

**Jews and the English Nation: an Intertextual Approach to Evolving
Representations of Jews in British Fiction, 1701-1876**

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Contents

| | |
|---|-----|
| Abstract | iv |
| Acknowledgements | v |
| Introduction | 1 |
| Chapter One | |
| The Precedent of Shylock | 12 |
| <i>The Jew of Venice</i> and the Jews of England | 20 |
| The “Jew Bill” Controversy and its Effects | 29 |
| Benevolent Jews on the Stage | 44 |
| Chapter Two | |
| Defining Jewishness in the Late Eighteenth Century | 56 |
| Jews and anti-Jacobinism | 61 |
| William Godwin’s Appropriation of Jewishness | 70 |
| Universalized Jewishness in George Walker’s <i>Theodore Cyphon</i> | 79 |
| Chapter Three | |
| Gothic Fiction and the Wandering Jew | 86 |
| Wandering Jews and Benevolent Jews: <i>Melmoth the Wanderer</i> | 92 |
| Sympathy for the Rebel Apostate in Romantic Poetry | 101 |
| Chapter Four | |
| “What is a Jew” | 112 |
| The Roots of Prejudice: Maria Edgeworth’s <i>Harrington</i> | 118 |
| The Debts of History: Walter Scott’s <i>Ivanhoe</i> | 144 |
| Chapter Five | |
| Anglo-Jews, or Jews in England? | 168 |
| Jewish Self-Fashioning in the Imperial Context: Scott’s <i>The Surgeon’s Daughter</i> | 174 |
| Jewish Independence: Edward Bulwer Lytton’s <i>Leila</i> | 182 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Hebraism, Hellenism, and the Hebrews: Benjamin Disraeli's Theories of Race | 192 |
| Jewish Nationalism: George Eliot's <i>Daniel Deronda</i> | 210 |
| Conclusion | |
| The Shifting Ground of Jewish Representation | 220 |
| Appendix | |
| William Hogarth's <i>Harlot's Progress</i> (plate 2) and <i>Election</i> (plate 4) | 230 |
| Percy Shelley's Transcription of Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart's <i>Der Ewige Jude</i> | 231 |
| Bibliography | 235 |

Abstract

Recent scholarship on the representations of Jews in British Romantic fiction has explored the relationship between the radical changes in Jewish characterization of the period and shifting cultural values. Judith Page, for example, considers the effect of Romantic notions of sentiment, detailing especially how Jews test the limits of sympathetic feeling, and Michael Ragussis has linked the surge of interest in Jews to their value as rhetorically useful subjects in relation to debates surrounding English and British identity. Such studies at times draw attention to the impact of older characterizations of Jews on the new, typically to reinforce claims that relate changing Jewish portrayals to particular cultural and historical developments. Yet, the impact of literary precedent itself has not been fully considered as a leading factor in inspiring new ideas about Jewish characterization. This study takes as its centrepiece the development of the sympathetic or benevolent Jew in the Romantic period, best characterized by Richard Cumberland's sentimental comedy *The Jew* (1794), and the historical novels *Harrington* (1814), and *Ivanhoe* (1819) by Maria Edgeworth and Walter Scott respectively. These works draw heavily on pre-existing Jewish-themed texts, notably Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* (1598). While the play's Jewish villain Shylock exerts a powerful and well-documented influence on later Jewish characters, the relevance of these Shylockian imitators merits more minute investigation in terms of their impact on the gradual transformation of ideas about Jews in fiction. For this reason, this dissertation takes a long period of history as its subject in order to emphasize that innovation in Jewish portrayal results not from ongoing social change alone, but equally from the interplay of past literary influences and developments in style and genre.

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Formerly the Israelite in novels was as accurate a representative of his race, as was the frog-eating French dancing master or the howling wild Irishman of ancient farces. He was a coiner, a buyer of stolen goods, a trainer of young thieves, a pettifogging attorney, a sheriff's officer, a money-lender, a swindling financier. He was a Jew, a man with no other thought than greed for money, no other sense of honour than that which is said to exist among the class to which he was compared, and with scarcely a soul to save. If young, he was red-lipped, with greasy ringlets, the embodiment of covetousness and rapacity, with seldom one ennobling trait to redeem the repulsive picture. The delineation was as truthful as if a Whitechapel costermonger had been held out as the type of British merchants. To make a Jew the hero of a story, or even to endeavour to enlist the sympathies of the reader in his favour, was contrary to the canons of fiction. (James Picciotto, Review of *Daniel Deronda* in *Gentleman's Magazine* 1876)

Introduction

In his exhaustive study of the history of anti-Semitism, Anthony Julius identifies England as a “continuously innovative” leader in anti-Semitic expression (xlii).¹ England may, as Julius argues, be the originator of some of Europe’s most influential anti-Jewish tropes, but, it may also have been the first European nation to attempt to confront such prejudices in its literature. There was no widespread persecution of Jews in England after the edict of expulsion in 1290, but English culture maintained a strong civic and literary antipathy to Jews well into the Romantic era. The return of Jews to England after the Civil War (1642) could have prompted re-evaluation of this customary anti-Jewish attitude, but the Jews’ presence only became a matter of public interest with the widespread controversy surrounding the passage and repeal of the Jewish Naturalization Act in 1753-1754, which polarized public opinion and inflamed anti-Jewish expression. The history and aftermath of the Jewish Naturalisation Act demonstrates that, while

¹ Henceforth, this study avoids the term “anti-Semitism” as anachronistic in describing casual stereotypes about Jews that inform the texts discussed below. This decision follows from Bryan Cheyette’s dismissal of the term because of “the inherent moralizing attached” to it. Anthony Julius likewise assesses the term, coined at the end of the nineteenth-century, as “problematical. It implies a Jewish racial identity, and it dignifies vicious and degraded sentiments with the status of an ideology. It was invented, indeed, to serve precisely these objects” (xlii). “Anti-Semitic” also carries connotations of malicious intent that would unjustly be ascribed to many of the authors discussed in this dissertation. Instead, the phrase “anti-Jewish” is used to describe negative depictions of Jews in order to deemphasize the influence of a specific ideological motivation.

Jews did enjoy respectability in some circles, the popular voice was against Jewish integration into English society. Opponents of the act drew on a large corpus of commonplace anti-Jewish tropes to defeat the Bill, despite the fact that the Jew Bill only benefitted “a few wealthy merchants, at most”, while the public outcry it produced demonstrated a deeply felt anxiety over the place of Jews in British society (Endelman, *Georgian* 76).

While the Jew Bill immediately increased hostility toward Jews, the long-term consequences were quite different. Jewish representations in the second half of the eighteenth century may have been largely derogatory, but the stereotypes became worn through frequent repetition, and this enabled writers to think more creatively and more critically about Jewish subjects. Stereotypes persisted into the nineteenth century and beyond, but they became mixed with more sympathetic impulses. As well, a number of other social and literary developments during the Romantic period contribute to the rapid growth in the variety of contexts and rhetorical positions in which Jews could be placed. Through analysis of the trajectory of changing representations of Jews from the eighteenth into the nineteenth century, this study examines how and why these changes occurred and the impact they have on the development of British fiction. In addition, this dissertation considers how new trends in Jewish portrayal intersect with developing ideas about nationalism and the Jews’ ambiguous relationship to host nations.

Edgar Rosenberg’s and Abba Rubin’s early studies of Jews in British fiction note the emergence of positive Jewish characters at the turn of the nineteenth century and demonstrate how such figures exert an influence on later portrayals. More recent work on Romantic portrayals of Jews has attempted to situate such Jewish characters more clearly in the context of authorial oeuvres and cultural developments. Michael Scrivener expands Rosenberg’s and

Rubin's arguments by demonstrating how stock Jewish figures are reinvented with more complexity in Romantic literature and relates these transformations more closely to their fictional antecedents and to contemporary real-life inspirations. Judith Page considers Jewish characterization as an effect of Romantic notions of sentiment and the literary imagination, detailing especially how Jews test the limits of sympathetic feeling. In several works, Michael Ragussis links the surge of interest in Jews as rhetorically useful subjects in the Romantic period to a long-term development in the concept of English and British identities. Sheila Spector's three edited collections of essays about Jews and Judaism in relation to Romantic culture complement these longer studies. Such works demonstrate an increasing interest in and relevance of the study of Jews in relation to British Romanticism.

Building upon these and other scholars' work, this study broadens the discussion by considering the long-term developments in British fiction that affect how Jews are portrayed. Although the Romantic period was a time of critical re-evaluation of notions of Jewishness in Britain, this dissertation takes a much longer period of time as its subject in order to emphasize the intertextual nature of Jewish portrayal. Authors engage with pre-existing stereotypes when attempting to reinvent the literary Jew, and so even positive depictions incorporate elements of stereotype. The success or failure of such efforts to vindicate Jewish characters is therefore best gauged by their influence on later works, as well as by their immediate reception in the great *Reviews*. Reviewers were often sceptical of Jewish innocence, but still frequently applauded innovations in Jewish characterization.

Jewish characters in early English fiction are, according to Sheila Spector, based upon four archetypes:

1) Faust, the evil magician, [who] actualized the extreme dangers of Original Sin. 2) Shylock, the usurer, the negative representation of Christ's ransom. 3) Ahaseurus, the Wandering Jew, the visual embodiment of eternal damnation; and 4) Jessica, the convert, the promise of Grace ("Other's Other" 310).

By the 1790s, however, British writers began to think more carefully about these archetypes and their applicability to actual Jewish people. Such re-evaluation began with the deployment of Jews to figure larger socio-cultural issues. While Jewish migration and assimilation had been ongoing for over a century, the political uncertainties of the revolutionary decade stimulated broad debate on the question of British identity, with implications for Jewish subjects. The combination of Jews' symbolic link to commerce and their actual involvement in international trade made them pertinent to discussions of national identity and security. In this context, Jews could become emblematic counters, rhetorically useful in negotiating political and social discourses and adaptable, as such, to a range of genres.

Authors struggled to integrate positive notions of Jews into their writings because Jews were still somewhat foreign and mysterious to contemporary readers. Lacking direct knowledge of Jewish life, writers built on the very fictions they were trying to supplant as models. Combining reversals of stereotype with vague knowledge of Jewish practice tended in turn to produce works that violated conventions of genre and of propriety. A common example is the ascribing of an exceptional Christian morality to fictional Jews, with the intent of embarrassing and humbling readers. By rendering Jews more Christian than Christians, authors undermine the unique religious character of Jews and invent an image of the Jew that is as favourable as it is false. For example, Richard Cumberland's play *The Jew* (1794) inverted the Jewish plot of *The Merchant of Venice* by granting the Jewish moneylender heroic qualities of generosity and

sympathy that enable a happy resolution of the play's conflicts. Part of the power of the play comes from the unexpectedness of Sheva the Jew's benevolence, supposedly rooted in his Jewish identity. Later authors in turn took advantage of the surprising notion of the Jew as a force for positive change.

However, Jewish themes in fiction, plays, and poetry published shortly after Cumberland's *The Jew* increasingly lost sight of the religious and social particularity of Jewish characters and instead imagine Jewishness as a parallel to other kinds of marginal statuses, or use the Jew's benevolence to bolster arguments criticizing the status quo of English society in general. At the same time, the actual celebration of Jews or Judaism in Romantic-era texts proved unsettling to reading audiences. Isaac D'Israeli's *Vaurien* (1797) was praised for its soundly conservative views, but harshly criticized in the *Analytical Review* and the *Monthly Review* for its two more radical incidents – its defence of Jewish religion and its appeal to sympathy for fallen women. Critics likewise deemed Byron overly sympathetic to Jewish culture in his *Hebrew Melodies* (1815) and Maria Edgeworth an alarmist for overstating the prevalence of anti-Jewish sentiment in England.

Experiments in benevolent and symbolically rendered Jews ran up against conventional wisdom derived from older texts, exposing the insufficiencies of Jewish representation. This development in turn inspired authors to think more carefully about the history of damning portrayals of Jews in literature, emphasizing how they promote anti-Jewish attitudes. Efforts to create positive depictions of Jews occur against a ground of establishmentarian thinkers who, working with inherited attitudes supported by literary convention, seek to demonstrate the incompatibility of English values with what they construe as Jewish ones. In "Imperfect Sympathies" (1821) Charles Lamb, for instance, expressed his belief that "a moderate Jew is a

more confounding piece of anomaly than a wet Quaker. The spirit of the synagogue is essentially *separative*” (62). Lamb rejects the evidence of successful Jewish assimilation and defers instead to received literary representations as a truer model of Jewish character than observed behaviour. Likewise, reviewers of philo-Semitic texts tended to disregard the authors’ message about the falsity of stereotype by citing earlier fictions, especially *The Merchant of Venice*, to attest to the true character of Jews. Elements of pre-existing Jewish characters thus become incorporated, consciously or not, into subsequent characters, even as authors attempt to say something new about Jews. A longstanding English literary tradition with regard to Jews is perhaps therefore the most daunting obstacle to positive depictions of Jews in fiction, but also the richest inspiration for new Jewish figures in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The opening chapter of this dissertation provides a foundation for the ensuing arguments by establishing the theoretical and historical contexts for understanding the portrayal of Jews before the 1790s. The legacy of Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice* (1598) is particularly important in this chapter since Shylock exerted a profound influence on iterations of Jewish characters in English literature prior to the drastic reconfigurations of the Romantic period, and even beyond. Three different styles of performing the play were popular in the long eighteenth century, and discussion of how Shylock transforms from comedic foil (1701), to demonic villain (1741), to sympathetic and tragically flawed victim (1814) are consistent with contemporary attitudes toward Jews in fiction. Shylock is especially pertinent in relation to the Jew Bill Controversy of 1753-1754 since Shylock was frequently treated as the exemplary Jew and cited as a reason to deny Jewish naturalization.

The Jewish Naturalization Act was an extremely minor piece of legislation, but the resulting debates about whether or not Jews could rightfully be termed English citizens

foregrounds the question of Jewish nationality and the Jews' relationship to the English and other Europeans that underpins much later discourse about Jews in the nineteenth century. Tobias Smollett's counter-argument to Shylock in the *Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom* (1753) suggests that Jews can indeed be model citizens and that they deserve fair treatment. While a few voices such as Smollett's questioned the legitimacy of Jewish stereotypes, an uptick in vicious or farcical Jewish characters and statements denigrating the Jews and Judaism is evident after 1753. After exploring the short-term effects of the Jew Bill Controversy on Jewish portrayal, the first chapter argues that the Jews' topicality as a result of these debates enables late-century writers to reconsider the available moral positions for a Jewish character, and this culminates in both Cumberland's *The Jew* and in Edmund Kean's sympathetic rendering of Shylock in his performances starting in 1814.

Building upon these arguments about the Jew's place in the British nation, chapter two demonstrates how the 1790s saw an increased interest in detailed descriptions of Jews and the emergence of critical attitudes toward the older depictions outlined in the opening chapter. The importance of Jewish characters and themes and the ways these are represented at the turn of the nineteenth century suggest a society striving to re-evaluate its cultural makeup. In light of the upheavals of the French Revolution and of a domestic radicalism championed primarily by religious dissenters, questions arise as to the loyalties of outlying social groups that stand to gain by criticizing the establishment. Although there were no laws in England that specifically limited Jewish rights, Jews were included among other religious minorities against whom laws were in place barring them from public office, the universities, and some professions.

As one of a number of victims of legal restriction, Jews came to carry an increasing political and symbolic relevance in fiction. Jewishness is by this time no longer simply a

shorthand description of murderers, heretics, and corrupt dealers. Instead, authors take advantage of other qualities associated with Jewishness to imagine Jews in new ways, enabling consideration of the history and social position of Jews, usually for a more or less obvious political end. Writers on either end of the political spectrum could make use of Jewish tropes, as did Edmund Burke when he related Jewish religious tenacity to his own prized quality of tradition, while the radical William Godwin took inspiration from the Jews' ability to thrive outside of national hierarchies and regarded their persecution as indicative of the injustices inherent in traditional societies. Jews thus serve complex, often contradictory, symbolic functions in fiction as a result of the interplay of toleration, anti-Jacobinism, radicalism, and paranoia characteristic of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic periods. This second chapter therefore explores how the political upheavals of the era contribute to the literary reconfiguration of Jews.

At the same time that Jewish characters became involved in these kinds of cultural debates, a contemporary trend in Gothic fiction saw the Wandering Jew myth adapted in complementary ways. Chapter three demonstrates how depictions of the Wandering Jew, like those of other Jewish characters, contribute to an increasing conceptual difference between fictional and actual Jews. In the hands of some of the most popular writers of the era, including William Wordsworth, Percy Shelley, and Lord Byron, Jewish characters and themes, including the Wandering Jew, were often closely associated with questions of individuality, tradition, family, and oppression. Thus depicted as universalized or personalized figures, such Jewish characterizations tend to obscure the particularities of a living Jewish culture, and Judaism itself becomes increasingly vague as a result of competing associations derived from idiosyncratic ideologies.

The reaction to this disparity is the subject of the fourth chapter that traces the transition from the instrumental deployment of Jews as rhetorical figures to their more central position in contemporary novels and poetry as subjects in their own right. Maria Edgeworth and Walter Scott reoriented literature about Jews toward discussion of the conditions of actual Jews. These authors point to the historically-rooted nature of anti-Jewish sentiment in Christian Europe, noticing that years of calumny and exclusion led to the modes of life that Jews were in turn attacked for leading. This heightened awareness of the double bind on which anti-Jewish attitudes depended owed much to the emerging relevance of history to the legitimacy of national and religious entities. Thus, the emergence of the historical novel is crucial in reshaping cultural attitudes toward Jews by making them more sympathetic and approachable. The fact that the genre's progenitors, Edgeworth and Scott, also present some of the most memorable and powerful novelistic investigations of Jews within British history, in *Harrington* (1817) and *Ivanhoe* (1819) respectively, contributes to a dramatic shift in readers' expectations of Jews in fiction.

Edgeworth's contributions are especially important in terms of literary depictions of Jews as she draws attention to how fiction itself is responsible for harmful notions of Jews. In recognition of this fact, Edgeworth sought to redefine Jews through *Harrington*. While it fails to imagine Jews in an entirely new way, the novel was nevertheless a crucial step in the revision of Jewish character because it painstakingly details how prejudice is formed and reproduced. While less overtly self-conscious about the role of fiction in perpetuating Jewish stereotypes, *Ivanhoe* achieves even more than *Harrington* because it depicts a unique Jewish heroine and insists that Jews had a foundational Jewish role in English history. *Ivanhoe* was also much more influential on later Jewish characterizations. Both novels also emphasize the impact Jews have made in

England's cultural history in order to reframe contemporary debates about Jewish incorporation in terms of cultural indebtedness, rather than the more customary religious toleration.

