of Palestine's national question. While plane hijackings and guerilla warfare are the PFLP's

most visible legacy, the group's ideas have also been hugely influential. Many of those ideas are evident in the book that follows: the imperialist character of Zionism, the importance of narrative in authorizing state violence, the primacy of class in both Zionist colonization and Palestinian resistance.

Kanafani is known differently by Israelis (and, to the degree that they're familiar with him, by Europeans and North Americans). Among the Zionist professional and political classes, he wasn't merely an enemy, but each of the many pejoratives they apply to victims of Zionism: extremist, antisemite, barbarian, terrorist. Although a devoted Marxist, Kanafani was no hero to the Israeli working class, who despised him with equal passion. For his part, Kanafani viewed the Israeli working class as an antagonistic formation given the enormity of the Nakba and the structural inequality of Israel's legal system. Working class solidarity was viable only in conjunction with decolonization and the end of imperial domination.

To this day, Israelis don't really know Kanafani. They know his name. They know his actions. They know his reputation. But they cannot properly comprehend him as an intellectual and activist, and especially not as a human being with the gravitas to inspire his people. Israelis have reduced him to a boogeyman haunting their fantasies of peace. Kanafani knew Israelis extremely well, however. In situations of disparate power, formal knowledge belongs to the oppressor, with its highbrow bureaucrats and bourgeois institutions, but the oppressed possess something more powerful and intuitive: a profound need to free themselves of injustice and subjection. The oppressed, by necessity, have intimate knowledge of the oppressor.

This book serves as an excellent example of that maxim.

From its inception, the PFLP was devoted to ideas and has a vibrant archive of revolutionary theory, but it also maintains an active military presence among the resistance to this day, very much in the tradition of Frantz Fanon and Amílcar Cabral:³ deploying violence not only as a means of territorial and political sovereignty, but as a psychological prelude to liberation. In this way, Kanafani's political and literary work are inseparable. It wouldn't be inaccurate to say that his assessment of Zionist literature is at base an affirmation of Palestine's future. In seeking to understand Kanafani, we do well to abandon discrete ontological and intellectual categories altogether, or at least to think of them as dynamic and interactive. *On Zionist Literature* is "political" literary criticism, indeed, especially in the sense that it refuses to separate culture from imperialism.

Kanafani's political writings, like the broader Palestinian intellectual tradition, are underknown in the Anglophone world despite being so influential in Arabic. The translation of *On Zionist Literature* that follows is an effort to rectify this deficiency. As readers, we can learn a great deal about Zionism and Palestinian resistance from Kanafani's incredible knowledge and experience. We can also follow the book's example and move our comprehension of political material in the internet age from the realm of myth into the more satisfying terrain of material politics.

- Steven Salaita

Preface to the First Edition, 1967

As far as I know, this is the first study by an Arab in Arabic on Zionist literature and its methods and hostile political objectives. The Palestine Research Center of the Palestinian Liberation Organization was motivated to commission Ghassan Kanafani to conduct this study (though the idea was his) in appreciation of this significant dimension of Zionist production, which has been neglected by Arab researchers who have restricted their interests to the politics and practices of Zionism. There is a strong connection between the politics and literature in the Zionist movement, as this book shows.

Zionist literature subordinated itself to politics. In this subordination, which takes the ugliest of forms, literature dedicated itself to serving hostile political objectives through the expropriation of land, possessions, rights and freedom of an innocent people through the most grotesque methods including deception, obscurantism and the reversal of the facts. This is how Zionist literature gained its worldwide audience and its widespread acclaim. Indeed, there is hardly a single body of political literature that has enjoyed as much commercial and moral promotion outside of its country of origin. But the reasons for such propaganda and its impact lie beyond the scope of this book, and must be the subject of another study by one of the distinguished researchers at the center who

specialize in Zionist media.

Of the many angles that the literature in question may be studied, the author of *On Zionist Literature* chose to trace its history across centuries prior to the appearance of the contemporary Zionist cause, and to bring its prominent characteristics to light. As such, the author left the literature's secondary characteristics, along with its minor nuances, to be dealt with in another study (which we hope will be completed before long), the comprehension of which will have been facilitated by this first, main and more general study.

- Anis Sayegh, General Director of the Palestine Research Center

Preface to the Current Edition, 2022

The first time I met any Palestinian person was during a student conference in Yugoslavia in 1960. I knew nothing then about what had happened to Palestine and the Palestinian people. When the Palestinian representatives told me, I became very angry – why did I and other Danes not know? I grew up in an intellectual working-class family in Copenhagen and my father was active in the Danish resistance against the Nazi occupation of Denmark. But even the leftwing press didn't write about what happened when the state of Israel was established in May 1948 and more than 800,000 Palestinians were driven from their homeland by Zionist military forces. It seemed to me that the Zionist influence on European media was almost total.

In September 1961, I went on a study trip to Syria and Lebanon to visit some of the students from that conference in Yugoslavia, and to learn more about the destiny of the Palestinian people, the refugees and their cause. It became a very important chance for me to get to know some of the truth. After two weeks in Damascus, I continued my journey to Beirut and a good friend, Ahmed Khalifeh, gave me an envelope addressed to his friend, the Palestinian journalist Ghassan Kanafani, then one of

the editors of the Arabic weekly *al-Hurriya* ('Freedom'). The paper represented the progressive Arab Nationalist Movement (ANM) and Ghassan edited its Palestinian affairs.

That is how I was introduced to Ghassan Kanafani. He was writing an editorial for the paper and asked me in the meantime to have a look at a book in English about Palestine. After a while we started to talk together about his homeland – Palestine. When I asked him to let me visit some refugee camps, Ghassan fell silent. "Do you think our Palestinian people are animals in a zoo!", he angrily told me after a moment, and then he began to explain – to tell me about his people and his country – how on November 29th 1947, the United Nations (contrary to its own charter four) had partitioned Palestine against the will of its Arab population (which then made up two-thirds of the total population and owned more than 90% of the land); how in the final voting only one Asian country (the Philippines) and two African countries (Liberia and South Africa) had voted for partition, and of those the former two had been intensively pressured by the United States. Thus the colonialist Zionist State of Israel was forcibly implanted on the threshold of the emerging Third World without obtaining the voluntary recognition of a single Arab, African or Asian state – apart from Apartheid South Africa.

And so Ghassan proceeded to tell me about his beloved Palestine and how he was forced to leave it in 1948 together with his parents, five brothers and sisters, and other family members. He was born in Acre on April 9th 1936 at the beginning of the Palestinian Arab revolt against the Zionist forces and the British Mandatory Au-

thority. During the revolt the Palestinian Arabs staged a general strike – maybe the longest in history – that lasted half a year. By 1939, when the revolt was put down, 5,032 Arabs had been killed and 14,760 wounded, while 110 were hanged by the British authorities. Ghassan told me about Israeli terrorism – how they forced his people to leave. His hometown, Acre had been allotted, according to the United Nations' partition plan, to the Arabs. But like many other Arab cities and villages it was conquered by the Zionist forces and its inhabitants were driven out by physical or psychological force. The Arabs of Palestine were at that time panic-stricken after the massacre of the peaceful and unarmed village, Deir Yassin on 9th April 1948. In an eyewitness report the Red Cross representative, Jacques de Reynier, related how 254 women, children and old men were deliberately and cold-bloodedly butchered and many of their bodies thrown down a well by the Zionist terrorist groups – the Irgun and the Stern Gang. Ghassan's family left Acre shortly before May 15th 1948; by that date 800,000 Arabs had fled the Zionist terror. And the Arabs continued to flee, the women and children first of all – the men stayed to defend the towns and villages. Soon, Jaffa, Lydda, Haifa etc., were “cleaned” of their Arab population (the word is Yigael Allon's, the Palmach commander responsible for these atrocities).

When Ghassan's family was expelled from Palestine they left empty-handed. His father chose to stay in a small Lebanese village, Ghazieh, near the border. Later on, the whole family moved to a mountain village in Syria. Life there was very hard. Ghassan's father was a lawyer and later had a chance to move to Damascus with the family, and Ghassan and his eldest brother began to work

in order to earn a little to support their family of eight and the eight other relatives who were living with them. After a while they both continued their studies at night school, working during the day. At that time, Ghassan was thirteen years old.

After passing his *Brevet* qualification at sixteen, Ghassan began to teach at an UNRWA school (United Nations Relief and Works Agency, the UN's agency for Palestinian refugees). Before joining the school, Ghassan had been working as an apprentice at a printing press in Damascus, and in 1955 he was asked by the ANM to work partly as an editor for their paper *al-Rai* and partly in the printing of it. He became a member of the ANM that same year. The following year he joined his sister Fayzeh and brother Ghazi in Kuwait. The three of them sent most of their salaries back to the family in Damascus. His father now had a monthly income with which to support the rest of the family; meanwhile he obtained permission to practice as an advocate in Damascus, where most of his clients were Palestinians and very poor.

During the following six years in Kuwait, Ghassan continued his political work. He was teaching art and sport, and in fact those years proved to be a very important part of his life. All his spare time was spent painting, writing and reading – mainly political works: Marx, Engels, Lenin and others. In 1960, Dr. George Habash convinced Ghassan to leave Kuwait for Beirut in order to work on *al-Hurriyah*.

From the first day I met Ghassan I felt I was confronted with an exceptional human being. Our relationship developed through the Palestinian cause into a personal relationship. In spite of an insecure situation – as a Pal-

estinian, Ghassan had neither passport nor work permit, he had no money, and worst of all he suffered from an incurable illness, diabetes – we soon realized that only death would be able to separate us.

I had graduated as a teacher in Early Childhood Education from the teacher training college in Copenhagen in 1956, so I was able to take up a job in an Arabic/English kindergarten in Beirut when I decided to postpone my return to Denmark. Two months after my arrival in Lebanon we got married – neither of us ever regretted it. Like most other Palestinians we had our difficulties, economically and otherwise. In January 1962, when the political situation was particularly unstable, Ghassan had to remain hidden at home for more than a month because of his lack of official papers. During this period, he wrote the novel *Men in the Sun*, which later became known throughout the Arab world, and he dedicated it to me.

Ghassan translated all his novels and stories for me while writing them, and I became acquainted with his political writing as well. His compulsion to write was unlimited – it was as if he contained a fountainhead of words and ideas from which he wanted to fill page after page about Palestine, his country, and his people. He was always busy, working as if death was just around the corner. Ghassan was a painter and designer as well. One of his paintings from that period depicts man crucified in time...

I was greatly influenced by Ghassan's ideas, but he never tried to impose them on me. The same went for our foreign friends, among them several journalists who visited us at home and discovered the Palestinian cause through him. Many of them later took up the problem in

their own countries. My relationship with Ghassan's family became very close; from the beginning they welcomed me with all their hospitality and warmth and I came to love them dearly. Our married life was based on trust, respect, and love, and so it was always significant, beautiful and strong. Our first child, a boy, was born August 24th 1962. Fayez – it means Victor – was named after his grandfather.

Ghassan was now busier than ever and completely involved in his work. He was by this time established as a writer and journalist, and in 1963 he was offered the post of editor-in-chief of a new daily, *al-Muharrir*, which represented the Nasserite and progressive forces. The paper soon became the second daily in Lebanon and was also widely distributed to other Arab countries. He worked for five years with *al-Muharrir*, at the same time publishing the weekly supplement *Falastin*, which represented the Palestinian branch of the ANM and dealt with Palestinian affairs specifically.

During 1963-1964, the ANM was on the way to scientific socialism and in 1964 it decided to prepare for armed struggle in Palestine. In 1965, Ghassan was officially invited to China and India, where he met the Chinese Foreign Minister, Cheng Lee, the Indian Prime Minister, Shastri, and other political leaders in those two countries. He discussed the Palestinian problem with them and was no doubt greatly influenced by this trip. After his second trip to China – where he participated in the Afro-Asian Writers' Conference – four-year-old Fayez gained a beautiful baby sister. We called her Laila, after the heroine in one of the most famous stories of Arab folklore; Laila is also a Scandinavian name, common among the Sámi

people who live on the lands north of the Arctic Circle.

Ghassan adored his children and often wrote about them. Even though his time with us was limited, he used to play with them frequently and would teach them many things. Fayez and Laila loved to work with him in our small garden. He seldom lost his temper and never hit them. His enjoyment of their company extended to include their friends – he would often cart them all off to the cinema or join in their games at home.

We both enjoyed seeing our family and friends in our home or visiting them in theirs. We would all enjoy nice food, and some of us a good drink, and tell jokes about life and the general situation, even when things were very bad. In general, Arabs love to tell jokes even during very difficult times – joking and laughing becomes a kind of natural therapy or medicine to keep us going. Ghassan himself had a wonderful sense of humor and sarcasm, which often appeared in his discussions with journalists. Ghassan and I also loved singing and dancing and sometimes we would go out with a group of good friends for dinner and dance.

The summer of 1964 I traveled back to Copenhagen for the first time since I left my family in 1961. Ghassan and Fayez joined me and I introduced them to our family and friends. We spent a wonderful time together. My parents and two brothers even arranged a second wedding party for us and invited our Danish extended family and many friends. It became a very nice evening with speeches, songs and dances. Ghassan even taught the guests the Palestinian/Lebanese folkdance, the *Dabke*, and he gave a very nice speech of thanks to my family.

During the following weeks, Ghassan met with

politicians, journalists, artists, school teachers and representatives of labor unions and other persons, mainly from the left-wing parties and those who had been active in the Danish resistance movement's struggle against the German occupation of Denmark during the Second World War. He discussed with them the problems of the Palestinian people from the time of the British Mandate in Palestine to the expulsion of the majority of the Palestinians from their homeland by terrorist military forces before and after the Zionist state of Israel was established in Palestine in May 1948. He also discussed with them the role of the Danish media in informing the population of Denmark about the history of Palestine and the rights of the Palestinian people to return to their homeland, and to combat the almost total domination of the Zionist propaganda on the media. These meetings were very important and some of the participants later visited Lebanon and Palestine and kept in contact with Ghassan.

Ghassan had been collecting books for his study, *On Zionist Literature*, over the previous year, but it was difficult to access such material in Lebanon as there was a general boycott there and in other Arab countries on all items related to Israel – including books, newspapers and magazines. He therefore asked foreign friends to bring such material to him when they visited Lebanon. After our trip to Denmark, he was able to ask some Danish friends to help in providing him with the material he needed for his research.

In addition to all his other work and responsibilities as editor-in-chief of *al-Muharrir* and *Falastin* until late 1967, then with *al-Anwar Daily* until 1969 when he estab-

lished the political weekly *al-Hadaf* – Ghassan wrote and published several novels and short story collections and even a detective story. He also wrote and published plays and satirical articles and he designed several posters and illustrations for *al-Hadaf*. Ghassan mostly worked on his literary writing at home after returning from his journalistic work in the evenings or on weekends. He enjoyed creating and to express himself in drawing and paintings and working in clay, which he often did at home when he found the time. Fayez and Laila were willing helpers and happy to watch their father painting and drawing and they would do their own creative work alongside him.

After his assassination on July 8th 1972, a journalist friend wrote in *The Daily Star* newspaper in Beirut: “Ghassan was the commando who never fired a gun. His weapon was a ballpoint pen and his arena newspaper pages; and he hurt the enemy more than a column of commandos.”

- Anni Kanafani

On Zionist Literature

Introduction

The Zionist movement used the weapon of literature in a manner only matched by its use of politics. Zionist literature was a crucial and indivisible part of the movement, which political Zionism¹ employed extensively not only for its propaganda efforts but for its political and military campaigns as well.

It would not be an exaggeration to assert that literary Zionism preceded its political counterpart. As soon as the literary movement gave rise to political Zionism, the latter enlisted it to play its designated role in its colossal scheme. And though political Zionism was the product of chauvinism and racism, it was literary Zionism that first exhibited these characteristics. Indeed, this chauvinistic and racist current, along with the politicization of Judaism, were first manifest in literature, as we will see.

The increasing racist pressures of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries looked to literary Zionism as the handbook for a chauvinistic Jewish current that was soon to crystallize into a political form. "Zionist literature"² in this study refers to all that has been written to serve the movement for the Jewish colonization of Palestine either directly or otherwise. As such, the term refers to the work of Zionist sympathizers, be they Jewish or non-Jewish.

Naturally, this means that "Zionist literature," in the sense used here, includes that which was written in

non-Hebrew languages by non-Jews – and so includes any text that operated under the banner of political Zionism and served its ends. It also means that we will not commit to the history of Zionism's official establishment at the end of the nineteenth century as this study's point of departure, but will instead explore the roots of Zionism in literature by tracing them back to their earliest possible point.

This study will therefore regard the establishment of political Zionism as a moment of consolidation in the movement's actual history, which was a product of its early literary precursors. Zionist literature became a critical part of the political movement thereafter as it worked deliberately along its directives and predetermined objectives. We will observe Zionist literature's disciplined march to the rhythm of the political movement as it crescendos from novel to novel, and from story to story, until a clear and uniform position finally renders this literature more of a propagandistic symphony than a creative artistic endeavor.

Of course, this study does not claim that it will cover all that could possibly be covered from the many authors, novels and stories that embodied literary Zionism. Such a task would exceed the capacity of a single volume and author. The topic is, in any case, a peculiar one, due to the nature of Jewish history and diaspora. This literature spans an untold number of writings in an uncountable number of languages across long and indeterminate periods of time. To deal with this complexity, this study selected the most prominent works of literary Zionism – or what may be regarded as emblematic of its essence. It also attempted to cover the geographical areas that are

most pertinent to the Zionist cause, as well as those of the Arabs, while its timeframe extends to the periods that most influenced these issues. The main purpose of this inquiry is to shed new light on an essential but yet to be recognized aspect of the infernal machinations of the Zionist movement.

The experience of Zionist literature may be historically unprecedented in its instrumentalization of art in all its forms, through which it carried out an extensive process of disinformation which eventually produced exceedingly dangerous results – chief among which is the wholesale indoctrination of humanity through what are ostensibly tools of enlightenment and truth. Israel's media campaign is therefore not a mere passing raid; this is conquest upon well-trodden terrain, striking deep into the consciousness of an audience that has long been deceived. To comprehend this process, we must acknowledge the role that Zionist literature has surreptitiously played to serve political Zionism's illegitimate ambitions.

Many questions come to mind, and answering them remains a pressing need:

- What did a book like *Daniel Deronda* accomplish to prompt Israel to name one of Tel Aviv's most important roads after its author within days of establishing the state in 1948?
- What did *The Wondrous Tale of Alroy* accomplish to later become Nazism's covert mentor?³
- How, why and when did the tale of the Wandering Jew change from a symbol of persecution to that of racial supremacy?

- What was the function of Shakespeare's Shylock in the history of literary Zionism?
- What was the basis upon which a novel like *Exodus* became nearly the singular source for all kinds of Western readers to understand the events of the Middle East?⁴
- How did post-1948 Zionist novels falsify history, erase the facts and steer their Western audience to support an unjust cause?
- Why did the Nobel Prize committee award a reactionary and chauvinistic author in 1966, whose writings lack all of the requisite literary standards?
- Is it a coincidence that the phrases employed in Western political commentary resemble, almost verbatim, those of Zionist novels?
- Was the Western press's reaction to the Israeli aggression of 1967⁵ a merely superficial phenomenon? Or was it a logical outcome of a longstanding exercise in cultural disinformation via the Zionist literary and artistic apparatus, which laid the groundwork for such coverage?
- Why does the Western reader accept the same racist and fascist positions in Zionist novels that are deemed to be contemptible when taken by non-Jews?

Such questions can only be answered by tracing the development of literary Zionism of past and present across various locales. This is an attempt to expose a most grotesque and wide-ranging process of cultural disinfor-

mation, which serves illegitimate political and military ends, and has largely succeeded in justifying those ends to large numbers of people, having encompassed them under a virtually impenetrable shield.

This study does its utmost to avoid two pitfalls, which are necessarily present under the current conditions:

1. Avoid drawing a broad conclusion from a single source, regarding a partial position as evidence of an existing phenomenon, or to make much of what is cursory. The study therefore tries to find the common thread that runs across the largest possible number of available sources.
2. Avoid letting its involvement in the struggle cause it to neglect the requisite level of objectivity.

Naturally, being mindful of such pitfalls does not prove having avoided them altogether. This is only to indicate that such caution has accompanied the study's conduct.

Another point must be made. This study has cited many examples of Zionist literature's positions on a variety of topics of historical, political and ethical significance. These positions were not met with detailed refutations because their errors are regarded to be self-evident. This can be noted in how a given Zionist novel would claim that Israelis have treated the Arabs with unparalleled grace; that Arabs are a primitive, barbarous and immoral people; that the Crusades were directed against Jews, not Arabs; that Arabs possessed nothing in Palestine for at least five centuries; that the Israeli soldier is the most moral and militarily capable fighter in the entire world; that ordinary Arab citizens regard Jews to be a source of salvation; that, had it not been for their feudalists masters,

the Arabs would have cooperated with the Zionists... When the study references such texts, it does not concern itself with discussing or responding to such claims, per se. That task is left to be settled in scores of historical and political volumes, in addition to one's lived experience and the events on the ground.⁶

Indeed, such references do not appear here to be debated but to serve the exigencies of the research. All that this study hopes to achieve is to shed new light on that exacting principle: know your enemy.

1. Zionism Fights on the Linguistic Front

The role of the Hebrew language suddenly grew in importance during the period that preceded and followed the birth of political Zionism at the end of the nineteenth century. Hebrew broke out of its centuries-long condition of being a traditional language of religion and was compelled, through various means, to become a national language.

Within just a half a century or so, Hebrew was subjected to extraordinary pressures in order to elevate its status from a language of religious affairs to one that prompted an internationally respected institution, such as the one that oversees the Nobel Prize, to award its 1966 prize in literature to an Israeli author who “wrote in beautiful Hebrew.” The vehemence that political Zionism had displayed on this front can only be matched by its complementary struggle against social integration.¹

As the movement struggled to transform Judaism into a national bond, it was necessary for it to appeal to Hebrew because it represented the only possibility through which such a bond may be forged. Judaism had ceased to be a national bond for nearly two thousand years, and had since lacked all the requisites of national cohesion. Indeed, there had not been a common sense of geography, civilization, economy, culture or politics among the world’s Jews, and there certainly was not an ethnic

kinship either. Semitism itself was a negative identity, in that it was defined from without. Put differently, it was not the Jews who self-identified as Semites but rather how (especially European) antisemites defined Jews.

Thus, language became of utmost importance. Hebrew was subordinated to the movement's political ends and was made, through incremental and constant direction, into a justification for the movement's existence because it represented the tenuous link that connects the world's Jews. Because Hebrew actually reflected a religious bond and not a national one, Zionism regarded the task of changing that to be among its foremost priorities.

The initiative here belongs to Ahad Ha'am,² a pioneer of Zionism whose articles undermined the remnants of the movement for social integration among the Jews of Eastern Europe. He heavily employed the phrase "the last Jew and the first Hebrew," which later became a Zionist slogan in the cultural field especially.

The movement also waged a relentless campaign against Jews who remained attached to other languages, including Yiddish, which is spoken among the Jews of Eastern Europe and is a mixture of Hebrew, German and Slavic. This remained the case even though David Ben-Gurion³ once regarded Yiddish as "a vessel for the arts, which was produced by Eastern Jews and Germans, and is a language for religious, scientific and political studies in Russia, Poland, Lithuania and Latvia."⁴

Despite the role that Yiddish played in the daily lives of Eastern Jews, it became necessary for Zionism to put an end to its significance in order to make way for its political plans via the Hebrew language.⁵ We can trace this phenomenon through Ahad Ha'am's slogan of "the last

Jew and the first Hebrew” in his Hebrew writings, which Arthur Koestler repeated in his novel *Thieves in the Night* in the mid-1940s, which proved to be a clear precursor to the establishment of Israel. As the novel’s hero, Joseph, put it: “I became a Hebrew because I hated the Yid.”⁶

Yael Dayan⁷ repeated the same directive in *Envy the Frightened*, when the character Ivri says: “you are Israeli. I was only a Jew... I left my clothes behind and some of my family, and found a new God.”⁸ The truth is that Dayan seemed to suffer from the same dilemma, because she is Jewish and writes about Zionist issues in English – a fact that once prompted her to declare that Israelis consider her a “national disaster.”⁹ Finally, we find Israel to be overjoyed with Shmuel Yosef Agnon’s Nobel Prize in 1966. The truth is that he is not the best Israeli writer. He did, however, dedicate his talent to promote the adoption of Hebrew as a national language and heaped chauvinistic praise upon it – thereby imbuing his work with an unadulterated Zionist message.

It was ineluctable for Zionism, as a fabricated political movement, to weaponize language with such vehemence, an effort only matched by its hostility to social integration against which it presented itself as an alternative. Weaponizing language in this way sharpened the contradiction within the Zionist cause, which wants to amalgamate nationalism with religion into a single concept. The work of the Nobel Prize winner Agnon, for example, cannot be comprehended by an international audience because it features a complex *mélange* of religious rituals, on the one hand, and a political project on the other.

Historically, pre-Zionist Hebrew literature was confined almost exclusively to poetry, especially in the Psalms.

The language occupied a purely religious position; it was “the language of the Jewish spirit ... even during the times when Hebrew ceased to be a complete language.”¹⁰ During times when Hebrew was only the language of religion and prayer, and when Jews did not suffer from religious, political or racist persecution, they chose to use the languages of the societies in which they lived in their philosophical, intellectual and literary production. Such decisions indicate the natural status of the Hebrew language.

In the period between the ninth and twelfth centuries in al-Andalus, for instance, which Jewish historians themselves regard as “a golden era” under Arab rule, Yehuda Halevi and Solomon ibn Gabirol produced philosophical and intellectual works in Arabic, while, at the same time, composing religious poetry in Hebrew. A similar process occurred during other times of reprieve in the Netherlands, Germany, Italy and the rest of the Western countries,¹¹ where Hebrew poetry was similarly confined to prayers and other religious rituals. Some of Halevi’s poems are suitable for prayers, while others are not; but most are replete with religious sentiments.¹²

We take Yehuda Halevi as a case study in this regard because he lived during “the golden age” in al-Andalus, where he was far removed from the environment of fear and persecution that prevailed elsewhere. He was born in 1086 and lived in al-Andalus, after which he traveled to Palestine for religious reasons where he died in 1140. Halevi fully mastered the Arabic language alongside Hebrew, according to the Jewish German poet Heinrich Heine.¹³ Yet he used Hebrew in religious poetry only and did not use it in his intellectual work at all – much like his

fellow Jewish poet and intellectual Solomon ibn Gabirol, who died in 1070.