Thanks to these developments in historiographic thought, later fictions are more readily able to dismiss stereotypes and to engage with Jewish characters in more complex ways. The fifth chapter of this study explores how Scott's location of the Jews early in English history was taken up and challenged by later writers. Scott's own novel *The Surgeon's Daughter* moves beyond the defense and justification of Jews to explore parallels between cultural attitudes toward Jews and British foreign policy in India. The novel's half-Jewish anti-hero's behaviour in India enables Scott to subtly critique attitudes about cultural others in general, as well as Jews in particular.

Two of Scott's imitators, Edward Bulwer-Lytton and Benjamin Disraeli, are also discussed in this chapter. Lytton's *Leila* (1838), like *Ivanhoe*, emphasizes a Jewish perspective of European history. Set during the fall of Granada, the novel recapitulates arguments in defense of Jews almost as a matter of course, even as the plotting of the novel implicates Jews as decidedly antagonistic and foreign. Lytton depicts the Jews as a faction with a set of interests distinct from the warring Muslims and Catholics, suggesting that their loyalties cannot be with any European nation. Benjamin Disraeli, by contrast, regards the Jews as progenitors to both Muslims and Christians and regards them as rightfully at home among either group. Disraeli thus intensifies Scott's positioning of Jews at the roots of English history by also regarding the Jewish religion as foundational to the English nation. Nevertheless, Disraeli, like Lytton, does not suggest that Jews can effectively assimilate into host nations, but rather implies that the time for the establishment of an independent Jewish nation is near.

By more overtly advocating a Jewish return to Palestine, George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* (1876) provides the most complex depiction of Jews in the late nineteenth century. The novel features numerous scattered allusions to earlier literary portrayals of Jews and is itself, of course, concerned with the status of Jews in British society and their relationships to England and to Zionism. *Daniel Deronda* provides the most complete example of how popular attitudes toward Jews in fiction did or did not change after the late-eighteenth-century reinvention of the literary Jew. Eliot does not resolve the tensions that arise from fuller considerations of Jews in the romantic era and does not reassure readers that Jews are loyal to Britain first, since her Jewish heroes Deronda and Mordecai leave England to pursue their Zionist project. But she differs from writers like Burke and Lytton, who distrust the Jews' ambiguous status, because of her sympathy for the uniquely Jewish concerns of her subjects. Eliot builds upon the groundwork laid by Romantic writers who demonstrated that Jews were interesting literary subjects and could be adapted to a variety of plots and modes. Eliot follows in this tradition by pushing the reformation of Jewish characters further. She presents not only benevolent Jews, but Jewish characters who convey an accurate sense of Jewish life. *Daniel Deronda's* decidedly foreign, but still heroic Jews represent the culmination of over a century of gradual change in Jewish portrayals. The extent to which revisionary Jewish portrayals influenced popular attitudes cannot be certain, but tracing the development of such figures provides valuable insight into how efforts to promote tolerance can be both empowered and impeded by stereotypes.

Chapter One

Open the book of dramatic representation at whatever page you choose, you will find on it the figure of the Jew, sinister in his evil-doing, uncouth in his appearance, at best a caricature of a man, with the words ‘to be continued’ faithfully inscribed at the foot of each folio. At no period is the record blank. Even the few exceptions to the rule of the centuries are either ill-drawn by the original delineators or blurred by the callous handling of those in whose keeping the pages have been placed. Shylock is the Wandering Jew. His form may be shadowy at times, but it varies little. Never is he permitted to rest: death and burial are denied him. Impelled ever onward through the years, the butt of mankind where he is not pitilessly execrated, he spreads the plague of prejudice in all lands and climes. (Landa 9-10)

This is the Jew that Shakespeare drew. (Attributed to Pope)

The Precedent of Shylock

The Shakespearean character Shylock has long held strong connotations relating to popular ideas about Jews. In the eighteenth century, these associations often traded on popular conceptions of Jewishness and not necessarily on direct knowledge of the *Merchant of Venice* (1598) itself. This chapter therefore discusses the reputation of the play and of Shylock in the eighteenth century and the Romantic period. Understanding the legacy of *The Merchant of Venice* is critical to understanding the highly charged symbolic power of Jews, with implications for multiple aspects of British life from the 1750s through to the French Revolutionary decades. Jews in this period, along with Scots and Irish, test the limits of English toleration and challenge the notion of stable ethno-cultural identities. Shylock, in his multiple incarnations, reminds readers that Jews always differ from Englishmen and other Europeans – though the specifics of that difference may change. The resurgence of *The Merchant of Venice* in the eighteenth century also corresponds to emerging notions of nationhood and associated concerns over the dilution of English culture. The consolidation of Shakespeare’s status as the preeminent English poet at

precisely this time strengthens the ability of *The Merchant of Venice* at once to form and to mediate English opinions of Jews.

Critics count *The Merchant of Venice* among Shakespeare's greatest plays, but this reputation only begins to accrue as a consequence of Shakespeare's increasing importance within "an emergent English nation [that] badly needed a national poet" (Shapiro 213). This statement takes on greater significance when considered in relation to theorists' claims that the development of a British identity required clear demarcations between British and non-British peoples. Within this collective British identity, Englishness is correspondingly distinguished from other British identities, so that "learning how to be English often meant learning how to exclude Scots, Irish, and Jews" (Ragussis, *Theatrical Nation* 11).² As part of the development of an English national culture, "Shakespeare was constituted in England" and "cultural life during that period was by constitution Shakespearean"; thus, "Bardolatry" takes root in the eighteenth century (Bate 1). Jonathan Bate links "England's patron Poet" to its "patron Saint", noting that "during the eighteenth century it was agreed that Shakespeare's birthday should be celebrated on St. George's Day" (6-7). As Shakespeare becomes a cultural touchstone, determining what he thought of Jews, whether sympathetic or not, becomes a political act as well as a literary judgement, with potentially serious implications for public policy and popular culture (Shapiro 77). The multifarious stakes involved in claiming certain knowledge of Shakespearean intentions are particularly apt in the history of *The Merchant of Venice*.

Qualifying such knowledge is inherently difficult as Shakespeare displays an unusual level of complexity in his characterization of Shylock that has led to contradictory interpretations

² Linda Colley shows how the ascension of Scots to positions of political and cultural power in the 1760s prompted fears that they were infiltrating English culture and undermining English hegemony. With the recent violence of 1745 in mind, a nationalist figure like John Wilkes could harness English Scottophobia and reassure his countrymen that Scottish difference (and implicit inferiority) guaranteed the primacy of the English in Britain (Colley 116-117).

of the bloodthirsty yet humanized Jew. As a result of Shylock's ambiguity, stagings of the play over time have experimented with the stock Jewish figure. From George Granville's toothless and comic Jew, to Charles Macklin's grotesque monster and Edmund Kean's Romantic outcast, the most popular versions of Shylock in the long eighteenth century demonstrate a wide range of stereotypes of Jews. While existing criticism has shown how these shifts parallel the gradual acceptance of Jews into the centres of English society, little has been said about how these changes also reflect a growing recognition among authors of the innovative potential available within Jewish tropes. In the Romantic period especially, Jewish themes could often be linked to social and political discourse. This chapter demonstrates how Shylock himself was understood in the long eighteenth century, and how "knowledge" of Jews derived from such fictions informed other popular depictions of Jews, particularly during the "Jew Bill Controversy" of 1753-1754.

Shylock is often thought of as an irredeemable villain, but the text of *Merchant of Venice* actually walks a line between the two extremes of what Harold Fisch calls the dual image of Jewish portrayals. Jewish characterizations in English literature, Fisch argues, rely chiefly on mythology that simplifies and emblemizes Jews. However:

The Jew is always more than a subjective psychological symbol: he is always . . . the Jew of History, charged with having played a certain part in the death of the Christian saviour, carrying upon him the burden of exile, and living . . . upon the profits of usury – alone, hated, hostile, itinerant, cherishing his own faith, guarding the ways and customs of his ancestors, and refusing "the summons to Christian fellowship." . . . The Jew is often . . . a figure of evil: but more than that, he is a nuisance, a problem, a difficulty, something one has to come to terms with before one can come to terms with

oneself. The image of the Jew is indeed a dual image: he excites horror, fear, hatred; but he also excites wonder, awe, and love (Fisch 12-13).

These contrasts in Jewish meaning are at play in Renaissance theatre, with prominent examples for each mode: among them are Gerontus, the pious and honest merchant of Robert Wilson's *The Three Ladies of London* (1584), and the cruel villain Barabbas of Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* (1592). Fisch argues that introducing Jewish characters gives writers the opportunity to "abolish one or the other of these images, or somehow to bring the two into a common focus" (13). But, whereas these two plays simplify the question of Jewish identity by making the Jew either impossibly good or impossibly evil, Shakespeare's play presents a more complicated picture of the Jew, who, though a villain, appears reasonably justified or even sympathetic.

The Three Ladies of London features a Jewish merchant, Gerontus, who does not worship money, but rather embodies Christian Humanist virtues including charity, mercy, and sincerity.³ The play focuses on the machinations of Lucre and her followers, Fraud, Dissimulation, Usury, and Simony, as they practice treachery upon the two virtues, Conscience and Love, and their followers, Hospitality, Simplicity, and Sincerity. The allegorical argument implicates love of money as the source of every evil imaginable. By the end, even Love and Conscience betray the virtues they represent because they have allowed Lucre to upset the moral order, and they are punished for allowing themselves to be so corrupted.

In the play's subplot, the Italian merchant Mercadore runs an errand to Turkey on behalf of Lucre. When Mercadore arrives in Turkey, the Jewish merchant demands repayment of a loan. Mercadore refuses, so Gerontus brings him to court to sue for his money. There, Mercadore

³ Existing manuscripts of *The Three Ladies of London* attribute it to R.W., who is commonly thought to be the playwright Robert Wilson.

intends to proclaim conversion to Islam, since doing so will erase all his debts.⁴ Rather than see his fellow perjure himself by undergoing an insincere conversion, Gerontus first offers to forgive the interest and then the principal of his loan. Once the loan is completely forgiven, Mercadore admits that he was only converting to save himself money. Gerontus, in his religious sincerity and charity, thereby establishes a trope that recurs intermittently in English writing before the Romantic era: the Jewish merchant who does not lust after gold and who promotes social harmony.⁵

Gerontus might represent a positive step in Anglo-Jewish depictions in terms of destigmatizing Jews and Judaism, but he is no more realistic a version of Judaism than Barabbas, the Jewish villain of Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*. Indeed, Marlowe's representation of Barabbas demonstrates a marginally more informed view of Judaism since Marlowe at least draws attention to aspects of Jewish belief that differ from those of Christianity and Islam. Wilson seems confused as to what Jews believe, since Gerontus invokes Mohammed when he threatens Mercadore: "Trulie pay me my money and that euen nowe presently, / or by mightie Mahomet I sweare, I will forthwith arrest yee" (35). Gerontus is primarily a type of generalized Eastern exoticism, reinforced in the play through the listing of his wares: "Muske, Amber, sweete Powders, fine Odors, pleasaunt perfumes, and many such toys . . . Diamondes, Rubyes, Emerodes, Saphers, Smaradines, Opalles Onacles, Iasinthes, Aggattes, Turkasir, and almost of all kinde of precious stones: And many more fit thinges to sucke away mony from such greene headed wantons" (29). Gerontus is, primarily, a Turkish merchant and his status as a Jew is only briefly considered.

⁴ This notion that conversion would erase debts seems to be a complete invention of the playwright

⁵ This figure appears in English literature from at least the Renaissance, but moves into the foreground with the publication of Cumberland's *The Jew* (1794) and, more powerfully, in Edgeworth's *Harrington* (1817) and Scott's *Ivanhoe* (1819).

Marlowe, however, develops specific tropes to give his comic villain Barabbas a distinctly Jewish character. Over the course of *The Jew of Malta*, Barabbas incites two friends to murder each other, poisons a convent, murders his daughter for converting to Catholicism, kills a priest and frames another, and betrays Malta to Turkish invaders whom he then attempts to double cross with the help of the former Christian rulers. All the while, Barabbas remains motivated by a love of money that is only exceeded by his hatred of non-Jews. In addition to embodying many of the evils usually attributed to Jews, such as covetousness and bloodthirstiness, Barabbas distinguishes himself as a Jew by associating his experiences with those of his Biblical forbearers. For example, while exulting in his successes early in the play, he feels that: “These are the blessings promised to the Jews / And herein was old Abram’s happiness” (1.1.102-103). Shakespeare likewise has his Jew Shylock refer repeatedly to Biblical circumstances as analogous to his own, such as when Shylock justifies usury to Antonio by saying “mark what Jacob did” (1.3.72).

The Jew of Malta was one of the most popular plays in England before Shakespeare came on the scene, so Shakespeare’s decision to give his Jewish character *any* degree of humanity is both surprising and effective.⁶ Shakespeare’s actual interest in Jews, let alone sympathy for them, is debatable, but his creation of Shylock is a landmark for English portrayals of Jews since it opened up for the first time the possibility of emotional and moral depth in a Jewish character. Here we see Fisch’s alternative constructs merged in a single character. Shylock’s aesthetic potential culminates in the trial scene when his brief moment of triumph is thwarted by Portia,

⁶ Harold Fisch argues that Marlowe was too well informed to seriously credit tales of Jews poisoning wells and the like, and suggests that Marlowe must have been parodying popular fears about Jews (27-28). Such a reading assumes that Marlowe has no intention of condemning Jews in general and that Barabbas is not meant to be representative. Yet, although Barabbas’s fellow Jews don’t participate in his schemes, they don’t disassociate themselves from Barabbas either. Any thought that Barabbas is an exception is discounted by Ferenze’s lines in the final scene: “Now, Selim, note the unhallowed deeds of *Jews*”, as if to suggest that the audience recognizes that Barabbas does represent Jews in general (5.5. 92, emphasis mine).

who reminds him that as an outsider in a Christian land, his power is illusory. She then removes any sense of freedom Shylock might have had when she forces him to convert. The most generous critics see this trial scene as Shakespeare's critique of changes in Christian society. Fisch, discerning connections between the trial scenes in *The Merchant of Venice* and *The Three Ladies of London*, argues that Shakespeare's target is not the Jew, but rather "the new economic order of the sixteenth century, necessitated by the expansion of commerce and exploration, and legitimated in the Calvinist scheme of civil society. . . . The fury and bitterness of the attack upon usance . . . is to be explained by the reaction against current social and economic developments by no means originating in Jewry. This is another example of guilt transference" (26). Similarly, Bill Overton argues that the injustice done to Shylock upsets the audience's comfortable notions of Christian superiority and questions whether there is not "a different law, and 'justice' for the outsider" (303).

Both of these interpretations, in implying that Shylock is more of a symptom than a cause of social corruption, ignore the fact that if Shakespeare were criticizing the changing political and economic order, then Jews, with their longstanding mercantile associations and strict ritual and legal codes, personified the changes in Christian society that Shakespeare supposedly critiques. Shylock's defeat and exile thus symbolically purge the unchristian and materialistic forces that corrupt the first four acts. Shylock's removal reorients Christian society and establishes the idyllic resolution wherein the lovers unite and social harmony is restored.⁷ Thus, Shakespeare's concern with the new economic order and legalism does not preclude, but rather reinforces the play's explicit criticism of Jews.

⁷ The Jew in English fiction is nearly always excluded from marriage and romance (unless he or she converts) since, as in Shylock's case, his Jewishness is deemed to exist outside the Christian ideals of divine love and redemption upon which marriage plots are based.

Fisch and Overton may ask too much of Shakespeare and in the process verge on the anachronistic. Nevertheless, similar perspectives are invoked in texts by Romantic-era writers such as Maria Edgeworth, William Hazlitt, and Walter Scott, who critique English and Christian hypocrisy in the treatment of Jews, perhaps having been influenced by the trial scene in *The Merchant of Venice*. The question of Shylock's sympathetic quality is best demonstrated by Toby Lelyveld's assessment of *The Theatrical Observer's* 1825 review of Edmund Kean's Shylock. Lelyveld finds that the review's negative stance is provoked by Kean displaying too much dignity when portraying Shylock's defeat during the trial scene. The reviewer disdains the sympathetic portrayal of Shylock and in his critique alludes to "Kean's sympathetic, and even compassionate treatment of Shylock. For the first time, the stage-Jew was taking on human form, and for the first time, the audience was able to appreciate it" (Lelyveld 45). William Hazlitt also felt that the text of the play allowed Shylock depth and dignity, but that because of "our habitual impression of the part from seeing it caricatured in the representation", it was not possible until Kean's performance to recognize in the script Shylock's humanity (246).

Were these more sympathetic, and therefore complicated, assessments of Shylock intentionally made available by Shakespeare, or are they the product of a later culture that was more amenable to inclusivity? M.J. Landa returns an equivocal answer: "that Shakespeare deliberately embodied in the play a scathing indictment of the Christianity of the day is a justifiable assumption", but "the contention that Shakespeare meant to defend the Jew will not stand the test of examination" (78). Just as Landa criticizes modern critics for reading their own desire for Shakespeare's sensitivity into the play, we can assume that Romantic interpreters like Kean and Hazlitt performed a similar revisionism in their praise of *The Merchant of Venice*. As the *Observer* review indicates, Kean and Hazlitt's contemporaries were not all receptive to the

more complicated version of Shylock and preferred him as the typically monstrous and unsympathetic stage Jew.

The Jew of Venice and the English Jew

George Granville clearly found nothing likeable about the character when he staged his Shylock as a villain with no redeeming qualities. Granville's *Jew of Venice* (1701), a greatly altered version of *The Merchant of Venice*, was the standard from the beginning of the eighteenth century through to 1741. Granville's rewriting of *Merchant* may be a low point in Shakespearean performance history, but it stands as a useful indicator of Jewish portrayals of the time. Since *The Jew of Venice* all but replaced *The Merchant of Venice*, as there is no record of any public performances of *Merchant* from the beginning of Restoration until 1741, we can conclude that even if Shakespeare did intend his Jew to be a sympathetic figure, nearly two hundred years would elapse before audiences once again became receptive to this vision.

The Jew of Venice maintains the two major plots of the original play, but cuts out most of the scenes involving Portia's suitors, and only Bassanio chooses a casket. The most obvious additions include a prologue featuring the ghosts of Shakespeare and Dryden, who praise this new version, and a masque performed while Bassanio, Antonio, and Shylock sit down to dinner. The masque has no bearing on the actual play and the prologue mostly praises Granville's improvements:

Shakespeare: These scenes in their rough native dress were mine;

But now improv'd with nobler lustre shine;

The first rude sketches Shakespear's pencil drew,

But all the shining master-stroaks are new.

This play, ye criticks, shall your fury stand,
Adorn'd and rescu'd by a faultless hand. (Prologue 35-40)

Though presumptuous, this self-aggrandizement proved accurate for Granville, as his version of the play ran successfully and without rival until 1741.

In addition to penning new “master-strokes” by rewording and simplifying dialogue and plot, Granville cuts out most of the elements that make Shylock sympathetic, such as Solanio’s mockery of the confused lamentation of “the dog Jew” found in the original: “My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter! / Fled with a Christian! O my Christian ducats!” (*MV* 2.8.15-16). In Granville’s version, Shylock speaks similar lines on stage, but these only enhance his contemptibleness: “would my daughter were dead / At my foot, so the jewels were in her ears. / Would she were hearsed, so the ducats were in the / coffin” (3.2. 45-48). Granville also gives Shylock another speech in which he again conflates his money with a woman. When asked to offer a toast during the banquet, Shylock says:

I have a mistress, that out-shines ‘em all –
Commanding yours – and yours tho’ the whole sex:
O may her charms encrease and multiply;
My money is my mistress! Here’s to
Interest upon interest. (2.2.28-32)

Granville here capitalizes on readily-available stereotypes of Jewish sexual monstrosity. Shakespeare had already likened Jewish usury to the production of offspring, and Jessica’s elopement, conversion, and theft rob Shylock of all versions of his progeny -- literal, spiritual, and figurative (his wealth). This loss includes “a sealed bag, two sealed bags of ducats” and “two stones, two rich and precious stones / stol’n by my daughter!” (*MV* 2.8.18, 20-21). The links

between the bag and scrotum, with the two stones as testicles, are repeatedly invoked by Shylock in ways that make his child and his money inseparable from his sense of self (Shell 350).

Granville reconfigures these associations while removing any latent possibility for sympathetic response, since, rather than linking Shylock's wealth to paternal feelings for his daughter, Shylock recasts wealth as a mistress and "interest upon interest" as an illegitimate, perhaps incestuous child of usury.

Granville's understanding of the character is best understood through his presentation of the "hath not a Jew eyes" speech. In this monologue, Shylock expresses an ambiguous moral position in a way that has, in more recent interpretations, conferred sympathy, if not necessarily justification, upon the speaker:

He hath disgraced me, and hindered me half a million; laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies; and what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge. The villany you teach me, I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction. (*MV* 3.1.45-75)

Shylock speaks to a common humanity grounded in fellow feeling and natural sympathy, even as he undermines himself by using his words to justify a violent revenge. Landa dismisses the sympathetic potential of this speech, noting that Shylock delivers it to the most minor characters of the play, in the street, and not to Bassanio and Antonio, or to the court (78-79).

Granville seems to agree that the speech was never meant to reflect well on Shylock. Though *The Jew of Venice* includes the speech in full, Shylock addresses it to the shackled and imprisoned Antonio. Shylock in his ascendancy has come to gloat over Antonio at his lowest point, a circumstance that strips the speech of any pathos. As Lelyveld notes, Granville sought to reorient the play to focus primarily on the romance between Bassanio and Portia. In the process, he de-emphasizes the drama of the plot involving Antonio and Shylock, and removes some characters altogether. The result was pure comedy, though “the intended humour of Granville’s version is not as apparent in the reading as is its marked vulgarity. It may be . . . that what seemed amusing to audiences at that time was made evident by the action and appearance of Shylock” (Lelyveld 17-18). Shylock is thus stripped of his dramatic power and performed as nothing more than a comic relief from the love plot.

Though *The Jew of Venice* has been dismissed as having negligible literary value, particularly since the actors “probably worked uninhibitedly at the task of devastating whatever charm and nobility was left in Shakespeare’s play” (Lelyveld 18), the play is worth consideration as a marker of the status of fictional Jews in England at the turn of the eighteenth century. Granville recreated Shylock as an uncomplicated and comic villain, intended to function as an object of fun, rather than fear or serious thought. After all, Granville writes in the preface: “Today we punish a stock-jobbing Jew / A piece of justice, terrible and strange; / Which if pursu’d, would make a thin exchange” (Prologue 28-30). Aside from overstating the role of Jews

on the Royal Exchange, as Jews were allowed to number no more than 12 out of the 124 total members, this statement indicates that Granville has no particular agenda against Jews (Roth 71).

Granville was probably more interested in witticism than moralizing. “Stock-Jobbing Jew” was a common complaint (Burke repeats the phrase several times in *Reflections on the Revolution in France*), but Granville also gives credit to the Jewish role, however exaggerated, in the British economy. In this regard, his position aligns with some of his contemporaries’ more positive statements about Jewish commerce. Addison praised the Royal Exchange because its cosmopolitan culture demonstrated British commitment to toleration and testified to the power of commerce to produce social harmony. The Exchange was so effective at producing equality that Addison even imagines that he can become like the people he sees there, including Jews:

I am infinitely delighted in mixing with these several Ministers of Commerce, as they are distinguished by their different Walks and different Languages. Sometimes I am jostled among a body of *Armenians*; sometimes I am lost in a crowd of *Jews*; and sometimes make one in a Groupe of *Dutch-men*. I am a *Dane*, *Swede*, or *French-man* at different times; or rather fancy myself like the old Philosopher, who upon being asked what Country-man he was, replied, he was a Citizen of the World. (No. 69. p211)

While such mixing may have acquired more disturbing connotations at the end of the century, at the beginning, it could be pointed to as a hallmark of Britain’s economic success, while Addison’s ability to become lost in a crowd of Jews implies a universalism in which Jews are included.⁸ In his *Letters Concerning the English Nation* (1733), Voltaire also praised the pacifying effects of commerce symbolized by the Royal Exchange:

⁸ In the late eighteenth century “passing for a Jew . . . became the means of expressing a deepening anxiety over the increasingly fluid border between Jew and Gentile” (Ragussis “Passing for a Jew” 41).

There the Jew, the Mahometan, and the Christian transact together as tho' they all profess'd the same religion, and give the name of Infidel to none but bankrupts. There, the Presbyterian confides in an Anabaptist, and the Churchman depends on the Quaker's word. At the breaking up of this pacific and free assembly, some withdraw to the synagogue, and others take a glass. This man goes and is baptiz'd in a great tub, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: That man has his son's foreskin cut off, whilst a set of *Hebrew* words (quite unintelligible to him) are mumbled over his child. Others retire to their churches, and there wait for the inspiration of heaven with their hats on, and all are satisfied. (30)

Despite the satire and mockery of both religious insincerity and the artificial peace brought about by trade, Voltaire concludes with a more earnest statement about British toleration: "if one religion only were allowed in *England*, the government would very possibly become arbitrary; if there were but two, the people wou'd cut one another's throats; but as there are a multitude, they all live happily and in peace" (30).

In relation to the Royal Exchange's positive symbolism of Britain's commercial strength and its cosmopolitanism, Jews were regarded as a force driving the British economy. Addison says of the Jews in *The Spectator* No. 425 (1712) that "they are become the Instruments by which Mankind are knit together in a general Correspondence. They are like Pegs and Nails in a great Building, which though they are but little valued in themselves, are absolutely necessary to keep the whole Frame together" (No. 495, p566). Howard Weinbrot relates Addison's opinion to a sense of British identity defined by its commitment to liberty founded in economic opportunity. In this context, a syllogism about the role of Jews in Britain emerged: "trade is essential for liberty, Jews are essential for trade; therefore, Jews are essential for liberty" (416). This is the

logic informing Granville's assertion in the prologue that eliminating Jews from the social fabric would diminish the power of the Royal Exchange and hurt the nation as a whole.

Given this perception of the value of Jews to Britain, *The Jew of Venice* appears less as an attack on Jewish monstrosity than as a poorly conceived farce featuring a grotesque Jewish caricature. The general powerlessness of Shylock and his diminished role in Granville's play suggest that he is only an object of light humour, and not a source of fear. Furthermore, the addition of a banquet scene with Shylock in attendance reinforces the possibility of Jewish and Christian coexistence – a possibility not available in the original play. Granville's version enjoyed success throughout the first half of the eighteenth century (and continued to be performed after) and its attitude toward Jews seems to closely relate to general opinion in that period. As the most notable adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice* at the time, however, the play did little to amend prevailing negative estimates of the antecedent text.

This changed in 1741 when Charles Macklin returned to Shakespeare's script and restored the original title. Critics and audiences found Macklin's Shylock compelling and truly frightening:

The Shylock which Macklin created was not likeable. On the contrary, the aspects of Shylock's personality that were stressed most by Macklin made the money-lender appear to be something of a monster. Macklin counted upon a shock-effect, and so fierce was this new Shylock that audiences were startled into taking him seriously for the first time. It was Macklin's underscoring of the Jew's malice and revengefulness that first established Shylock as a significant dramatic character. He was relentless, savage, ominous, venomous. (Lelyveld 22)

This Shylock bears little resemblance to Granville's and prompted the famous couplet, attributed to Alexander Pope, "This is the Jew / That Shakespeare drew", a sentiment that Landa dismisses as "neither poetic nor truthful" (84). Regardless of its verity, the statement indicates to us that eighteenth-century audiences felt that the powerful and explosive fury of Macklin's Shylock more accurately reflected Shakespeare's intent. Copies of Shakespeare's plays had become increasingly affordable as demand for them grew in the first half of the century; by 1741, Shakespeare accounted for a quarter of all plays performed in London (Bate 22-25). Public interest in the original texts of Shakespeare's plays naturally enough resulted in the introduction of the original *Merchant of Venice* and a fuller portrait of the Jewish villain.

While he satisfied audience demand for "the Jew that Shakespeare drew", Macklin also departed from the standard portrayals of Jewish character, and, as a result, he underplays Shylock's stereotypicality. Lelyveld writes that Macklin, a pursuer of authenticity in his roles, gradually adopted fewer of the expected trappings of the stage Jew, mimicking instead contemporary English Jews and by the end of his career, the only stereotypical markers he retained were the "pointed underchin beard", the "skull-cap", and the "hook nose" (25-26). By looking more like contemporary Jews, Macklin lent additional weight to the thinking that Shylock could be an accurate depiction of them. Audiences responded strongly to Macklin as Shylock and he maintained his style of performing *The Merchant of Venice* through to the end of the century, indicating that his genuinely fearsome performance and authentic costume satisfied aesthetic expectations of the Jew on stage.

According to Michael Ragussis, "Macklin is the actor and playwright who takes us most directly to the centre of the politics of ethnic identity in Georgian theatre and Georgian culture generally" (*Theatrical Nation* 45). Macklin, the leading actor of his age, was noted for his

depiction of the most prominent British others: Scots, Irish, and Jews (45). In addition to playing the monstrous Shylock, Macklin invented a comic Jew, Beau Mordecai, for his *Love a La Mode* (1759), a brief play that contemporizes the love plot of *Merchant of Venice* and recasts Portia's suitors as recognizable British others, including a boastful Scot, a foppish Jew, an ill-mannered English rustic, and an honest but inarticulate Irish soldier. Each of these men speaks in exaggerated dialects that are the main source of humour in the play. The Irishman receives much abuse from his fellows due to his limited understanding of English idiom and custom, but he becomes the hero of the play when he agrees to marry the heiress Charlotte, even though she claims not to be in possession of her rumoured wealth. After the other suitors reveal their mercenary natures and give up their suit, the Irishman, who has agreed to marry her anyway, discovers that the news of her poverty was a test. The play makes fun of the provincial accents of the suitors, but character is the deciding factor in the end. The light-hearted and simple story does not directly consider the status of its various outsiders, but the implications of the casting are clear: Britain contains a variety of foolish ethnic minorities all of whom, nevertheless, belong to the nation. England's political centre, London, is represented by Charlotte, who remains the arbiter of taste and power. The popular double-bill performance of Macklin's *Merchant of Venice* and *Love a la Mode* "potentially ironized the figure of the Jew on the stage" and "established the Jew as spectacle for the less thoughtful theatregoer . . . He is the product of the new commercial age, a fop and a fool" (Ragussis *Theatrical Nation* 47). The two Jews, Beau Mordecai and Shylock, may not, however, be so different after all; both are depicted as undesirables, and in the absence of any alternate representations, the harmless Beau Mordecai might easily be seen as a Shylock in waiting.

The “Jew Bill” Controversy and its Effects

Just as Fisch regards Shylock as a form of commentary on the new social order of the early-modern period, Michale Ragussis argues that Beau Mordecai is well suited to the artificiality of eighteenth-century life. The Jew, it seems, is perennially available as an indicator of changes in English commercial society. William Hogarth saw this potential as well. In *The Harlot’s Progress* (1731), Jews symbolize the degeneration of the English social order through their supposed ability to undermine the existing strictures related to rank by buying status.⁹ Plate 2 shows the titular harlot, Moll, married to a foppish Jewish merchant who is unaware of her extramarital affairs. The plate also depicts a pet monkey who runs about with lace draped around it. The monkey represents the way both the Jew and his wife enter fashionable society by mimicking those who are born into it, just as the mask lying on a side table reinforces both the Jew’s pretensions to high society and Moll’s infidelity. One of the Biblical-themed paintings in the background that evoke the husband’s Jewishness shows King David’s celebration at the return of the Ark of the Covenant, while also portraying Uzzah being stabbed in the back.

Ronald Paulson notes the recurrence of this Biblical scene in *Election* (1754), plate 4 where Hogarth also returns to the character of the Jew.¹⁰ In this engraving,

Hogarth offers a reprise of the painting on the wall of *Harlot* plate 2 that showed King David’s triumphal procession with the Ark of the Covenant. In *Election* 4, Hogarth seems to be saying, the parvenu, “aping Jew” of *Harlot* 2 has succeeded and the Jews have taken over English society. No longer “made a monkey of” by the Harlot and her boyfriend, the duped Uzzah has become the triumphant King David, though his harp is reduced to a fiddle. The Jewish fiddler and his motley followers (the “mob”) bear the

⁹ See appendix for this plate

¹⁰ See appendix

successful candidate as if he were the Ark of the Covenant – and are about to drop him as they did the Ark but with no Uzzah in the vicinity to save him. (Paulson 285-286)

The election in question in Hogarth's prints was the general election of 1754, which closely followed the passing of the infamous Jew Bill of 1753 that granted very limited opportunities to a select group of Jewish merchants. Although the Bill itself was a minor piece of legislation, the controversy surrounding it prompted a new wave of portrayals of English Jews and laid the groundwork for the shift to the more sympathetic post-1790 depictions.

Like Beau Mordecai, the Jews in Hogarth's prints are well integrated into British society, and they are also symptomatic of its faults. The Jew-fop of *Harlot's Progress* combines qualities of two classic villains who, though easily defeated, are difficult to recognize by physical features and are able to corrupt society through false taste, effeminacy, and sexual danger. The Jews in *Election*, by contrast, are foreign-looking Ashkenazi Jews, who were often pedlars. The print, however, implies their vested interest in the Jew Bill and thereby connects them to the well-connected and mostly assimilated Sephardi Jews for whom the Jew Bill was written. Paulson argues that the comedy of the *Election* print comes from the incongruity of an unassimilated Ashkenazi Jew leading the procession. In addition, he finds Hogarth's intent unclear and asks whether he was voicing the "fear of a Jewish takeover" or mocking the Tories who exploited that fear even after the Jew Bill was repealed (286). By swapping the assimilated for the still foreign Jew, Hogarth shows that even the most English-looking Jews are still subject to stereotyping. The paranoia over the Jew Bill is founded on the idea that respectable Jews are only a mimicry of the English, so opponents of the Jew Bill capitalized on this fear through a surge of popular depictions of Jews successfully infiltrating the ranks of fashionable society and influencing politics. Macklin's *Merchant* was performed through this period and his frightening,

inassimilable Shylock reminds viewers that the respectable veneer of English Jews imperfectly masks the more menacing and alien Jew underneath.

The Jew Bill, officially the Jewish Naturalization Act, was introduced by the Whig Pelham administration at the request of the Sephardi community and granted as an act of special favour to Jewish supporters of the government, chiefly Joseph Salvador, who emphasized the degree of support Jews had offered the administration in the recent past, especially during the 1745 Jacobite uprising (Perry 21). The Bill allowed foreign-born Jews to request naturalization without having to take the Sacrament and through an act of parliament. The Bill had no impact on English-born Jews, since they were *de facto* citizens. Some members of the Jewish community even opposed the bill for fear (ultimately justified) that it would create controversy and a negative backlash for Jews (Perry 19-20). Thomas Perry's study of the Jew Bill controversy repeatedly stresses the insignificance of the Act for both Jews and Englishmen at large, and although the Act passed easily and with little opposition in July 1753, it became a national controversy in the fall of the same year.

Perry argues that the Tories who initiated attacks against the Pelham administration and the Jew Bill did so mostly for political gain. The Tories' power had been dwindling since the 1720s, but the Jew Bill presented an opportunity to create scandal and discredit the Whig government (Perry 24). In Perry's estimation, the Jew Bill controversy was only incidentally about Jews; although many of the attacks against the government were framed in familiar and extreme anti-Jewish terms, the targets of abuse were almost always the government. The debates thus dramatized the opposition of Whig toleration and liberal economic policy to High Church Tories and protectionist London merchants (70-75). Opponents of the Bill were chiefly anti-ministerial politicians and city merchants, with the latter objecting on the grounds that Jews

would steal away their business. Outside of London, the controversy was more often seized upon by parish clergy as an opportunity to reinforce religious feeling through symbolic purges of Judaic influences, such as through pork feasts (Perry 119-120).