This reality shows that the connection between Jews and Hebrew had always been non-national in nature. The task of the Hebrew language was to “assist in the articulation of religious ideas and interpretation” since the dawn of Jewish history.¹⁴ Though the practice of writing in other languages was a natural custom, this of course does not mean that Jews were not proud of the language. They have always been so, but such pride was always associated with the language’s sacred function.¹⁵ This sort of pride is evident in Halevi’s decision to select Arabic – i.e., the language of the society in which he lived – to write his tome in defense of Judaism titled *al-Hijja wal Dalil fi Nuṣrat al-Dīn al-Dhalīl* (or: *The Book of Refutation and Proof on Behalf of the Misguided Religion*), which is known in Jewish circles as *Kuzari*.

Political Zionism, therefore, utilized this religious phenomenon for political ends that have nothing to do with the religion, singling out the land of Palestine from all the offers on the table at the time to establish a national homeland. Hebrew was the language of the Old Testament and represented the spiritual bridge to the promised land. Zionism exploited these facts for its political ends.

Suddenly the status of Hebrew underwent a complete transformation. The Zionist movement threw its entire weight behind the claim that there existed national connotations to Jewish pride “in the language of the sacred religion only.” Thus, dubious and illogical new positions arose from the politicization of the Hebrew language, which became “the chest key that contains the most

valuable of prizes”¹⁶ because “the Old Testament is humanity’s most effective medicine.”¹⁷ The lobbying and disinformation efforts pressed on, the revisionist account of which went on to claim that Hebrew did not only manage to survive for centuries because it was a language of rituals, but because it represented a state, of sorts.¹⁸

The situation continued to escalate at an alarming rate through the deliberate distortion of the facts. As part of the cultural movement that was fabricated to facilitate conquest, Menachem Ribalow added that “[Palestine] lived in the heart of the Jew through poetic imagery... this is what was present in the Psalms, and what became the Jew’s daily bread.”¹⁹ This hypothesis became an avenue for political Zionism’s falsifications, whereby a language of religious affairs was made to bear an even heavier burden beyond any logic. Suddenly, religious rituals themselves were turned into catalysts of a political cause. According to this narrative, Jews

have never ceased to believe, across the generations, that this language will be reborn... for them, Hebrew was not merely the language of the past, but of the future; the language of rebirth; the language that enables the Jewish people to remain as a single people.²⁰

Such political instrumentalization of a traditional religious matter (which never meant what Goldberg wanted it to mean) forgets that many Jews did not actually know Hebrew, and that they uttered Hebrew words during their prayers without knowing their meaning.²¹ This can be noted in how David Bakan, a Professor of Psychology at Missouri University, for instance, remembers his grandfather, Yitzchak Yosef Rosenstrauch, performing

his prayers in memorized Hebrew which he did not understand. This indicates the truth of the matter: that such rituals were not more than religious mysticism of a specific brand – and goes against the idea that Hebrew was preserved to “[enable] the Jewish people to remain as a single people.” Ben-Gurion himself confirms this when he says that Hebrew “was the language of non-speakers that lived in the hearts because it was the language of prayers, poetry and religious literature.”²²

It is doubtless, however, that such falsification represented more than mere instrumentalization of Hebrew for a new and urgent task. It also served to distort the representations of the Jewish character in the literature that was to follow. Turning Hebrew into a national language changed its literary content as well. This was reflected in Jewish literary characters, where a religious character of mystical lore and moral fortitude became a political one – despite being unable to rid himself of his antiquated mythological roots.

This change in the character of the Hebrew language distorted the relationship between Jewish and Hebrew heroes, according to the terminology of *Ahad Ha'am* and the inheritors of his slogan. The classical Jewish character had practically disappeared from Jewish literature during the long centuries that followed the collapse of the ancient Jewish statelet in Palestine until the birth of the Zionist movement. That hero was subsequently replaced by the “Hebrew character” once more, which appeals to the legends of the Old Testament – only this time, he is without a god, a predestined fate or spiritual objectives. In a ludicrously quixotic manner, the Jewish literary character now represents absolute power and purity.

Reuben Wallenrod explains that “the reason for the absence of heroism in Hebrew stories of the Diaspora is that the writers found no aim in sight for their characters. The old goals had crumbled away and there were no new ones to replace them.”²³ This is an analysis that wants to ultimately justify the Zionist message by deliberately distorting the facts. The Jewish hero was not actually absent during the period of wandering. Such a hero did exist, but it was articulated in religious terms because Hebrew literature was confined to religious purposes. What Zionism has done, in this context, is instrumentalize that character in the political arena by rendering that old mythology in a form that resembles a psychological complex rather than a real human being. Merging the religious with the political dimensions could not produce a better result than what can be found in *Exodus*, where the hero embodies absolute virtue physiologically, psychologically and politically – a little more than a joke, if critiqued from a purely technical point of view. Yet, Wallenrod carries on: “today, the fiction of Israel has given us heroes once more”²⁴ – that is, at the expense of the artistic value, sincerity and legitimacy of the work.

All of the above summarizes the details, which will be discussed in the coming pages, of Zionist literature’s positions on the land of Palestine, along with race and religion (which are often amalgamated into a single concept), and its opposition to social integration into other societies. These questions will test Zionist literature’s message, the results of which resemble a farce, as we will see. This is a literature that claims to be opposed to racist oppression while representing a contemporary example of yet another brand of it from the opposite direction.

Zionism deals with this contradiction in a fraudulent manner. On the one hand, it views the world's growing consciousness of human rights as the catalyst that "changed the religious character [of the Jews], which for many generations had manifested itself through prayer and pleading to metaphysical powers; [until Jewish identity] took a political and national character" instead.²⁵ But on the other hand, the world's growing consciousness is a force that actually pushes toward the social integration of its communities and not toward fabricating tenuous nationalisms. Indeed, never in the history of the world has religious tolerance ever turned a religion into a nationalism. The opposite is the case, because such tolerance allows religious minorities to attain citizenship rights in the nations in which they reside.

The truth is that the Jewish experience did not *change* on its own, nor did it change as a result of the world's increasing consciousness of its rights. Rather it was compelled to change, almost by force, which affected not only how Jews view other peoples, but also how other peoples view Judaism as a religion. Even before its official birth, the Zionist movement constantly resisted the calls for integration, as championed by some Jews during times of reprieve. This situation yielded grave consequences, which will be reflected in Zionist literary production, as we will see.

2. The Birth of Zionist Literature

Zionism – i.e., the Jewish political movement targeting Palestine – was not born at the conference in Basel on August 29th 1897.¹ This event was nothing more than a public crowning of a series of lobbying efforts, in which Zionist literature had played a fundamental role. While it is true that the end of the nineteenth century witnessed the official birth of political Zionism, its literary counterpart preceded that period. It was the latter that produced the material that ultimately comprised intellectual Zionism, as per the writings of Moses Hess, Leon Pinsker, Nahum Sokolow, Ahad Ha'am, Theodor Herzl and others.

A few initial observations are worth making. The pinnacle of Zionist literary production was reached at a time when Jews attained citizenship rights in their countries of residence. Crucially, this was also precisely the period during which the ideas that would later represent the bedrock of Zionism were developed. This seems like a strange development that contradicts the received wisdom, which holds that it was anti-Jewish oppression that drove Jews toward adopting a sense of superiority, whereby a political rediscovery of “the promised land” becomes a vehicle for self-reliance, salvation and reclamation of dignity. But studying Zionist literature, overall, shows that the complete opposite was true. Indeed, the

best (and most original) works of Jewish literary production originated – within the framework of the Jewish diaspora – during times of reprieve.

During periods when Jews enjoyed an almost complete sense of freedom, which extended for several centuries (i.e., 175-1038), the most significant Jewish names gained prominence in the intellectual and religious fields. This was the period when Jews achieved what they regard to be the completion of the field of theological codification that continues to feature in contemporary Jewish life. Yet, this was also a time when Jews completed the writing of the Talmud – a book containing bloody violence, hatred and extremism – and when the idea of “the return to the promised land” spread for the first time, if on religious grounds.

The Jews experienced their “golden age” under Arab rule in al-Andalus. During this time Yehuda Halevi produced his religious poetry, which Jews regard as among the finest in their literary history as well as his tome, which came to be regarded as a landmark religious work (i.e., *Kuzari*).² It was also during this era, under Arab rule in al-Andalus, Morocco and Egypt, that Jews attained their full rights. This was when Sa’adiah ben Yosef Gaon (892-1103) made his Talmudic and philosophical contribution and produced the first Arabic translation of the Old Testament in Egypt. It was when Isaac al-Fasi (1012-1103) wrote his philosophical work in Arabic and when Moses ben Maimon (known in the West as Maimonides), who is considered a prominent figure in Judaic history, produced his religious and philosophical works. One may also recount the number of prominent Jewish names that established the foundations of Judaic thought during

times of reprieve, such as Hasdai ibn Shaprut (961), Samuel ha-Nagid (Solomon ibn Gabirol's mentor) and others.

When the Islamic state was extended to the east during the middle of the seventh century, Islam acknowledged Judaism and granted the Jews all the rights they had enjoyed under the most tolerant Persian states.³ Jews in these places produced advanced religious, philosophical and literary studies at a time when their Western European counterparts experienced sheer intellectual impotence during the oppressive period of the Middle Ages. When a few names did become prominent during periods of oppression, their work did not represent more than extensions of what had already been produced during periods of reprieve and tolerance. The Jews of Spain and southern France, who experienced a period of oppression following the Arab retreat from al-Andalus, followed Maimonides's thought and extended it. The same dynamic can be observed in the period of oppression that followed Rashi's interpretation of the Talmud in the second half of the twelfth century, after which it remained a point of reference.⁴

Toward the end of the fifteenth century, the world's Jews could not have found a safer and more tolerant place than Constantinople. Before long, 30,000 Jews who had fled the oppression in Europe arrived there "after nearly a thousand years."⁵ The Jewish cultural center in Palestine was reinvigorated thanks to the tolerance of the rulers of Constantinople, through which those fleeing Eastern and Central Europe found their way to Safad, where they established a productive center for studies that produced the likes of Joseph Karo (1488) and Isaac Luria (1532).

During this period Poland also became a Jewish cul-

tural center, thanks to the improvement of the conditions of the Jewish population there. It supported the religious Jewish culture of Germany,⁶ where a wave of persecution was underway. But due to what is known as “the Cossack massacres,” Poland ceased to be such a center for Jews and was displaced by the Netherlands due to its tolerant environment. This, after all, was where Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677) produced his excellent works, along with Menasseh ben Israel (1604-1657) whose religious and literary work exhibited early signs of originality.

The eighteenth century was a special time of reprieve for the Jewish population of Germany, thanks to the development of the outlook of its Christian intellectuals, led by Christian Wolff, as well as the novelist and historian Jacques Bastani who wrote the famous play *Nathan the Wise*.⁷ The influence of these two personalities led to the improvement of the social and political conditions of the German Jewish community.⁸ Yet, this situation provoked a reaction against assimilation and social integration. This can be noted in how Moses Mendelssohn’s (1729-1786) translation of the Jewish Bible⁹ into German was received. The translation was intended as an effort to “help the Jewish community to assimilate into German society,” but it failed due to a ferocious campaign by racists who refused to be regarded as equal to other peoples.¹⁰ Under such pressure Mendelssohn’s translation of the Old Testament did not lead to the desired outcome, but drew new Jewish readers toward German literary circles instead of the dissemination of the Old Testament (in German) among Jews.¹¹ The subsequent chauvinism turned Mendelssohn into a champion of the very cause he sought to fight.¹²

On October 27th 1791, the French National Assembly granted unconditional rights to the Jewish citizens of France. The phenomenon spread to Western and Central Europe. But instead of nurturing the drive for social integration, the power represented by a class of Jews with special economic and financial privileges was, to a large extent, used to exert pressure in the opposite direction – that is, in the direction of racism and extremism. The empowerment of Jewish communities was confronted by that privileged class on flimsy religious and racist grounds.¹³ This led to a critical development in Jewish history: it split the spiritual and civil authorities in the Jewish communities into a religious order and another made up of a socio-economically privileged class, which advanced a Jewish supremacist position – often on religious grounds.

During this period, a reformist school was established in Germany as a result of the fierce battle between the two camps, in which old religious texts were revisited. The intellectual writings of Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808-1888) discussed modernizing Judaism through integration into European culture. But such calls were always confronted by an opposing camp that was represented, to some degree, by Abraham Geiger. It was also during this time that Israel Held Scheimer established the Orthodox Institute for Religious Studies in Berlin, before an antisemitic wave developed there toward the end of the nineteenth century.

The Jewish communities of Eastern Europe enjoyed a period of relative freedom between the years 1815 and 1855, which gave rise to what Jews call *Haskalah* (or enlightenment) and reinvigorated Hebrew literature in Po-

land and Russia. And in the second half of the nineteenth century the conditions of Jewish communities improved in England, leading to an increase in Jewish cultural production which took on a racist character at the hands of the socio-economically privileged Jewish class, as we will see.

The fact, then, is that oppression was not what gave rise to the Zionist movement; the opposite seems to be closer to the truth. Times of reprieve could have served as openings for integration, but such opportunities were spurned by a specific class of Jews on racist and chauvinistic grounds. It is striking how the roles of the oppressor and the oppressed were reversed, in these cases. The racist Jewish position was mostly represented by Jewish men who enjoyed special privileges at the expense of the oppressed Jewish minorities: "Jewish history proves that the creative periods of Jewish self-assertion were times free from persecution...Virtually all the great Jewish classics, the works which in their sum total represent the Jewish heritage, originated in times of Jewish prosperity and freedom from persecution and oppression."¹⁴ If Jewish heritage, or what Weiss-Rosmarin called "Jewish self-assertion," was established during times of reprieve, then calls for such conditions should have been the message of the Zionist movement. But the movement took the opposite position – for racist purposes – by claiming Jewish superiority and refusing to integrate, which in turn always contributed to undermining the prospects of co-existence. Consequently, these positions not only refute the recurring claim in Zionist literature that Israel was a part of the response to oppression, but also reveals the reason behind the bind in which the Zionist novelist con-

stantly finds himself: to feel a constant need to “justify Israel” – and to adopt racist positions toward that end.

Such racism has a long history. It represented a negative response to the Jewish question, which it never intended to resolve. The oppressed Jewish communities were confronted with two mutually exclusive possibilities: to either endure the pain of the struggle for equality and social integration, or to cling to claims of superiority and the myth of exceptionalism – with the latter being a mere inversion of the same racist ideology that persecuted the Jews.

Jewish history has witnessed appeals for integration, through its struggle for full civil rights, as much as it had appeals for racism behind the guise of the myth of “God’s chosen people.” But the Zionist movement managed to besiege and obliterate the proponents of integration thanks to its limitless resources, establishing in its place a *negative Judaism* at the heart of which lies a psychological complex which would be exploited to the furthest possible extent.

No one has the right to demand that Jews be martyrs of human stupidity. But the conditions of the modern age have widened the scope of human rights and enlightened the world’s collective consciousness. Had Zionism employed its effective methods and limitless resources in a positive manner, it would have achieved for the Jews a status similar to that which they enjoy in the United States, for example, the social integration into which Nahum Goldmann regarded to be a “Jewish obligation” in 1965.

Hebrew literature was, indeed, by and large a religious literature. Religious sentiments, as they appeared in an-

cient texts, may seem to be extremist and chauvinistic in certain contexts. This may not seem reprehensible, if historicized. What is truly reprehensible, however, is the instrumentalization of a bygone era's claims of exceptionalism – which do not fundamentally carry a univocal meaning – to serve a political Zionist objective, and to meticulously search for whatever seems to be conducive to that purpose in ways that could not have possibly occurred to the original authors.

Contemporary Zionist studies on Hebrew literature are fixated on Maimonides's will to his son, where he wrote: "My son, I know the sin I have sinned against my people and I pray to God that I may be found worthy to return the stolen article to its rightful owners and to translate my books into the sacred tongue."¹⁵ Zionists deem this document as supportive of their case, regardless of the content of the rest of Maimonides's work and the circumstances that made it possible. Yehuda Halevi, on the other hand, only wrote religious poetry and composed at least 700 Psalms for the synagogue. Zionism has worked hard to politicize his poem *My Heart is in the East*, where he wrote: "Zion lieth beneath the fetter of Edom, and I in Arab chains?"¹⁶ More ambiguous lines have received a similar treatment in *My Journey to Zion*, which could not have possibly been political in intent.

Zionism dedicated its energies to this front because it represented a penetrable point in "the spiritual Jewish home," and a fabricated connecting tissue between religion and nationalism. But such negative pressures were not restricted to this arena. They also extended to the social arena. Just as a racist current confronted Mendelssohn when he translated the Old Testament to German,

lest it help integrate the Jews into German society, racist Jews organized demonstrations in the Netherlands at the end of the eighteenth century when Jews were given the same civil liberties socially, religiously and politically as the Dutch. The racist current opposed the rights and the equality these liberties entailed because “they feared that Judaism would suffer from the great freedom of the Jews and from their new duties.”¹⁷ But the truth is that this was essentially an opposition to opening the door to integration.

The ideas of superiority and distinction have always played a role in preventing assimilation. The constant lobbying efforts of the racist Jewish current contributed to the maturation of this tendency – at the expense of another tendency which viewed equality and then social integration to be the solution to the question.

Literature played an important role in serving this purpose, whereby the partisans of racism deepened its role by insisting on using it as a means to disseminate their views. As Heine¹⁸ wrote in 1854: “I now see that the Greeks were only handsome youths, whilst the Jews were always men – powerful, indomitable men...”¹⁹ The promotion of this position would carry on for almost exactly a century, eventually giving rise to the infallible Jewish character, which Leon Uris took to the extreme in *Exodus*. This occurred not only at the expense of one’s ethics, but at the expense of artistic technique as well.

As we will see, this current increasingly grew in literature and carried with it the seeds of Zionism. We will likewise detect this current at play in the legend of the Wandering Jew, which was removed from its religious context, along with its metaphysical relationship with

persecution and punishment, and was turned into a tale of superiority and distinction. The character's wandering and his concomitant torments came to be regarded as the price of superiority, as Jews "would become, through torment, better Jews with more Jewish hearts."²⁰ We will see that constant pressures will render this position as a fact – to a degree that would make Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) write a long response to one of his friends, who asked to be advised on whether to provide his son with a Jewish upbringing or to assimilate him into Christian schools, in which he says:

if you do not want your son to grow up as a Jew, you would deprive him of all irreplaceable sources of vitality. He would have to struggle as a Jew, and you would have to cultivate within him every energy he would need for that struggle... do not deprive him of this characteristic.²¹

Freud himself believed that the Jewish sense of pride and superiority was based on the idea of "God's chosen people," which was spread by Moses in ancient times among the Jews.²² He also attributed antisemitism to the "envy" with which ancient peoples met the Jews – because Jesus was born among them.²³ This belief, in addition to being entirely devoid of an analytical basis, does not explain the reasons for the Jewish sense of superiority. Freud circles around it until he reaches a complete confession: "Moses created a character for Jews when he gave them a religion that gave them confidence to such a degree that they came to believe to be superior to all other peoples. They survived as a result of this superiority."²⁴ We can note that Freud here insisted on saying "a result of this

superiority” rather than “a result of their feeling of superiority.” What undergirds such an articulation will turn that Jewish ability “to survive” into an ability to violently invade – i.e., armed with such claims of superiority.

There was a certain racist current, then, that pushed towards a negative Judaism and inverted the same racist ideology that persecuted the Jews, while silencing other Jewish voices that were actually interested in resolving the Jewish question through a civil rights struggle, social integration and a separation between Judaism and “Jewish nationalism.” Zionism ultimately employed its vast resources for the domination of Zionist literature, which was expressed in the evolution of the Jewish literary figure since the nineteenth century up to the present moment. The character started as the (Davidian) religious figure then moved to the Shylockian character, after which we find the doubter, followed by the complainer, the conqueror, and finally the political David, who rather resembles a psychological complex: a figure of absolute power, virtue and infallibility, before whom the entire world appears like the ghost of Goliath.

3. Race and Religion in Zionist Literature Beget Political Zionism

The conditions of European Jews saw an improvement at the start of the nineteenth century. We can say that this improvement was consistent and progressive, despite the episodic relapses that may be regarded as secondary in an otherwise upward trajectory. By 1806, Napoleon Bonaparte planted the seed of the idea of equality in France and the parts of Europe that he managed to reach. Soon the idea spread further and was put into practice, at least partially. It was also during this period, in 1811, that the reformist Jewish movement was established in Germany. Influenced by the ideas that Bonaparte had spread, the movement called for the promotion of Judaism as a religion and a culture in line with the times.

Between 1815 and 1855, the Hebrew language enjoyed a new lease of life in Eastern Europe where language schools were established for that very purpose. And in the second half of the nineteenth century, large numbers of Jews migrated to Western Europe and the United States where they achieved a degree of relative privilege (especially in England). This phenomenon was reflected clearly in the ebbs and flows of Jewish literary production in that period.

While opportunities for social integration and assimilation were increasing, we can nevertheless note a rising

chauvinistic current among socio-economically privileged Jewish circles. The constant stream of Zionist literature that began to appear by the middle of the century finally broke into the mainstream by the century's end, leading up to the consolidation of political Zionism at the First Zionist Congress in Basel in 1897.

During this period the Jewish hero began to take on a new shape in European literature, articulating the Jewish question as an existential one. Nonetheless, chauvinistic pressure was pushing toward framing the matter as a national question. The world's increasingly enlightened consciousness created an opportunity to revisit the Jewish question on an objective basis. But what happened was the opposite. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Jewish literary characters ceased to be modeled after the Shylockian archetype,¹ not only as a result of the enfranchisement of influential sections of the European Jewish community but also due to the ascendancy of an enlightened consciousness in Europe which championed a modern cultural current that was anti-racist on principle.

The truth is that many European and Jewish writers during that time advanced various Jewish characters that seemed to gesture at possible beginnings of a resolution to the Jewish question. Such characters were rejected by the chauvinistic Jewish tendency, which continued to peddle the superior and infallible hero. We will observe this current more clearly when studying the character of the Wandering Jew and its development across various literary works. This archetype emerged in a particular timeframe to pose a specific question, which constantly paved the way for literature on "the political Jewish destiny." The Wandering Jew was thus transformed from a

symbol of religious persecution to a political adventurer with the right to question God himself and prove to him the fundamental immorality of his persecution.²

In light of the increasing civil liberties that were afforded to Jewish communities, as well as the opportunities for social integration, the chauvinistic and racist current pushed toward political Zionism. The increasing influence of the socio-economically privileged section of these communities was thus instrumentalized toward that political end. English literature is a perfect and comprehensive case in point. At the start of the nineteenth century, the Jewish population in the British Isles did not exceed 8,000 and their conditions were not characterized by privilege of any sort. Their relationship with British society was nevertheless better than their European counterparts in their respective states. During the first half of the century, the position of the Jewish character changed slightly in English literature and the few cases that contradict this trend were exceptions that do not refute it.

Only after noting this phenomenon can one understand the extreme hostility with which Maria Edgeworth's novel *Harrington* (published in 1817) was met. It was perceived that its representation of Jewish characters broke the traditional and once-prevalent mold in English literature. This novel was, in the opinion of most English literary critics, the first to depict a virtuous Jewish character. *Harrington* was an innovative intervention that reflected an increasingly enlightened global consciousness that rejected racism. It retains a special importance for that reason. But within sixteen years of the novel's publication, the English and Jewish Benjamin Disraeli wrote *The*

Wondrous Tale of Alroy,³ which attacked *Harrington's* Jewish hero for paving the way for social integration. Disraeli's hero, on the other hand, proposed a violent brand of racism that would come to represent the other side of the bloody Hitlerian coin a century later.

The second part of the nineteenth century witnessed key developments in the form of a rich British cultural production that explored the Jewish character on humanistic terms, according to which the Shylockian character that once dominated English literature for centuries was categorically rejected. This new phenomenon reflected the qualitative change in the relationship between Jews and their respective societies. It was possible for such developments to offer an opening for a genuine resolution to the Jewish question, were it not for the chauvinism that confronted them at every turn on behalf of certain Jewish circles.

The evolution of English literature vis-à-vis the Jewish hero was, therefore, not mere happenstance. It was the culmination of a history of pressures, key among which was the increasing enlightenment and the diffusion of the principles of human rights. Meanwhile a certain development was taking place against this backdrop in the English Jewish community, which was beginning to enjoy social and economic advancement thanks to the stream of migration from abroad, accompanied by migration to London specifically. We may regard the middle of the nineteenth century as a turning point. In 1858, Lionel de Rothschild became the first Jewish member of British parliament in history. The rise of de Rothschild reflected increasing Jewish influence. It was followed by another precedent, as London had its first Jewish mayor in 1880.

Around the same time, Benjamin Disraeli became Prime Minister twice. By 1900 the Jewish population in Britain reached a quarter million, a third of whom lived in London.

A concomitant development was taking place. There was a change in the character of the literature that discussed the Jewish question. We will see later that the second half of the nineteenth century will bring a final turning point toward politicizing the Jewish character in that literature. Two notable books can be placed within this broad framework: the first is the aforementioned novel, *Harrington*, and the second is *Ivanhoe* by Sir Walter Scott, published in 1819. Their significance lies in the fact that they employed virtuous Jewish characters at such an early period of the history of the English novel. Yet what may seem like exceptional circumstances leading to such literary developments were actually a natural reflection of the increasing sense of enlightenment and anti-racism on the part of these novels' readership.