According to Cecil Roth, the Jew Bill controversy had no enduring effect on English treatment of Jews:

One of the most remarkable, most universal, and most famous of all popular agitations of the day died down as suddenly and as completely as it had begun. It had left behind it no rancour; indeed, one of the strangest features about the entire episode is that, notwithstanding the manner in which feeling was excited, there was hardly any physical violence—a fact which demonstrates its artificial nature. And, though the results may have dashed the hopes of some of the upper class for any substantial relief from the disabilities from which they suffered (it was seventy years before the Jews again received specific mention in any Act of Parliament), the lasting effects were insignificant. (57)

But while the legislative consequences of the reversal of the Act were minimal, and the Bill itself revoked in 1754, Roth is too hasty in dismissing the fallout as insignificant for English Jews. As Perry demonstrates, the controversy brought to the surface of English popular culture a surge of anti-Jewish feeling. The “sixty pamphlets, leaflets, and broadsides directly pertaining to the controversy” indicate “a sudden and widespread curiosity about Judaism” with roughly 75-80% of the material unfavourable to Jews (90). While the status of Jews in England was by law unchanged, public opinion about Jews underwent a dramatic shift away from Addison’s and Voltaire’s use of the Jewish merchant to emphasize the role of commerce in promoting social harmony in Britain.

Comic or monstrous Jewish villains were in use before the advent of the Jew Bill controversy, but such figures, as Granville's Shylock suggests, were generally produced with an eye to plot alone, and had no clear relationship to contemporary issues, nor even necessarily to living Jews. "The Jew" was an established stock figure well in advance of the novel's consolidation, having emerged in the twelfth century and called up subsequently for convenience when a plot required a minor villain or comic foil.¹¹ Before 1753, fictional Jewish characters were rarely given a detailed background or unique identity since the appellation of 'Jew' was deemed sufficient to implicate him as a despicable character.

The villainous Jewish merchant in Daniel Defoe's *Roxana* (1724) functions in exactly these terms (although numbers of other types, to be discussed subsequently, suggest a gradual widening of representations). The Jewish merchant, suspecting that the jewels the widowed Roxana is selling were acquired through theft or murder, attempts to cheat her. At the sight of the jewels, his reactions are grotesquely exaggerated:

He falls a jabbering The *Jew* held up his hands, look'd at me with some horror, then talk'd *Dutch* again, and put himself into a thousand shapes, twisting his body, and wringing up his face this way, and that way, in his discourse; stamping with his feet, and throwing abroad his hands, as if he was not in a rage only, but in a meer fury; then he wou'd turn, and give a look at me, like the Devil; I thought I never saw anything so frightful in my life. (139)

During the encounter, Roxana describes the Jew's "Devil's looks", repeatedly refers to his "Devil's face", and says he "look'd at me so like a Devil" (140-143). As Melissa Mowry's footnote reminds us, Defoe trades on "ancient anti-Semitic stereotypes of Jews as agents of the

¹¹ James Shapiro dates the use of "Jew" as a catchall term for villainy and vice to as early as the twelfth century (24)

Devil, whose demonic affiliations were often thought to be visible in their physical appearance” (139). In addition to his grotesque characterization, the Jew behaves in a stereotypically Jewish manner by covertly antagonizing Roxanna. Given Roxana’s history of deception, theft, and prostitution, the Jew’s suspicions of her criminality are understandable, though he is mistaken in this particular case. Once it becomes clear that the jewels are not stolen, the Jew correctly deduces that Roxana is the kept mistress of a prince. In consequence of his snooping, the Jew is “can’d very severely, as he deserved” and then abducted by two men who cut off his ears and threaten to behead him if he persists in “talking imprudently of his superiors” (157). Far from chastened, the Jew continues to threaten Roxana with legal action and remains in the background as a potential threat to her throughout the rest of the novel, though one of Roxana’s lovers keeps him at bay. The Jew’s motivation throughout is of course monetary as he hopes to lay hold of the jewels through his machinations. The amount of physical torment the Jew suffers appears to a modern reader greatly out of line with what he deserves, particularly since Roxanna is just as calculating, self-interested, and deceitful as is the Jew. But the criminal associations of Jewishness itself seem to justify the degree of the Jew’s torments, while existing tropes of torturing Jews makes the scenes both familiar and acceptable.

The Jew’s cruel treatment is replicated in short comedic tales. One joke book, *The Cambridge Jest* (1721), summarizes Shylock’s bargain with Antonio and relates the punch line as the injunction to cut exactly a pound of flesh or face penalties (138-139).¹² A prose version of *The Surprising Life and Death of Doctor John Faustus* (1740?) also plays on the Jew’s bond trope where flesh and money are interchangeable. Here, the Jew’s presumed dishonesty justifies others cheating him. The doctor “was minded to play a merry Jest to deceive a Jew” (43) and to that end refuses to pay back a loan. “The Jew, that never was a Friend to a Christian”, therefore

¹² The names of the characters are changed and the setting is now Constantinople

demands a limb instead (44). Faustus bewitches the Jew into thinking he has sawn his leg off and given it as collateral. The Jew takes the leg, but realizes he has no use for it and throws it away. Faustus returns three days later to pay back the loan and reclaim the leg, demanding that the Jew cut off his own, since he has lost the other one. To appease the magician, the Jew pays Faustus twice the value of the loan.

Roxana provides one of the more extreme examples of Jewish villainy in the eighteenth century: the combination of the Jew's namelessness and his stereotypical depiction suggest that he embodies for an eighteenth-century audience the very essence of Jewishness. But there are contemporary alternatives to Defoe's depiction. Very often, Jews appear briefly and without judgement, such as a variety of Jewish merchants who engage (sometimes fairly) in trade. When the Jew receives more than cursory attention, he tends to be depicted as self-interested and untrustworthy, but this conformity to type is no greater than that of other minor characters.

Sexual excess also characterizes eighteenth century depictions of Jews. *Mother Midnight's Comical Pocket-Book* (1753), for example, provides an imagined Jewish epitaph:

If fame tells true
Of this old Jew
In half her public thrillings,
Here lies a rogue,
A whoring dog
And the worst of scoundrel villains. (23)

Such farcical depictions of Jews were carried over from the Restoration period; a collection of poems attributed to the Earls of Rochester, Roscommon, and Dorset (1739) contains several parallel instances of Jewish characterization. "Lady Sandwich's Cabinet", an anonymous ballad

describes “A Jew there was to make up the Farce, / With a great Bag of Money and a swinging Tarce, / Which he was ready to thrust into ev’ry one’s Arse” (Stanza 11). The following poem, “A Letter to a Friend” (1680?), by Rochester, contains the epithet “lustful, bugging Jew” (31). These two descriptions of Jewish sexuality play on two versions of the Jew, as identified by Matthew Biberman: the “hyper-masculine Jew” and the “Jew-Sissy”. The poems suggest a fluid relationship between the two poles of Jewish masculine excess, at least during the Restoration and early 1700s, as the “hyper-masculine” lustful Jew with the “swinging tarse” is also homosexual, and therefore feminized.¹³ According to Biberman, these stereotypes of sexual and economic excess make the Jew a fit target for humour and help to distinguish Jews from Christians, or to delineate the acceptable limits of manliness (3).

Occasionally, a Jewish character might be reasonably honourable, but in the first half of the century Jews are nearly always villains or fools. More to the point, though, Jews are never well-developed characters, and conventional attitudes about Jewishness are not questioned.¹⁴ Jews appear frequently in British fiction of the early eighteenth century because they make simple antagonists or because Jews were vitally involved in British public life through commerce. This availability, combined with their traditional associations with mercantile perfidiousness, made Jewish characters convenient shortcuts when creating antagonists; or, incidents involving a Jew could simply introduce a little variety into the series of events. For these reasons, the inclusion of a Jewish character in an early eighteenth-century text more often indicates the continuation of literary tropes than self-conscious commentary on any Jewish matter.

¹³ The link from Jew to homosexual lies in the necessity of secrecy, as well as criminality: “The Jew, like the homosexual, was seen as having a hidden identity, and both were imagined to perform secret acts that substantiated their elusive identities” (Itzkovitz 179).

¹⁴ A positive depiction occurs in Sarah Fielding’s *David Simple* (1744), where a Jew falls in love with a woman, offers money to the father, and promises to treat his new wife well (25-26),

Neither *Roxanna* nor any of these other works seems to pursue a partisan agenda in their portrayals of Jews and the characterizations are simply conventional. After the introduction of the Jewish Naturalisation Act in 1753, however, negative depictions of Jews take on a new and corrosive centrality in response to associated fears of Jewish commercial dominance and of the rise of pernicious Jewish influence in culture. *The Merchant of Venice* held a special position in the Jew Bill debates as the repeated invocations of Shylock implicated all Jews in anti-naturalization propaganda that suggested villainous Jews sought the ruin of good Britons through corrupt business practices. At the same time, the majority of other existing depictions of Jews supported opponents of the Bill by consistently depicting Jews as inherently foreign and as having no respect for law or morality. Because literature had already provided the negative examples necessary to demonize Jews, the Jew Bill controversy was “a critical moment in Anglo-Jewish history less because of the traditional stereotypes it recycled and more because it was the entrance of the Jew into public discourse in England as never before” (Ragussis, *Theatrical Nation* 91). The Act prompted deeper questioning about the nature of Jews and the public began to take the stereotypes more seriously. Literature published in the 1750s depict Jews with much more frequency and vitriol than in the early century, and even after the Naturalization Act was repealed in 1754, Jews continued to appear primarily as antagonists in fiction and plays.

Eliza Haywood’s novel *The Invisible Spy* (1755) takes advantage of the public clamour relating to the Bill and of the Jewish stereotypes used to reinforce arguments against Jewish naturalization. Haywood directly confronts the Jew Bill by ironically praising it through the characters Lady Allmode and Ruben, a Jewish merchant, who discuss the merits of the Bill and the Jewish people. In so doing, both insult the “ordinary” Englishmen whom Allmode dismisses:

the “vulgar are not to be regarded; - they are no more than moving clods of earth” (2: 62). And, although Ruben laments the general persecution of Jews across Europe and praises England’s superior toleration, his speeches and actions expose the dangers of tolerating Jews. His diatribe against opponents to the Bill evokes Shylock’s appeal to strict justice over mercy: “if dey offer to affront us, we sall know how to be revenged: - we have de same law, de same privileges as demselves (2: 61-62). Haywood further satirizes Jews and the value of the Jew Bill when, after his meeting with Allmode, “the goatish Jew” forcibly kisses a maid and offers her “a pretty ting” when she angrily refuses his advances (2: 63). In light of Allmode and Reuben’s ridiculousness and vice, Haywood’s disdain for Jewish naturalization is clear. And, as the novel was originally slated to appear before the election of Spring 1754, Haywood likely intended the novel’s criticism of the Jew Bill to affect the vote (Muse 106).

After the success of anti-Jew Bill activism, writers display greater freedom in condemning Jews in fiction. The narrator of *Chrsyal; or, the Adventures of a Guinea*, (1760), for example, issues the conventional blood libel in a detailed description of the Passover offering which, by a secret tradition, never committed to writing for fear of being betrayed, was changed from the typical offering of a lamb to the real immolation of human blood, for which purpose the most beautiful children were purchased at any expense, and under any pretext, from the ignorance of necessitous parents, or the perfidious avarice of servants, if they could not be obtained by stealth, and brought from all parts of Europe to these ceremonies, it being a long received opinion that the original sacrifice of a lamb was designed only for that one occasion, to conciliate the favour of Heaven to the escape of their forefathers out of Egypt; but that to render it propitious to their restoration to their country, and to the consummation of their promised happiness and

glory, the type must be changed for the thing typified, and human blood, in the purest state of infant innocence, be offered instead of the ineffectual blood of a brute. But, as some traces of natural affection might remain, even in hearts divested of the feelings of common humanity, to remove every obstacle to this practice, and stimulate superstition by hatred and revenge, the children of Christians were appointed for this sacrifice, and those especially of the superior ranks of life, whose pride might be too apt to make them treat the people of the Jews with severity and contempt. (2: 123-124)

In the post-Jew Bill climate, the author (Charles Johnstone) adapts the blood libel to English sentiments about Judaism, implying that Jews operate in secret and target Christians with whom there is mutual animosity. The Jewish plot to sacrifice children is discovered, but is excused as the authorities kowtow to Jewish wealth and power. Johnstone implies that if this is the way Jews act in Germany, where the scene takes place, then Jews ought to be denied the privileges of English citizens lest similar episodes occur in Britain.

Arguments against Jewish naturalization relied on the Jews' status as religious enemies and foreigners whose increased business power would diminish the profits of native-born and Christian merchants. Supporters of the Bill downplayed these distinctions and instead emphasized Jewish loyalty to the crown and the Jews' readiness to conform to their host culture. The conception of all Jews as evil was primarily an artefact of medieval superstition, but, as a result of the backlash prompted by the Jew Bill, fictional Jews now came to be taken as accurate descriptions of real Jews. After 1753, the roles assigned to Jews in fiction tended to demonstrate that Jews ought not to be naturalized. Jewish villainy in early novels and in *The Merchant of Venice* stemmed primarily from economic incentives, so those depictions naturally enough supported those who argued that the Jew Bill courted disaster by removing restrictions on Jewish

merchants. The activities of real Jews, including both the prominent Sephardic Jews involved in foreign trade, and the less affluent Ashkenazi Jews, helped bolster this negative reputation. The Ashkenazim, who began to outnumber Sephardim by 1720, were largely pedlars of cheap goods, and some resorted to criminal activity (Endelman, *Jews of Georgian England* 40-42). Although the Jew Bill would do nothing for the poorer Jews, some of whom survived through illegal and disreputable means, their activities were often cited as reasons to reject the Jew Bill, as well as to denounce the Jewish presence in Britain more generally.

Defenders of the Jew Bill, recognizing the damage that fiction had done and continued to do to the reputation of Jews, attempted to draw attention to the limited scope of the Bill and, more positively, to endorse Jews as valuable subjects unjustly targeted by “Deists, atheists, bigoted Papists, or Jacobites” (Perry 123-124). Support for the Bill was less common than attacks on it, however, and lacked the rhetorical force that references to Shylock provided. The most powerful defence of Jews in the wake of the Jew Bill controversy comes from the fictional portrait of a Jew in Tobias Smollett’s *Ferdinand Count Fathom* (1753). In the novel, Fathom’s friend Melvil needs a loan. After several Christian moneylenders refuse him, he resorts to a Jewish moneylender, reasoning that although Jews “lie under the general reproach of nations, as a people dead to virtue and benevolence, and wholly devoted to avarice, fraud, and extortion, the most savage of their tribe cannot treat me with more barbarity of indifference than I have experienced among those who are the author of their reproach” (224-225). The Jew, Joshua Manasseh, moved by sympathy for the pitiable Melvil, offers not only the needed money, but also provides a letter of recommendation and the promise of future help if needed, which he subsequently delivers several times. Indeed, Manasseh is one of the few honest characters in the novel and is instrumental in resolving the plot by facilitating the reunion of the lovers.

Smollett seems to have deliberately constructed his Joshua Manasseh as a reversal of Jewish stereotypes and, in the process, he created the first anti-Shylock. This Jewish moneylender acts as a fitting counterpart to the type of the Jewish merchant that features prominently in *Roxana*. His instrumental and positive role in the novel makes Smollett's mid-century benevolent Jew a literary anomaly.¹⁵ To combat the trope of evil Jews, Smollett reversed the usual stereotypes and created a Jewish merchant who is sympathizing and sympathetic, yet still characteristically Jewish. When Joshua witnesses the reunion of an estranged father and daughter, made possible through his intercession, he joins in the celebration in an extreme emotional display that resembles the rage of *Roxana's* Jew: "The drops of true benevolence flowed from his eyes, like the oil on Aaron's beard, while he skipped about the room in an awkward extacy, and in a voice resembling the hoarse notes of that long-eared tribe, cried, "'O father Abraham! Such a moving scene hath not been acted since Joseph disclosed himself unto his brethren in Aegypt!'" (328). Like the jeweller, Joshua's emotions clearly manifest themselves in his whole body. And, while Defoe's evil Jew "jabbers" in foreign languages, Smollett's alludes to familiar Biblical events in his exclamations.

Abba Rubin points out that the Jew of *Ferdinand Count Fathom* is unlike Smollett's other Jews who appear in several of his novels and are portrayed in mostly negative ways, suggesting that Smollett's gesture was insincere pandering to his Whig allies in the interest of supporting them during the Jew Bill controversy (69).¹⁶ If so, the inefficacy of the novel as a

¹⁵ The Jew of Samuel Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison* (1754) lacks the force of argument that Joshua carries, since Merceda is initially a villain and only truly becomes good once he converts.

¹⁶ Ian Campbell Ross rejects this reading of Smollett's benevolent Jew. He points out that the novel was published six weeks before the Act was introduced and could not therefore have had anything to do with the Jew Bill ("Smollett and the Jew Bill of 1753" 54). Nevertheless, if Rubin is correct in assuming that Smollett produced the character in order to support his political patrons, then he could easily have received advance knowledge that such a bill would be introduced and tailored his character accordingly, regardless of whether the Bill would become controversial or not. Ross's claim that Menasseh represents Smollett's belief in the disjunction of goodness from creed is clearly indicated in the novel, but this does not negate the implications of the timing of the book's

propaganda tool is unsurprising since *Ferdinand Count Fathom* was a critical and financial failure, and its over-the-top sentimentality was atypical of novels of the time (R. Spector 87). Richard Cumberland's similarly motivated anti-Shylock *Sheva*, by contrast, successfully filled theatres and had a strong impact on portrayals of Jews; but Cumberland's play debuted 40 years later, when sentimentalism was at its peak. In the intervening years, the demonic Shylock defined popular conceptions of Judaism. And, despite Roth's claim that Jews were unaffected in the end by the Jew Bill controversy, works prominently featuring negative Jewish characters were produced frequently after 1753 (Ragussis "Passing for a Jew" 41).