Despite being the first English novel that portrayed its virtuous Jewish characters in a serious manner, and despite having critically engaged with antisemitism,⁴ *Harrington* broke Maria Edgeworth's own mold as well. After having depicted Jewish characters along the prevailing stereotypes of the time, *Harrington* represented an attempt at redemption on the author's part.⁵ About a year prior to publication, Edgeworth received an "extremely well written letter"⁶ from a Jewish American girl called Rachel Mordechai which protested the portrayal of Jewish characters in the author's previous novels.

Although Jewish critics are inclined to believe that this letter played an important role in influencing the author,

a more objective reading would posit that the writer was responding to a growing cultural trend that sought to resolve the Jewish question on an anti-racist basis. Jewish critics, however, tend to view *Harrington* as “an apology” for a mistake that only came as a result of Jewish pressure. Such a view robs the author of her agency. A similar pattern repeated itself with *Ivanhoe* (1819), which was seen as the first English novel to offer a popular depiction of Jews.⁷ In the 1894 *Letters of Sir Walter Scott*,⁸ on the other hand, we find the author to be fixated on denigrating the Jews. It seems that Scott’s relationship with them was strictly financial, as he frequently marveled at their ability to earn such wealth and described them as being adept lenders. Other parts of his letters suggest that he might have fallen into the hands of Jewish debtors, who pursued him relentlessly and enraged him.

Thus Jewish critics are inclined to suggest that the character of Rebecca in *Ivanhoe* represented an attempt at mediation, of sorts, between the author and his Jewish debtors. This suggestion lacks an objective basis. Writers do not write novels to simply “apologize,” and *Ivanhoe*, whose character Rebecca contradicts the author’s beliefs about Jews, could have only been the author’s capitulation to an objective social tendency that rejected racism. Yet the apology thesis is common among some critics, where the matter is taken for granted.⁹ When such critics fail to find such an apology to score a victory for the purported Jewish position, the novelist would likely be ignored.¹⁰

The chauvinists’ insistence on distorting such significant moments reflects their desire to establish a premise for a political Jewish hero that rejects integration as a resolution to the Jewish question. Thus, it was necessary

to invent a Jewish character of a different mold than the “romantic” ones of *Harrington* and *Ivanhoe*. Benjamin Disraeli, himself an English Jewish-born political personality of considerable influence and privilege, invented such a literary character so blatantly in 1833 as per the requirements of the chauvinists.

Sir Walter Scott and Maria Edgeworth brought about a qualitative shift in English literature’s position on Jews and affirmed the romantic Jewish characters that Shelley and Byron had formulated around the turn of that century. Disraeli, on the other hand, as a proponent of the racist position, served the ambitions of the chauvinistic and extremist Jewish circles by transforming the romantic character into a political-national one – thereby delivering a blow to the proponents of social integration.

Disraeli authored *The Wondrous Tale of Alroy* in 1833 before becoming Britain’s Prime Minister. That this novel is often overlooked is suspicious enough. The novel is, in any case, pertinent both in its own right and due to its consequential impact. Here, Disraeli showcases a Jewish Zionist hero around half a century before the official birth of the Zionist movement in Basel, where he rejects any chance for social integration. This is the same racist and extremist position that finally meets its downfall eighty years later, after it was adopted in its inverted form by Adolf Hitler.

In order to reject the romantic Jewish hero, and along with it the idea of social integration, Disraeli had to offer an alternative solution which, at this early historical stage of Zionism, was stunningly clear: racism. Disraeli took the claim of Jewish superiority (which represented a survival attribute according to Freud) to its inevitable con-

clusion by turning it into a conquering force. Rejecting integration necessitated one of two possibilities: to either assume a position of inferiority or that of superiority. Having rejected integration, Disraeli was compelled to choose the racist position.

The sense of superiority and distinction that surrounds the Jewish hero in *The Wondrous Tale of Alroy* was crudely racist. Disraeli paints the entire world with the same grotesque Hitlerian brush: "race is all... there is no other truth." He insisted that even "what people may regard as an individual action is in fact a racial characteristic." Recall that this was a time when opportunities for integration were available. Disraeli pushed in the opposite direction instead: "in reality, you cannot obliterate a pure race, it's a psychological fact, it's a simple law of nature."¹¹ He declares, across pages and pages of this exhilarating novel, that "the Hebrew is an unmixed race."¹² This novel was written and published at a time when Disraeli sat at the very top of the politically and economically privileged class of Jews, not long after which he ascended to the position of Prime Minister, which signified both that the Jewish question was on the path toward resolution and the extremists' rejection of it.

Disraeli said a lot more than he should have in *The Wondrous Tale of Alroy*. Revealing the truth of the racist ambitions of the extremist Jews provoked a wide-ranging reaction. One critic commented on the novel by pointing out that Disraeli was effectively saying that "Jews are ordained on historical and religious grounds to assume the moral and intellectual leadership of the universe."¹³ All the same, Disraeli steered clear of explicitly declaring Palestine as a national homeland for the Jews. Nonetheless,

his mixing of race and religion did target Palestine as a "spiritual center" in an astonishing and peculiar manner.¹⁴

In any case, what Disraeli did was more damaging than what he did not do. He introduced a Zionist hero for the first time instead of a solely Jewish one.¹⁵ Upon publication, extremist Jews took the opportunity to correct what Disraeli said while highlighting and embellishing what he did not say. As part of the widespread discussion in the British press, George Eliot¹⁶ expressed her disgust with Disraeli's character of Sidonia and her boasting of her racial purity and superiority.

We will see shortly that this is the same George Eliot who maintained a close relationship with Jewish extremists, having been inspired to write her lengthy *Daniel Deronda* against *The Wondrous Tale of Alroy*. In that novel, Eliot rejected the sense of racism to which Sidonia appealed. The novel also "rectifies" Disraeli's Zionism by regarding Palestine as "a politically expedient means of gathering Jews from the Diaspora."¹⁷ This claim, which has since become ubiquitous, was enshrined here as a principle of Zionism – i.e., that Zionism represents a response to racism and antisemitism. It is a position that conceals the essence of Zionism, which counters racist oppression with racism.

Daniel Deronda will be discussed later, but let us trace the rising tide of Jewish characters in English literature for now where a strange phenomenon can be observed. In 1856, Charles Reade wrote *It is Never Too Late to Mend* which was not of any special significance, per se, except in that it represented a turning point for Jewish characters in the literature. Reade's hero vacillates between virtue and vice, self-importance and triviality and, in clearer

terms, between social integration and exceptionalism, as though he was preparing himself for an imminent transformation. Reade's hero is a man of dignity whose motto is "an eye for an eye." But he is also a mysterious figure who denounces people through a Shylockian prism. In short, he represents the very turning point that Eliot would advance – thanks to Disraeli's influence – toward a racist position.

Consider the following: a number of prominent books were published in 1838 (among others of lesser stature) whose Jewish characters fit the Shylockian mold, including *Oliver Twist* and *Leila*.¹⁸ In 1848, George Eliot critiqued the racist premise upon which Disraeli authored *The Wondrous Tale of Alroy*. In 1856, Charles Reade wrote his novel whose hero stood bemused between the Jewish characters of the day – as in *Ivanhoe* and *Harrington* and those of *The Wondrous Tale of Alroy*. Later in 1876, George Eliot wrote *Daniel Deronda* which finally established the Jewish Zionist hero in English literature and thus contributed to increasing the numbers of pro-Zionist publications.¹⁹

This crescendo of events was accompanied by another process on the societal level: the Jewish population in England increased from 8,000 to a quarter million, as did the opportunities for integration along with political and economic influence. *Daniel Deronda's* hero, Mordecai, represents a non-combatant figure, who will take a precisely delineated journey and reappear once more in the 1950s under the name of Ben Ari in *Exodus*. *Daniel Deronda* is especially important because it established an actual premise for the Jewish Zionist hero in the literature. The novel opened the door to a stream of others that fol-

lowed Eliot's lead in crafting their Jewish characters. As such, "the Jewish group in *Daniel Deronda* remain ... the most distinguished Jewish names in the English novel to date."²⁰

Eliot's accomplishment was that she established a Zionist action plan when she made her characters believe in "contributing to the creation of the future of the world and of the Jewish people." Her work promoted "awareness of the value of heritage and tradition" and the political significance of "pivoting toward Palestine." Mordecai, in this way, became a legendary proselytizer – "a political man" and "social prophet."²¹ He speaks of nothing but the Jewish state, and finds no suitable alternatives elsewhere.

In fact, Mordecai succeeds in doing exactly what Sidonia had done in *The Wondrous Tale of Aloy* in a far more sophisticated manner because the former avoided the trappings of Disraeli's overt racism. Mordecai thus employs a ruse, as he skillfully affirms that the idea of God's chosen people actually means that "[the Jews] were chosen by God for the sake of other people." But this formal eradication of racist content becomes meaningless as the novel's events unfold. Its characters' elaborate maneuvers around the pitfall of racism do not save them from it and its unjustified sense of superiority.

Here is contemporary Zionism's political and literary appraisal of *Daniel Deronda*:

the most important layers that created 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, and in the three quarters of a century that

have elapsed since the appearance of this novel, this layer has come ever more to the fore ... [establishing] the legend of Israel Reborn.²²

The more accurate term for “heroic” should be “Zionist,” with its refusal to be equated with the rest of the members of society in which Jews reside. Sol Liptzin’s definition of romanticism highlights

the role of Jewish characters in English literature, which for a time featured the angelic Jew, an exotic picturesque figure akin to the gypsy, a saintly sage about whom there was a gleam of past glory and whose daughter was beautiful, kind, and suffering as in the works of Richard Cumberland, Walter Scott, Byron, Shelley, and others; ‘but none of these writers was interested in the future of the Jews.’²³

Defining romanticism in such terms serves a purpose. Liptzin states that romanticism is a “foreign representational form” based on reviving “disguised models that belong to ancient times.”²⁴ But romanticism was neither a foreign representational form nor a disguised reenactment of ancient ones. Romanticism, rather, rearticulated Judaism as a religion and implicitly demanded the end of its oppression. But the extremists viewed such a development as a threat to their political objectives, which favored “heroism” as an expression of national superiority.

In any case, what concerns us in *Daniel Deronda* – which spans over 600 pages – is what critics later dubbed “the Zionist section” of the novel. This was the part that Henry James, the critic most specialized in George Eliot’s work, described as “at bottom cold” and unreservedly a total failure.²⁵ Frank Raymond Leavis, who wrote the

scholarly introduction to the edition of the novel referenced here,²⁶ believed that the Zionist section of the novel was characterized by an “intelligence about the world of her time that had enabled George Eliot to forecast how the passion of nationalism would affect the Jews,” while praising the author’s “immense capacity for intellectual acquisition.”²⁷ Among the most notable features of these chapters is their containing “a great deal in the way of fallacious proposition and dubious suggestion,” despite the fact that many critics have questioned “whether the whole heavy structure of the Jewish question was not built up by the author for the express purpose of giving its proper force to this particular stroke.”²⁸

This perspective tries to represent Eliot as if she had foreseen “a historical inevitability.” The truth is that she was expanding and affirming an already existing current that chauvinistically rejected the viability of social integration. Eliot did not foresee anything, as Leavis would have us believe. Rather, she merely put herself at the service of an already existing agenda and drew an action plan for it. Eliot cast the old Jewish question in *Daniel Deronda* in a new form and turned its main character Mordecai into a Zionist orator of the first order, as his opinions are not a natural outcome of the novel’s series of events but are direct declarations and lectures. These orations in particular were responsible for the popularity of the novel in Zionist circles, as they represented a series of publicized replies to efforts at resolving the Jewish question and high-profile defenses of such oppositional efforts. As such, when Mordecai proceeds to present his point of view across tens of pages, he represents the propagandistic face of a current that wanted to crown

“Jewish superiority” with a nation-state.

These parts of the novel, which can only be described as Zionist orations, were those that Henry James regarded as “at bottom cold.” These were an “extraneous” intervention that are not reflected by means of the narrative of the novel, but rather through direct speech. This is also the reason that prompted some Jewish extremists to dub *Daniel Deronda* a “pro-Zionist publication.” If another writer had incorporated such an amount of oratory, their work would certainly be condemned to failure. Eliot’s literary ability, however, enabled her to salvage the novel as such without allowing those prolonged orations to obliterate the novel’s artistic value entirely.

In any case, the difference between Sidonia’s racism in *The Wondrous Tale of Alroy* and Mordecai’s in *Daniel Deronda* was not as great as Eliot intended. Any neutral reader would easily be able to detect Mordecai’s racist position, despite his relative sophistication vis-à-vis Sidonia:

it is true, as Jehuda-Halevi first said,²⁹ that Israel is the heart of mankind, if we mean by heart the core of affection which binds a race and its families in dutiful love, and the reverence for the human body which lifts the needs of our animal life into religion.³⁰

Once more:

I say that the effect of our separateness will not be completed and have its highest transformation unless our race takes on again the character of a nationality. That is the fulfillment of the religious trust that moulded them into a people, whose life has made half the inspiration of the world. What is it to me that the ten tribes are lost untraceably, or that multitudes of

the children of Judah have mixed themselves with the Gentile populations as a river with rivers? Behold our people still! Their skirts spread afar; they are torn and soiled and trodden on; but there is a jeweled breast-plate. Let the wealthy men, the monarchs of commerce, the learned in all knowledge, the skillful in all arts, the speakers, the political counselors, who carry in their veins the Hebrew blood which has maintained its vigor in all climates, and the pliancy of the Hebrew genius for which difficulty means new device – let them say, ‘we will lift up a standard, we will unite in a labor hard but glorious like that of Moses and Ezra, a labor which shall be a worthy fruit of the long anguish whereby our fathers maintained their separateness, refusing the ease of falsehood.’ 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. And is there no prophet or poet among us to make the ears of Christian Europe tingle with shame at the hideous obloquy of Christian strife which the Turk gazes at as at the fighting of beasts to which he has lent an arena? There is store of wisdom among us to found a new Jewish polity, grand, simple, just, like the old – a republic where there is equality of protection, an equality which shone like a star on the forehead of our ancient community, and gave it more than the brightness of Western freedom amid the despotisms of the East. Then our race shall have an organic centre, a heart and brain to watch and guide and execute; the outraged Jew shall have a defense in the court of nations, as the outraged Englishman of America. And

the world will gain as Israel gains. For there will be a community in the van of the East which carries the culture and the sympathies of every great nation in its bosom: there will be a land set for a halting-place of enmities, a neutral ground for the East as Belgium is for the West. 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.³¹

This excerpt fully summarizes Mordecai's Zionism and clearly shows that George Eliot did not "foresee" anything. She was involved in drawing an action plan to convert Jews to Zionism and to exploit the superiority complex as much as possible. Theodor Herzl did the same about half a century later in his novel *The Old New Land*, which was a precursor to the birth of political Zionism at his hands, and which was more sophisticated than Eliot – much like how Eliot had been more sophisticated than Disraeli – in maneuvering around the racist nature of the cause by trying to dress it up in a humanistic garb.

The mixing of race and religion seems to be at its clearest point in Eliot's text. This practice, as can be noted from the excerpt above, confounds two unrelated matters. It claims that race is a spiritual bond before leaping into a discussion about "the national character" – as if this triad is perfectly synonymous.³² Then comes the discussion of anti-Jewish oppression, to which a solution by way of a *non sequitur* is suggested: to assume the role of the humanist pioneer in an arena of "beasts" – instead of calling for breaking the chains of oppression.³³

During a turning point in the history of European Jews, *Daniel Deronda* was aligned with the ideologues of chauvinism by taking the Jewish literary character

to the realm of adventure and conquest – turning him into a racist “hero.” This led to a critical transition, as “with writers as different as Charles Reade and George Eliot we reach a time when the Jew is impeccable.”³⁴ The word “impeccability” here is nothing but a synonym for racism. The Jewish literary character thus lost the support of his God, much like the impeccable Jews of the Old Testament, which rendered this “impeccable” proselytizer an insufferable and indefensible ideologue in *Exodus* in 1958.³⁵

Daniel Deronda's value lay in its political services for a chauvinistic current at a turning point in history, and whose leaders regarded the book as extremely valuable. Thus they adopted, distributed and republished the novel across Europe. Within four years of its publication, a new school of theorists in Russia – Peretz, Gordon, Smolensky and Lilienblum – changed its position on social integration by adopting “national-political restoration” as a resolution to the Jewish question.

Thus, “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.”³⁶ The book invaded Jewish homes, as planned, and became “a Zionist Bible” after its translation into Hebrew.³⁷ Later in 1948, Israel named one of its roads in Tel Aviv after George Eliot while the flames of the Palestinian catastrophe were still ablaze.

4. The Birth and Development of the Character of the Wandering Jew

The character of the Wandering Jew in Europe presents us with a more light-hearted representation of the Jewish literary character in popular culture, and sheds light on the relationship between the development of this character in accordance with the social, financial and religious conditions of European Jews at the time. Tracing the Wandering Jew in the literature also reveals the racist political efforts to steer the legitimate concerns that surrounded the Jewish question away from humanistic solutions in favor of racism and chauvinism.

In the past, the Wandering Jew orbited the religious context that conceived it. It was a character that vacillated between the positions of guilt and malcontent, the sinner and the afflicted, and bad and good omens. These positions spontaneously reflected both the positive and negative changes in the social and religious relations between Jews and Europeans, which were characterized by chauvinism as well as enlightenment at various historical junctures. Yet the Wandering Jew was never a political “messenger” until the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, when the racist currents undermined the popular ingenuity that had, for better or worse, regarded the cause of the Wandering Jew to be that of a subversive and helpless religion.

The Wandering Jew took the same journey as *The Wondrous Tale of Alroy* and *Daniel Deronda's* heroes by making the question of ethnicity and religion into one of race under the aegis of a myth of superiority. The character of the Wandering Jew stems from ancient religious origins¹ though it goes back further still because it embodies, at its root and philosophical base, the age-old human bewilderment before the dilemma of mortality and its escape into mythology.

What concerns us about the legend of the Wandering Jew, however, is not its ancient historical past, but the mainstream form it came to assume. Naturally, the legend reflected not only the socioeconomic conditions of the Jews but also the position of the Church toward them. The legend, therefore, often reflected the conditions of the age that produced it. It appeared "at times, when the church represented [it] as a topic of obedience or religious sin. [The legend] was mostly absent during enlightened times."² It was frequently utilized to serve specific purposes and often disappeared with the disappearance of Jewish minorities.

We can trace the social conditions of the Jews by tracing the legend of the Wandering Jew. He was downtrodden, acquiescent and religious, at times. In other instances, he was a vagrant who spelled bad luck and devastation. He could either be poor or studded with jewels. He may be resigned to the punishment that had been meted out to him at first, but he would soon grow skeptical, querulous and pugnacious. Ultimately, he becomes a subversive rebel as he eventually shakes his fist at God.

Among the legend's first recorded instances in the European belief system can be found in the welter of the

Crusades, especially in the Levant. The legend seemed to circulate among peoples and areas that were directly affected by the conquest and was a purely religious phenomenon. The legend made its way to the West in 1228 through an Armenian Archbishop who participated in a priestly synod in Saint Albans, England. According to Joseph Gaer,³ tales of the Wandering Jew had spread in Europe following the return of the first regiment of Crusaders in 1110. But the first recorded instance of this character appeared in the tale of the Armenian Archbishop's volume *The History of Saint Albans* in 1228.

The Archbishop claimed to have seen Noah's Ark from one of the peaks of Armenia's mountains. There, he was asked whether he knew of the man who witnessed the crucifixion of Christ and who was condemned to wander the earth until the day of judgment. The Archbishop's response was remarkable. He said, following a momentary pause: "Strange that you should ask this of me. For shortly before I left Armenia this man, Joseph by name, dined with me." The priest went on to tell the tale as he had heard it from the hapless man: he had wandered for about twelve centuries. His name was Cartaphilus during the time of Christ, when he worked as a doorman at the very courthouse that issued the crucifixion sentence. As Christ was leaving its hall, Cartaphilus tapped Christ on his back and cried: "Go faster, Jesus, go faster! Why do you loiter?" Christ responded calmly: "I am going, but you shall wait until I return." Since then, Cartaphilus had not ceased to wander the earth as a quiet and wretched man in constant hope for forgiveness, having committed a sin of ignorance – because Christ said on the cross, "forgive them, Father, for they know not what they do."

Three centuries after the recording of this tale, the Wandering Jew was said to have appeared in Bohemia in 1505 where he helped a man called Kokot to find his grandfather's hidden treasure. Twenty years later, he appeared for a third time in Germany to Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa⁴ in the guise of a sorcerer. The character is said to have made an increasing number of appearances thereafter in various European cities. What is worth noting here is that the character remained likable and pitiable at this point. Recall the reason for his invention: his rudeness to Jesus. It is remarkable for such a character to become well-liked in the popular imagination. This will prove to be a very important observation because the Wandering Jew became a boorish bearer of bad luck in later periods. This indicates that the character's development reflected processes: the position of the church vis-à-vis the Jews in general, and the social role that Jews came to occupy in Europe.

The period that separates the good and kindly Wandering Jew from his depiction in the seventeenth century reveals the legend's clear transformation. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in Western Europe, it was believed that the Wandering Jew was a frightening figure who – as a bad omen – only accompanied the appearance of storms: “in such places he was spoken of in whispers. When a storm arose, people gathered together to pray that their town might be spared from a visit by the Wanderer.”⁵ This belief naturally reflected a dominant Christian position of the age.

As is the case with any historical classification, we cannot draw definitive temporal boundaries. Heuristically, however, we can regard the sixteenth century as the

line that separates two entirely different characters: one lived prior to this century and the other developed after its conclusion. The latter set out from Central Europe, where Jewish communities were increasing in size. The beginning of the seventeenth century brought with it a new depiction of the Wandering Jew, as is evident in the widely translated popular song from this period in Brussels called *The Complaints of the Wandering Jew*.⁶ The character assumes the name of Isaac Laqueudem for the first time, which suggests the work of a Jewish mind in writing the song as “Laqueudem” is a slight modification on the Hebrew word “lakodem,” which means “old.” This name soon spread to other literary works thereafter.

The song reflects the changing nature of the Wandering Jew from a man whose preoccupations revolved around pleading for forgiveness to a man who complains about poverty and homelessness:

I don't have a home to shelter me
and I don't have a treasure to present
Yet, a mysterious power
grants me five pennies each day

These pennies became of utmost importance in the legends that followed. The character would be keen to collect them until they amounted to the price of a jewel that he would tie to his torso – in anticipation of more.

Such legends reflected the economic position of European Jews, as represented by Shylock in one of Shakespeare's best-known plays. But just as Shylock had to wait for a writer like Sir Walter Scott to popularize him in *Ivanhoe*, Isaac Laqueudem had to wait for Christoff Creutzer in 1602 to popularize the Wandering Jew as

a non-Shylockian hero called Ahasuerus. In that year, Creutzer wrote a booklet in German with the following title:

A Jew called Ahasuerus, who personally witnessed the crucifixion of the Lord Christ and participated in the demonstration. It was determined that Ahasuerus never return to Jerusalem. This was why he couldn't see his children and wife again, and he had to remain alive since that time. Then he came to Hamburg for a few years. He was seen in Danzig around December 1599.⁷

This booklet did not contain much more information than its peculiar title provides. But it was republished forty-six consecutive times in German, nineteen in Swedish, ten in French, four in Danish, three in Finnish, along with several others in English, Czech, Polish and other languages.⁸ The document is significant because it popularized the Wandering Jew in Europe – strictly within the confines of religious doctrine and without promoting oppressive measures – and served as a key source for subsequent books that drew on the ideas and travels of wandering Ahasuerus. These ideas continued to develop through the romantic era, during which Jewish characters in Europe were changing. An important development occurred here: the Jewish mind was starting to contribute to shaping the legend of Ahasuerus. But the extremist current intervened once more to advance the character into “the arena of the hero” (*Daniel Deronda*) and rendered him as a superior and infallible spokesman on behalf of the race.

This turning point seems apparent in the circum-

stances that surrounded a certain letter that suddenly spread across the continent at the end of the seventeenth century, which came to be one of several common tales of the Wandering Jew. There is no doubt, upon examination, that chauvinistic Jewish forces had either authored this letter or at least influenced it significantly. The letter in question was prefaced with a narrative of a Turkish spy in Paris, who is writing a report to Constantinople in 1644 on the Wandering Jew's opinions, positions and true nature in full detail after meeting him in Paris. There is no Turkish evidence for any part of these claims, of course, as the nature of the letter will soon reveal. That it was authored on behalf of Jewish chauvinism will also be clear.

A reliable history of the publication of this letter does not exist. The letter itself dates to 1644, but this does not necessarily mean that it was published then. The entire story was probably written by several authors well after 1644.⁹ It was also probably articulated in such terms because it seemed like the most effective way of presenting the conditions of the Jews and their ambitions, and was most effective in persuading the audience of their superiority and innocence. In any case, this letter played an important role in taking the Wandering Jew from the realm of folklore to that of the novel – the form that would become highly popular, as evidenced by the large number of volumes that were published between 1840 and 1860 especially – and which imbued the Wandering Jew with its romanticism and prompted its rebirth as a symbol.

The legacy of the letter of the purported Turkish spy, which came to be regarded as an artistic source,

was further developed by Christian Daniel Schubart's poetry in the eighteenth century, where the Wandering Jew boasts of his superiority thanks to the wisdom he had accumulated over his long travels. The legend strayed from its religious origins and popular context from this point. Once a direct reflection of the Jews' social and, later, political conditions, the legend soon became a vehicle for racism.