Smollett's attempt to redefine the Jew went more or less unnoticed for some time as Joshua Menasseh was competing with the newly reimagined version of Shylock played by Charles Macklin. The growing ascendancy of Shakespeare in the eighteenth century, coupled with the topicality of Jews after 1753, positioned Charles Macklin's *Merchant* to deliver the definitive statement about Jews in mid-century England. By August 1753, the *Cambridge Journal* suggested that the Jewish community would try to silence calls for the performance of the play. Whether or not such opposition existed and despite the demand for public performances of *The Merchant of Venice*, the play was not performed. Shapiro speculates that "some form of censorship was clearly at work", probably enforced by the theatres themselves (Shapiro 215-216). An article in the *London Evening Posts* entitled "News for One Hundred Years Hence in the *Hebrew Journal* reprinted with Authority" imagines England's Jewish future in which Christians are persecuted, crucifixion is a routine form of execution, and *The Merchant of Venice* is banned from the theatres. James Shapiro and L.W. Connolly both note how this article plays

publication. Given Smollett's previous handling of Jewish characters in *Roderick Random* and *Peregrine Pickle*, which treated Jews primarily as comic sideshows, the introduction of a sentimental and magnanimous Jew seems inconceivable without some outside pressure.

on Jewish prejudices in order to exaggerate the impact the Jew Bill would have in changing the character of England (Shapiro 217, Conolly 125-127).

That empowered English Jews might want to ban performances of the *Merchant* is, however, a reasonable claim, considering that the Shylock Macklin introduced to the stage embodied, and to some extent constructed, the evils of Jews and demonstrated clearly the folly of their integration within English society. Opponents of the Jew Bill frequently invoked anti-Jewish texts, especially *The Merchant of Venice*, as evidence for their position. In *Some Considerations on the Naturalization of the Jews*, for example, the pseudonymous J.E. Gentleman satirically refers to a variety of Jewish tropes such as forced circumcision, the wearing of beards, comparisons to devils, associations with Mammon and Belial, and the generally unkind nature of Jews; these occur in addition to more strongly worded religious claims that all Jews carry responsibility for the murder of Christ, and that they are blasphemers and religious bigots. To support claims of Jewish hatred of Christians and of Jewish money-worship, the author quotes *The Merchant of Venice* at length. The evidence of Shylock alone is enough to say “judge ye, What Advantage can it be to you to have these *Jews* naturaliz’d! What can you get by them? They are all griping Usurers. And what can they get out of you but your very Blood and Vitals?” (20-21). Since Shylock is a rich, crafty, deceitful, and Christian-hating Jew, the author implies that all Jews must be so.

Although the initial backlash against Jews was strong, the negative depiction of Jews after the Jew Bill paradoxically paved the way for a remarkable change in representation during the Romantic period. Edmund Kean’s 1814 performance as a humanized but flawed Shylock is the culmination of a process involving expanded possibilities for Jewish characters that began with the Jew Bill controversy and intensified in the 1790s. The key figure in this transformation

is Richard Cumberland. Macklin developed two versions of the anti-Semitic portrayal – the inhuman monster and the artificial pretender to English respectability – but Cumberland emphasized the positive elements of Jewish caricature latent in the stage Jew. In *The Jew* (1794), Cumberland invented the impossibly generous and pious Sheva, a complete reversal of Shylock and a figure designed to undo the prejudices that Shakespeare’s play had popularized, if not invented.

Benevolent Jews on the Stage

Though the miserly outcast-Jew dominated the English stage throughout the eighteenth century, counterpoints to Shylock began to emerge in the 1790s. Critics tend to credit the sudden emergence of popular sympathy for Jews at the turn of the century to the increasing population of Jews in England at that time and to their growing confidence in making their displeasure at being caricatured known. Ragussis, for example, notes the controversy surrounding the performance of *Family Quarrels* (1802), a play that lampooned not just Jews, but an entire “ethnically expansive cast of characters common at the time” (*Theatrical Nation* 3). On opening night, Jewish members of the audience protested against a character who cross-dressed as a Jew and sang an “anti-Semitic song that disrespectfully characterized the Jewish women he has courted” (*Theatrical Nation* 3). Public backlash, in prints and critical reviews, was largely against the Jews, claiming they were being too sensitive in challenging the English right to parody whomever they liked (*Theatrical Nation* 3). Yet, despite this dismissal of the protest, the fact that the complaints were articulated suggests Jews were confident in their ability to influence popular taste. The disparity between real Jews and their staged representations was now sharply in focus.

The uproar over *Family Quarrels*, however, had an important precedent. Seventeen years previously, Richard Cumberland responded to what he saw as inadequate stage portrayals of Jews. But his objections were founded less on Jews' increased influence in public life, and more on the principles of literary sentimentalism. Cumberland, though all but forgotten today, was immensely popular in his own time, and his bombastically sentimental style provided the main impetus for his reversal of the Shylock role in his plays and in his collection of essays, *The Observer* (1785). In *Observer* no. 38, Cumberland remarks on the poor treatment of Jews in England and abroad and praises English toleration as the preferred alternative to the treatment of Jews in Catholic countries (3. 27-28). However, he continues, the lack of direct institutional oppression does not make England a friend to Jews. After outlining the lamentable fate of Jews in these other countries, Cumberland presents a fictional letter from an English Jew, Abraham Abrahams, complaining about the ill treatment of Jews in England, primarily at the theatre:

I no sooner enter a playhouse than I find all eyes turned upon me; if this were the worst, I would strive to put as good a face upon it as I could; but this is sure to be followed by a thousand scurrilities, which I should blush to repeat . . . *Smoke the Jew!* – *Smoke the cunning little Isaac* – *Throw him over*, says another, *hand over the smouch!* – *Out with Shylock*, cries a third, *out with the pound of man's flesh* – *Buckles and buttons! Spectacles!* bawls out a fourth – and so on through the whole gallery till I am forced to retire out of the theatre, amongst hootings and hissings, with a shower of rotten apples and chewed oranges vollied at my head, when all the offence I have given is a humble offer to be a peaceable spectator, jointly with them, of the same common amusement. (3. 29-30)

As one of the leading playwrights of the late 1700s, Cumberland was very familiar with audience behaviour in theatres, and, given his lack of self-interest here, it is unlikely that his claims are exaggerated.¹⁷ Contemporary critics, including Walter Scott and Leigh Hunt, tended to construct the Georgian theatre as “a kind of state apparatus that minimizes class and ethnic conflict . . . a popular cultural fiction that refused to acknowledge the kinds of ethnic and class divisions that divided the nation” (Ragussis *Theatrical Nation* 11). Cumberland’s frank refusal to accept this fiction clearly emerges when he gives voice to the alienation a Jew might feel at the theatre. In addition to exposing the stage as a fraught site of cultural conflict, Cumberland adapts the theatrical language of Shylock to combat prejudice when Abrahams proclaims interest in the “same common amusement” as Englishmen. Cumberland’s defence rests chiefly on a sentimental approach to Jews as objects of pity.

Later in the letter, Abrahams lays the blame for his ill treatment on playwrights, including Cumberland himself, who nurture anti-Jewish feelings to sell their plays:

I observe with much concern that you great writers of plays take great delight in hanging us out to public ridicule on all occasions: if ever they are in search of a rogue, a usurer, a buffoon, they are sure to make a Jew serve the turn. I believe the odious character of Shylock has brought little less persecution upon us poor scattered sons of Abraham, than the inquisition itself (3. 31).

To equate the evils of Shylock with the Inquisition is no light claim since England’s celebrated toleration was often contrasted with the barbarity of the Inquisition. Cumberland thus establishes the treatment of Jews as a benchmark for the progress of a nation. Abraham’s complaint is remarkable in indicting Cumberland himself, who had produced a play, *The Fashionable Lover*

¹⁷ A Jewish German traveller to England expressed similar concern at the popular anti-Jewish attitudes of Englishmen in 1782 when he observed that Englishmen were even more strongly opposed to Jews than Germans were (Endelman, *Jews of Georgian England* 110).

(1772), featuring a ridiculous and villainous Jew. Even more remarkably, while later writers created benevolent Jews in response to readers' complaints about their portrayals of Jews, Cumberland recognized the injustice of his portrayals with little prompting.

Cumberland's revisionist instincts had emerged earlier in his treatment of other anathematized groups in *The Fashionable Lover*, which, though harsh in its depiction of Jews, challenged notions of Scottish inferiority and features a Scot who defies stereotype. Charles Macklin attempted something similar in *Love a la Mode* when he made an Irishman a hero. But Macklin was himself Irish, and the play makes no attempt to dismiss negative claims about the other ethnic characters. Cumberland, on the other hand, was English (and Christian) and thus had no self-interested motivation for dispelling prejudice except as a means of furthering his own reputation. The postscript to Abrahams' letter requests that Cumberland "persuade one of the gentlemen or ladies who write plays . . . to give us a kind lift", promising that "we should not prove ungrateful on the third night" (3. 32). After it became clear that no other playwright would heed this call for a redeemed Jewish character, Cumberland took upon himself the writing of such a play in 1794, *The Jew*.¹⁸ Although Cumberland likely believed in his cause, he also wanted to be recognized as a champion of the Jews. In this regard, he was disappointed, having claimed to receive "not a word" in thanks from any Jews (Landa 139).¹⁹ Landa, perhaps in an attempt to amend this slight and boost Cumberland's dwindled reputation, calls Cumberland "brave . . . to stand up, David-like, against a Goliath who had centuries of tradition behind the

¹⁸ Cumberland was also likely influenced by G.E. Lessing's *Nathan the Wise* (1779, performed 1783), which had been translated from German and shown in London. The play was written by Lessing in honour of his friend Moses Mendelssohn, founder of the Jewish Reform movement. The play argues for the equality of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam and the impossibility of knowing which religion is the true one. The title character, like Sheva, revels in giving to others. An English translator, R.E. Raspe (1781), inserted a prologue in which he offers the play as a corrective to negative feelings about Jews: "Nathan will be suffered to counteract the poison which barbarous ages have left in the minds of fanatics, and Shakespeare and political factions may, some time or other, stir up again and put into fermentation" (Prologue).

¹⁹ Although this claim is likely exaggerated, it's true that no Jewish body paid official recognition to Cumberland in his own time, likely because no Jewish body yet existed for such a purpose (Landa 140).

popular backing of the day . . . His Sheva . . . is still the standard measurement for charity and justice to the Jew on the English stage” (142). *The Jew* includes scenes designed to generate sympathy for and to applaud the hero, Sheva the Jew, as he works to repair the fortunes of the Ratcliffe and Bertram families. In the process, he also reforms their attitudes about Jews.

The Jew begins with Charles Radcliffe, recently dismissed from the counting house of Stephen Bertram, in need of financial support. His friend Frederick, Stephen’s son, borrows from the reviled Jewish moneylender, Sheva, to support Charles and Sheva agrees to lend 300 pounds (echoing the 3000 ducats in *Merchant*). Sheva is genuinely affected by the plight of Charles, who had once rescued Sheva from an angry mob and who now defends Sheva against Frederick’s insults. Later, Frederick himself requires Sheva’s money when his father cuts off his inheritance for marrying Charles’s sister. In order to lend as much money as possible, Sheva routinely denies himself all but the most immediate necessities, and although he has a reputation as a rich miser, he in fact dedicates his money to charitable causes. By the end of the play, Sheva resolves the misfortunes of both Charles and Frederick, reconciling them with each other and with Sir Stephen. At the same time, as the characters experience Sheva’s benevolence first hand, each retracts his negative feelings about him and accepts that he can be both a Jew and a good man.

Cumberland certainly succeeded in giving Jews something of “a lift” on stage by casting Sheva as the hero. But he did very little to re-imagine Judaism for the theatre. Clearly, Cumberland anticipated that the play would put the lie to the standard aspersions of Jews, as does Sheva: “I live sparingly and labor hard, therefore I am called miser – I cannot help it – an uncharitable dog, I must endure it – a blood-sucker, an extortionist, a Shylock – hard names, Mr. Frederick, but what can a poor Jew say in return, if a Christian chooses to abuse him?” (6) Sheva’s actions repeatedly disprove these claims about him, such as when in an argument with

Sir Stephen, Sheva defends the sincerity of his desire to help without receiving anything in return:

Sheva: And what has Sheva done to be call'd villain? – I am a Jew, what then? Is that a reason none of my tribe shou'd have a sense of pity? You have no great deal of pity yourself, but I do know many many noble British merchants that abound in pity, therefore I do not abuse your tribe.

Sir S.: I am confounded and asham'd; I see my fault, and most sincerely ask your pardon.

Sheva: Goot lack, goot lack! That is too much. I pray you, goot Sir Stephen, say no more; you'll bring the blush upon my cheek, if you demean yourself so far to a poor Jew, who is your very humble servant to command. (42)

Sheva amazes Sir Stephen with his selfless generosity, convinces him that a Jew can also have pity, and continues throughout the play to insist on keeping his beneficence secret. Unlike the poisoner-of-wells secrecy of the medieval Jew or of Barabbas, Sheva's secrecy is configured by Cumberland as the quiet pursuit of acts directed to the good of others. Yet Cumberland reinforces the appropriateness of Jewish secrecy because, as Sheva's self-effacing response to Sir Stephen demonstrates, thanking "a poor Jew" is demeaning to the Christian. Even in the exercise of their benevolence, Jews remain inferior.

The immediate success of *The Jew* and the praise lavished on it at the time owe much to the contemporary vogue for sentimental plots. The clumsiness of the writing, however, was largely responsible for the play's ultimate failure to convincingly reinvent the stage Jew.²⁰

²⁰ Though the play was successful and was considered a great play in its time, later readers have tended to disagree. Judith Page posits "that the play and particularly the character of Sheva were popular because audiences identified with the easy-going benevolence and at the same time still laughed at the foreign-accented, money loving stage Jew who likes people a *little* bit more than his ducats On the one hand Cumberland evoked sympathy for

Unlike Shylock, Sheva leaves no real impression as an original character. He is a kind of domesticated Shylock.²¹ He retains the trappings for which Shylock was noted: the Jewish costume, usury, a tendency to extravagant, emotional speeches, and an ostensibly Jewish style of speech. In short, “Cumberland cannot imagine a Jew as anything but a moneylender” (Page 35). In addition, Sheva is often more comical than pitiable, such as when he questions Frederick about his poverty:

Fred. My father has expell'd me from his house.

Sheva. Why? For what cause?

Fred. I have married

Sheva. That is natural enough

Fred. Married without his knowledge.

Sheva. So did he without your's. What besides?

Fred. Married a wife without a farthing

Sheva. Ah! That is very silly, I must say. (17)

Much of the humour revolves around Sheva's unexpected responses where money is involved. He defies notions of Jewish greed, but is nevertheless defined by them. He constantly weighs the value of money against sympathetic feeling, such as when he says to Frederick, “if I do love my monies, it may be because I have in my power to lend them to you” (21). Sheva retains an

Sheva by showing him responding sympathetically to thwarted lovers and to a family in need, but he also wanted the more satirical and comic punch that Sheva's stereotyped speech, dress, and mannerisms would afford” (36). Cumberland's desire for comedy therefore undermines the play's potential to truly redeem Jews for audiences. The play argues for a tolerant position, but continues to distinguish Jewishness as alien to British culture (Page 35-36).

²¹ Biberman's study of Jewish masculinity argues that there is a transition from the hyper-masculine, demonic Jew of the medieval period into the effeminate, non-threatening Jew over the course of the long eighteenth century. Both are inferior versions of manhood particular to the needs of distinct eras. Sheva thus replaces the threatening Shylock with a controllable Jew, who lives only to serve Gentiles. While completely reversing Shylock's role, Sheva remains an outsider, different from what an ideal man should be (Biberman 157).

unnatural love of money, even if his love for Christians, like Shylock's hatred for them, slightly exceeds his avarice.

Cumberland also fails to make Sheva as representative of Jews as Shylock is meant to be. Shylock is the only male Jewish character in *Merchant*, but *The Jew* features a second Jew, the servant Jubal who is even more flatly and comically rendered than his master Sheva. Jubal plays on stereotypes of Jews desiring what is forbidden to them – an impulse that leads to insincere conversion (Ragussis *Figures* 50-51). Jubal constantly complains that Sheva's stinginess leaves him deprived of food, describing in one scene being tempted by pork sausages that, as a Jew, he could not eat. Jubal wishes he were not Jewish and tries to distance both himself and his master from their Jewish identification. In so doing, he perpetuates standard slurs, such as when he asserts that Sheva "is no Hebrew at all", because he "gives away his money by handfuls to the consumers of hog's flesh" (23).

The Christians of the play similarly attempt to separate out Sheva's Jewishness from the humane qualities that they identify as Christian. Charles calls Sheva a Christian in recognition of his "feelings, affections" and "charities", but a Jew in terms of his occupation, to which Sheva takes offence, saying he "shall not thank you for such a compliment" (11).²² Cumberland thus tries to demonstrate that Judaism or Christianity cannot be equated with particular traits. Nevertheless, Sheva and Jubal exhibit patterns of speech and behaviour that demarcate them from the dominant society and isolate their Judaism as the chief mark of difference. At the same time, Cumberland recognizes the possibility of someone taking pride in his Jewishness: Sheva

²²A similar occurrence in *Nathan the Wise*:

Friar: O Nathan, Nathan! You're a Christian soul! By God, a better Christian never lived.

Nathan: And well for us! For what makes me for you a Christian, makes yourself for me a Jew.
(4.7. 145-148 p. 257)

denies that his spirit is Christian and instead sees his goodness as a product both of humanity and Judaism.

Jubal and Sheva together, then, exemplify the complexities of period representations of Jewishness. Jubal comes to understand Sheva's desire to give away money, but both characters frequently lament the personal hardships that follow from this charity. The play suggests that Jews can redeem themselves in the eyes of their English hosts, but only if they follow Sheva's example and completely sublimate their desires to their Christian betters' interests. Once all of Sheva's benevolences are revealed, Charles praises him as "my benefactor; . . . The widow's friend, the orphan's father, the poor man's protector, the universal philanthropist" (73). This list reverses typical claims about Jews, but only because Sheva has actually done all those things. In the absence of such actions, presumably, men like Charles, and certainly Frederick and Sir Stephen, would persist in their negative responses to Jews, responses supported by conventional wisdom and deep-rooted prejudices.