In England, for example, the legend disappeared from the thirteenth century up to the mid-seventeenth, which overlaps with the expulsion of the Jews in 1290 until their return in Cromwell's time. The legend began to grow once more from this point onward. But it did not occupy a prominent role in English thought until Jews themselves managed to achieve a higher status in British society. In his study on Jewish characters in English literature, Edgar Rosenberg does not record any text on the Wandering Jew during most of the eighteenth century. But from 1796 – i.e., around the beginning of the nineteenth century – until 1900, he records around ten novels featuring the character, where it was intended as an interjection in religious affairs, at times, while being cast as a political figure in others.¹⁰

The fact is that English poetry, especially that of Shelley (1792-1822) and Lord Byron (1788-1824), preceded the English novel in dealing with the question of the Wandering Jew. Shelley wrote his poem *Queen Mab* around the time of *Harrington's* publication, where the Wandering Jew was made into a symbol of eternal protest against his unjust sentence. Thus, his demand for freedom here becomes more important than forgiveness. Many critics believe that Shelley was influenced by Schubart's (1739-

1791) poem, which was discussed above, where the character was transformed from a religious symbol to one of intellectual superiority. This is the same tendency that influenced the great poet Goethe (1749-1832). In the nineteenth century especially, the character of the Wandering Jew began to change in Europe “from a sinner to an accuser, and from a repentant figure to a rebel.”¹¹ It was not a coincidence that this change occurred in Germany first, as Jews enjoyed a period of reprieve there at the time.

The romantic influence on poetry that dealt with the Wandering Jew did not last long, as was the case with its influence on novels. In 1844 (i.e., during the same period when Disraeli’s *The Wondrous Tale of Alroy* was published and later criticized by Eliot, in preparation for her publication of *Daniel Deronda*), Eugène Sue wrote the novel *The Wandering Jew* where the traditional question of the Wandering Jew was turned into a social question – completely severed from its religious origins. This was also the case when Jacques-Fromental Halévy (1799-1862) wrote his opera *La Juive* in France, which criticized racism against the Jews before the ink from *The Wondrous Tale of Alroy* had dried. The work was written in 1834 and intended as a basis for his future opera *The Wandering Jew* (1852), which did not garner much success.

Up until around this point, as we have seen, the literary works that dealt with the Wandering Jew were oriented toward resolving the Jewish question and were implicitly demanding social equality through Jewish integration into their respective societies. We see this, for instance, when Eugène Sue, in *The Wandering Jew*, focused on “man’s inhumanity to man,”¹² as well as Halévy’s opposition to

the racist enslavement of Jews. Indeed there was an inclination, on part of a large number of authors, to articulate the eternal journeying of the Wandering Jew, along with other characters later on,¹³ in defense of his cause. The character thus continued to represent a social issue, above all, until the racist pressures on it exploded most evidently in David Pinski's 1906 Yiddish play *The Eternal Jew* which was translated into English as *The Stranger* by another Jewish writer called Isaac Goldberg.

What is noteworthy here is the sudden shift in the Jewish mind toward the legend of the Wandering Jew. The legend, according to the minds of Jews and non-Jews, was once compatible. In the Jewish mind it symbolized the prophet Elijah who was known in folkloric Jewish culture as "the eternal Jew" and represented virtue and faith, as per prevailing religious mythology of Judaism. According to Jewish religious scholars, there are thirty-six wandering and immortal Jews – not just one – whose mission is "to help the deserving, to console and protect the widow, the orphan, and the aged, and ailing, and, above all, to remind people that if they have implicit faith all will be well with them and the world."¹⁴ This religious message gave way to a purely political one by the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, thanks to the pressures of the chauvinistic Jewish current that placed its bets on a deliberate strategy of advancing a racist position. After twenty centuries of a purely religious existence, the Wandering (or Eternal) Jew now carried weapons and ideas of conquest in Pinski's *The Stranger*. The Habima theater group¹⁵ thus adopted the play immediately and presented it to the Jews of Eastern Europe and subsequently to Jews worldwide to

serve even greater ambitions.

The Wandering Jew figure in *The Stranger* says:

Yes, I am a sinner. I have committed the greatest sin. For I was plowing my field when I should have been taking part in the struggle for the freedom of my people. Now God's terrible punishment is upon me. I shall have to wander all over the world, and long, long shall I seek the Messiah. Now I go to do what I must – what I must... I will search for 'the Messiah' for a long, long time... I will now do what I have to do... I will do what I have to do...

Commenting on this theater group, Raikin Ben-Ari, a founder of Habima, writes:

I still see Zemach [i.e., the actor who played the part of the farmer-prophet] before me, lifting his bag and staff with a piercing sigh, climbing up to the top of the construction, where exclaimed in a mystic tone of voice: *Ani holech le-happes et ha-mashiah!* [I am going in search of the Messiah!]. These were not empty words for him. He was always looking for a messiah himself, for the theater, for the people. He believed in the redemption of his people and hoped that the Habima would bring the problem of the Jew before the eyes of the world."¹⁶

This excerpt precisely summarizes the political instrumentalization of a religious matter. It was not a coincidence, as we will see, for politically chauvinistic Jews to have widely promoted this play along with *Daniel Deronda*, which also mixed religion and race under the banner of the national homeland. Just within half a century, these

three elements established the most grotesque case of settler-colonial conquest in modern history.¹⁷

The play facilitated the Wandering Jew's newfangled political journey. In 1920, the theaters of London saw another play called *The Wandering Jew* by Ernest Temple Thurston. While being martyred before the courts of the Spanish Inquisition after his long journey (and martyrdom here signifies emancipation), the Wandering Jew exclaims: "the spirit of your Christ is closer to my heart, as a Jew, than it is to the lips of those who claim to believe in him." This claim reflects new chauvinistic pretensions in which Zionism would perform a political funeral for *The Wandering Jew* in the form of a 1933 Yiddish film produced in Yaffa.¹⁸ Likewise in 1948, the Wandering Jew was utilized in a new mission in "the industry of the Nazi catastrophe" at the hands of Vittorio Gassman in the film *The Sands of Time*,¹⁹ where the character symbolizes the steadfastness of the Jewish spirit in the terrible Nazi camps.

The Nobel Prize-winning Swedish writer Pär Lagerkvist would then write a short story called *The Death of Abasuerus* in the early 1960s. The Wandering Jew here arrives in Palestine and dies, after severely scolding God: "why do you force me to think of you continually? To think of how you came along the street, dragging your cross?" He thus not only compares Jesus's suffering and sacrifice to his own, but regards his sentence of having to wander for so long as far worse – before presenting his death (i.e., the conclusion of his wandering: or the establishment of Israel) as humanity's true guide!²⁰

As we will see shortly, this position runs in parallel with those that was found in novels. It is a position that

Aaron David Gordon (1856-1922) summarized like this: “we [Jews] have the distinction of being the guides not because we’re better than the rest, but because of our excessive suffering.”

5. *Zionist Literature Marches in Lockstep with Politics*

In works like *Daniel Deronda* and Pinski's *The Eternal Jew*, Zionist literature assumed its central mission at the start of the twentieth century propelled by an organized political movement that not only facilitated a set of incentives and protections for it but also provided promotional opportunities without parallel in the history of politically-directed art. This literature carried out a twofold mission with matchless determination: on one hand, to mobilize Jews by creating a global environment sympathetic to the Zionist cause and, on the other, to obliterate all obstacles in the way of this coordinated propaganda campaign. Such well-directed work used every available weapon with precision, including falsification, exaggeration, erasure of facts and the opportunistic exploitation of history to justify entirely new events that were far removed from the location, thought and personalities of that history.

There is no doubt that Zionist literature's contradictory mission was primed for fatal pitfalls in terms of form and content. In spite of this, the formidable Zionist machine prevented any meaningful exposure of its unethical and systematic practices of deception through art. The devotion of these works of art to their mission, the essence of which is logically fallacious as we will see, inhibited their

ability to rid themselves of their propagandistic attributes. This rendered Zionist literature essentially different from other politically-directed literature because it is premised on bending the facts to serve a foregone conclusion, even if such a process requires a distortion of history (outright deception at times) and the omission and evasion of all that may contradict that superimposed set of analyses and hypotheses.

There is no doubt that Theodor Herzl was the first to earnestly announce this tendency at the turn of the twentieth century, when his novel *The Old New Land* anticipated his own political Zionism. The novel was, in this way, among the catalysts that turned Herzl from an artist to a political figure. After having expressed his deep regret for abandoning his literary career to work toward establishing the First Zionist Congress, Herzl admitted that the objective of his novel was not artistic but propagandistic.¹ It is entirely logical for that “novel,” therefore, to end up in the condition we find it in 1962, when a German language edition was published in exactly the same format as propaganda pamphlets: 220 large pages of heavy weight paper, accompanied by 200 illustrations and diagrams about Israel and Jewish history on glossy paper inserts, interspersed with the novel’s text, which tendentiously and tediously highlight immigration trends as well as the development of production, the army and the legislature, along with colored photographs of Israeli towns. This “novel,” at bottom, was pure propaganda.² In fact, in this novel Herzl did little more than push *Daniel Deronda*’s Mordecai a step further – casting him in the field of action, whereas Eliot’s Mordecai was a mere propagandist.

Stylistically, Herzl invented a formula that would be followed thereafter in which Palestine was said to be forlorn – simply waiting for the Jews to return to populate and develop it, without any mention of the people who already lived there.³ Furthermore, Jews' migration to Palestine was made to seem like a service for the Western mind: Herzl affirms repeatedly that the Jews did not do anything for the old new land but simply took to it modern institutions that existed in modern countries at the end of the nineteenth century.⁴ This was perhaps the precise reason that Herzl discussed the role that Israel would play in “backwards” Africa and Asia in a manner that evoked Mordecai's orations.⁵

Yet while *Daniel Deronda's* Mordecai – much like *The Wondrous Tale of Aloy's* Sidonia and Pinski's hero in *The Eternal Jew* – was a mere propagandist that discussed an action plan to conquer Palestine and employed slogans with a certain intellectual and political resonance, the hero of *The Old New Land* went on to implement them. This hero, like his author, became part of a de facto political movement with a coherent intellectual structure and a set of objectives. This difference not only brings about a qualitative change in Mordecai's position; it leads to a more direct clash with the facts. Thus, since *The Old New Land*, it became necessary for the Zionist literary character to march in lockstep with the Zionist political program, which became increasingly prone to contradiction. Therefore, what Mordecai sidestepped in his orations became imperative to address as an existing reality for Joseph in Arthur Koestler's *Thieves in the Night*, Ari Ben Canaan in *Exodus* and others. And what Mordecai could achieve through the abuse of language and

a set of moral imperatives became something that Ari Ben Canaan, Joseph and others would have to address through the distortion, omission and falsification of history. Yet the common ground upon which all of the aforementioned phases stood was the Zionist mixing of religion into nationalism – in order to produce a perverted sense of superiority.

It is important to distinguish between two senses of superiority, in this regard: one is connected to a common, natural and legitimate sense of pride while the other is premised upon contempt for other peoples by placing them in a second tier in a “human hierarchy.” This was the same idea that later made it to Hitler’s infernal playbook. In *Moses and Monotheism*, Sigmund Freud was concerned with explaining what he called “Jewish superiority” as a sense of pride of sorts. Moses, for Freud, put the Jews as close as possible to God and the truth, based on which Freud explained the Jewish sense of distinction as “[being] animated by a special trust in life,”⁶ because that sensibility was a part of their religion.⁷ Freud then took this idea further in *In the Wake of Moses*.⁸ We have seen how George Eliot relied on the same theory to conclude that Judaism had a right to nationalism. Herzl, too, wanted his novel to prove that the idea of mixing religion and race under the banner of “God’s chosen people” is one that benefits humanity at large.

Yet Freud’s justifications are unable to turn the Jewish question into one of nationalism. Freud, at any rate, believed that Moses was not a Jew but an Egyptian pharaonic priest in the court of the hapless Akhenaten.⁹ His personal letters, on the other hand, demonstrate that he was not inclined to distinguish between religion and race

when it came to the Jews, despite the fatal error involved in such reasoning. All religions make their followers feel that they “hold themselves to be specially near to Him” and that “this is what makes them proud and confident.”¹⁰ This absolutely does not mean that these religions should take racist or nationalistic positions.

All of the above led (perhaps willfully) to neglecting the distinction between those who identify with Judaism and those who share a common ancestral lineage, or between embracing Judaism and forming a distinct nation. Research has shown that “modern Jews have neither national nor covenant continuity with the Jews of biblical Israel, and even if they had it is very doubtful that scripture speaks of any ‘return’ beyond that from Babylon.”¹¹ Zionism had to push this idea further when it confronted two of its common challenges: to consistently justify its opposition to social integration and to explain, in an infinitesimally precise manner, the process of turning Judaism into a state and a nation – at the expense of an already existing nation and, perhaps, another religion. Zionism’s political thought tried to adapt its response to these challenges in a manner that serves its propaganda and mobilization campaigns either by, as usual, ignoring the challenge altogether or by presenting fraudulent answers. It would have been almost impossible for most literary works lacking such precise planning and deliberation to descend to exactly where the political Zionist mind desired.

Zionist literary works are rife with inescapable contradictions that have been generated by their very own narratives. Thus, they automatically betray the truth about Zionism that political writings have otherwise managed

to obfuscate. The Jewish hero is now confronted with a dilemma: he can no longer confine himself to speaking in abstract and hypothetical terms in historical novels; he must now deal with the reality on the ground, which represents the one true measure.

In this light, Zionist thought worked hard to legitimize this literature to such an extent that readers have become unable to tell whether *Exodus*—for example—has informed Jewish historians or Jewish historians had informed the novel. A perfect example of such deliberate conflation can be found in a 1955 book titled *Jews and Arabs: Their Contacts Through The Ages* by Shelomo Dov Goitein, a Professor of Islamic History and Islamic Studies at the Hebrew University. He shows that Arab-Jewish relations were good across history and were not characterized by antisemitism nor any of the persecution complexes that result from it.¹² It also states that Arabs described Jews, in modern times and up to this moment, as “Arab Jews.” Zionism must therefore justify the central claim behind its conquest of Palestine, namely the principle of “responding to anti-Jewish oppression” – which represents the essence of contemporary Zionist literary works.¹³

Thus, we begin to suddenly witness the birth of Zionist works that are hailed as “intellectual,” yet whose main purpose is a matter of rationalization rather than research. The book cited above by Goitein serves as a perfect case of how Zionist literary works are fed with these unfounded assumptions. *Jews and Arabs* truly demonstrates the essence of how race and religion come to be interchanged in the current discourse. The book poses the following important question: if Arabs and Jews belong to the same race, why does the history of the

two peoples take two different directions? The answer reveals the implausible (and acrobatic) theory that undergirds the Zionist cause. The author is methodologically unable to distinguish between the Islamic faith and Arab nationhood, and thus blames Arabs for the behavior of other peoples that adopted the religion, and blames Islam for the behavior of nations that adopted it – especially Arabs.¹⁴

If we look beyond this fatal methodological error, we find that the author commits yet another when attempting to explain the divergence of Arab and Jewish histories. The error is that what he calls the Jewish people did not form a national, geographical, civilizational or cultural unit in order for it to be compared to other peoples. If he insists on drawing such comparisons, he must regard Judaism as a race. This is why Goitein's endeavor to bridge this gap, when comparing the histories of the Arab people and the Jews, must appeal to certain metaphysical Jewish qualities. It is also what drives the author to decide that there is a racial basis for the "superiority" of the Jews over the Arabs across history – i.e., that there are inherent Jewish characteristics from which Arabs are destined to be deprived.

The author believes that the historical precedence of Judaism, in relation to other religions, has resulted in the superiority of "the Jewish human being" in terms of consciousness and value. In an acrobatic manner the author claims that Arab-Islamic culture is the result of the cultural intercourse between the Arabian Peninsula and the remnants of the kingdoms of the peninsula's south, which benefited from a prior intercourse between the kingdoms of Saba and Solomon.¹⁵ Other such laughable

opinions and acrobatics from this book of “history” will be reflected in future Zionist literature. The author, for example, believes that the difference between Arab and Jewish histories stems from the commercial mentality of the Arabs, which can only understand the logic of supply and demand, whereas the mentality of the Jews is based on principles alone.¹⁶

Such research would have arrived at opposite conclusions if it had started by distinguishing religion from nationhood – a point from which any conscientious research should set out. Had the author done this, he would not have needed to resort to such generalizations that would not be out of place in Alfred Rosenberg’s Nazi mind. But Judaism is a religion and Jews do not form a nationality; Islam is a religion and Muslims do not form a nationality; and Arabs are a nation, a part of which embraces Islam. This self-evident formula undermines the premise of the entire research project.

But this Zionist writer and others like him were actually treading the same psychological ground which they themselves had paved and turned into an arena for their activities and ideology – a set of assumptions that cannot withstand the slightest scrutiny. What, then, is the value of an artistic endeavor that deals with the Zionist cause? The difficulty of answering this question is without parallel in the history of the creative arts. The standards of Zionist literature are riven with illegitimate rationalizations, and it remains a mystery how they could have been sanctioned. It is as though the critical standards that apply to Zionist-oriented literature are exceptional, and that this blatant exceptionalism has simply become a norm.

There is a novel that cannot be described as anything other than a crude distortion of history, namely Leon Uris's *Exodus* (which will be discussed at greater length later). Yet it is commonly regarded as a historical novel. Let us turn, for now, to a Zionist authority's discussion of this work, for whom the novel's inconsistencies and contradictions are deemed to be the markers of its success and quality:

It seems to me that there has been during the last years only one English Jewish writer who has boldly made this confrontation [re-thinking or confronting the position of the Jew today] and that, surprisingly, is Leon Uris in *Exodus*. Soon after it had made its first impact in the United States, I asked one of the most representative Israelis what he thought of it. He replied that he had forced himself to read it. It was a vulgar book but it was good for the American Jews.

I have often thought about that answer and what it really meant. Did he mean that it was just good propaganda? I don't know now, but clearly Uris achieved something much more: he has written a book which has been more widely read by the present generations of American Jews (and probably also of English Jews) than the Bible, and which is better known to the younger generations than the Bible, and largely accepted by it as the authentic version of how the State of Israel came to be established.

Uris put sex, success and "James Bondism" into Zionism: he 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.

The only problem Uris did not manage to overcome is how to reconcile the facts with his fiction. He left that to others. This will not be easy, but it will not be achieved by critics who point to the literary and historical shortcomings of *Exodus*, however real these may be. For this is the image of Israel that is fixed now more firmly in the mind of the generations of our day than is that projected by either Herzl, Weizmann and even Ben-Gurion.¹⁷

A close examination of this quote leads one to an astonishing discovery: if this was written about any other novel, the novel would be regarded as a failure. The points that Jon Kimche¹⁸ and others have made about *Exodus* as positives would, by any measure of critique, obliterate any other novel.

In Kimche's opinion, the value of *Exodus* lies in the fact that it has become more ubiquitous than the Bible and that it is now regarded as an official report on Israel's establishment. He claims that the novel "did not reconcile the facts with ... fiction" and that it "put sex, success and 'James Bondism' into Zionism." This contradiction does not lead to any reservations. On the contrary, Kimche calls on those who insist on exposing the novel's historical and scientific shortcomings to come to terms with them – all for the sake of maintaining Israel's illusory image in the minds of the readers! This is deception of a peculiar kind: while a prominent Israeli figure regards the book to be "vulgar and derivative," he insists that it is

“great for Jewish Americans.”

What, then, is the purely artistic measure against which a Zionist work is judged? If everything is justified for the sake of serving a prior conclusion, what is the standard against which the quality of art may be critiqued? And why does Zionist art alone stand as an exception to the established standards of literary criticism? This tendency, above all, is what drives a critic like Mordecai Richler to state that it has become increasingly attractive for the American Jew to become a novelist, and to become controversial and distinctive as well.¹⁹ Committing technical and historical errors can suddenly count as merits, much like what has happened in countless Zionist literary works.

All this is due to the contradiction that lies within Zionist ideology itself, and its propagandistic requirement that art must perform directly in the political arena. The Zionist novel is not required, as is the case with other novels around the world, to thoroughly explore the facts. On the contrary, it is required to invent new facts at any cost, and then protect them, oftentimes, by appealing to the guilty conscience of the European critic and his illusory responsibility toward Israel.

To that end, the Zionist novel positions itself carefully by disregarding half of the facts and exaggerating the rest. A common phenomenon runs through Zionist literary works: while discussing the war of 1948 in Palestine, the author spends half of their book invoking the Holocaust in Germany during the Second World War while displaying the same competence in either entirely ignoring the Arab point of view during the very year in which the novel is set or in distorting it by representing it as laugh-

able and illegitimate. In the Zionist novel, Hitler artfully builds Israel along with the Jews. He is a protagonist who is just as effective as any Zionist one in ruthlessly paving the way for the conquerors of Palestine.

The reality that confronts the hero of a given Zionist novel, on the eve of the war in Palestine, requires a series of rationalizations to confront it, along with whatever skills the author may have to superficially distort the details of this reality. The Zionist writer must justify non-integration in the societies from which he came, and simultaneously justify the violent uprooting of Palestine's indigenous inhabitants. Such justifications in art are bound to expose the racist and fascist essence of the Zionist movement.

The common cause among Zionist writers gave rise to a shared literary trajectory, based on which an almost identical sequence of events unfolds in almost all of the novels that have been written on the establishment of Israel. The sequence of events is as follows:

1. The hero comes from Europe, in most cases, as a result of apocalyptic persecution. He is fleeing the memories of one or two recent massacres at the hands of Hitler, the effects of which remain in his mind and body. He loses his family and friends along the way, and searches for a quiet place to recover, where dormant national aspirations emerge from the depths of his unconscious to rehabilitate his pride.
2. The hero falls in love with a non-Jewish person. But this person could never be an Arab for reasons that will soon be apparent. Through this relationship, the author provides a full explanation of the Zionist

perspective and aspirations, and moderates a dialogue through which the story always puts the narrative of “Jewish torment” at the forefront – thereby entirely obscuring the heart of the matter. This results in the non-Jewish character’s discovery of personal responsibility for the catastrophe, conversion to Zionism as a redemptive measure for a sin committed elsewhere, and ultimately becoming a proponent of the Zionist cause.

3. The Arabs, being the direct adversary, are represented as individuals without a cause – often as mercenaries who either serve a foreign or, at best, feudal power. This is how the author affirms the Arabs’ mental and civilizational backwardness as an incurable disease. If there happens to be an Arab character that the hero likes and respects, it would be one who believes that Judaism is the only solution for the Arabs. Through the events of the novel, the author focuses on the “barbarism of the Arabs” and on their sheer lack of connection to the land, which they are said to have ruined over generations. This is often accompanied by the author’s attempt at exaggerating the Jewish connection to Palestine. To that end, the Jewish hero is revealed to be an astute scholar of archeological matters and the myths of the Old Testament.

4. With the above tools, the author commences the events of the novel. But he remains in need of a justification for not integrating into the society from which he came. Thus, an abrupt emphasis on the world’s oppression against the Jews constantly repeats itself. The object here is not only to present this oppression

and exaggerate it, thanks to the world's incapacity to understand the Jews; it is also to show Jewish solidarity in the face of that oppression. Other peoples are attacked from this premise through contempt and trivialization, much like how Leon Uris's *Exodus* portrayed Jewish resistance in Poland by scorning the Poles across many pages.²⁰

5. In light of the absence of geographical, linguistic, historic and economic ties among the Jews, the Zionist author cannot help but regard religion and race as a single internal factor alongside other external factors (i.e., oppression, Hitler's massacres) that push the Jews toward Palestine. Thus Zionist literary works engage in racist diatribes in various ways, through which the hero attains an absolute sense of competence and becomes mentally, physically and historically infallible. This character not only meets every challenge, but overcomes it with ease. In other words: the character turns into a caricature that has nothing to do with human experience, nor with the achievement of artistic merit.

These five points represent the broad parameters of the Zionist novel. Only the literary works of Jews who lived in Palestine before 1948 are not beholden to them for various reasons, chiefly that such writers witnessed the reality as it was, and because they did not orient their writings toward foreign audiences. *Exodus* encapsulates the above outline, along with countless other works including *Thieves in the Night* by Arthur Koestler in the mid-1940s, Robert Nathan's *A Star in the Wind*, Yael Dayan's *Dust*, Ted Berkman's *Cast a Giant Shadow*,²¹ Joseph Viertel's *The*

Last Temptation and Lester Gorn's *The Greater Glory*.²² In short, the Zionist writer is concerned with the following themes in their work:

- Absolute Jewish superiority and the infallible hero.
- The position vis-à-vis the Arabs, in particular, and other peoples more generally.
- The character of the Jewish people and how they relate to Israel.
- Zionist justifications of conquering Palestine, which include emphasizing anti-Jewish oppression in general and Hitler's massacres in particular.

6. *Jewish Infallibility and the Unworthiness of Other Peoples*

Reuben Wallenrod explains the infallibility and absolute superiority of the Jewish hero by saying that the Jewish writer “very often loses his objectivity” because “of this feeling of complete identification with life about him and his responsibility for it.” Therefore, “the emotional closeness to the events and characters lends charm to his work, but a certain myopia also results from this intimacy.”¹ The opposite is true, in fact, as we will see: when Jewish writers are indeed mentally and physically close to the events of the novel, they tend not to lack objectivity as much as the Zionist writer who writes from a distance. For this reason, we will notice a correlation between the lack of objectivity and the practice of writing from a distance: Leon Uris in *Exodus* not only suffers from myopia, but also from near-complete mental blindness.² Yael Dayan, on the other hand, is relatively more objective because she is closer to the events.

What is truly worth noting is Wallenrod’s claim that a feeling of absolute unity with one’s identity and its responsibilities represents a “logical reason” for losing one’s objectivity. This can only be true under one condition: when that identity and its responsibilities are not objective to begin with. Wallenrod’s observation would be completely correct if rephrased in the following

terms: the Jewish writer's defense of an unobjective cause can only be achieved through unobjective means. This is exactly what explains the contradictions that befall Jewish writers of fiction.

In David Shimoni (born in 1886 and arrived in Palestine in 1909), we will soon encounter a poet who was truly close to the events. In his poem *The Grave* he discusses a man called Katriel who disliked being described as a pioneer. He protests against the imposed idea that he had carried out a great sacrifice: "there is nothing to praise, for the life they left was horrible." He sees Palestine as the only place where the Jewish individual may exist with freedom and dignity.³ He also protests the aura of heroism that has been imputed to the work of the Jewish youth in Palestine – because this is the only country in the world that provided Jews with an opportunity to live. But such a perspective would not last for long: the infallible Jewish hero will take its place and represent absolute superiority in every sense. Little by little, this character will come to represent a discernible phenomenon in Zionist literature, quite distinct from the crude heroes and villains in tales of the Second World War and cheap novels of the American West. This is not a case that can be described as "myopia," as Wallenrod would have it. It is, rather, a recalcitrant psychological complex that disguises itself in a deep-seated and absolutely racist sense of superiority.

At an early point, the Jewish writer Yaakov Rabinowitz (1875-1949) presented his character Amosai in an eponymous novel in the following way:

[he is] an extraordinary man. Living dangerously, he is equal to all occasions. He goes wherever he is most needed: he follows an inner call when he leaves the

organization of the watchmen to become an agricultural laborer in a village and returns again to his duty as a watchman when the need arises. He volunteers for the corrupt, degenerate Turkish army in order to do his duty and to serve as an example to others. During all these wanderings he meets dull, mediocre people – drab, tired, weak and arrogant. In contrast to them, Amosai is shown as the ideal new man, the man of the future.⁴

This represents a total abandonment of artistic standards in which the hero “passes before the reader like a ghost, in spite of the hundreds of pages dedicated to his adventures.”⁵

It does not seem to be coincidental for the infallible and superior character to have been born at the turn of the century. As can be noted in the novel *The Great Madness* by Avigdor Hameiri (born in 1886), where it is claimed that the First World War was “the great madness... [H]eroism is forced upon the characters. The Jews do not want war and do not support it, but once a part of it, they are compelled to fight as best they can – and they do.”⁶ This hero will continue to advance toward his superhuman form – or psychological complex – until we read of a time in which “untrained little lawyers, entomologists and milkmen from Berlin were able to force twelve Syrian tanks to flee after firing a few unintended rounds... Jews will never tire of recalling such gallantry.”⁷ Hence, “a realistic appraisal of their deeds makes them feel slighted. Even building a house, for them, is a feat whose greatness cannot be captured in words.”⁸ This position entails a critical set of ethical and artistic consequences on the role that Zionist literature came to play. It is the point of entry

from which the superiority complex became a position of unabashed racism toward other peoples and religions – i.e., the position which Hitler later championed.

As regards the Zionist novel, the question of Palestine can be summarized in this sentence: “on this land, David slayed Goliath ... and today: another David will slay another Goliath.”⁹ The Jewish character is a prophet of miraculous proportions. More than that, he fancies himself an instrument of God, which doubtlessly renders him nothing more than a clown. Thus, an unending parade of absurdity passes before the eyes of the reader of Zionist literature that is at odds with the most elementary of human character-types – not to mention the most basic artistic standards.

The reader encounters the conquest of al-Jiyya (near al-Majdal) at the hands of seven semi-armed Jewish men in a broken military truck they had acquired from a battle with the Arabs – conquering without orders, without losing a single man and with an ease that astonishes their own commander.¹⁰ And merely thirty Jewish men were able to conquer Acre and defeat its protectors in lightning speed, of whom “God knows how many Arabs [there were].”¹¹ This is almost identical to the way that a group of Jewish boys were able to discipline a massive number of Arab invaders in Safad.¹² As for the villages that extend from Safad to Acre, “exactly 43 Jewish boys and girls” were assigned to confront an Arab invasion. In Safad, the writer provides a more precise number: “1,214 Jews were surrounded by 13,400 Arabs ... or a single Jewish man per 11.1 Arabs.” Yet, the writer proceeds to say that even this number is not entirely accurate because most of the Jews of Safad were religious men who do not

fight, and the Arabs were in control of the strategic areas of the town. But this fact, of course, did not undermine the superiority of the Jews and their occupation of Safad with unparalleled ease.¹³

In *Exodus*, the English officer Malcolm says: "I like Jewish soldiers... The Hebrew warrior is the finest, for he fights and lives close to ideals. This land is real to him. He lives with great glories all around him. Your chaps in the Haganah probably constitute the most highly educated and intellectual as well as idealistic body of men under arms in the entire world."¹⁴ And so we find the Jewish character Mundek to be "voted the military leader [during the Second World War] although he was not yet nineteen."¹⁵ We find twelve-year-old Dov becoming the best forger of documents among the Polish resistance¹⁶ and singlehandedly countering the gunfire of three infamous and well-armed villains, "knocking one to the floor and compelling the rest to flee."¹⁷ When the Palmach men ran out of ammo, they managed to "force the Arabs to flee by firing firecrackers and blaring the sound of explosions through loudspeakers, which they had hung on trees."¹⁸

These are the sort of Arab fighters who would believe that Jews were using atom bombs in their attacks, which would prompt them to surrender while sobbing or fleeing while chanting "Hashiroma" instead of Hiroshima.¹⁹ David of *Exodus* would declare that "there never existed a people, anywhere, who fight for the sake of freedom in the way that ours did."²⁰ Another character named David would affirm the pronouncement: "I think that no one in the world is brave any more, except our own people."²¹ And behold the lesson that one draws from a Catholic priest's encounter with a Jewish person: "the

Catholic puts himself at God's mercy and leaves miracles to the saints. But the Jew takes it upon himself to make them."²² And he does enact miracles: "you can never pay a Jew to be an informer"²³ – despite the fact that "a person of Jewish descent... like [Karl] Lueger²⁴ played an indirect but important role in the worst massacre of the Jews in history, that which took place under Hitler. Hitler said that it was Lueger who first convinced him of the correctness of the anti-Semitic position. Lueger was Hitler's hero."²⁵

The world cannot help but surrender before such a hero. Hence we find Major Allan Alistair, Britain's Intelligence Chief in Cyprus, declare in a novel that "there is nothing we can do to frighten [these Jews]"²⁶ as they are "armed and they are not behind barbed wire [in Palestine]. They eat little men like you for breakfast."²⁷ Intellectually, Zionists are "very clever people... They can argue a camel into thinking he is a mule. Good Lord... [T]wo hours with Chaim Weizmann and I'm about to join the Zionists myself."²⁸ This sense of superiority also includes the moral dimension as well, as Jews who bomb Arab cities ensure that they do not entail any destruction or casualties,²⁹ whereas Arab bombs – astonishingly – only kill children.³⁰ We encounter boorish Jews aboard a Palestine-bound ship who discover, just at the right moment, "the most magnificent sense of morality and fighting spirit, which even surprised them."³¹ While a piece by Tchaikovsky is playing, "Arab fighter jets bombed Tel Aviv, but none of the members of the audience cared or moved... [T]hey could have died at any moment, but beauty is rare."³² Even if they were afraid, there existed what was even more real than fear: the "Jewish sense of

humor, which never dried across 2,000 years of wandering.”³³ And when the Syrian gunners’ heavy fire forced the Ein Gev settlement to live underground, “schools continued on schedule, the small newspaper never skipped an edition, and the pious did not miss a minute of synagogue.”³⁴

Michener tells us in *The Source* that there is an archeologist in every Jewish family.³⁵ If these impeccable people were asked to fight, it would be “just a scratch. We’ve won, naturally. The cowards. They wouldn’t even fight, though some were pretty good.”³⁶ The combination of all of these virtues necessitates an astonishing Christian realization. A character called Kitty “learned that it is impossible for one to be Christian without being Jewish in spirit.”³⁷ Despite the fact that this character suffered mightily, that suffering takes the following form:

Mark: “Kitty Fremont has suffered more than one person has the right to suffer.”

Ari: “Suffered? I wonder if Kitty Fremont knows the meaning of the word.”

Mark: “[D]amn you, Ben Canaan, damn you. What makes you think that Jews own a copyright on suffering? ... [Y]ou see, I like people with human weaknesses.”

Ari: “I never have them during working hours.”³⁸

Given that the infallible Jewish hero was surrounded only by men who knew no human weaknesses at the time of action, he cruises through absolute victories without a moment of hesitation. Artistically, *Exodus* represents that

self-evident truth: “there is no confusion in knowing the hero and the scoundrel, no mystery in defining right and wrong. The main problem is that the characters of the novels did not ever go into the world. They withhold expression and are not remarkable personalities.”³⁹ This shows how Zionist literature promotes its cause without any regard for the truth, nor the price that may be incurred by distorting and suppressing it. As a result, one witnesses farcical battles that even Mickey Mouse would not dare replicate.

We see in such battles how the passengers of a ship called “The Promised Land” are able to thwart two fully-armed British destroyers, Apex and Dunston Hull, while migrating to Palestine in secret, using nothing but rocks and water hoses in a confrontation that lasted no more than five hours.⁴⁰ The writer fails to mention a consequential and significant fact, namely, that Jews themselves were the ones that bombed the ship of migrants (the SS *Patria*) as it was sailing along the shore, “drowning 250 people in order to create a propaganda spectacle that embarrasses Britain and pushes the policy of migration forward.”⁴¹

The Zionist novel does not merely exaggerate the facts; it invents them. Koestler’s *Thieves in the Night* admits that after a year of his death by a bullet that pierced his head because he could not keep it down, young Naphtali, who was known for his cowardice, “became our hero and local patron saint.”⁴² Yael Dayan evinces the same absurdity in *Envy the Frightened*, where she speaks through Gideon: “You little bitch!... Go to Udi and build of the land [sic] and have half a dozen heroes around you .”⁴³ Upon listening to Ben-Gurion, the observer suddenly

finds that this psychological complex is not just a literary invention: “our victory in Sinai was not just the greatest in the history of Israel alone, but the greatest victory in the history of the entire world.”⁴⁴ Amnon Kapeliouk⁴⁵ admits the existence of a certain phenomenon as a result of all this: “after all we say and do, we look at [the Arabs] from above and don’t take them seriously. We feel superior to them and it is hard to imagine that this feeling will disappear one day.”⁴⁶ An Arab from the occupied territories bitterly observed a self-evident conviction in Israel: that “the Jews will teach the Arabs how to prosper in their countries.”⁴⁷

Such an ostentatious sense of absolute superiority and divine infallibility was not without consequences. It established a racist position so clearly that it is hard for a critic to resist the conclusion that the European and American currents that admired Zionist literature (especially *Exodus*) were objectively and surreptitiously satisfying the needs of a concealed racist position, the most important aspect of which is not Jewish superiority as such but the position it exposes toward other peoples as well – especially the Arabs. It is a position that can only be described as racist.

In principle, the Zionist cause could not justify its conquest of Palestine without leaning on the same justifications of all other conquests throughout history – i.e., by citing physical, civilizational, mental and moral superiority, the other facet of which is how the conqueror directs his gaze at the subjects of his conquest. In this regard, the Zionist movement had to accomplish two simultaneous missions through the novel: first, to justify the non-integration of Jews in their European societies,

and, second, to justify uprooting an entire people from their land.

According to Nahum Goldmann, “the purpose of the Jewish state was to preserve the Jewish people, which was threatened by the lifting of restrictions and integration.”⁴⁸ Yet the same Nahum Goldmann later called on the Jews of the United States to integrate into US society. *The Jewish Observer* came to discover that it was only in the Soviet Union and the Arab countries that Jews encountered the issue of dual-loyalty.⁴⁹ Regardless, Goldmann then went on to announce that it was not important to work against the social integration of the Jews – even in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.⁵⁰ These blatant contradictions underline the challenges that the Zionist novel had to face. Such political maneuvers had to be reflected in literary works, where the issue is contended with ever more pressingly, and where the racist refusal to socially integrate is made more apparent.

In these Zionist works of art, the entire world’s peoples are subjected to varying degrees of contempt: the Poles are cowards, the Germans are barbarians, the Turks are corrupt, the Greeks are servile, the Arabs are deserters and traitors, the English are complicit, the Americans are opportunistic and so on. “Perhaps Armatau may be a Turk, but he can be trusted.”⁵¹ “Mandria the Greek would have resented being dismissed like a taxi driver, but he was getting used to taking orders from Ben Canaan.”⁵² There were “very few Poles [that] ran the risk of harboring a Jew. Others extorted every penny from the Jews and then turned them over to the Germans for a reward.”⁵³ Poland in its entirety could not withstand Hitler’s advance for more than twenty-six days, but Jews, according to this

narrative, with thirty people, ten guns and six rifles were able to resist for far longer.⁵⁴ And the English did not do much in Palestine besides throwing their weight behind the Arabs and exercising unparalleled oppression against the Jews.⁵⁵ The Americans, on the other hand, helped the Jews because they feel that they stand accused and were merely assuaging their guilty conscience.⁵⁶

But all of these positions do not compare with what is written about the Arabs. If the reader tries to understand the Zionist writer's position towards Arabs as merely that of direct enemies who must be fought, they will soon realise that the superlative contempt in which they are held cannot be explained as an exigency of battle alone. Far more than that, it is a justification for the uprooting of an entire people and an absolute unwillingness to find a single square centimeter of common ground upon which dialogue can take place.

What does the war of Palestine mean to the Arabs, according to the narrative of Zionist novels? It is, without any doubt, an unnecessary luxury, no more than a question of hiring or bribing impulsive mercenaries. This image derives its tragic nature from the objective it was intended to serve: the migrating Jews from Europe, who have lost their true connection with Palestinian soil as a homeland 2,000 years ago, are represented as the only ones who will fight for it to the death – against the people who have actually been living there for over 2,000 years. The 600 pages of *Exodus*, for example, lead its author to the following conclusion: “If the Arabs of Palestine loved their land, they could not have been forced from it – much less run from it without real cause. The Arabs had little to live for, much less to fight for, this

is not the reaction of a man who loves his land.”⁵⁷ This claim is a mere rationalization. Avoiding reality compels the author to distort it.

The Zionist writer is required to justify the uprooting of a people by deciding that Arabs do not deserve a country. If Zionist writers succeeded in avoiding the question of how to transform a country of another people into a national Jewish homeland prior to the war of Palestine (case in point: Herzl’s *The Old New Land*), contemporary writers must address this point because it is now a reality. But instead of doing so, Zionist writers chose to take a position of essentially declaring that the Arabs are a people that do not deserve to live in the first place.

There are no proponents of the theory that allows a “civilized” people to uproot a backward people besides followers of Nazism. And although this theory has been rejected on a world-historical scale, the Zionist novel represents it in an inverted form with the consent of a wide section of Western readership. In spite of this acceptance, the Zionist emphasis on Arab backwardness was pure slander. The Zionist novel was required to justify the behavior of the movement that led to this travesty. It was unfortunate for the Arabs to become the direct enemies of that movement. Its position against the Arabs, in any case, exposes Zionism’s true position with regard to other peoples more generally.

More on the features of this narrative: Arabs are “experts in building on top of the civilizations of other nations.”⁵⁸ They “haven’t [produced] anything worth showing off, except cabarets and filthy postcards, from Tangier to Teheran – not for the last thousand years.”⁵⁹ When involved in battle, Arabs do not have any incentive

to win and “if they died, they died for their rulers, for the *effendis*, or for loot. The Jews who died, died for a better reason.”⁶⁰ “The Egyptian Chief-of-Staff selling [sic] secrets to the Germans; Cairo all decked out to welcome Rommel as their liberator; the Iraqis going to the Germans; the Syrians going to the Germans; the Mufti of Jerusalem a Nazi agent.”⁶¹ The lives of Arab children seem to be “useless, as opposed to the morale of Jewish children; there did not seem to be any kind of fun, songs, games or goals among Arab children; it was an inert existence; a new generation is born along a desert caravan that travels along an unending desert.”⁶² Arabs cannot aim well with their weapons. They abandon their dead, leaving it to the Jews to bury them.⁶³ If it is indeed true that they know how to operate tanks, they do so in their *jalabiyya*.⁶⁴ While Jews are able to buy the loyalty of any Turk with ease, they know that the only thing that Arabs can understand is a fist.⁶⁵

Koestler spends seventeen pages describing the customs of an Arab village in an insufferably disparaging and arrogant manner.⁶⁶ When he discusses a land sale in another Arab village, he tells us that “the elders of each clan had to be bribed separately, and the thumbprints of each of the 563 members obtained including the babes’ and village idiot’s.”⁶⁷ The author repeats that sentence that often stokes the imagination of Europeans and their mockery. He does not tire from substituting the phrase “the father decided to marry his son” with “he decided to buy Issa a good wife, regardless of cost.”⁶⁸ Uris sings the same seductive tune when the Jewish hero tells Kitty, the American, that an Arab “wanted to buy you. He offered me six camels.”⁶⁹ He goes on: before the

honorable Jewish fighter, “Arab thugs slither[ed] along the ground with knives between their teeth.”⁷⁰ In other instances, “they crawl slowly, followed by the officers of the group, forcing them to carry on crawling by pointing their rifles at their backs.”⁷¹ When one of the leaders informed Fawzi al-Qawuqji⁷² that his men decided to fight until their last drop of blood, the reader must expect that that was not based on a deep or virtuous incentive. Thus, upon listening to these men’s speech, al-Qawuqji says: “Good. They are costing us almost a dollar a month in pay alone.”⁷³ When the Arab was ready to die for one dollar, it is natural for Arab children to roam the streets to offer the Jews sex with their virgin sisters.⁷⁴ When “no Jewess would risk living with him [an English officer], and there were no English women available. This left only an Arab woman”.⁷⁵

In terms of individual bravery, Arabs are even more pathetic: “if not fighting behind fortifications of armed concrete, they are totally useless... [T]o walk to Cairo or the Suez is less difficult than cutting butter with a knife.”⁷⁶ The English officer Malcolm in *Exodus* provides a rare testimony: “If an Arab comes out of his coffeehouse and takes a pot shot at a kibbutz from a thousand yards distant, he thinks he is a brave man. The time has come to test these bloody heathens.”⁷⁷ Therefore, whenever Jews stroll around, they encounter deserted Arab villages, “whose inhabitants had been ordered by [King] Abdullah either to fight – which they had no intention of doing – or to flee, which they did.”⁷⁸ This is also why they don’t “play rough”, but rather play “mean.”⁷⁹ Likewise, the Jewish character Jossi was able to invade the very heart of a Bedouin tribe’s territory, whose men were armed with

rifles, and whip their chief in front of everyone, make him beg for mercy and discipline the entire tribe without the slightest resistance.⁸⁰ An amusing scene follows: a Jewish audience was queuing before a typhoid vaccination center, among whom there stood a burly Arab in torn clothes and a fez. The Jews would emerge from the vaccination room expressionless, whereas after the Arab entered the clinic, “there was the sound of shouting in anger, and then an unearthly shriek, followed by silence.” Then, Elsa went in with David, her seven-year-old son. After taking the vaccine, Elsa told Dr. Albert: “I’m afraid he hasn’t been very brave, Doctor”. And Dr. Albert said: “Lot braver than the Arab that was here.”⁸¹

Another scene in the same novel features a large number of Arabs who piled up on a single Jewish person in Jerusalem and tore him to pieces, but were quick to flee as soon as a few Haganah boys arrived.⁸² The reader may contrast a confused Jewish girl, who spoke English, German, Danish, French and Hebrew, and an Arab shopkeeper who only knew “how to jabber in Arabic.” As if this alone can definitively prove the pointlessness of seeking common ground between Jewish superiority and Arab backwardness, what is even more remarkable is that “the floor had not been swept for at least ten years.”⁸³ If an individual who belongs to a people of such a level “were to go to Jordana [a Jewish woman] and tell her of his love? She would spit on him, of course.”⁸⁴ This wretched man encounters a worse fate when he asks for Jordana’s hand from her brother, whereupon the latter’s fist “shot out and smashed Taha’s jaw. The Arab was sent sprawling to his hands and knees” as a response to his outrageous provocation!⁸⁵

But these countless examples do not mean that praise for Arabs does not exist. One finds such praise, however, to be much worse than the denigrations. It is only meant to serve the idea of Jewish superiority and their right to the land – i.e., the very premises of the Zionist novel. In *Exodus*, we find an Arab with whom the author is very sympathetic because he, of course, believes that “the Jews are the only salvation for the Arab people. The Jews are the only ones in a thousand years who have brought light to this part of the world.”⁸⁶ When the Arab character is allowed to offer his perspective on the ongoing struggle, he would typically say: “The devil may take them [the Jewish settlers] away, but he could leave their tractors. They’re dogs and sons of bitches but they know how to work. They will grow tomatoes and melons and God knows what out of that stony hill... [W]e are too lazy, ya Abu; by God...”⁸⁷

In *The Source*, by James Michener, we encounter an Arab called Jamil Tabari (spelled in the book as “Jamail”) whose task, in the thousand pages that the novel spans, is to defend the Jews and their right to Palestine. The character’s value is further emphasized because he is cast as having served as the leader of the Arab resistance in Acre in 1948. The Arab character explains to his foreign peers that the war was an invasion of Arab desert-dwellers who were astonished by Jewish farmlands.⁸⁸ This Arab goes further than the relatively modest point of view⁸⁹ of the Jewish hero by asserting that the Zionist conquest of Palestine was earned through Jewish superiority and that Arabs are the most destructive people to farming, as they leave a wilderness behind them wherever they go.⁹⁰ And when an Arab expresses his “patriotism,” it comes in the

form of pleading with the Jewish character to make him feel like he belongs in Israeli society.⁹¹ Such “patriotism” is also expressed by announcing that the Arabs should resort to the English sporting spirit of accepting defeat because “[if we do that,] we might pick up where the Greeks left us 2,000 years ago.”⁹²

This is the same kind of Arab who induces the Jewish character to disavow the idea that Arabs fought the Crusaders by denying that it ever happened.⁹³ He also provides him with false and demeaning ideas about Islam.⁹⁴ Where the Zionist author does not practically aspire to more than praise for the Jews and denigration for the Arabs – which the author plants into the mouth of an Arab character – the testimony comes from another “ally” of the Arabs and in some cases, the English. As the English character John Halliwell put it:

that chap Mustafa over in Katamon... [T]he fellow who owns all of these houses there. You know him. Devilish nice chap. Never a word said against the Hebrew. Just polite and nice as could be... I had dinner at his place last week. Right on the floor. Absolutely charming.⁹⁵

This feudal landlord, who does not yet know what a table is, represents the abandonment of the most important question of the hour: he did not utter a word about the Jews at a time when the country was ablaze with war.

The most amusing example in *The Source*, however, is when Mr. Brook and his wife, two elderly American photographers at the holy sites, criticize Israel in the following manner:

You go to a historic spot like Tiberias, hoping to find

something that will evoke for people in Iowa the romantic quality of the place, and what do you find? Housing developments, ... bus stations, ... a tourist hotel, ... and on the very edge of that sacred lake, what? A kibbutz... I remember when we first came here ... it looked just as it might have in Bible times... But today, you can hardly take a photograph anywhere that tells an audience clearly that you're in the Holy Land. Now it's all towns and building developments ... [whereas] in Jordan today you can still find hundreds of scenes with people in Biblical costume, ... little donkeys, ... heavenly-faced children playing by open wells...⁹⁶

With such "criticism" of Israel and praise for the Arabs, the author seeks to protect his artistic integrity in the most comical manner while preserving the propagandistic message to the greatest possible extent. As for the moment when arguments rage between conflicting points of view, the Arab takes it upon himself to provide Zionist rationalizations in a spectacular display. The Jew would say to the Arab: "this hill did not produce anything since our ancestors left it, you've neglected it and let its slopes fall apart. We will clean that hill of rocks and will bring tractors and fertilized soil." The Arab responds: "What the valley bears is enough for us... Where God put stones, man should not carry them away. We shall live as our fathers lived and we do not want your money and your tractors and your fertilizers."⁹⁷ This is an open admission from the mouth of the Arab about the reality of the Arabs' destructive role and their insistence on backwardness in an astonishing manner.

We observe another Arab who delivers a lecture on

the virtues of the Jewish conquest of Palestine while under the captivity of Jewish soldiers. He expresses, at the same time, his tragic backwardness when he tells an unprompted story about people who touch the screen with their hands while viewing a cinematic film.⁹⁸ Such disparity provoked the fury of an American journalist in *A Star in the Wind*, when he explodes in the face of an Arab who had insisted the land was his:

[T]here never was a house here. There was a desert and a stinking swamp and pox-ridden fellahin... Your population was on the decrease for centuries because half your babies were dying from filth in their cradles, and since the Jews came it 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.⁹⁹

Zionist novelists adore this tune and repeat it to a revolting degree. A foreign observer in *A Star in the Wind* discusses the "meanness" of the Arabs as a self-evident truth, after "these young Israelis, these *sabras*, had lived with them, had helped them with their crops and fields, had ministered to their health."¹⁰⁰ When an Arab man expresses his point of view while clashing with Jews, he admits his extreme backwardness and refuses any assistance toward progress.¹⁰¹ Even palm trees, that primitive and ubiquitous plant that fills the remotest deserts, supposedly did not arrive in Palestine until the Jewish Yarkoni smuggled a hundred grafts from Iraq.¹⁰²

All of this amounts to what is historically and objectively the most vicious defamation campaign that has ever been perpetrated by a propaganda apparatus. The

Jewish writer Joshua Barzilai seems far removed from this narrative when he wrote the following, upon his arrival in Palestine at the end of the nineteenth century: “I cannot describe the trees; how can I describe the beauty of the palm trees, the olives, the figs? ... [I]f heaven resembles this, it must be very beautiful.”¹⁰³ This, of course, preceded Yarkoni’s smuggled palm tree grafts to Palestine by about a quarter of a century, when the total number of Jews in Palestine did not exceed 8,000.¹⁰⁴ More importantly, these words were said before Zionist propaganda took it upon itself to represent Palestinian land as an arid desert – and over half a century before the Irishman O’Connor¹⁰⁵ said: “I hear they’ve made the desert bloom like the rose. That should be a beautiful thing.”¹⁰⁶ It is unclear if this garden of Eden of which the Irishman had heard from a distance was the same garden of *The Fifth Heaven*, where Jewish children would plant tree branches in the morning to trick tourists into making donations to turn the desert into a paradise, a scheme inspired and arranged by their nanny under the slogan: “life is a struggle, a trick in return for a treat.”¹⁰⁷ Nor do we know if this paradise is the “Zodman Forest” of the Jewish American, who donated money to Israel to plant a forest named after him – only for the Israelis to place a placard with his name at an old forest to trick him into donating more.¹⁰⁸

All of the above puts the Jewish individual in the position of playing a “civilizing role” that must be carried out in spite of the opposition of the population in question. He thus becomes transformed from an invader to a reformer, from an outcast to a virtuous father-figure. We hear him speak with bitterness about scenes that he could not forget: “I can’t seem to forget the Arab slave

markets in Saudi Arabia and the first time I was invited to watch a man have his hands amputated as punishment for stealing.”¹⁰⁹ It is because he cannot forget that his aggression takes on the grandeur of a “reform movement.”