Cumberland sanitized the Jew and made him sympathetic, even likeable. Yet, ultimately, he did little to dislodge the prevailing image of Shylock. Sheva is still a moneylender, an outsider, and a lonely widower, backwards in his speech and dress. The only significant difference between Sheva and Shylock lies in Sheva's love of Christians and Shylock's hatred of them. The insufficiency of *The Jew* is best summed up by Walter Scott, who noted in his biography of Cumberland that even though Jewish audiences were grateful for the playwright's attempt at vindication, Sheva the benevolent Jew had shortcomings that Jewish audiences could not appreciate:

The author, in his Memoirs, does not disguise his wish that they had flattered him with some token of the debt which he conceives them to have owed. We think, however,

that a prior token of regard should have been bestowed on the author of Joshua, in the tale of Count Fathom; and, moreover, we cannot be surprised that the people in question felt a portrait in which they were rendered ludicrous as well as interesting, to be something between an affront and a compliment. Few of the better class of the Jewish persuasion would, we believe, be disposed to admit either Abrahams or Sheva as fitting representatives of their tribe. (*Miscellaneous Prose Works*, 3:133-61)

Other attempts at crafting benevolent Jews operate similarly as the Jews retain all the established stereotypical signatures and simply substitute extreme benevolence for extreme antagonism. Although Shylock is no more realistic a character than Sheva, 1790s discussions that centred on which of these two characters more closely resembled real Jews “encapsulate the schizophrenia of the culture and the stage’s persistent duality with regard to Jewish identity”. Shylock was considered representative, but Englishmen also persisted in the self-flattering belief that their tolerance allowed them to admit that Jews might be more like Sheva, even if they knew this wasn’t the case (*Theatrical Nation* 114). Shylock’s supposed verisimilitude was, of course, also constructed by fiction, but it had the force of tradition and mythology behind it, and the validation of Shakespeare’s authorship. Nevertheless, just as the image of Shylock changed over the course of the century in concert with changing ideas about Jews and the theatre itself, so too Cumberland’s *The Jew* introduced new standards for the representation of Jews in the early nineteenth century.

The debates over who was the real Jew, Sheva or Shylock, took another turn when Edmund Kean, seeing the humanity behind Shylock, reinvented him once again for his 1814 performance of *Merchant of Venice*. Kean established a version of Shylock that audiences are likely more familiar with today. Previous renditions had cast Shylock as a simple villain whose

Jewishness was the unproblematic explanation for his evil. Kean, on the other hand, made Shylock “complex, ambiguous, and fascinating” (Page 60). Rather than root Shylock’s villainy in Jewish caprice, Kean makes the abuse Shylock suffers a justifiable cause for anger and resentment. Kean especially emphasized Shylock’s promises of revenge and pleas for justice, bringing a sense of majesty to the “Hath not a Jew” speech that elevated it to an impassioned call for sensitivity from the audience (Lelyveld 44). Contemporaries such as Hazlitt were alerted to the humanity inherent in Shylock as a result of seeing Kean’s performance and the change gave the play new life. Kean had successfully taken up Cumberland’s call to reform the stage Jew by transforming the monster whose name was synonymous with Jews into a pitiable but flawed man, in the process reconfiguring the principal source for literary depictions of Jews in England.

Kean’s Shylock was hugely successful and he regularly received signs of approval from audiences (Lelyveld 43-44). This approval, however, does not fully explain Kean’s motivation for taking the play in such a radical direction. Some critics have suggested that Kean may have been Jewish, but there is no evidence to support the claim (Page 56). Judith Page argues that Kean’s sympathy for the Jew is a natural result of Kean’s tendency to subvert audience expectations and to defy social hierarchies (56-59). Others have suggested that Kean’s sympathetic approach derived from his own poverty and familiarity with the prejudice that attended it (Lelyveld 41). But whatever his motivations and however drastic his revisionism, Kean’s sympathetic turn needs to be considered in the larger context of period changes in the depictions of Jews. William Hazlitt understood Kean’s performance as a more perfect realization of Shakespeare’s intent, but Kean’s subtle rendering of Shylock was the product of developments in Jewish portrayal ongoing since the early 1790s. Kean’s performance and its subsequent naturalization—however shocking and subversive his Shylock initially appeared, it quickly

became standard—suggest that the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century witnessed a growing sympathy for Jews.

The transformation of Shylock, in short, did not occur in a vacuum, but was the result of an ongoing process that began with George Granville's *Jew of Venice*. The new versions of the stage Jew, and of Shylock specifically, that emerged over the course of the long eighteenth century reflect a cultural demand for new representative Jews. Macklin, Cumberland, and Kean did not simply have different opinions on what Shylock should be, but rather, actively responded to contemporary perceptions of Jews and then transmitted those ideas through the stage. These changes occurred as a result of clashes between existing and emergent opinions on a range of issues including Jewish and British identity, toleration, sentimentalism, and literary form. This chapter has traced the development of Shylock in order to indicate general changes in characterization over time. The following chapters investigate more closely how other Jewish characters derive from different aspects of the Shylock model and how the proliferation of reference points for Jewish representation leads to increasingly diverse and complex portrayals.

Chapter Two

At three o'clock in the morning, a Jew received into his house, and retained as a servant, a man he had never before seen, under circumstances that might have warranted any suspicion, merely because he had the appearance of sincerity and merit. Where is the Christian who would have done this? (Walker, *Theodore Cyphon* 11)

The Jewish paragon – no matter how fiercely loyal he may remain to his tribe – is in effect made to assimilate a morality . . . regarded as peculiarly and definitively Christian. (Rosenberg 267)

Defining Jewishness in the Late Eighteenth Century

Although Shylock's influence looms large over the idea of the Jew in the English literary imagination, other influences are at play. As the changes in how Shylock was played demonstrate, the representative dominance of the character is often mediated by ongoing developments, such as the Jew Bill controversy, that have more immediate impact on popular notions about Jews. Likewise, significant changes in ideas about Jews came about as part of a broader redefinition of individual identity after the 1770s. Dror Wahrman demonstrates that while some identity markers, including gender and race, had come to be seen as fixed by the late eighteenth century, the trend with other characteristics was reversed, such as the increased fluidity of religious and national identities (280). Since throughout the eighteenth century Jews were described through reference to the terms of religion, nation, *and* race, they posed a peculiar challenge to the emergent terms of what Wahrman deems "the modern regime of selfhood" (265). In addition to the breakdown of once-stable categories, Jewish difference was also no longer easily visible in obvious markers such as clothes and beards. Instead, biological features came to define the Jew: "realizing that the Jews had abandoned the outward signs of dress and speech that had set them apart previously from other men, essayists and journalists rediscovered the alleged distinctiveness of the Jews in the physical structure and colouring of their faces –

something Jews were incapable of changing” (Endelman *Jews of Georgian England* 124).²³ As Jewish assimilation threatened to erase all difference between Jew and Christian, revealing the natural Jew through physiognomy helped mitigate concerns with Jewish infiltration, even if recognizing such physical signs was not so easily done as imagined. While they were once reassuringly other, recognizable by stereotypical features and accents, in the late eighteenth century, Jews became increasingly unsettling reminders of the uncertainties of identity.

Widespread changes in ideas about the formation of identity provide one explanation for the distinctively multiple late-century portrayal of Jews. A second and more profound cause of this diversity involves the revolutionary culture of the Romantic period. Radical changes in politics and religion and a complementary tendency toward literary experimentation contribute to a new vitality in Jewish portrayals. More particularly, the dominant genres of fiction in the Romantic era – Gothic, polemical, and historical novels – help to reshape the role of Jews by providing new contexts for Jewish characters. Cultural critiques, spurred by reactions to the French Revolution, prompted novelistic and poetic considerations of Jewishness in relation to other emergent British identities. At the same time, the strategic incorporation of Jewish characters enabled authors to advance their own specific interests.

Frequently construed as outsiders seeking inclusion, Jews came to embody a variety of attitudes relating to rights across a broad political spectrum that reached from the radicalism of William Godwin to the explorations of marginal cultures in works by Walter Scott and Charles Maturin. In the novels of conservative polemicists such as Isaac D’Israeli and George Walker, Jews serve as mouthpieces for discussions of social problems, discussions that do not condone revolution or prescribe specific changes, but nevertheless address the need to recognize ongoing

²³ Heidi Kaufman notes the artificiality of this kind of biological identification since Dickens and Edgeworth ascribe Jewish features to characters that are not ethnically Jewish, or not entirely so - the convert, George Gordon, and the half-Jewish Berenice Montenero respectively (32).

injustices. Writers of the 1790s broaden the scope of political inclusion by describing Jewish individuals who behave virtuously despite oppressive environments, and this gives way by the 1810s to the more stylized poetic renderings of Jews and Wandering Jews as expressions of authorial subjectivity. This chapter demonstrates how Jewishness becomes both more relevant and less clearly defined to the reading public as a result of these trends.

After the furor over the Jewish Naturalization Act, concern with a perceived Jewish influence on British culture grew between the 1750s and the 1790s. According to Michael Ragussis, Jews had become so topical by the end of the eighteenth century that “passing for a Jew” was a commonly voiced worry, expressive of “a deepening anxiety over the increasingly fluid border between Jew and gentile, and the location of Englishness in relation to Jewishness” (“Passing for a Jew” 41). Accusations of “turning Jew” had been fairly common on the Renaissance and Restoration stage (Shapiro 8), but the charge became frighteningly real in the later eighteenth century (“Passing” 42). Lord George Gordon’s conversion to Judaism in 1787 was the most famous example of a Christian “turning Jew”, but more often Jews became Christians, usually for the sake of social advancement. Anxieties over the blending of Jew and Christian were compounded by increasing immigration and enculturation, as Jews had been buying country estates and intermarrying with the English since the second quarter of the eighteenth century (Endelman *Jews of Britain* 56-57), and of course, Jewish merchants had significant business interests in Britain.

Tobias Smollett addresses the growing concern with Jewish infiltration in *Humphry Clinker* (1771). In that novel, the lover, George Dennison, (going under the name of Wilson), adopts disguises in order to meet clandestinely with Lydia, the niece of the novel’s sentimental hero, Matthew Bramble. Matthew, who does not know that Wilson is actually a gentleman’s

younger son (his friend Charles's son in fact), vehemently opposes the union of his niece with Wilson because of his supposedly low status. One of the disguises Wilson adopts is a Jewish pedlar, whose first appearance causes Lydia some anxiety: "for several days past there was a Jew-looking man, that plied at the Wells with a box of spectacles; and he always eyed me so earnestly, that I began to be very uneasy" (25). Wilson makes such a convincing Jew that he must tell Lydia directly who he really is, after which Lydia shares the secret of her rendezvous with her semi-literate maid, Winifred Jenkins, who expresses surprise at the Jew's transformation. Perhaps to indicate the general ignorance of the nature of Jews, Smollett has Winifred describe "Jews with beards, that were no Jews, but handsome Christians, without a hair upon their sin" (42).

Smollett uses Jenkins's belief that Jews are defined by their beards to typify the confusion made possible by limited knowledge about Jews. Wilson easily evades detection thanks to his disguise, and this reflects Smollett's concern that urban anonymity which "allowed people to don and doff identities with impunity" could result in chaos and disorder (Wharman 203). Such a view is also expressed in *Ferdinand Count Fathom* when Fathom's friend Ratchkali describes London as a place where the natives' trusting nature and mercantile interests make them especially susceptible to the impositions of disguise: "this metropolis is a vast masquerade, in which a man of stratagem may wear a thousand different disguises, without danger of detection" (145). Thanks to this kind of anonymity, Jews had the ability to go unnoticed, despite claims made in fiction that Jews are clearly defined by external markers. Smollett reminds us through Jenkins's naive conception of Jews that the impermeability of the Jew-Christian barrier is an idea credited principally by the ignorant.

Win Jenkins' idea of Jews is built upon images from popular entertainments, likely what Michael Ragussis defines as the "super-Judaized Jew" common in theatre throughout the eighteenth century and who could easily be identified through external markers ("Passing" 49). In the late eighteenth century, public demonstrations regularly included the symbolic exile of the stage Jew as a means of expressing discomfort with "the newly porous borders between (foreign) Jew and (English) Gentile in the culture at large" (Ragussis *Theatrical Nation* 122). Smollett's treatment is more subtle. The Jewish presence in *Humphrey Clinker* is purged when Dennison throws off his disguises and takes upon himself the responsibilities of a gentleman, but Dennison's protean abilities suggest Smollett's opinion that the guise of Jewish pedlar and British gentleman are so convincingly projected by one man because identity itself is malleable.

Revealing the artificiality of depictions of Jews does not necessarily constitute Smollett's endorsement of Jewish integration into Britain, however. While Wilson's Jewish persona is no villain, and only his low status makes him unfit company for Lydia (Dennison's other disguise is an equally objectionable type, a musician), the potential marriage between a supposed Jew and a squire's niece alerts readers to the newly upwardly mobile status of Jews at this time, as does Jerry's derisive response to his husband-chasing aunt's indifference to religious distinctions and her willingness to marry even a Jew (*Clinker* 64). Considering that noxious mixtures are a recurring theme in *Humphrey Clinker*, the confounding of ranks and religion can be read as an expression of Smollett's disdain for the upward mobility of Jews and others. When Wilson reveals himself to the rest of the characters as a gentleman, all concern is lifted. Yet, his former ability to impersonate a Jew may have unsettled contemporary readers as concerns about the levelling of distinctions between Jews and Christians endured. This anxiety may have even intensified into the nineteenth century, as evidenced by Charles Lamb's statements in his essay

“Imperfect Sympathies (1823): “I boldly confess that I do not relish the approximation of Jew and Christian, which has become so fashionable. . . . Jews Christianizing – Christians Judaizing – puzzle me” (77). The extent of Lamb’s irony is difficult to trace, and best considered elsewhere, but Lamb’s remarks testify to the perennial topicality of Jewish-Christian relations.

Smollett is anomalous in his willingness to explore alternatives to inherited models of Jewishness. Nevertheless, he frequently falls back on Jewish stereotypes, such as when Bramble equates Jewishness with financial crime: “If poverty be a subject for reproach, it follows that wealth is the object of esteem and veneration – In that case, there are Jews and others in Amsterdam and London, enriched by usury, peculations, and different species of fraud and extortion, who are more estimable than the most virtuous and illustrious members of the community. An absurdity which no man in his senses will offer to maintain” (275-276). This general belief in Jewish criminality likely stems from two different ways of understanding Jewishness. A Christian could don the trappings of the Jew, including the beard and accent, as the physical attributes of Judaism. An obsession with money, however, is assumed to be an inherently Jewish trait. The slippage between sympathy and stereotype in Smollett’s novels might seem puzzling if Smollett were attempting to stake out particular claims about Judaism. Instead, Jews serve Smollett’s broader purpose of demonstrating the mixture of vice and folly that permeates British society (Ross 55).

Jews and anti-Jacobinism

Despite the unusual variety of Smollett’s Jewish characters, they are still dominated by stereotypical features. Rather than regarding Smollett and his contemporaries as limited in their thinking, however, it is more helpful to consider how major changes in the approach to Jewish

representation are enabled by the confluence of a number of crucial late-century developments: the experimental tendency of Romantic authors, the accelerated processes of genre change, the powerful influence of celebrated texts and personalities, the loyalist suspicion of widespread secret societies, and the fashion for particular literary modes. The popularity of sentimental comedies in the late century is especially significant, and this trend led to Richard Cumberland's championing of the benevolent Jew in his play *The Jew*, which generated a model by which to imagine other sympathetic Jews. The popularity of the play encouraged other writers to adapt the benevolent Jew to different ends. The experimental nature of Romantic novels also meant that typical plot devices could be revised and subverted, thus producing more complicated narratives, and therefore more sophisticated portraits of Jews. As with Smollett and Cumberland, the motivation and opportunity to redefine Jewish character arises from the Jews' topicality in public discourse and from a willingness to question older depictions. The Jew Bill controversy was a relatively minor phase in British cultural history, but it prompted serious discussions about the Jews and the limits of British inclusivity. It is therefore unsurprising that Jewishness would once again be revalued in light of the dramatic upheavals of the revolutionary decade.

Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), the first conservative response to the French Revolution, initiated a fiercely contested debate about the relationship between the individual, the state, and national identity. In this polemic, Jews occupy an ambiguous position in relationship to Britain. Burke links Jewishness to the evils of revolutionary ideology, but he also reverses the tendency to demonize Judaism with the suggestion that religion of any kind can be redemptive. In service to his arguments, Burke turns to Jewish stereotypes that rely on sentimental pageantry and nationalist pride. He repeatedly invokes the commercial associations of Jews, and links stereotypical Jewish rapaciousness with

the levelling impulse of reformers. The French revolutionaries are “like Jew brokers contending with each other who could best remedy with fraudulent circulation and depreciated paper the wretchedness and ruin brought on their country by their degenerate councils” (56). Jews are no longer pillars of British life and symbols of its tolerance, as Addison and Steele had suggested, but examples of the greatest threat to the civilized order. The Jew is a fraud, circulating counterfeit money and planning the ruin of the country in secret meetings. Jews, who in the mid-century had been easily recognizable, mostly comic, and easily dismissed, are here likened to shadowy instigators of secret plots to ruin the country.²⁴

The *Reflections* relies on a steady contrast between progress guided by the tempering effects of tradition and the short-sighted rejection of the past that characterizes the French Revolution. Jews work as effective symbols within this argument due to their imputed tendency toward secrecy and self-interested manipulation of others. Jewish difference is evoked in one of the most striking images in the treatise:

The vanity, restlessness, petulance, and spirit of intrigue of several petty cabals, who attempt to hide their total want of consequence in bustle and noise, and puffing, and mutual quotation of each other, makes you imagine that our contemptuous neglect of their abilities is a mark of general acquiescence in their opinions. No such thing, I assure you. Because half-a-dozen grasshoppers under a fern make the field ring with their importunate chink, whilst thousands of great cattle, reposed beneath the shadow of the British oak, chew the cud and are silent, pray do not imagine that those who make the noise are the only inhabitants of the field; that, of course, they are many in

²⁴ Britons responded suspiciously to the introduction of paper money and investment brokering because of their insubstantiality. Reflecting this concern, forgery was prosecuted with greater ardour than any other crime in the eighteenth-century (Wharman 210).

number; or that, after all, they are other than the little shrivelled, meagre, hopping, though loud and troublesome, insects of the hour. (105-106)

Though this passage does not include, or sit adjacent to, direct reference to Jews, it details many arguments about Jacobinism that are easily transferable to and from Jews. The contrast between the few grasshoppers and many cows mirrors the disproportionately small number of Jews living in England relative to their cultural visibility. Like the grasshoppers, Jewish merchants were recognized by their “importunate chink”: the oft depicted cry of “old clothes” that distinguished one of the most common trades of Anglo-Jews, rag dealing. Burke’s rhetoric relies chiefly on invoking powerful images that sway the emotions, pitting the cruel and rapacious revolutionaries against the temperate scions of English values. The British oak and cows are two of the most familiar images that represent Britain and Burke uses Jews as a similarly potent image of greed and instability. At the same time, Burke refrains from labelling Jews as religious enemies, instead inviting them to participate as allies against French atheism.