7. Zionist Rationalizations for the Usurpation of Palestine

Arnold Toynbee once said that,

I can understand the Jewish demand, after all of their suffering they have endured at the hands of the Germans, is to be given authority in a certain place in the world to exercise their own sovereignty... [I]f this must happen, this authority would have to come at the expense of the West, which carried out the cruelest horrors against the Jews, and not against the Arabs. This point seems easy and correct to me, but when I once mentioned it in a Western country, which wasn't Germany or England, it was met with cries of laughter.¹

It seems that Zionist propaganda has succeeded in entrenching, in the mind of the Western reader, an idea at odds with the simple and humane formula that Toynbee proposed so clearly. This entrenchment is especially reflected in the Zionist novel.

One of the justifications for conquering Palestine essentially rests upon the premise that it is a response to Hitler's massacres against the Jews especially, and against the oppression from which the Jews have suffered in general. It is thus nearly impossible for one to find Palestine

treated in a Zionist novel without a reference to Hitler's massacres. It seems that the Zionist author is entirely aware of the value of this blackmailing tool against the minds of his Western readers. This is how he guarantees their sympathies from the first few pages, regardless of any errors that he may commit.

Yet, the key point, as articulated by Toynbee, is never addressed: what do the Arabs of Palestine have to do with paying the price of the West's massacres against the Jews, especially given that Jews lived in Arab societies peaceably almost constantly throughout the ages? Though self-evident, this question remains unaddressed, and all of the attempts of the Zionist novel to contain it fall into fatal – and sometimes comical – contradictions.

It seems that this is the question with which Leon Uris was preoccupied when he admitted that “Arab massacres of Jews were never the calculated genocide of Europe... The Arabs had become too busy plotting against each other to be much concerned with the ... Jews.”²

In *The Source*, Michener also justifies the absence of “Turkish” massacres against the Jews by claiming that “the Turk did not favor the Jew because he preferred him to the Christian; on the contrary, the Turk, like God, found the Jews to be a stiff-necked people, most difficult to manage.”³ Before the “problem” of Islam's non-oppression of the Jews in Medina upon the *Hijra*,⁴ Michener elects to say that “799 Jews rejected Muhammad ... but it was impossible to execute them all. They were good farmers and they were needed on the land, so a grudging truce was arranged.”⁵ This crude contortion of the truth leads Uris to dedicate 40 pages⁶ of his novel to provide a detailed and dramatic presentation of Hitler's massa-

cles through the words of a child. This is the grotesque opening through which the author justifies the crimes that the Jews have committed ten years later and 10,000 miles away against a people who have nothing to do with Hitler's Germany. This is precisely what Michener does in *The Source* as well.

In another novel, we encounter a greater horror. The Jewish character Pat, for example, who is distressed by the death of his lover Sarah, destroys two Arab tanks and sets them on fire. "He was tired, but he felt that his body was light in an unbelievable way; he turned toward the two tanks and said: this is for you, Sarah, for you."⁷ Sarah died in a forced labor camp in Hitler's Germany. For his part, the distressed lover recounts his tragedy 10 years later and 10,000 miles away from the camp in which she died – while attacking Arabs, not Germans. The author finds this to be entirely logical.

Then we listen to an American colonel who volunteered to fight alongside the Jews against the Arabs say, without ever having heard of Herzl: "I was at Dachau. The bodies were still piled up like cordwood. After that, I didn't need any more lessons in the importance of a Jewish homeland."⁸ It is an astonishing, uneven and illogical equation. Why does all this happen? Because "every time the Palmach shells an English warehouse, or sends some Arabs to hell, I earn more respect... [Y]ou, here, are fighting my battle to earn respect."⁹ It is a very complicated matter, the essence of which is rationalization, not explanation: to fabricate a reason because none exists in the first place. Likewise, the character of Joseph in *Thieves in the Night* becomes a terrorist in Palestine because Dina was killed in Germany. In *Exodus*, we find a

ludicrous association disguised as an attempt to address the insoluble problem:

Ours not to reason why ... I can't seem to forget the Arab slave markets in Saudi Arabia and the first time I was invited to watch a man have his hands amputated as punishment for stealing, and somehow I can't forget those Jews at Bergen-Belsen.¹⁰

The phrase "not to reason why" represents the heart of the matter. What is the reason, then? It might be that "Karen, like all Jews, should go to Palestine. It was the only place a Jew could live with dignity."¹¹ But this opinion is only half of it. What about the indigenous population? An astonishing response: "have [the British] more right to be [in Palestine] than the survivors of Hitler?"¹² We magically return, via a bridge of fabrications, to the same Hitlerian whip, without arriving at an actual answer.

Arthur Koestler obscures the crux of the issue when he attempts to provide an answer through an American journalist. After Kamel Effendi¹³ had insisted that Palestine is his home, the American says: "Aw, chuck that talk about your house... For the last five hundred years it wasn't yours but the Turks."¹⁴ Koestler should be the first to know that the Turks' conquest of Palestine does not erase the rights of its original inhabitants. Feigning ignorance of this fact, however, leads Koestler further. He justifies Zionist violence when explaining Simeon's sympathies with the Irgun terrorist gang after he had discovered the British intended to stop Jewish immigration.¹⁵ But Koestler himself declared that, despite being Jewish, "I feel fully English when I'm abroad."¹⁶ He wrote his novel to justify violence and migration. The question

is: how is he allowed to reconcile his “Englishness” with his Jewish identity while demanding that Kamal Effendi cease to identify as Palestinian as a result of Ottoman colonialism?

Matters get so thoroughly obscured here, the reality of which the author has no desire to confront. His justifications multiply in a vast expanse of contradictions and fabrications instead: in a conversation on violence between a Catholic priest and the Jewish Dr. Dreyfoos, the latter tells the former that the Catholics resorted to violence during the Crusades, to which the priest says: “Oh, but the Crusaders came to liberate Jerusalem.” Dreyfoos responds: “And that’s also our goal, as Jerusalem is also a sacred city to us.”¹⁷ This response ignores the fact that the city is also sacred for other religions as well. We encounter yet another omission when Ben Kronstein says: “Two thousand years I waited for this... The Jews will have a country. This was the meaning of the vote. The Jews will have a country – without British soldiers, without a landlord; they were to have a country of their own.”¹⁸ His notion of “waiting for two thousand years” omits the fact that there exists an indigenous population in this land that has been “endowed” to the Jews. This becomes ludicrous when juxtaposed with Koestler’s claims that Palestine belonged to the Turks because they colonized it for five hundred years – when it supposedly also belongs to the Jews two thousand years after they left it!

But the fabricated justifications for conquest do not end there. Another amusing display can be found in a novel set on the Egyptian-Israeli front. The Jewish character says:

Jews against Egyptians. This is a historical matter in

Torahic form: enslaved Jews built the pyramids under the whip of the Egyptians and Moses fled with his people to the Promised Land. In today's terms: Moses pushes the Egyptians toward the Suez Canal. After three thousand years of history, can the Egyptians pick up the whip once more?¹⁹

This alone, at the very least, reveals the obstinance of Zionist novelists, which incurs a dear price as they go to great lengths to construct a spurious narrative around the Palestine war by placing it in a fabricated history that spans five thousand years of supposed pharaonic enslavement – before expressing fear of the recurrence of that fabricated horror.

This is why the author of *A Star in the Wind* recounts all of those who featured in the history of Palestine without mentioning the Arabs²⁰ – and then when they are mentioned here or there, the purpose is to employ them for another justification. Uris summed it up when he wrote: “Israel today stands as the greatest single instrument for bringing the Arab people out of the Dark Ages.”²¹ Arabs reject such benevolence because “the priests told them to hate you and because they believe the priests and are illiterate and live in the thirteenth century and haven't read your Marx.”²² Elsewhere, it is claimed that there is a minority of Arab intelligentsia that fights all that is theoretical; as for the majority of Palestinian Arabs, and the rest of the Arabs, they fight without any faith for a land that they know belongs to the Jews.²³ As for the Jews, “they had carved a green and living homeland out of fetid swamp and bleak desert.”²⁴

The vicious cycle keeps spinning its frauds without addressing the real issue: namely, that this is revenge

against the West and Hitler's sins at the expense of the Arabs – while claiming to save them. It represents absolution of the Nazi criminals with Arab blood. The vicious cycle provides Zionist propaganda with the justifications for violence, aggression and seizure of land “which can only please those who search for romance in legendary epics.”²⁵ All this would lead to the most grotesque process of indoctrination not only on a global scale but also among Jewish circles, where this idea would be cultivated and truly believed and where the racist spirit would be nurtured.

In the spring of 1967, an experimental exhibition took place in Israeli towns before a carefully selected audience. A 17 minute tape called “I, Ahmad” was played, which was described as a “documentary” about the life of the Arab youth in occupied Palestine. This tape was in fact nothing more than an ingenious call for the Arabs of the occupied territories to emigrate out of Israel. Its hero stood at the end of it to say: “the best I can do now is to go somewhere, to Canada or America... The important thing is not to be here and look at their women. They fear me, they hate me. I never knew how an ostracized person felt.” The clip clearly urged Arabs to regard their departure from Palestine as the only thing that they ought to do.

Playing the clip to a test-audience yielded astonishing results. The authorities registered the audience's reaction as follows. A blonde girl cried: “go to Damascus!” To the applause of the audience, another exclaimed: “find me, in any Arab country, a young Arab man whose conditions are better than Ahmad's!” And an old man with a Russian accent said: “when I came here, was my condition

any worse than his?" Another man asked: "why don't you mention the positive side? Didn't we bring electricity to the Arab villages?" When one of the organizers attempted to calm the angry audience, during a scene in which a Jewish woman called Mrs. Rabinosovich refuses to rent a room to an Arab unless he registers his name as Abraham Mizrahi, a man shouted: "take them to your home so they can sleep there, if you love them so much." Ultimately, it was not possible to play the rest of the clip.²⁶ The audience's response was definitely rooted in the narrative of Zionist novels, as it ignored the heart of the matter by discussing the trials of the Jews and their illusory civilizing role. And despite the superficial disagreement between the clip and the audience, the consensus was that Arabs must leave their land.²⁷ This was and remains to be the undeclared, yet most impactful, intention of the Zionist movement.

We encounter Jewish writers who lived in Palestine prior to 1948, who participated in the war of aggression and have offered, in recent years, short stories and some novels that are more objective than those who wrote from afar. Uris, for instance, who was further from the events than Yael Dayan, and thus more lacking in objectivity, is more prone to exaggerations and is more committed to the premise of Zionist propaganda and its contradictions. Dayan's proximity to the events is what made *Envy the Frightened* try to justify its infallible hero. The title is appropriate in this regard, as it indicates the author's awareness of the fatal pitfall of Israeli literature. And it is what made Dayan depict human beings, in her third novel *Dust*, that do not fit the theoretical perversions of Zionism. We will also find other writers who took steps

that are more “objective” than Dayan.

Why? The probable answer is that such writers, and especially Benjamin Tammuz, are practically unable to blame Arabs for the crimes of Hitler, as Uris did. They do not feel the need to offer a justification for migration, on a personal level, because they had already been living in Palestine prior to 1948, during which they engaged with the Arabs in various ways, be it through violent confrontations or social relations. Such engagement is, doubtless, what made them experience the question of Palestine in a manner that is more faithful to the realities on the ground – without having to follow the nagging requirements of propaganda, which are normally oriented toward foreign audiences. These conditions drove such writers toward adhering to a bare-minimum level of objectivity – which is more than can be said about the “giants” of Zionist literature.

Yet, lest we get carried away by our imaginations, it must be stated right away that the difference between these two groups of writers is rather limited. It seems that the biggest problem that confronts such literary works is that their authors, unlike Uris, cannot deny their personal experiences as a minority in a hospitable refuge, prior to 1948. The problem, in short, is that such a writer cannot make 1948 into a definitive cut-off point in the flow of history. The story for them does not begin – nor end – in 1948.²⁸

Dayan represents the first instance of that idiosyncratic current in Zionist literature. In her novel *Envy the Frightened*, she criticizes the logic of “who is strong?”²⁹ In doing so she tackles a fundamental value of Israeli society, thereby expressing the deep-rooted crisis in which it

lives and indirectly exposing the fabricated character of the infallible hero – that sick and insufferable character, so readily imported into Zionist literature as though it were an intractable psychological complex.

Yet, these novels' justifications for Zionist violence as an inheritance from previous generations remain superficial: "you're afraid of people who knew your old self, and you are not so sure about your new self, so you pour it into Nimrod."³⁰ This contradiction would lead to a pertinent revelation:

if the war hadn't been in the air, it would have been necessary to invent it. Ivri's generation had fought the land and conquered it. They took the first step in the change. Gideon's generation fought a world war. Both injected their spirit and strength into Nimrod's generation on a national scale.³¹

Thus, Nimrod the Jewish hero expresses his psychological complex to such an extent that justifies murder as an act of innocent love.³² Then a moment comes when Nimrod stands on a mountain peak near the borders: "who is strong?" I shout. You know where the echoes come from this time? From Jordan and the Litani below, from the road to Damascus on the north, and from the low ceiling of the sky."³³ This is a new Jewish hero, who is not only infallible, but whose cycle of violence is unending. It represents an expansionist and escalationist complex that has resulted, as Dayan would have it, from the complexes of previous Jewish generations: "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."³⁴

This hero's mission – to us, in any case – is to expose the giants of infallibility in traditional Zionist literature. But it remains too feeble a gesture to reach the heart of the matter.

In *Dust*, Dayan produced a novel that is artistically superior to her previous two. But she was still keen on avoiding the heart of the matter. The events of the novel take place in al-Naqab desert, where in a recently-constructed settlement its main character Yardena meets David – the only survivor of a family that had died in Hitler's massacres. David is a man without feelings or expressions, haunted by the ghosts of the family he had lost; he represents a character who has been deprived of their humanity.³⁵ A third character, Leni, is a mysterious character that lives in the desert. He is lonesome, with a hobby of collecting, naming and virtually worshiping rocks, who eventually admits to his lover that he is not Jewish.

Yardena falls in love with David because she wants him to return to the land of the living.³⁶ But gradually she feels “instead of growing a flower there, he uprooted her flower from her depths,”³⁷ and his ghosts came to haunt her. And then as David recovers, Yardena retreats to the world that David had built for her and finally commits suicide. But David feels no guilt because his conscience had already died of another great sin, of which the solitary Leni was a reminder: long ago David was lined up in front of Nazi officers who began to send people away, one to death, and the other to prison. David counted the individuals in front of him and realized when his turn came that death would be his fate.³⁸ So he switched places with the person ahead of him, “a tall blond boy,” who

was not Jewish but a Pole, and whose eyes reminded him of Leni's.³⁹ The confession of this sin was followed by another from Yardena, who was thirteen when the establishment of Israel was declared:

and I didn't know until then that these towns, these hills, these lakes and beaches and shores were not really ours, that they were promised but never given, dreamt about but not obtained, and when the State was proclaimed, they told me it meant war.⁴⁰

Dayan approximated the heart of the matter, if indirectly: that the Nazi Holocaust was not a catastrophe for the Jews only. In this sense, Leni should have been cast as one of the Arabs that new Israeli settlements had forced to leave. This would be closer to the logic of the narrative but Dayan did not seem to dare to go that far and chose, rather, to cast a Polish character, or whomever else in that desert who was not truly Jewish, to avoid casting a character that would confront David.⁴¹

On the other hand it seems that, for Dayan, this inhuman character, who has been hollowed out under the pressures of the Holocaust, is beyond rehabilitation. Thus, instead of rehabilitating himself in "the national homeland," the character corrupts the rest and robs them of their humanity – to a degree that pushes them toward death. This is a development on Nimrod's condition in *Envy the Frightened*, who resorts to violence under external pressures. Neither of these characters were able to restore their humanity. Nor could they face an Arab character, who would represent the indigenous population whose land has been turned into a field of colonial experimentation in response to Nazi violence.

Benjamin Tammuz took a step further in *A Tale of an Olive Tree* and *The Swimming Race*.⁴² In the former, the author tells the story of an Arab called Ali al-Taweel who owns a big old olive tree in the middle of his field in Galilee.⁴³ The tree produces as much as the rest of the field together. Its oil is rubbed on the bodies of newly-born infants. Men drink it in the morning. It decorates the dinner table. It is gifted to friends and cures diseases. When Ali al-Taweel wanted to marry his daughter to an old man against her will, the young woman refused this oppressive arrangement. The father tied her to one of his prized olive trunks for two nights, leaving her too afraid and tired to refuse the marriage. Later, she was unable to give birth to her first child in the village because the Jews forced her family to move to the north.

The first Jewish immigrant that receives Ali al-Taweel's farm does not know anything about olive oil. He spits it when he tastes it, and because he cannot kill the tree he cuts its branches to sell them to handicraftsmen who sell wooden souvenirs to tourists. The tree then starts to extend its branches toward the north, as if – according to the author's narrative – to call to the girl that it once knew and to wait for her from behind the border. Finally, government specialists arrive to cut down the tree. The author writes at the end of the story:

They carefully examined the olive grove's "rentability," they said what they said, and a week later, workers came to prepare the land. The first thing they did was to uproot seven ancient olive trees, first, because they had not been planted in rows and so disturbed plowing, and second, because they were too tall and during picking they required ladders so high that they could

not be found in the warehouse of the building contractor ... and third, because this is what the agronomist demanded, having found them unrentable.

The author uses Zionist literature's traditional manner of describing the traditions of the village in a prejudiced, conceited and unrealistic manner. But the main point of the story is to tell Ali al-Taweel's tale through his relationship with the olive tree (that ancient Palestinian heritage), and the new relationship between the settlers and that heritage. These intersecting relationships are consummated by the felling of the tree, which symbolizes another thing that the author fails to mention: that it stands for an unwanted memory!

In *The Swimming Race*, the author tells the story of two friends – an Arab and a Jew – before 1948. They used to race each other while swimming in a river near Yaffa. The Arab would always win the race in those days because he was bigger and older. Then the war broke out and during an armed confrontation in an orange grove near Yaffa, the Jewish character, now a military leader, is surprised to find his old friend as the leader of the opposing Arab force. The latter addressed the former, as if continuing a recent conversation: “Okay, you win this time.” But the Jewish leader responded: “No, you can't say that until we leave the water.” The Arab smiled with sorrow. The two old friends undressed and, just as the Jewish man enters the river, a gunshot is heard. He suddenly fears that his “friend” was killed. He gets out of the water and finds the Arab lying facing down on the sand. One of his soldiers tells him that he was killed by accident. Then, when the Jewish man turns the Arab's body around, he finds a mysterious smile lingering on the latter's lips – as if he

was the one who won the race after all.

These two stories by Tammuz reflect a feeling of that “thing” that the Zionist novel does everything to avoid. For Jewish writers who were close to the events, 1948 cannot be a stone wall that separates what came before it from what came after. It is a link in a sequence, with precedents and antecedents. While many reasons may account for why Tammuz was able to face this reality, he could not take it further than halfway there – thereby avoiding the most difficult steps. He saws down the olive tree and kills the Arab “by mistake” before the race even begins. As truncated as these stories seem, they at least do not give the impression that “Israel is the bridge between darkness and light.”⁴⁴ The latter claim cannot be made in a work of art – except by those who don the official uniform of the propagandist.

Despite the reservations and pitfalls involved, Tammuz represents a rare phenomenon in contemporary Israeli literature. There is a story titled *The Prisoner* by a writer called S. Yizhar, which takes a middle position between Dayan and Tammuz.⁴⁵ This represents an attempt to depict the tales of superhuman Jewish exploits in a level-headed manner. Thus, he tells the story of how a group of armed Jews arrested an unarmed Arab shepherd and stole his cattle. The story features a detailed description of the abuse that the shepherd experienced in the Jewish interrogation room. The latter half of the story comprises a soliloquy by the Jewish soldier who was tasked with transporting the chained and blindfolded prisoner across a long distance by car. He tries to convince himself to let the innocent prisoner return to his wife, but despite the fact that the logic of releasing the prisoner theoretically

wins the long argument the Jewish soldier does not dare release the prisoner and eventually drives him to prison.⁴⁶

Once again, we witness that the narrative has been arrested in order to keep it from the decisive confrontation: the Arab is still carefully chosen to fit a pre-defined Zionist mold. He represents an innocent fool, and innocence here is an enormous burden under the conditions of war – to which he remains entirely oblivious. He is, in other words, not a confrontational Arab. The space in which the Zionist author can operate is miniscule and superficial, tightly confined to the idea of “the acceptable and justified war.” The demure protestations are likewise confined to secondary details and not the heart of the matter.

Such protestations can be found elsewhere, evincing a similar position in a number of Jewish stories, most notably in Yehuda Amichai’s *Battle for the Hill*. A story that revolves, in a concealed sarcastic tone, around the mobilization of the Jews of occupied Jerusalem on the eve of the Suez aggression in 1956.⁴⁷ Another story called *A Goat on the Border* by Moshe Shamir deals (also sarcastically) with an Israeli goat that crossed the demilitarized zone.⁴⁸ None of these stories manage to get past the point where truth demands a greater commitment than propagandistic responsibilities and the exigencies of Israeli politics. All of them afford only the slightest space for maneuver on the level of particulars – i.e., within the confines of a case that has been built entirely upon falsehoods. Within this space, the only literature that can bravely shoulder the necessary confrontation – in form and content – is the literature of the Arab youth who suffer under the military Zionist occupation.⁴⁹

The phenomenon in Zionist literature described above is useful in one respect, at least: it exposes it. Here, Yizhar, Dayan, Tammuz, and Shamir contrast their heroes against those of Uris, Nathan, Viertel, Gorn, Berkman and others, and the difference reveals the extent of the artistic and moral retrogression that Zionist writers practice with unparalleled obstinance. Such retrogression extends beyond the two poles of the above comparison, which runs across two sides that, in spite of superficial differences, ultimately agree in principle.⁵⁰

8. From the Nobel Prize to the 1967 Aggression

At the end of 1966, the Nobel Prize for Literature was awarded to an Israeli writer for the first time – Shmuel Yosef Agnon.¹ The committee declared that his writing “represents the Israeli message to our time. It works hard to present the cultural heritage of the Jewish people through the written word.” The committee then showed special appreciation for Agnon for “his profoundly characteristic narrative art with motifs from the life of the Jewish people.”

Only seven months separate these words from the aggression of June 5th 1967. If the Nobel Committee found in Agnon’s chauvinistic, racist and reactionary writings an apt representation of Israel’s message, most Western media outlets found a similar message in the Israeli aggression as well. These two events crown many long years of deception, indoctrination and promotion of racist thought and literature. It is the natural and logical outgrowth of an edifice that was founded on the sanctioning and justification of aggression based on so-called racial and ethnic superiority.

That these two events occurred within a short interval is not a coincidence. They are a natural outcome of what we have witnessed in the previous pages. Deception and chauvinism have now reached their climax on the cultural and political planes, which have always been deliberately

and strategically fused. It is not a coincidence to read after the aggression of 1967, for example, an article in *Time* magazine (published on July 14th 1967) that repeats the Zionist depictions of Arabs in the crudest and most misleading manner, and passes them off as obvious assumptions beyond discussion.

Nor is it a coincidence to read an article by the English political writer Peregrine Worsthorne² in which he called on crushing the peoples of the developing Third World and putting them under the authority of the economically advanced countries – because they amount to a hopeless case, and because the “superiority” of the advanced countries grants them the right to dominate the resources of the developing world. Such opinions are expressed in Zionist novels in the same way, using nearly the same words, which suggests deliberate coordination that could not have been the result of mere shared sympathies.

If Koestler, Gorn, Uris, and the novels *The Anglo-Saxons* and *A Star in the Wind* justified the Zionist conquest because it brings “civilization” into the “backwards east” and “rescues” the Arabs, and that Israeli colonization has a “reforming mission,” it would not surprise us to find the same words, almost verbatim, in a political book by Randolph Churchill³ concerning the aggression of June 5th 1967 (serialized in *The Sunday Telegraph* between July-August 1967).

This interconnection and – ultimately – convergence between the positions the Zionist novel had already injected into the chauvinistic Western mind and the positions that mind ended up endorsing politically finds its clearest and most blatant manifestation in William Stevenson’s *The Israeli Victory*, which was distributed within less than ten

days of the end of the 1967 aggression. The book's task was to provide a political and military report to the reader. It was also supplemented with a chapter by Leon Uris, whom we have already met and whose ideas in *Exodus* we have explored. Any reader will find that the military and political sections of the book amount to little more than a copy of, or a supplement to, the positions expressed in *Exodus*. Uris's chapter, titled *The Third Temple*, is simply an extension or reiteration of the positions that have already been entrenched by the aggression. The fact that the two pieces appear side by side sums up the point. Here is a series of interlocking episodes and overlapping tunnels in the same racist mind. Indeed, it is doubtful whether the tone of the paragons of Nazi racism, in what they wrote and said about the Jews in the 1930s, was more hateful, ignorant or deceptive than Uris's tone in his new racist achievement in *The Third Temple*.⁴ What is astonishing is that a strong and well-developed current in the West finds it to be logical and acceptable, after gradually and uncritically swallowing such positions, ideas and opinions over many years. The final outcome is the present-day Western position.

Before all this, however, it was the same Nobel Prize Committee that offered its blessings to "the Israeli message" as expressed by Shmuel Agnon. This message – as expressed in the works of this chauvinistic and reactionary Israeli writer – was a mere episode in the chain of events that led up to the aggression of 1967, and in what led to the acceptance of that aggression by a large portion of the Western audience. *Exodus*, Agnon and *The Third Temple* represent a single conspiracy against the human mind – the Nobel Prize Committee, Worsthorne

and Churchill (both father and son) merely echoed that process.

In the previous chapters, we traced how Jewish chauvinism instrumentalized literature to serve its racist objectives along with the positions that it was compelled to adopt with remarkable coordination. Agnon occupied a prominent position in this long process of deception and justification of aggression because the world's foremost cultural institution offered its blessings in what represented a crowning moment for Zionist literature's long journey, and a fabricated sanctification of its legitimacy. Awarding Agnon the Nobel Prize represented a fraudulent and illegitimate literary endorsement to humanize what is fundamentally inhuman and to confer a civilizational value to what is reactionary, chauvinistic and racist. It amounts to a literary Balfour Declaration.

In one respect, the Swedish Academy affirmed that it had awarded its Prize to the Israeli writer for a number of reasons – among which was Agnon's precedence as “the first Hebrew writer whose celebrity penetrated the barriers of language.” But this, as most of Agnon's reviewers admit, is incorrect. Rather they claim that the value of Agnon, as an author, stems from his ability to write in Hebrew at a time when one could not find Jewish literature that was not written in Eastern European Yiddish. In this respect, Agnon was not more than a Hebrew writer. Just a year before being awarded the prize, he was not known at all among the readers of other languages. Indeed, many Jews themselves regarded the process of stripping his work from its original language (i.e., translating it) to be tantamount to hollowing it out entirely.

Only a single year beforehand, it was not possible

to find more than three books by Agnon in English (published by that Zionist propaganda institution called Schocken in New York) at the end of the 1940s. And it seems that its distribution was so narrow that the publishing houses of London had to re-translate and re-distribute it in May 1967. These stories were not written for a universal audience. They addressed the overzealous Jewish reader in religious terms. It is difficult for any other kind of reader to understand any of these stories or appreciate them. Indeed, one of his most famous short stories, which Jewish critics regard as the best of his writings (i.e., *Forevermore*), whose characters and places all start with the letters A and G, has yet to be deciphered by even those critics themselves. It may be that he was falling back on ancient religious legends, or that the two letters were nothing more than the first two of the writer's name (Agnon).⁵

The characters of almost all of his novels either speak or practice Jewish rituals and remember the heroes of the Old Testament. It is rare for God, a Jewish prophet or a dead person to be mentioned in any of his stories without being followed by the appropriate religious expression. If these phrases excite the feelings of the conservative Jewish reader, they elicit anything but breaking the barriers of language for non-Jewish readers. This is to say that a writer like Agnon, regardless of his provincial value, does not possess either a universal or humanistic dimension – which represent two key conditions for being awarded the Nobel Prize. And despite the fact that Agnon “wrote little about his adopted homeland,”⁶ what he did write about the topic is characterized by those two descriptions that Zionist literature never manages to escape: a call for

expansionist conquest and contempt for other peoples.

Agnon's main theme emphasized Jewish migration from Eastern Europe. This undoubtedly requires taking similar positions that can be found in other Zionist literature, which render non-integration with other peoples into a virtue. Of all Jewish writers, Agnon's foremost contribution for Zionism is that he found the most success in combining religious and political affairs. Underneath a loose-fitting religious garb stands his favorite character to announce: "May the day come when Jerusalem extends as far as Damascus, and in every direction."⁷ This sentence was not coincidental for a man who the Nobel Prize Committee regarded as having "worked hard to present the cultural heritage of the Jewish people." If this is how the committee sees the matter, how can such a heritage consist of a humanistic message?

Agnon repeats the message of conquest everywhere in his writings – without neglecting to dress it in religious attire. In his famous novel *In the Heart of the Seas*, he added Tyre and Saida within the borders of the state of Israel that he hopes to see and which he justifies by repeating the alleged "violation" of the sanctity of Jewish religious sites there.⁸ This position plays the same role as discussions of Nazi massacres in other Zionist novels in that both serve as excuses for conquest. But this position, as we have seen in other Zionist novels, requires the depiction of Arabs as a hopelessly backward people, which allows them to represent the supposed Arab violation of sacred Jewish sites as a matter of course.⁹ This is why we find Agnon having to represent them in such a grotesque manner.¹⁰ His insistence on such contemptuous depictions of Arabs is necessary for him

because it justifies why the Jews “love the land of Israel deeply,” which is being “destroyed” by the Arabs. It also explains why Jewish migration can be characterized as “a humanitarian rescue mission.” Otherwise, such crude and contemptuous imagery would not have been repeated in Zionist literature over the past twenty years.

More conspicuous than Agnon’s artistic transgressions is the fact that all of his Jewish characters in *Tebilla* have migrated from Eastern Europe to Jerusalem; and yet, they say that it was the Arabs who “came” to this land. This deliberate inversion of the facts, along with the conspicuous switching of roles it entails, would in other contexts be considered artistically – not to mention morally – unacceptable. Agnon provides another image that is worth examining:

the fires were raging in Istanbul, and sometimes these fires would swallow three or four hundred houses in one instance, or even more. But people would do nothing to stop the fire. All that was done was that the guards of the city would stop and scream: there is no God but God and Muhammad is his prophet.

This scene is significant not only because of its deliberate distortion of the Islamic religion, but also because it pits the Muslims of Istanbul against “Jewish religious wisdom,” which represents the premise of the novel (together with the claim of complete Jewish solidarity, as a religious duty). Despite the fact that Agnon returned to Poland and was shocked to witness the communal disintegration among the Jews there, he never ceased to emphasize the importance of migration. He regarded heading to Palestine as the ultimate resolution. Agnon’s

return to Poland in his youth was significant in his literary career because it instigated the shock that prompted a stylistic reorientation: his heroes once represented integrity, virtue and enlightenment, with their worldly and spiritual purity culminating in migrating to Palestine. Then came *A Guest for the Night* to deal with a negative topic: its heroes are deviant, lost and living in vagabondage. The novel makes it clear, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that this condition is the result of the destruction of Jewish traditions through war and wandering aimlessly. The heroes of this novel carry on aimlessly because their ancient traditions have been lost and have not been replaced by anything.

Following *A Guest for the Night* came Agnon's latest novel *Only Yesterday*, which takes the latter idea further when the Zionist youth from Galicia – Isaac Kumer – migrates to Israel. The author explicitly commends Kumer, in his customary style of abruptly interrupting the narrative with direct dialogue. He regards the migration of this youth, who belongs to a middle-class family in Israel, as definitive proof of his integrity and honesty “at a time when the Jew – if he was Zionist and had some money goes to a meeting, while he goes – if he had a lot of money – to Congress.” The novel follows the news of Kumer during his migration, his life in Yaffa, Jerusalem and the farming settlements until his early death as a result of “a rabid dog's bite.”

The manner of Kumer's death can be understood as a metaphor for the “hostile” climate that surrounds Israel. More importantly, in writing this novel, Agnon artistically realized Ahad Ha'am's Zionist slogan of “the last Jew and the first Hebrew.” While the novel renders its hero Kumer as the focal point of the events throughout his

migration, the focus suddenly changes upon his arrival to Israel to make him an observer of the events. He retreats from being the hero and an individual and becomes a member of society. The writing style also changes from strict realism to Agnon's traditional style, which mixes fiction and reality (and fiction, for Agnon, is made up of religious legends and what they symbolize). It is as if Agnon wants to tell his readers that arriving in Israel alone marks the end of "the Jew" and the beginning of "the Hebrew." In other words, it marks the end of the period of "wandering" and the beginning of "national renaissance," and finally putting Jewish traditions into action.

Agnon's literary production is merely a call for migration (especially from Eastern Europe) to Palestine, and a call for conquest in the name of "Jewish values and culture" – in the words of the Nobel Prize Committee. His insistence on these two objectives led to artistic and ethical transgressions: he repeats the dangerous phenomenon of historical fabrication at the expense of human values. When a man engages in such a project (regardless of the efficacy of its fabrications), an international cultural institution with the stated objective of encouraging humanism does itself a disservice by lighting up a powder keg in a region whose catastrophe still weighs on the world's conscience. But the committee did more than that. It practically justified, legitimized and blessed Israeli aggression either deliberately or otherwise, and conferred a cultural honor upon the racist Jewish current.

If the committee is not guilty of justifying the hideous racist attacks against Arabs in Europe and the United States that took place after the aggression of 1967, it is

certainly guilty of another wrong: its decision to award Agnon legitimizes the deception of humanity's collective conscience through incessant Zionist propaganda, the drumbeats of which have been reverberating worldwide for over half a century.

References

Introduction to the English Translation

1 As per the recollections of Anni Kanafani, Ghassan's widow, in email correspondence with Louis Allday, the editor of this translated edition, May 2022. Anni also believed it was likely that Ghassan had contributed to drafting the conference's resolution on Palestine.

2 Resolutions of the Third Afro-Asian Writers' Conference (March 25-30, 1967, Beirut, Lebanon) as quoted in *Lotus*, the organization's official publication.

3 In January 1973, less than a year after Kanafani's killing, Cabral was also assassinated.

Introduction

1 Translator's note: The author's use of the term "political Zionism" may seem odd, in light of the fact that Zionism is *ipso facto* a political movement. What the author means here, as will be apparent, is to distinguish the literary phenomenon (i.e., "literary Zionism") from the overtly political activities that coalesced formally at the First Zionist Congress in Basel in 1897.

2 Translator's note: "Zionist literature" and "literary Zionism" are used interchangeably by the author. The difference between the two is conceptually subtle and not sufficiently consequential, in the context of this study, to merit a revision or further explication.

3 Translator's note: While the author's argument remains to be explicated in chapter 3, the connection toward which he is gesturing has subsequently featured in the commentary of mainstream Western sources. Consider: "...Hitler, and some of his supporters... had a curious admiration for Benjamin Disraeli, the first and only British prime minister of Jewish descent, whose phrase 'race is all' was much quoted in Germany." Ian Buruma, "Class Acts", *The New Republic*, 24 September 2001. <https://newrepublic.com/article/92620/ornamentalism-david-cannadine> (accessed 1 June, 2022).

4 Translator's note: This refers to Leon Uris's 1958 novel about the establishment of Israel – an "extraordinary bestseller" that sold over 5 million copies by 1965 alone and was translated into dozens of languages. Christopher Lehmann-Haupt, "Leon Uris, 78, Dies; Wrote Sweeping Novels Like 'Exodus'", *New York Times*, 25 June 2003. <https://www.nytimes.com/2003/06/25/arts/leon-uris-78-dies-wrote-sweeping-novels-like-exodus.html> (accessed 10 June, 2022).

5 Translator's note: The original text says "the Israeli aggression of the 5th of June." The event is commonly known in the Anglosphere as "the Six-Day War." It has been modified here for clarity while preserving the intended meaning.

6 Translator's note: This is a critical moment to reflect on the nature of the text and how it figures into the author's life. He is essentially refusing to engage in dialogue with Zionists. The latter phrase, like the succeeding paragraph, indicates that he regards these matters to be settled through political struggle.

1. Zionism Fights on the Linguistic Front

1 Translator's note: This is a reference to the efforts of certain elements within European Jewish communities, chiefly in the nineteenth century, to promote social integration into the societies in which they resided. It competed with the Zionist and internationalist Jewish currents for the sympathies of the

communities at large.

2 His real name was Usher Ginsberg. He was born in Odesa, Ukraine in 1856 and died in Tel Aviv in 1927.

3 Translator's note: David Ben-Gurion (1886-1973) was the first Prime Minister of Israel.

4 David Ben-Gurion, *Herald Tribune* (New York), January 1962.

5 During this period, the political Jewish school in Eastern Europe called for social integration while adopting Zionism in the cultural sphere only. The politicization of the Hebrew language soon followed at the hands of Leon Pinsker and Eliezer Ben Yehuda.

6 Arthur Koestler, *Thieves in the Night* (New York, Macmillan, 1946), 226.

7 Translator's note: Yael Dayan was born in Ma'lul, Palestine (to Israelis: "Nahalal") in 1939. In addition to her literary work, Dayan is also known as an Israeli Labor Party-oriented politician who served in the Knesset multiple times and, most pertinently, the daughter of one of Israel's founders, military leaders and politicians, Moshe Dayan. The latter Dayan is known for his role as foreign minister in the Menachem Begin government and his involvement in the wars of 1948, 1967 and 1973.

Yaël's brother Assi was a film star and director, who featured in a number of high-profile films in Israel, Hollywood and elsewhere. *He Walked through the Fields* was one of his films, which was released just a few months prior to the 1967 war and represented a pillar of the officially-sanctioned post-war narrative as it "received generous financial support, and became one of the major events celebrating the twentieth anniversary of Israel. The Prime Minister at the time, Levi Eshkol, as well as ministers and other public figures were present at its premiere. Endowed with the support of the political establishment and acclaimed by the critics, the film turned into a national event." See: S. E. Wilmer, *Writing and Rewriting National Theatre Histories* (Iowa: University of

Iowa Press, 2004), 181.

8 Yael Dayan, *Envy the Frightened* (London: Wedenfeld and Nicolson, 1961), 31.

9 "Interview with Yael Dayan in Paris," *Herald Tribune*, 26 October 1962.

10 Leah Goldberg, "Modern Hebrew Literature," *New Outlook* (May 1960).

11 Ibid.

12 Nina Salaman, trans., *Selected Poems of Jehudah Halevi* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1928).

13 Ibid.

14 Mordecai Kaplan, *Questions Jews Ask* (New York, 1956).

15 Ibid.

16 Heinrich Heine, *Confessions*.

17 *Heinrich Heine*, Ludwig Marcuse. It is worth noting that Heinrich Heine, who wrote much on the Hebrew language, the Jews, and "Jewish nationalism," was infuriated when he saw his name in an 1832 book with the title *The Dictionary of the Most Prominent Contemporary Jews*. He protested the inclusion of his name because did not regard himself as a Jewish person. Heine wrote very few poems in Hebrew in his youth. Contemporary Jewish critics find much talent in the latter's use of the Hebrew language. Despite this, and everything Heine said about Hebrew and Judaism (which "one cannot abandon"), he did not continue to write in Hebrew. Eventually, he declared his disavowal of his Jewish identity in 1832. See: Dove Sadan, *Jewish Literature in Non-Jewish Languages; An Anthology of Hebrew Essays* (Tel Aviv: Massada P. Co., 1966), 198-204.

18 Haim Greenberg, *Jewish Culture and Education in the Diaspora* (World Zionists Organization, 1951).

19 Menachem Ribalow, "Hebrew Revival & Redemption," *The Canadian Jewish Chronicle* (7 August 1953).

- 20 Leah Goldberg, "Modern Hebrew Literature," *New Outlook* (May 1960).
- 21 David Bakan, *Sigmund Freud and the Jewish Mystical Tradition* (Princeton: Von Nostrand, 1958).
- 22 *Herald Tribune*, January 1962.
- 23 Reuben Wallenrod, *The Literature of Modern Israel* (New York: Abelard-Schuman, 1956), 23.
- 24 Wallenrod, 84.
- 25 Translator's note: The author references "Israel Government Yearbook 1953-1954" in this footnote. But the correct source appears to be the following: Jewish Book Annual, XII, 1953-55.

2. *The Birth of Zionist Literature*

- 1 Translator's note: The original text erroneously cites 20 August 1898.
- 2 See the following in *the History of al-Andalus* by Angel Gonzalez Palancia, trans., Hussain Monas (Cairo, 1955), 499: "as for Yehuda ben Levi al-Tulaituli (477 h – 537 h/1085-1143 C.E.), or Yehuda Halevi, who Arabs call Abi al-Hassan, he arranged his poetry and prose according to Arabic forms. Those who have translated his work affirm that he wrote with rare elegance. He authored his thesis called *al-Hijja wal Dalil fi Nuṣrat al-Dīn al-Dhalīl* in eloquent Arabic. We have a hand-written copy of the book in the Oxford library, which was translated to Hebrew by Yehuda ben Tibbun in 500h [or 1204 C.E] under the title *Safar al-Khazar*, or the book of *Khazar* or the *Khuzri* book. The latter name has been referenced in many sources. The book was translated from Hebrew to Latin by Johannes Buxtorf in 1660, and was then translated into Spanish by Rabbi Yaakov Ben Dana three years later. In 1886 to 1887, Hertwich Herschfield Leipzig published the Arabic text with a Hebrew translation. Yehuda referenced a historical event: the conversion of the *Khazraj* king

to Judaism, after having been offered Islam and Christianity, in which he found no purpose.”

3 M. Aurbach, *A Survey of Jewish History*, ed., Leo Jung (New York: Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations, 1927), 257.

4 Translator’s note: Rashi, or Shlomo Yitzchaki, (1040-1105) was a medieval French rabbi.

5 Leo Jung, ed., *The Jewish Library* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1928) 273.

6 Translator’s note: The author refers to “Germany” here. It is likely a reference to the Holy Roman Empire, in this context.

7 Translator’s note: *Nathan the Wise* was written by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-1781), not Jacques Bastani.

8 Jung, 282.

9 Translator’s note: This is a reference to the Old Testament.

10 For more, see: Elmer Berger, *The Jewish Dilemma* (New York: The Devin-Adair Co., 1946).

11 Jung, 283.

12 Ibid.

13 Berger.

14 Trude Weiss-Rosmarin, *Jewish Survival* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1949).

15 Menachem Ribalow, *The Flowering of Modern Hebrew Literature* (New York: Twayne Pub., 1959), 20.

16 Translator’s note: The cited source in this footnote is Nina Davis, trans. *Song of Exile* (Jewish Publication Society, 1901), 74. But this appears to be incorrect, as the poem has been found in the following source: Nina Salaman, trans. *Essential Texts of Zionism* (Jewish Publication Society of America, 1924). See: <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/quot-my-heart-is-in-the-east-quot-yehuda-halevi> (accessed 26 May, 2022).

- 17 Berger, 209. The source cites Heinrich Graetz.
- 18 Translator's note: Heinrich Heine (1797-1856) was a German poet and literary critic.
- 19 Joseph Herman Hertz, *A Book of Jewish Thoughts* (New York: Block Publication Co., 1926), 62.
- 20 Attributed to a folk Jewish song. Ibid., 104.
- 21 Letter from Freud to Max Graf in David Bakan, *Sigmund Freud and the Jewish Mystical Tradition* (Princeton: Von Nostrand, 1958), 147.
- 22 Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism* (New York: Vintage, 1962).
- 23 Ibid.; Bakan, 116.
- 24 Ibid. 158.

3. Race and Religion in Zionist Literature Beget Political Zionism

- 1 A reference to Shylock, the Jewish character from *The Merchant of Venice*, which was characterized as being morally base.
- 2 Par Lagerkvist, *The Death of Ahasuerus* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1962).
- 3 Translator's note: This is the title of the novel in English but Kanafani refers to it throughout this work as *David Alroy*, which appears to have been an alternative title in some languages.
- 4 Edgar Rosenberg, *From Shylock to Svengali* (London: Peter Owen Ltd., 1960), 3.
- 5 Ibid., 60.
- 6 Richard Lovell Edgeworth, introduction to the aforementioned novel in: Ibid., 60.

- 7 Ibid., 349.
- 8 Translator's note: This is a reference to *Familiar Letters of Sir Walter Scott* (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1894).
- 9 *The Jew in the Literature of England*, Zimmern, 168.
- 10 Rosenberg, 349.
- 11 Translator's note: These quotations do not appear to be verbatim extracts, but are paraphrased by Kanafani in a manner illustrative of the themes and language that appear throughout Disraeli's novel that, for instance, proclaims "the Hebrews, a proud, stiff-necked race, ever prone to rebellion" and speaks of Alroy's "pure nobility of race." See: Benjamin Disraeli, *The Wondrous Tale of David Alroy* (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea and Blanchard, 1833), 37, 132. The edition of the novel that is referenced by Kanafani is in German, which could account for these slight differences.
- 12 Benjamin Disraeli, *The Wondrous Tale of David Alroy* (Leipzig: Leiner, 1862); Rosenberg.
- 13 Rosenberg, 180.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Translator's note: As Eli Kavon argued in *The Jerusalem Post* in 2016: "[w]hile Benjamin Disraeli embellishes the story of David Alroy, he rediscovered the legend and gave it new life as an inspiring and romantic proto-Zionist saga of a man who would fire the imagination of a people". <https://www.jpost.com/opinion/disraelis-redeemer-the-rise-and-fall-of-david-alroy-464604> (accessed 1 June, 2022).
- 16 Translator's note: This is a reference to the famous English novelist (1819-1880), whose real name was Mary Ann Evans.
- 17 Rosenberg, 180.
- 18 Translator's note: Kanafani mentions a third book, the identity of which could not be determined. The title in the original text phonetically reads as follows: *Gharām fi Fīna*.

19 Rosenberg, 162.

20 Ibid., 4.

21 Ibid., 164.

22 Translator's note: The author references "Israel Government Yearbook 1951-1952" in this footnote. But the correct source appears to be the following: Sol Liptzin, "Daniel Deronda", *Jewish Book Annual*, X (1951-52), 43-44.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

25 This introduction appeared as a study in F. R. Leavis, "George Eliot's Zionist Novel," *Commentary* (October, 1960).

26 George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda* (New York: Harper Torch Books, 1961).

27 Ibid, 14.

28 Ibid, 16.

29 Joseph Herman Hertz, *A Book of Jewish Thoughts* (New York: Block Publication Co., 1926), 72.

30 Eliot, 399.

31 Ibid., 402. Translator's note: The quote as it appears in Kanafani's Arabic text contains some slight differences from Eliot's. The text here is Eliot's verbatim.

32 Translator's note: The author does not clarify what he means by "the triad," but like the aforementioned "three elements," one can glean from that text that it may be a reference to race, religion and nationhood.

33 Mordecai's suggested method for action is worth noting. Its application amounts to the following: funding, media and propaganda, organization (through the Zionist Congress), purchasing land, campaigns of hatred, bribing the West by declaring to represent its values, urging the West against Turkey, harping on the question of oppression during times when it seems to be

in retreat and so on.

34 Hilaire Belloc, *The Jews* (London: Constable, 1922), 225. It was cited in Rosenberg, 375. Translator's note: The quote was found in Liptzin in *Jewish Book Annual*, X, 46.

35 Translator's note: The author erroneously cited 1956 as the date of the novel's publication.

36 Rosenberg, 46.

37 Ibid., 184.

4. The Birth and Development of the Character of the Wandering Jew

1 Joseph Gaer, *The Legend of the Wandering Jew* (New York: New American Library, 1961), 75. Also see: Edgar Rosenberg, *From Shylock to Svengali* (London: Peter Owen, 1960), 191.

2 Rosenberg, 189.

3 Gaer, 14.

4 Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim (1486-1535) was a Renaissance scholar, theologian and physician.

5 Gaer, 40.

6 David Hoffman says that this song was composed in circa 1575, whereas Gustave Doré says in *The Legend of the Wandering Jew* that this song was composed after this Jew visited Barbent "at exactly six o'clock in the afternoon on 22 April 1772." See: *ibid.*, 41.

7 Translator's note: This long title refers to Creutzer's *Wunderbarlicher Bericht von einem Jüden aus Jerusalem bürtig und Ahasverus genennet welcher fürgibet als sey er bey der Creutzigung Christi gewesen/ und bißher von Gott beym Leben erhalten worden sampt* (Leiden, 1602).

8 Rosenberg. He claims that there were seventy publications in total.

9 Moncure Conway cited the letter's text in its entirety in his book *The Wandering Jew*, which was quoted by Joseph Gaer in his book *The Legend of the Wandering Jew*. Below is a literal translation of some importance parts of the letter, which offer insight into its contents:

There is a man come to this city, if he may be called a man, who pretends, to have lived above these sixteen hundred years. They call him the Wandering Jew. But some say he is an impostor. He says of himself that he was Usher of the Divan in Jerusalem (the Jews call it the Court of Judgment), where all criminal causes were tried, at the time when Jesus, the Son of Mary, the Christian's Messias [sic], was condemned by Pontius Pilate, the Roman President. That his name was Michob Ader; and that for thrusting Jesus out of the Hall with these words, "Go, why tarriest thou?" the Messias answered him again, "I go, but tarry thou till I come;" thereby condemning him to live till the Day of Judgment. He pretends to remember the Apostles that lived in those days, and that he himself was baptized by one of them; that he has travelled through all the regions of the world, and so must continue to be a vagabond till the Messias shall return again. They say that he heals all diseases by touching the part affected. Divers [sic] other miracles are ascribed to him by the ignorant and superstitious; but the learned, the noble, the great, censure him as a pretender or a madman. Yet there are who affirm [sic] that 'tis one convincing argument of the reality of his pretence that he has hitherto escaped a prison, especially in those countries where the authors of all innovations are severely punished. He has escaped the Inquisitions at Rome, in Spain, and in Portugal, which the vulgar will have to be an evident miracle.

One day I had the curiosity to discourse with him in several languages; and I found him master of all those that I could speak. I conversed with him five or six hours together in Arabic. He told me there was scarce a true history to be found. I asked him what he thought of Mahomet, the Prophet and

Lawgiver of the Mussulmans? He answered that he knew his father very well, and had often been in his company at Ormus in Persia; that Mahomet was a man full of light and a divine spirit, but had his errors as well as other mortals, and that his chiefest was in denying the crucifixion of the Messias for, said he, "I was present, and saw Him hang on the Cross, with these eyes of mine." He accused the Mussulmans of "imposture" in making the world believe that the tomb of their Prophet hangs miraculously between heaven and earth, saying that he himself had seen it, and that it was built after the manner of other sepulchres. Thou who hast been at the Holy Place knowest whether this be true or false. He upbraids the Persian Mahometans [sic] with luxury, the Ottomans with tyranny, the Arabians with robbery, the Moors with cruelty, and the Mussulmans of the Indies with atheism. Nor does he spare to reproach the Christian churches: he taxes the Roman and Grecian with the pompous idolatry of the heathens; he accuses the Ethiopian of Judaism, the Armenian of heresy; and says that the Protestants, if they would live according to their profession, would be the best Christians.

He told me he was in Rome when Nero set fire to the city and stood triumphing on the top of a hill to behold the flames. That he saw Saladin's return from his conquests in the East, when he caused his shirt to be carried on the top of a spear, with this proclamation: Saladin, lord of many rich countries, Conqueror of the East, ever victorious and happy, when he dies shall have no other memorial left of all his glories, but only this poor shirt.'