Burke rejects religious factionalism since he considers all traditional structures as bastions against radicalism, and thereby implicates Jews as potential allies. The Jews’ imputed religious obstinacy is therefore a potential means of redemption, since Judaism is to Burke a legitimate and venerable religion. Coleridge made a similar case and considered the Jews a “Biblical people, a remnant of former greatness,” despite his disgust for their modern condition (Page 166). Thus, while Burke aligns Jews with Jacobinism, he simultaneously presents them as preferable to their Jacobin counterparts. For all their machinations, Jews are not so extreme as to challenge religious institutions because they, like Burke, respect other religions, even if they

disagree with their tenets.²⁵ For this reason “the Jews in Change Alley have not yet dared to hint their hopes of a mortgage on the revenues belonging to the see of Canterbury” (Burke 130).

Burke further mobilizes Judaism as a natural enemy to any kind of radicalism or revolution by demonstrating how Lord George Gordon, the instigator of the anti-Catholic Gordon Riots (1780), and later a convert to Judaism (1787), has misunderstood his adopted religion by becoming enemy to another:

We have Lord George Gordon fast in Newgate; and neither his being a public proselyte to Judaism, nor his having, in his zeal against Catholick priests and all sorts of ecclesiastics, raised a mob (excuse the term, it is still in use here) which pulled down our prisons, have preserved to him a liberty, of which he did not render himself worthy by a virtuous use of it. We have rebuilt Newgate, and tenanted the mansion. We have prisons almost as strong as the Bastile, for those who dare to libel the queen of France. In this spiritual retreat, let the noble libeller remain. Let him there meditate on his Thalmud, until he learns a conduct more becoming his birth and parts, and not so disgraceful to the ancient religion to which he has become a proselyte. (104)

Burke seems to have purposely confounded the order of events – Gordon had not yet converted at the time the riots began – in order to suggest that Gordon’s zeal against Catholics was partially inspired by his Jewish leanings. Burke likens Gordon’s misguided nationalist and religious agenda to the Jacobin rhetoric that inspires popular revolution and he represents the ensuing mob violence as a disastrous alternative to temperate reform: Jacobinism appeals to a “false sublime” that stirs up popular revolt, while Burke appeals to the “true sublime” of monarchical pageantry and religious tradition (Furniss 115-119). Burke attributes to Gordon this false sense of the

²⁵ Burke’s earlier “Speech on the Toleration Bill” (1773), Frans de Bruyn suggests, argues in less exclusionary terms that if the Jews “confine themselves to the private exercise of their religious beliefs and observe the laws of the land, they should . . . enjoy the benefits of toleration” (de Bruyn 595).

sublime that arises from his Judaic sympathies, but he also claims that Gordon is misguided in thinking that Jewish thought supports mob violence. A true understanding of Judaism, Burke implies, might have prevented Gordon from pursuing such a “disgraceful” course of action.

On the whole, the *Reflections* delivers an inconsistent message about Judaism. Burke’s apparent ambivalence and his eagerness to differentiate Judaism from the actions of individual Jews (the “Jew brokers”, “Jews of Change Alley”, and Lord Gordon) sit uncomfortably alongside the use of Jewish allusions to condemn radicalism. Burke, in short, draws upon two incompatible models: the tradition of representation that casts all Jews in the same mold and the emergent notions of identity that recognize the individual as distinct from his or her group affiliations.

Although conservative thinkers in the 1790s tended to share Burke’s reservations about Jews, Isaac D’Israeli’s influential anti-Jacobin novel, *Vaurien* (1797), attempted a fuller vindication. The novel directly confronts Burke’s characterization of Jews through the character of a Jewish philosopher who rejects the equation of Jewishness and mercenariness. Written in a picaresque mode reminiscent of Fielding’s and Smollett’s novels, *Vaurien* tells the story of a young would-be radical who experiences first-hand the curiosities of contemporary British life. While the novel harshly condemns reformers, it also satirically exposes some flaws in the British establishment typified by “fashionable society”. D’Israeli devotes a chapter (the longest in the book) to the musings of a Jewish philosopher. Vaurien, the French sower of dissent, meets the Jewish philosopher in his travels and attempts to solicit from him support for an English revolution. While the philosopher accepts Vaurien’s claim that the French emancipation of Jews is a credit to that country, he evades the implied invitation to revolt and launches into an historically-grounded digression on the status of Jews in Europe. He claims that “a philosophical

history of Jews would be a history of human nature” since the Jews have travelled across the world, participated in all manner of political structures, passed from greatness to lowness, and introduced to Europe “those sciences which are cultivated by all men but themselves” (192). The philosopher argues that the Jews’ repulsive behaviour in Europe was the result of Christian prejudice and laws that forced Jews into the practice of usury or theft. He refutes the notion that the Jews were cursed to wander the Earth because of their rejection of Christ, since, as he notes, the Jewish diaspora began well before the events recounted in the Gospels.

Numerous other prejudices and stereotypes about Jews are explored, explained and debunked by the philosopher. The narrative provides little description of the philosopher’s behaviour as a Jew, but the few details given indicate his affiliation with the Jewish Reform movement. For example, Vaurien “found him at dinner eating pork-chops”, as if to suggest that the proverbial Jewish aversion to pig’s meat does not exist among Judaism’s more enlightened practitioners (191). D’Israeli models the character on the Jewish enlightenment philosopher, Moses Mendelssohn, whose belief in the need to modernize Jewish belief and practice was shared by D’Israeli.²⁶ The Jewish philosopher’s observations are meant to be taken seriously as his diatribes contain no hint of self-implicating irony as do the speeches delivered by the novel’s other philosophers. D’Israeli further validates the Jew’s claims by having the villain Vaurien reject him as too learned and insufficiently adaptable to political machination. Furthermore, D’Israeli’s extensive use of footnotes in the Jewish chapter bolsters and expands the Jew’s claims (a point that the *Anti-Jacobin Review* noticed with disapproval). The Jew presents arguments and opinions that reflect those of British Jews, at least according to D’Israeli, and the philosopher’s opposition to rebellion matches the position of English Jews who, on the whole, were staunchly loyalist.

²⁶ Mendelssohn also inspired the title character of Lessing’s *Nathan the Wise* (1779).

While the body of the novel addresses matters relating to current events and popular opinion, D'Israeli's footnotes more directly challenge literary portrayals of Jews. Burke receives special notice as the author of "a *diatribe* against all Israelites, as money-lenders, clippers, and coiners, and whatever crimes his black imagination could create" (193). Noting the persuasive power of literature, D'Israeli says Burke's "style is too beautiful to lose itself on such derisive subjects; it is a gilding sunshine that exhausts it's (sic) splendour on a dunghill" (193). Another footnote condemns eighteenth century fictions that revived strong anti-Jewish feeling, and names *The Adventures of a Guinea* in particular because of its portrayal of the blood libel (198). Such fiction stirs up resentment between Jews and Christians and tends to condone enmity to Jews by host nations. In a footnote on the ill treatment of Jews in Italy, D'Israeli obliquely justifies Burke's analogy between Jews and revolutionaries: "in Italy they probably imagine that the *children of Jacob* are really *Jacobins*, which, if they were, would not be surprising" (200). Obviously, D'Israeli's motivations and sensitivity to Jewish matters differ greatly from Burke's not least because he is himself Jewish.²⁷

That D'Israeli felt confident enough to challenge conventional wisdom about Jews demonstrates a significant shift in attitude; mid-century Jews were far less likely to assert their interest in a public way. A prominent Jewish merchant and community leader, Sampson Gideon, for example, correctly predicted that the introduction of the Jew Bill would increase hostility to Jews (Perry 19-20). Abba Rubin speculates that Myer Leoni, the Jewish actor playing the celebrated Jewish prizefighter, Isaac Mendoza, in *The Duenna* (1775) may have explained away Sheridan's anti-Jewish depiction "much as many critics explain away the anti-Semitism of *The Merchant of Venice* as being generally harmless and incidental. Certainly, he could not help

²⁷ Although *Vaurien* was originally published anonymously, many reviewers correctly guessed at the authorship. Suspecting that the author was Jewish, reviewers may have been sceptical about the novel's arguments about Jews.

seeing it” (85-86). More to the point, Leoni presumably had no reason to believe his opinions would have provoked positive change. While D’Israeli’s boldness was likely inspired by the contemporaneous success of Cumberland’s *The Jew*, his efforts to correct anti-Jewish prejudice attracted mostly negative comments from reviewers.

The *Analytical Review* was one of the few to praise the author for his sensitivity in “rendering another class of our fellow-creatures respected, who have almost immemorially been regarded with contempt, and treated with the most savage and unrelenting persecution – the Jews” (Forster 300). The more typical *Anti-Jacobin* review condemned the *Analytical*’s praise of D’Israeli’s defense of both Jews and prostitutes. While the *Anti-Jacobin* summarizes and then refutes the *Analytical*’s case for sympathy for prostitutes, it rejects the defense of Jews out of hand as motivated only by the periodical’s radical politics and anti-religious agenda: “The *Analytical* approves highly of the dissertation in defence of the Jews. It, indeed, contains many allegations inimical to Christianity” (Forster 305). Vaurien’s defence of Jews is subject to a parallel critique: “the chapter attempting to give the preference to the Jewish religion over the Christian, although the dissertation be in the person of a Jewish Philosopher, and not of the author himself, is very reprehensible, and some positions indecent almost to blasphemy” (Forster 303). Even the more moderate *Monthly Review* took umbrage at the chapter’s account of Christianity, noting an “objectionable passage” that claims the Sacrament originates in the Jewish ritual of Kiddush, the ceremonial blessing for wine said on the Sabbath and Jewish holidays (Forster 296).

The reviews demonstrate that even in the wake of Cumberland’s *Jew* and heightened public interest in sympathetic others (also evident in Wordsworth’s poetry, for example), more serious and sustained defences of Judaism were still unwelcome. D’Israeli presents a rational

argument against prejudice, rather than the typically sentimental case made for the exceptional benevolent Jew whose individual virtue refers only to himself and has no bearing on Judaism or the actual Anglo-Jewish community. Where Cumberland's *Jew* suggested that some virtuous Jews may exist, D'Israeli more boldly insisted on the Jewish religion's moral equivalence to Christianity that makes Jews in general fundamentally good citizens.

William Godwin's Appropriation of Jewishness

D'Israeli aside, conservative writers maintained a degree of suspicion toward Jews, especially regarding their transnationalism and their associations with finance. Unsurprisingly, these traits were precisely those celebrated by radical writers. William Godwin responds to Burke's linkage of Jews and Jacobins by aligning Jews with social progress. By adapting Gothic tropes to his social criticisms, Godwin distinguished himself as one of the most notable experimenters in novelistic form during the Romantic period; at the same time, he placed himself at the forefront of experiments with Jewish characterization. Godwin associates Jews with economic and ideological freedom and recasts some of the standard features of negative depiction in positive terms. In his first two novels, Godwin capitalizes on the Jew's sympathetic potential after *The Jew*. Jews are a particularly fruitful novelistic subject for Godwin because they stand as living examples of some of his revolutionary principles of social justice: Jewish economic and social success demonstrate the advantages of the dissolution of ranks since Jews flourish outside of national hierarchies while the Jews' lack of a homeland or centralized authority makes them especially vulnerable to institutional oppression. For these reasons, Godwin invokes Jews and Judaism in both *Caleb Williams* (1794) and *St. Leon* (1799).²⁸

²⁸ *Caleb Williams* was published in the same year and month that Cumberland's *The Jew* was first performed – May 1794.

Godwin's unpopular views and the backlash he experienced as a result also figuratively link his experience to that of Jews who seemed distinct from other Britons as a result of their adherence to a different religion.

Caleb Williams and *St. Leon* question the impact of the loss of roots on the individual, and Jewish Diaspora stands as a positive, yet precarious, example of how a people without strong ties to land and national identity still manage to thrive. The actions of the heroes of both novels tear them apart from their families and friends, and each suffers subsequently because of negative or unknown reputations. Although calumny and poor judgement uproot the heroes from their past, they attempt to define themselves by present action and good intentions, rather than by the prejudices of the societies that have cast them out. Williams and St. Leon think of themselves in vacillating terms as outsider and cohort, rejecting and then reaffirming the importance of public opinion and the validity of the existing social order. Wandering, concealment, and imprisonment confirm the impossibility of escaping the past, a dilemma that characterizes a significant problem in Godwin's attitude toward reform: abolishing existing hierarchical structures clashes with the need for belonging to historically rooted communities.

Godwin includes Jewish characters and Jewish allusions in the texts that link individual and social aspects of his philosophy conceptually to Jewish experience. As he explores the meaning of being an outsider through the various disguises of his heroes, including as Jews, communities such as the romanticized banditti and the Jews demonstrate in turn modes of social organization that exist in opposition to, or disjunction from, the larger cultural body. Godwin defines these groups by their relationships to money and exchange, thereby opposing them to the landed gentry's hereditary property and exalted reputation. As Caleb's master Falkland's power rests upon the slavish devotion of the lower orders who vie for his favour, Godwin implicitly

argues that the decentralization of wealth that his revolutionary politics entails will lead to a more just and prosperous society wherein personal ability and accomplishment will count for more than one's inherited position in the hierarchy.

Nevertheless, Caleb struggles with the tensions inherent in the breakdown of hierarchy as he becomes trapped between the search for a sense of identity rooted in history and the freedom that comes from having no ties to property or the past. Reputation in itself appears valuable to Caleb, especially when his own becomes tarnished, and the desire to protect his good name, and Falkland's, dissuades him from pursuing truth and justice. At the same time, Caleb's repeated shifts of identity allow him to escape the consequences of his past actions, for a time. By comparing the ways in which Falkland preserves his reputation through lies and those in which Caleb discards his by putting on disguises, Godwin critiques the apparent stability of identity, demonstrating that reputation is built upon a combination of truth and fiction. As a member of the landed gentry, Falkland enforces power over others through a legal system that favours landowners, and through careful defence of his reputation as a benevolent and just man. After Caleb confronts Falkland with his suspicion that the latter murdered Tyrell, Falkland frames Caleb for theft in order to protect his own reputation. Because Falkland is a respected gentleman, and Caleb an orphan, Falkland is believed implicitly and Caleb is punished for challenging his patron's integrity. Godwin argues that even a man as magnanimous as Falkland is easily corrupted by his social position and the prestige granted him because of it. Commitment to the preservation of his reputation and the sense of self it confirms motivates Falkland to murder Tyrell and to silence Caleb.

If the gentleman is defined by his obsessive need to enforce an authoritative version of his reputation, then the free subject, Godwin suggests, does the opposite – Caleb keeps his past

secret or multiplies the ways it can be read. The mysterious and often contradictory reputation of Jews suggests how individuals can negotiate a multifarious reputation and it is for this reason that Caleb's disguise as a Jewish writer is an effective contrast to Falkland. Gentlemen such as Falkland are tied to their landed family inheritance, but the deracinated community of Jews are connected internationally and support themselves with moveable wealth generated by commerce. Jewish connotations of mobility, secrets, and mercantilism contrast with the clearly delineated hierarchy of ranks to which Godwin objects. Money, in particular, defines the outsider in this novel because it can be spread in untraceable ways, in contrast to the clear record of property transference necessary to the hereditary structures of the gentry. Caleb's alleged crime is transporting wealth from where it belongs in his master's house. This action transgresses the border between opposing relations to property: hereditary ownership of real property versus the free exchange of money and goods.

This distinction of property is evoked throughout the novel by the personae that Caleb imitates. The bandits survive through theft, the Irish beggar on charity, and the Jewish alter-ego on the sale of merchandise, in this case, books. To contemporary readers, usury, theft, and miserly hoarding would be associated with Jews as well, but Godwin avoids directly attributing these characterizations to them. Still, the trials Caleb faces as a member of these outsider communities attributes to him an air of criminality associated with their violation of the status quo that demands stable and clearly defined relationships between individuals and money. Godwin thus makes no direct collective statement about Jews. Instead, he draws on Jewish experience as a way to address broader injustices. While the banditti's system is clearly unjust and criminal, the Irish beggar and the Jew are only popularly assumed to be criminal or immoral. But Caleb's series of disguises lead back to his role as a servant to a gentleman who is also a

criminal, thereby completing a cycle of self-re-fashioning that reveals all elements of society to be involved in injustice.

Caleb embraces an unstable identity that Jacques Khalip argues ultimately empowers him: “Indeed, it is by turning the concept of anonymity into a full-scale political theory in *Caleb Williams* that Godwin makes his mark: narrative uncertainties and character unravellings intimate that subjectivity is politically viable *because* it is easily substituted, mobile and, betrayable” (73). Caleb exhibits an “anonymous mobility”, generated by the flexibility with which he doffs and dons multiple identities (Khalip 74) and this in turn advocates for more just social structures wherein the individual can be judged upon observable behaviour rather than by birth status. By contrast, connections to a title and to real property limit freedom for both tenant and landholder as the need to preserve reputation stifles more natural impulses and leads to mutually destructive relationships. In *St. Leon* the relative mobility of property enables Godwin to link transportable wealth more explicitly with radical tenets.

St. Leon is not, like Caleb Williams, a victim merely in one country. He travels across Europe and his uncertain roots raise suspicion well beyond his native France. His mysterious and easily moveable wealth enables Godwin to combine in St. Leon the figures of “criminal and gentleman, weaving them together through a series of doubled reversals” (Mackie 182). Godwin by this means undermines the apparently clear distinctions of class, even as he demonstrates the European unwillingness to accept such dramatic challenges to its hierarchies. When St. Leon returns to his home town, having fled after losing his estate to pay his gambling losses, he finds that his recovered wealth does not ingratiate him to his former associates because they require specific knowledge of the source of his money. Since St. Leon cannot reveal the alchemical secrets of wealth and longevity, his honour is lost and he becomes an outcast. His isolation is

therefore a consequence less of his immortality than of the public refusal to accept his wealth as fairly won. The crucial distinction between the promise of unlimited wealth and the social status assured by real property in turn drives the second half of the novel. Despite his best intentions, St. Leon fails because his indiscriminate distribution of money undermines human institutions that tie virtue and honour to detailed knowledge of individual histories.