He relates many remarkable passages of Soliman the Magnificent, whereof our histories are silent, and says he was in Constantinople when Soliman built that royal mosque which goes by his name. He knew Tamerlane the Scythian, and told me he was so called because he halted on one leg. He pretends also to have been acquainted with Scander-Beg, the valiant and fortunate Prince of Epirus. He seemed to pity the

insupportable calamity of Bajazet, whom he had seen carried about in a cage by Tamerlane's order. He accuses the Scythian of too barbarous an insult on the unfortunate Sultan. He remembers the ancient Caliphs of Babylon and Egypt, the empire of the Saracens, and the wars in the Holy Land. He highly extols the valour and conduct of the renowned Godfrey de Bouillon. He gives an accurate account of the rise, progress, establishment and subversion of the Mamelukes in Egypt. He says he has washed himself in the two head-springs of the river Nile, which arise in the southern part of Ethiopia. That its increase is occasioned by the great rains in Ethiopia, which swell all the rivers that fall into the Nile, and cause that vast inundation to discover whose origin has so much puzzled philosophy. He says that the river Ganges in India is broader and deeper than the Nile; that the river Niger in Africa is longer by some hundreds of miles; and that he can remember a time when the river Nile overflowed not till three months after the usual season.

Having professed himself an [sic] universal traveller, and that there was no corner of the earth where he had not been present, I began to comfort myself with the hopes of some news from the Ten Tribes of Israel that were carried into captivity by Salmanasar, King of Assyria, and could never be heard of since. I asked him several questions concerning them, but found no satisfactory answer. Only, he told me that in Asia, Africa, and Europe he had taken notice of a sort of people who (though not Jews in profession) yet retained some characteristics whereby one might discover them to be descended of that nation. In Livonia, Russia, and Finland he had met with people of languages distinct from that of the country, having a great mixture of Hebrew words; that these abstained from swine's flesh, blood, and things strangled that in their lamentations for the dead they always used these words: *Jeru, Jeru, Masco, Salem*. By which, he thought, they called to remembrance Jerusalem and Damascus, those two famous cities of Palestine and Syria. In the Circassians also he had traced some footsteps of Judaism: their customs,

manner of life, feasts, marriages, and sacrifices being not far removed from the institutions of Mosaic Law.

Translator's note: The referenced material was found in English here: <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=coo1.ark:/13960/t77s88w19&view=1up&seq=26&skin=2021&q1=paris> (accessed 30 May, 2022).

10 Rosenberg, 307.

11 Ibid., 197.

12 Gaer, 128.

13 The German author Goethe included the Wandering Jew with Luther as symbols of reason, Christ and faith. Goethe intended to combine Ahasuerus (the Wandering Jew) with Spinoza (the famous Jewish philosopher). Alexandre Dumas, on the other hand, put him in the same category as the Pope in 1471, while Hans Christian Andersen cast him with Columbus and made him into a symbol of "the angel of doubt." In fact, the idea of the Wandering Jew was a source for a countless number of writers, who used the character for various subtle and artistic ends. Henry, for instance, cast him in the same style as his famous heroes, as a fictional and satirical figure that represents itself as the Wandering Jew despite not being Jewish. Most literary authors cast the Wandering Jew as a symbol of the human struggle with fate (as in Edgar Quinet's representation in 1825 and in Shelley, whose Ahasuerus prefers "the liberty of hell over the slavery of heaven," and so on).

14 Gaer, 82, 86.

15 Translator's note: Established in 1912, this group went on to become the National Theatre of Israel.

16 Gaer, 137-140.

17 Translator's note: The author does not clarify what he means by these "three elements," but one can glean from that text that it may be a reference to race, religion and nationhood.

18 Translator's note: Confusingly, there are two films that were released in 1933 under the title of *The Wandering Jew*. One is a Yiddish language US production directed by George Roland, while the other is an English language UK production directed by Morris Elvey and is based on Ernest Temple Thurston's eponymous play. It appears that Kanafani is referring to the latter, as the events of the film seem to match his description.

19 Translator's note: This is an alternative title of the 1948 Italian language film *L'ebreo errante* (or *The Wandering Jew*), directed by Goffredo Alessandrini and starring Vittorio Gassman.

20 Par Lagerkvist, *The Death of Ahasuerus*, 109-117. Translator's note: This quote was found on page 110.

5. *Zionist Literature Marches in Lockstep with Politics*

1 Theodor Herzl, *Altneuland* (Haifa: Haifa Publication Co., 1962), 5. The preface was written by Emanuel Neumann. Translator's note: Contrary to Kanafani's citation, the English language edition that contains Emanuel Neumann's preface was actually published in 1960, in it Neumann states that "Whatever the merits or faults of *Altneuland* from the literary standpoint, its importance lies in that it became a classic which helped to inspire two generations of Zionists..." *Old-New Land*, (New York: Bloch Publishing Co. & Herzl Press, 1960).

2 See: *Altneuland*, the publication of a German publisher in cooperation with the Haifa Publishing Company in 1962, under the supervision of the Herzl Committee in Jerusalem.

3 Herzl, 15.

4 Ibid., 135.

5 It is worth noting that Herzl's visit to Palestine, which preceded his writing of his novel, did not extend more than half a week.

- 6 Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism* (New York: Vintage, 1962), 134. Translator's note: This quote was found on page 167 of the following edition: Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism* (United Kingdom: The Hogarth Press, 1939).
- 7 Ibid., 135.
- 8 Translator's note: It is not clear to which publication by Sigmund Freud the author is referencing here, the original Arabic rendering is as follows: *Fī A'qāb Mūsa*.
- 9 Freud, first chapters.
- 10 Translator's note: This quote is from Freud's *Moses and Monotheism*, 135.
- 11 Alan Taylor, *Prelude to Israel* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1959).
- 12 Shlomo Dov Goitein, *Jews and Arabs* (New York: Schocken Books Inc., 1955).
- 13 In addition to the fact that Arabs are also Semites, and therefore cannot be regarded as antisemitic, it is also impossible, psychologically speaking, for Muslim Arabs to be antisemitic. This is because the essence of antisemitism is the idea that it was the Jews crucified Christ – which the Muslim mind fundamentally rejects.
- 14 Goitein, from page 33 onwards.
- 15 Ibid., 36.
- 16 Ibid., 40.
- 17 Jon Kimche, *Jewish Observer*, Vol. XI, No. 17, April 27, 1962.
- 18 Translator's note: Jon Kimche (1909-1994), a Swiss-born, British Jewish writer and journalist. In addition to his journalistic work, Kimche co-authored a number of books on the history of Zionism and Israel with his brother, David Kimche (1928-2010), an Israeli diplomat and intelligence agent who at one point was the Deputy-Director of Mossad, Israel's foreign intelligence service.

19 *New Statesman* (London), April 1967.

20 Leon Uris, *Exodus* (London: Kimber, 1959), 131 and on.

21 Translator's note: In 1966, the novel *Cast a Giant Shadow* (1957) was adapted into a star-studded Hollywood action film featuring Kirk Douglas, Frank Sinatra, John Wayne and Yul Brynner.

22 Translator's note: *The Greater Glory* (1959) was originally published under the title *The Anglo-Saxons* in 1958, Kanafani references both versions. Its author, Lester Gorn (1917-2016), was an American soldier who fought on the Israeli side in the war of 1948 under the nom de guerre Ben Zion Hagai, and the book is ostensibly based on his experience. See: <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/sfgate/name/lester-gorn-obituary?id=16194222> (accessed 28 May, 2022).

6. Jewish Infallibility and the Unworthiness of Other Peoples

1 Reuben Wallenrod, *The Literature of Modern Israel* (London: Abelard-Schuman, 1959), 2.

2 Translator's note: The author of *Exodus*, Leon Uris (1924-2003), was American.

3 Wallenrod., 50.

4 Ibid., 25.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid., 85..

7 Francis Joseph Schiedel, *The Myth of Israel*, trans. Adel Al Qabbani and Ahmed 'Abdelqader (Cairo: al-Dār al-Qawmiyya li-Ṭibaa wal-Nashr), 113.

8 Mix, *Milk and Honey*, 45. Translator's note: This perplexing citation is possibly a reference to "Milk and Honey", a 1961 musical set in Israel written by the American composer Jerry

Herman. The original text quoted by Kanafani here could not be located.

9 Lester Gorn, *The Greater Glory* (New York: Popular Library, 1959), 272.

10 Ibid., 272.

11 James A. Michener, *The Source* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1966), 860.

12 Ibid., 816.

13 Ibid., 305.

14 Leon Uris, *Exodus* (London: Kimber, 1959), 305.

15 Ibid., 130.

16 Ibid., 135.

17 Ibid., 138.

18 Ibid., 535.

19 Michener, *The Source*, 843.

20 Ibid., 199.

21 Robert Nathan, *A Star in the Wind* (New York: Popular Library, 1963), 77.

22 Ibid., 109.

23 Uris, 115.

24 Translator's note: Karl Lueger (1844-1910), an Austrian politician, the mayor of Vienna and leader-founder of the Austrian Christian Social Party.

25 David Bakan, *Sigmund Freud and the Jewish Mystical Tradition* (Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1958), 30.

26 Uris, 115.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid., 191. This was said by Bradshaw, one of the staunch-

est anti-Zionists in the novel.

29 Nathan, 137.

30 Ibid., 144.

31 Ibid., 125.

32 Ibid., 159.

33 Ibid., 117.

34 Uris, 558.

35 Michener, 27. It is as if the author later regretted such modesty when he affirmed, at the end of the novel, that every Jewish person in Israel is in fact an "archeologist."

36 Yael Dayan, *Envy the Frightened* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1961), 130.

37 Uris, 505. The same conclusion and position can be found in: Michener, 468, 470, 682. A Christian character suddenly discovers that he is more Jewish than Christian; and that the Christian religion is but a flower on a branch of the tree of Judaism.

38 Uris, 178.

39 "Palestine – the Edited Appendix" (Beirut) No. 440, 17 December 1964, in *Issues* (US publication), which was based on six studies on the novel *Exit* during the period of 1958-1959 in six US newspapers.

40 Uris, 166.

41 Nathan. Lord Halifax [the British Foreign Secretary] did, in fact, capitulate in the wake of this incident and allowed the rest of the Jews on the ship, which numbered 1,750, to enter Palestine (November 1940). Translator's note: This is a reference to the Haganah's sinking of the SS *Patria* on 25 November 1940.

42 Arthur Koestler, *Thieves in the Night* (New York: Macmillan, 1946), 70.

43 Ibid., 62. [sic] Translator's note: This reference is actually

from Dayan's *Envy The Frightened*, as the author indicates in the text.

44 Official Communiqué in Tel Aviv, 15 May 1958.

45 Translator's note: Amnon Kapeliouk (1930-2009), an Israeli journalist and author who co-founded the human rights organization, B'Tselem, and wrote a biography of Yasser Arafat.

46 *New Outlook* (Tel Aviv), No. 53 (May 1963).

47 Ibid.

48 Alan Taylor, *Prelude to Israel* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1959).

49 *Jewish Observer*, No. 23 (November 1961).

50 Newspaper reports (via Reuters in New York), 12 April 1967.

51 Uris, 35.

52 Ibid., 56.

53 Ibid., 131.

54 Ibid., 145-146.

55 Despite this, an international report presented by the Haycraft Commission to Palestine in 1920 stated that the reason for the violence in Yaffa in May was "a feeling among the Arabs of discontent with, and hostility to, the Jews, due to political and economic causes, and connected with Jewish immigration, and with their conception of Zionist policy as derived from Jewish exponents." (See: Taylor. There are also a number of Arab testimonials, submitted to the Royal British Committee in 1938, which were collected by Jamil al-Shuqairi and were published by I'tidāl Press in Syria in 1938. Here, the conditions of the Arabs under the British policy and the pressure of Jewish immigration is sourced with documents and numbers). But this series of facts does not mean anything to Zionist authors. There is not a single reference in a Zionist novel to the Arab struggle against British colonization. In addition to ignoring the Arab revolts,

some authors – if referencing them at all – would describe them as “terrorism” (Koestler), while insisting that the English were with the Arabs and were against the Jews. Even when it comes to British consent to the Jewish migration to Palestine, Uris writes: “the British quota for Palestine was only fifteen hundred a month, and they always took old people or those too young to fight.” (*Exodus*, 98). This position quickly slides into cheap exaggeration. It is claimed that the English correspondent for Reuters during the Palestine war conducted espionage for the Arabs (141), and the man who shelled the Ben Yehuda neighborhood in Jerusalem was “an English officer who al-Hajj Amin promised 500 pounds, which were never paid” (142). *Exodus* constantly focuses on this point to represent the battle as one between an alliance of the English and the Arabs against the Jews. The same position can be found in *The Last Temptation* by Joseph Viertel, especially after the shelling of the King David Hotel; and when the British troops treated the curious crowd rudely and brutally, only Arabs were treated with respect (146). The novel represents a battle with the English through the voice of the hero as follows: “some day it’ll be ours and the English will go home and leave us alone” (154). The same position can be noted in *The Anglo-Saxons, A Star in the Wind* (77), *Thieves in the Night* and *Cast a Giant Shadow*. In the latter, the author accuses US president Truman of being pro-Arab (95) and attacks the British viciously in most of the book for their ostensible support for the Arabs.

56 Uris, 123.

57 Ibid., 588.

58 Ibid., 337.

59 Koestler, 180.

60 Nathan, 186.

61 Uris, 38.

62 Ibid., 371.

63 Nathan, 202.

- 64 Ibid., 207.
- 65 Uris, 244.
- 66 Koestler, 103-120.
- 67 Ibid., 14.
- 68 Ibid., 27 and other pages.
- 69 Uris, 277.
- 70 Ibid., 301.
- 71 Ibid., 518.
- 72 Translator's note: Fawzi al-Qawuqji (1890-1977) was a commander of the Arab Liberation Army during the war of 1948. He was an important Arab nationalist and anti-colonial military leader. Rendered as Kawukji in his fictionalised version in *Exodus*.
- 73 Uris, 521.
- 74 Ibid., 257. Ari dismissed a group of Arab boys from around him, but one followed him and asked: "Guide?" "No."
"Souvenirs? I got wood from the cross, cloth from the robe."
"Get lost."
"Dirty pictures?"
Ari tried to pass the boy but he clung on and grabbed Ari by the pants leg. "Maybe you like my sister? She is a virgin," Ari flipped the boy a coin. "Guard the car with your life."
- 75 Ibid., 432.
- 76 Gorn, *The Greater Glory*, 347.
- 77 Uris, 306.
- 78 Nathan, 164
- 79 Ibid., 71.
- 80 Uris, 253-254.

- 81 Joseph Viertel, *The Last Temptation* (London: Cargo Trans World Pub., 1960), 134-136.
- 82 Ibid., 175.
- 83 Uris, 400.
- 84 Ibid., 369.
- 85 Ibid., 515.
- 86 Ibid., 279.
- 87 Koestler, 35.
- 88 Michener, 250.
- 89 Ibid., 764.
- 90 Ibid., 765.
- 91 Ibid., 901.
- 92 Ibid., 342.
- 93 Ibid., 566.
- 94 Ibid., 867.
- 95 Viertel, 160-161.
- 96 Michener., 862. Translator's note: Kanafani's text is a compilation of quotes from *The Source* that are slightly paraphrased and appear in a different sequence from Michener's original. The text here is Michener's exact words in the order that they were rendered by Kanafani.
- 97 Koestler, 34.
- 98 *The Anglo-Saxons*, 243.
- 99 Translator's note: Contrary to Kanafani's citation the quoted passage is actually from Koestler, *Thieves in the Night*, 176.
- 100 Nathan, 182.
- 101 Koestler, 177.

- 102 Uris, 64.
- 103 He was born in 1855 and died in 1918. To read more on him, see: Wallenrod, 10.
- 104 According to an official census, in 1914, there were 59 colonial settlements in Palestine of 12,000 Jews.
- 105 Translator's note: A character from *A Star in the Wind*.
- 106 Nathan, 35.
- 107 In *The Fifth Heaven* (1962) by Rachel Eytan. The incident occurs on the eve of the Second World War. See: *New Outlook*, Vol. 5, No. 8 (October 1962).
- 108 Michener, 40.
- 109 Uris, 40.

7. Zionist Rationalizations for the Usurpation of Palestine

- 1 A lecture in Cairo in December 1961, parts of which were published. Also: *Jewish Observer* (London) under the title "Cries of Laughter."
- 2 Uris, 596.
- 3 Michener, 740.
- 4 Translator's note: This is a reference to the prophet Muhammad's migration from Mecca to Medina. It corresponds with the year 622 C.E.
- 5 Michener, 516.
- 6 Uris, 69-109. From a purely artistic point of view, these pages have nothing to do with the story because they could not have possibly been narrated by the character (Karen) due to her age.

- 7 Lester Gorn, *The Greater Glory* (New York: Popular Library, 1959), 236-237.
- 8 Ted Berkman, *Cast a Giant Shadow* (New York: Perma Book, 1963), 18-19.
- 9 Uris, 108.
- 10 Ibid., 4.
- 11 Ibid., 94.
- 12 Ibid., 194.
- 13 Translator's note: A Palestinian character in the novel.
- 14 Koestler, 175.
- 15 Ibid., 153-155.
- 16 *The Observer* (UK), "When Daydreams Must End," 10 March 1963.
- 17 Nathan, 99.
- 18 Viertel, 173.
- 19 Gorn, *The Greater Glory*, 245.
- 20 What is astonishing, in this regard, is the title of the story that the author used as a symbol of "Jewish defense against Arab aggression," and what he intended, when using the word "star," as the symbol of Israel – all of it based on a laughable innovation. The village, as defined by the novel, is the Arab village of Kawkab al-Hawa [Translator's note: A former Palestinian village that was depopulated by Zionist forces during the Nakba in 1948] which was not inhabited by Jews across its long history, but is nevertheless transformed into a symbol of "Jewish defense" when it was in fact a symbol of aggression. This is just one of the novel's many contradictions.
- 21 Uris, 588.
- 22 Koestler, 132.
- 23 Berkman, 16. Translator's note: This was a quote in Kana-

fani's original text, which has been paraphrased on his behalf. The rationale for doing so is that he seems to have slightly misunderstood the original quote. What Berkman is saying is that there are Arab intellectuals who are sincere in their opposition to Zionism on an anti-colonial and anti-Western basis, much like the rest of the Third World at the time; but that Zionists have a better argument for why they deserve Palestine. In a way, the author was not wrong in what he concluded about his primary concern: Berkman is justifying conquest all the same.

24 Berkman.

25 A letter from Robert Walsh to the *Jewish Observer* (London) on 16 February 1962. The most grotesque of such stories and the most self-contradictory is *Cast a Giant Shadow*.

26 *New Outlook*, No. 87 (March-April 1967), based on *Haaretz*.

27 It seems that the clip of this kind was more than a coincidence and test. Israel faces an insistence, on the part of the Arabs of the Occupied Territories, to not leave their land at any price. Quite the contrary, they represent a current of resistance which the Zionists take great measures to confront. This is especially reflected in the Arab "literature of resistance" in occupied Palestine, at the forefront of which are courageous and talented youth. It seems apparent that this literature takes its most common form in poetry, which insists on clinging on to the land and the failure of all the policies and procedures of repression, the expropriation of the remaining lands in the hands of the Arabs in Israel and the Judaization of their common areas. The poetry of Mahmoud Darwish and Samih al-Qassim is at the forefront of this insistence, which appears as spontaneous, deep and of rare, pure beauty and finds no parallel in the series of Zionist claims that have been discussed above. See: Ghassan Kanafani, *Adāb al-Muqawama* (Nicosia: Dar al-Rimāl, 2013). Also see other poems from the literature of resistance in *al-Adāb* magazine, No. 6 (June 1966), *al-Muṣawer* magazine (Cairo, late May 1967) and *Mulḥaq al-Anwār* (Beirut: August, 1967).

28 It seems that the phenomenon has deeper roots than this.

We can note that the Jewish writers who migrated to Palestine at the turn of this century were not very interested in writing about it – especially as a national home. David Shimoni (born in 1886 and came to Palestine in 1909) was not very interested in Israel (*the Literature of Modern Israel*, 41). The same thing happened with Shmuel Agnon, who kept writing about his country of origin, and Jacob Steinberg (1886-1948), who did not mention Palestine in his poetry except in rare cases, while Aaron David Gordon (1856-1922) talked about “a humanitarian homeland,” but never a national one. Such examples are countless. Conversely, the “foreign authors” discussed “the heroism of the Jewish pioneers” in Palestine and their work to establish Israel.

29 Translator’s note: This is a reference to an upcoming quote in Dayan’s *Envy the Frightened* which relates to the concept of “might makes right.”

30 Dayan, *Envy the Frightened*, 36.

31 Ibid., 55.

32 Ibid., 125.

33 Ibid., 113.

34 Ibid., 142.

35 This man highly resembles another in *Exodus* by the name of Dov, “in whom not much humanity had remained.” See: Uris, 142, as well as a third character in Michener’s *The Source*.

36 Yael Dayan, *Dust* (London: Weinfeld and Nicolson, 1963), 46.

37 Ibid., 140. Translator’s note: Dayan’s original text actually says “David is uprooting the flower in you [Yardena] instead”.

38 Translator’s note: This is Kanafani’s paraphrasing of a passage that appears on 112-113 of *Dust*.

39 Dayan, *Dust*, 113.

40 Ibid., 56.

- 41 For a critical review of the author's novel, see: *al-Hurriyah* magazine (Beirut), No. 183, 19/8/1963.
- 42 Joel Blocker, ed., *Israeli Stories* (New York: Schocken Books, 1962), 151. Translator's note: This appears to be an erroneous reference, as these two stories are not contained in this compilation.
- 43 Translator's note: As per Lisa Katz's translation, the main character of the story is named Mahmoud Tawil. Another character is called Ali al-Kasir. See: Benjamin Tammuz, "The Tale of an Olive Tree," trans. Liza Katz, 8 December 2009 <https://zeek.forward.com/articles/116088/index.html> (accessed 28 May, 2022).
- 44 Uris, 625.
- 45 Blocker, 151.
- 46 For comparison: *The Anglo-Saxons* is a similar story, where one could imagine that the Arab prisoner in Yizhar's story is the same as the one that appears in *The Anglo-Saxons* (243). Another similarity is the question of stealing cattle and justifying it, in which the two prisoners concede that they are closer to idiots than complete human beings.
- 47 Blocker, 195. Translator's note: This is a reference to the Israeli-French-British invasion of Egypt in October 1956, commonly referred to as the Suez Crisis in the Anglosphere or the Tripartite Aggression in the Arab world.
- 48 *New Outlook*, No. 79 (May 1966).
- 49 For more on this, see the aforementioned Kanafani source.
- 50 A comparison of this sort points to the message on the gravestone of the American colonel Marcus, who volunteered for the Haganah and was killed in Jerusalem. It is nothing more than humor in bad taste: it bore the words: "David Mickey Marcus – the soldier of all of humanity." This colonel was buried in West Point military cemetery in the United States. See: *Cast a Giant Shadow* by B. A. B. in *Palestine Magazine*, The Editor's

8. *From the Nobel Prize to the 1967 Aggression*

1 Agnon was born in Galicia in 1888, which is a part of Poland. He received a religious education before migrating when he was 20 years of age (in 1908) to Palestine, where he lived for four years. He then left for Europe and then returned, following an absence of thirteen years.

2 Peregrine Worsthorne, *The Sunday Telegraph*, "Triumph of the Civilized," June 1967.

3 Translator's note: Randolph Churchill (1911-1968) was the son of the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill. He was a writer and a Conservative Party politician.

4 Willian Stevenson, *Israeli Victory* (London: Gorge Books, July 1967). In Leon Uris's appendix titled *The Third Temple*, the Jewish author takes his racist position a step forward with further chauvinism and hatred. Just one example in the piece shows the author's reaffirmation, with prolonged repetition, that the Crusades were directed against Jews (125), along with his affirmation that the root of the issue in the Middle East is Arab aggression (140).

5 Blocker.

6 Wallenrod, 145.

7 Blocker, 145. Translator's note: Kanafani's citation here appears to be incorrect, the quote can in fact be found here: S. Y. Agnon, "Tehilah," in *Firstfruits: A Harvest of Twenty-five Years of Israeli Writing*, ed. James A. Michener, trans. Walter Lever (Philadelphia, 1973), 39.

8 Shmuel Yosef Agnon, *In the Heart of the Seas* (New York: Schocken Books, 1948), 83.

9 Shmuel Yosef Agnon and others, *Tehilla and other Israeli Tales* (New York: Abelard-Schuman, 1956), 34.

10 Agnon, *In the Heart of the Seas*, 83.

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On Zionist Literature

Ghassan Kanafani

Translated into English for the first time after its publication in 1967, Ghassan Kanafani's *On Zionist Literature* makes an incisive analysis of the body of literary fiction written in support of the Zionist colonization of Palestine.

Interweaving his literary criticism of works by George Eliot, Arthur Koestler, and many others with a historical materialist narrative, Kanafani identifies the political intent and ideology of Zionist literature, demonstrating how the myths used to justify the Zionist-imperialist domination of Palestine first emerged and were repeatedly propagated in popular literary works in order to generate support for Zionism and shape the Western public's understanding of it.

The new preface by Anni Kanafani and an introduction by Steven Salaita place *On Zionist Literature* in its broader historical context and make a compelling case for its ongoing significance more than five decades since its original publication, illustrating the extent to which "Kanafani was a searing and incisive critic, at once generous in his understanding of emotion and form and unsparing in his assessment of politics and myth."

Ghassan Kanafani is regarded as one of the most well-known Arab writers and journalists of the past century. Born in Palestine in 1936, Kanafani and his family were forced to flee his homeland during the Nakba – after which he lived and worked in Damascus, Kuwait and finally, from 1960, Beirut. Kanafani was martyred on July 8th, 1972, along with his niece Lamees, in a car bomb planted by Israeli agents. His writings have inspired generations of Palestinians and those in solidarity with their cause.

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