This essentiality is most clearly demonstrated when St. Leon adopts charitable projects in Hungary. St. Leon initially succeeds by acting discreetly and moderately to build infrastructure in the war-torn region, but he soon finds that his efforts are not appreciated by the local government. The bashaw accuses him of being “one of those busy-bodies, who never see an evil without imagining that they are the person to correct it, intruding into every thing, and subverting every thing” (376). The bashaw labels St. Leon’s interference both treason and blasphemy because, as is the case in Christian Europe, Turkish-occupied Hungary requires direct hierarchical relationships: “the sovereign of Constantinople will have no benefactor in the countries he presides over, but himself. Like the invisible ruler of the universe, he acts by second causes; he allows his ministers to be instruments of his beneficence; but all must be ascribed to him, must flow from his will, and be placed under his control” (376). St. Leon interferes with the established order when he resolves “to pour the entire stream of my riches, like a mighty river, to fertilize these wasted plains, and revive their fainting inhabitants” (360). Nourishment which ought to flow from the top down is instead distributed freely by St. Leon. He offers the common people a support that does not come from a legitimate and centralized authority, thereby destabilizing the power of the monarch. The bashaw reacts to this intervention by extorting bribes from St. Leon in order to allow him to continue giving charity, and this in turn diminishes the threat of his interference. The central irony of *St. Leon* is here revealed: infinite wealth is

disempowering, not because the Philosopher's Stone corrupts St. Leon, but because society is corrupt.

Without the stability of hereditary roots and real property, money makes St. Leon vulnerable, since he is subject to extortion or imprisonment by those who do have reputation and authority. This precarious position was familiar to Jews in Medieval and Early-Modern Europe when, because of legal bars to respectable professions and to land ownership, Jews were often forced to live on the profits of usury and to hide their religion. The Jews' reputation for possession of wealth and their legal and social marginality in turn made them frequent targets of violence. Walter Scott for this reason depicts the routine nature of extorting Jews in the Middle Ages when Front de Bouef threatens Isaac the Jew with torture if he will not pay a ransom in *Ivanhoe* (1819). Caleb and St. Leon are likewise vulnerable to oppression because of their connections to wealth and property.

Both Caleb Williams and St. Leon disguise themselves to avoid such abuses, but neither is successful. Eric Daffron notes that Caleb's disguises fail "because the personae he chooses to imitate actually expose rather than conceal his presence", since "as a lower class farmer's son . . . he shares a marginal, nearly outlawed status with the Irish beggar, the wandering Jew and the disabled" (228). Furthermore, Caleb becomes fascinated with the exaggerated accounts he hears of his own exploits and develops a psychological attachment to his fictive self (Mackie 189-190). St. Leon likewise fails to completely dissociate himself from his past errors, since, disguised as Chatillon, he continues to leave the origins of his wealth mysterious. As D'Aubigny, he allows his indiscriminate show of wealth to interfere in his son's (Charles's) life and he almost undoes the marriage between Charles and Pandora. St. Leon's only true success comes when he disguises himself as an Armenian merchant. In this disguise, St. Leon is able to see his daughters

and undo the damage his misconduct has done to their honour. Michael Scrivener discusses this disguise as the last in a series of allusions that links St. Leon with Jews, since Jews and Armenians have a shared history of persecution, and occupy similar roles as “merchants, and . . . scholars” (*Jewish Representation* 108). The fluidity of both money and an identity typically associated with Jews grants St. Leon power to succeed in this instance. As an eastern traveler and merchant, he requires no explanation for his wealth nor is his past at all relevant.

The various disguises in both novels, the Jews, the Irish beggar, the banditti and the rejuvenated St. Leon, enable the heroes to reject the primacy of social rank and transgress borders. As an outsider who disperses his money freely, St. Leon challenges existing hierarchies by undermining top-down social structures. Godwin links these themes of rootlessness, money, and radicalism to Jewishness in a pivotal moment of *St. Leon* when the hero drinks the elixir of life and regains his youth. After escaping the inquisition, he stumbles upon a Jew’s house and takes refuge there. St. Leon threatens the Jew, symbolically reproducing the tyranny he has himself suffered at the hands of the Inquisition. He borrows a suit of clothes, concocts the elixir of life and drinks it while the Jew and his daughter are asleep. Now, wearing the Jew’s clothes, St. Leon looks in the mirror and sees a twenty-year-old version of himself: he achieves the ultimate disguise by becoming young again, and he does this in the home of a Jew who has only nominally converted to Christianity in order to save his own life. The crypto-Judaism of his host mirrors St. Leon’s disguise as he too must conceal a secret in order to survive unmolested. At the same time, both are intimately connected to money: the Jew by popular prejudice and St Leon by circumstance.

Godwin nevertheless underscores a significant difference between the two characters. St. Leon has by now severed all ties with his family, whereas the Jew clings to family as his one

security in life: “We poor Jews, hunted on the face of the earth, the abhorrence and execration of mankind, have nothing but family affections to support us under our multiplied disgraces; and family affections are entwined with our existence, the fondest and best-loved part of ourselves” (340). St. Leon, however has sacrificed the security of family life for the power alchemy offers.

This need for family presents a challenge for Godwin in making his case against the social order. As St. Leon’s actions alienate him from his family, Godwin implies that one must make a choice between advancing social justice and maintaining fulfilling personal relationships. Louise Joy argues that although Godwin professed to have written *St. Leon* as a way of amending his theories and to make family affections consonant with political justice, the gesture is at times hollow since Godwin generally glosses over the domestic scenes in order to focus on the supernatural tale and examples of injustice. St. Leon laments the loss of domestic life, rather than celebrating its presence, and his regret in turn “takes him away from the more practical ends he should be serving” (Joy 48). The distraction of family recalls Godwin’s argument in *Political Justice* that, given the choice between saving two lives, one should always choose to save the person who has the greater scope for performing good acts in the future. Godwin insists that it would be unjust to take personal feelings or family relationships into account when making such choices (170). But *St. Leon* nevertheless indicates that family and the rootedness it represents provide self-fulfillment. Without family, St. Leon can only be an aimless wanderer; he can disrupt society, but never actually change it. The Jew that St. Leon encounters acts as his double, a man who potentially achieves a balance between family and social justice.

Universalized Jewishness in George Walker's *Theodore Cyphon*

Godwin assigns to his Jewish characters a minor role and only an abstract capacity to generate positive change, but George Walker's retelling of *Caleb Williams, Theodore Cyphon* (1796), offers a sustained examination of the status of Jews in England, while also negotiating a political position between the extremes of radical and loyalist ideologies. Shechem Bensadi, the novel's exemplar of virtue, who cherishes his family and gives selflessly to those in need, stands in contrast to the landed gentry whose inheritance structures destroy family ties and encourage vice. Bensadi, as the subtitle *The Benevolent Jew* suggests, is aligned with Cumberland's positive portrayals in *The Jew* and is a Jewish moneylender who is secretly charitable, despite his reputation for usurious practices. The Jewish plot frames the main part of the novel which is the history of Theodore Cyphon, who comes to the Jew seeking refuge and gradually reveals his story. Cyphon's father is a squire who is dependent on his older brother Theodoric, Theodore's uncle. His father disinherits Theodore for marrying a peasant girl who is later abducted and raped by Theodoric, whom Theodore then kills in revenge. Theodore lives as a fugitive for some time before bringing himself to justice in the hope of reconciling with his dying father. After Theodore's execution, his father's reputation remains untarnished, while Theodore continues to be anathemized as an ungrateful child and a villain.

Walker tones down the radicalism of Godwin's *Caleb Williams* by having Theodore submit to his punishment, partly because he has actually committed the crime for which he is accused, but also so as to preserve the ideal of social order maintained by the authority of law. Theodore turns his life in to an object lesson: "Learn . . . from this the obedience due to the laws. It is necessary that I should thus suffer for the outrage I have committed, and let all mankind learn, that when passion overcomes reason, desolation is the consequence" (2. 217). A second

embedded narrative involves the history of Theodore's brother-in-law, Jason Hanson, who joins the navy and suffers a variety of misfortunes. He also comes to Bensadi for help, tries to resolve Theodore's conflicts, and falls in love with and marries Bensadi's daughter, Eve.

The plot of *Theodore Cyphon* draws in obvious ways on other texts. The relationship to *Caleb Williams* is evident in the main plot, which involves an unjust patron and an innocent servant, and which explores the impact of reputation on character. The novel also contains elements borrowed from *Robinson Crusoe*, *The Merchant of Venice*. Cumberland's *The Jew* is also invoked in the subplot involving Bensadi and his daughter Eve. Bensadi is rescued from a mob by Theodore, and he later learns that Hanson had once rescued Bensadi's wife from a group of robbers. Although Bensadi attempts to resolve the novel's conflicts as best he can, he achieves less success than Cumberland's Sheva; ultimately, Bensadi and Hanson fail to save Theodore's life or reputation. However, Walker presents the Jew as a sympathetic listener, someone who understands human nature, and can provide a neutral perspective on events. While Caleb William's opinions are always suspect because of the first-person narration, Shechem Bensadi's position as a disinterested outsider makes him appear more reliable. His sympathetic mode of speech, rooted in the language of sentiment, further distinguishes him from Caleb Williams, whose commentary relies on polemic and political philosophy. Bensadi's reaction to a case of adultery is typical of the sentimental tone taken up by Walker's characters:

Son of my affections . . . the customs of this country allow punishment of death to him who robs thee of worldly goods to a very trivial amount; whilst he who robs thee of thy wife's affections, who steals away the essence of thy existence, and verily a part of thyself (for thy church declareth the unity of man and wife) this man escapes with a trivial fine, which if rich is a matter of little consideration, and the stigma of ridicule is

affixed to thy name. To speak of natural justice would be nonsense, it is society which fixes every standard of the penal code; but in this case thou seest the very absurd difference; and that thy repose and happiness are not equal to a few pence. (1. 89-90)

Walker intensifies Godwin's social criticisms in *Caleb Williams* by demonstrating how unjust power structures can undermine even family bonds. Shechem considers Theodoric's crimes as so terrible that he later partially condones the murder, since it eliminates from the world a man whose lust motivates his abuse of power and whose actions have repeatedly destroyed loving relationships. Not the systems that allow abuse, but the end result – the breakdown of family – represents Walker's greatest concern, and it is one that registers more viscerally than does Godwin's more abstract political critique. Bensadi's attack on the privileging of reputation over family is especially potent because he is a Jew, and expected to value money above all else, hence Cyphon's bewilderment at Bensadi's goodness and his subsequent exclamation, "art thou a Jew!" (1. 90). Again, Walker draws on the idea of the benevolent Jew as laid out in Cumberland's play: the Jew defies prejudice by prizing social cohesion, especially the sanctity of marriage, above wealth.

Walker takes advantage of this version of the Jew to indict the anti-social competitiveness of the gentry. Jewishness in the novel is, however, interchangeable with a variety of other outsider identities, with Walker repeatedly demonstrating that virtue appears more often amongst racial others and the lower classes. Hanson is a pivotal figure in this regard. His travels in India give him opportunity to condemn the violence and prejudice of colonialism (2. 25) and to praise the benevolence of the Indian people whom he encounters. In England, the Hanson family reiterates the core principle that virtue and happiness are more easily found among the poor than among the landed gentry. In a context that identifies virtue with individuals

rather than institutions or religions, Bensadi's Jewishness is made to appear a secondary attribute, rather than a defining feature. Bensadi's extreme benevolence would be surprising had not the trope of the benevolent Jew already been popularized. The presumed unlikelihood of Bensadi's virtue bolsters the critique of Cyphon's family, who have allowed unnatural animosities to arise as a result of the greed and pride encouraged by the laws associated with primogeniture.

Although Walker comes to conclusions about virtue similar to Godwin's, his novel differs from *Caleb Williams* in terms of its account of the origins of injustice. Godwin construes Falkland as a potentially great man who becomes corrupted by his status and the felt need to exercise power over others. Conversely, Cyphon and Hanson suffer, as do the natives of India and the Jews in England, because the people in power are inherently corrupt or cruel. Bensadi, Theodore, and Hanson argue that while law and government are not perfect, they are superior to the alternative methods of maintaining peace and order proposed by the radicals. Theodore, for example, tells a companion who was transported for uprooting a tree that lesser crimes deserve greater punishment, since the purpose of law is to deter rather than punish, and thus the crime easier to commit must be more severely condemned (2. 90). Walker distrusts the ability of the individual to act righteously, and he therefore carefully offers arguments to mitigate the radical implications of his story by so explaining apparent absurdities. Like Burke, Walker allows that institutions necessarily enable some injustices, but suggests that the alternative, reliance on the good intentions of individuals, is worse: "we are afraid to put men to live and trade each on his own private stock of reason; because we suspect that this stock in each man is small" (Burke *Reflections* 105). The private injustices suffered by Hanson and Cyphon do not require the complete overhaul of British law, as Caleb Williams's history might suggest. Theodore argues,

echoing Burke, that the law gradually improves over time, especially when it becomes tempered by sentiment, so that mercy and lenience can be practiced when necessary (2. 97-98). Walker suggests that individuals must cultivate sentiment in order to promote social harmony and the fault, therefore, does not lie in the institution whose archaic structure grants Theodoric the ability to oppress, but rather in Theodoric's lack of compassion.

Still, the overwhelming evil of the gentry in the novel lends credence to the argument that "the elite family both symbolizes and perpetuates tyranny" and that, "conversely, intimacy and true benevolence are found only in the families of shunned 'outsiders' like the Bensadis" (London 108). *Theodore Cyphon's* victimized Jews and Indians are shocking examples of British oppression. Walker writes that the purported inferiority of Britain's others lies in "the weighty consideration of heavy artillery" and these oppressed people are actually morally superior (2. 22). Nevertheless, the moral character of these oppressed people originates in personal qualities, not in their group affiliations. To illustrate the relative importance of personal choice, the novel presents Bensadi's religion as an obstacle to practicing benevolence because of the associated stereotypes, and especially because of Bensadi's initial distrust of Gentiles. But Bensadi lays aside his religious prejudices and offers support to Cyphon, even after learning that he is a murderer. In this way, Bensadi acts according to principles of generosity and fair judgement rather than those prescribed by religious prejudice. He exhibits qualities that Walker elsewhere ascribes to true Christians, such as Hanson, whose "soul", though he professes himself indifferent to religious forms, "was the emblem of Christian patience and goodness" (2.126). Both characters contrast the religious hypocrites for whom "Christianity is now a name, a mere passport to office" (2. 126).

Bensadi at first adheres to what he feels is his religious obligation when he carefully keeps his daughter Eve's existence a secret from Theodore in order to discourage the possibility of an interfaith union. When Eve does learn that Theodore is staying in their home, Shechem warns her that "though thou art strong in thyself, yet perhaps thy heart might be caught like the wild roe on the tops of the mountains . . . for thou knowest our religion forbids marriage with a stranger" (1. 32). But, perhaps in light of Theodore's tale and the suffering brought about by a father's obstinacy regarding a child's marriage, Bensadi softens his views on interfaith marriage in the second half of the novel when he sees an emerging romance between Hanson and Eve that he does not try to thwart with the same ardour as before. After Hanson protests that religion makes no difference to him, "Shechem smiled. 'Well,' said he, 'this is my daughter's business, with her you must settle it'" (2. 203). Bensadi thus exemplifies the notion that any good person is essentially a Christian, a conclusion that produces a happy ending for Eve and Hanson but leaves unresolved the religious tensions that could follow from it.

Bensadi almost entirely rejects all distinction between Jew and Christian, so his Christian goodness invites the question of whether the characterization of the benevolent Jew was flattering to a Jewish audience. The conclusion of *Theodore Cyphon* sees Bensadi, Eve, and Hanson half-heartedly reject formal religion in favour of a universalized benevolence that ignores formal religious distinctions. This resolution may smooth the marriage between Jew and Christian, but fails to address the larger questions of reconciling different, often hostile traditions. Nor does the novel substantially depart from standard characterizations of Jews. Bensadi's complexity owes more to Walker's confused merging of literary antecedents than to thoughtful attention to the particularities of Anglo-Jewish life. Bensadi's religion is ultimately rendered irrelevant as even the initial resistance to interfaith marriage is abandoned, while

Bensadi's marginal status and accompanying virtue remain interchangeable with a variety of "others". Like Cumberland's *The Jew*, *Theodore Cyphon* takes advantage of the dramatic power of a Jewish hero and, like *The Jew*, it fails to make that hero distinctively Jewish.

These 1790s works, from Cumberland's *The Jew* to Godwin's political novels and Walker's *Theodore Cyphon*, appropriate the Jew as an effective rhetorical feature. Such works raised Jews to a new level of importance in fiction, even as they rendered Jews less clearly defined as a distinct people. The following chapter demonstrates how this dilemma intensified into the nineteenth century as such politically charged depictions give way to Jewish figures that embodied increasingly idiosyncratic authorial concerns and which are inflected with Gothic tropes. The re-evaluation of Jewishness coincides with a period of experimentation in British literary culture, particularly evident in the Gothic novel and its offshoots, the polemical and historical novels. Jews occupy significant roles in some of the most popular of these novels, indicating that formal innovations enabled such redefinitions of Jewish character. The Gothic mode in particular allowed for commentary on Jews since some of its distinguishing characteristics were also integral to contemporary representations of Jews: supernaturalism; political and religious hypocrisy; oppression and confinement, especially of women; surveillance and disguise; and unconventional narrative structure.

Chapter Three

Oh! weep for those that wept by Babel's stream,
 Whose shrines are desolate, whose land a dream;
 Weep for the harp of Judah's broken shell;
 Mourn -- where their God hath dwelt the godless dwell!

And where shall Israel lave her bleeding feet?
 And when shall Zion's songs again seem sweet?
 And Judah's melody once more rejoice
 The hearts that leap'd before its heavenly voice?

Tribes of the wandering foot and weary breast,
 How shall ye flee away and be at rest!
 The wild-dove hath her nest, the fox his cave,
 Mankind their country -- Israel but the grave!

(Byron. "Oh! Weep for Those That Wept by Babel's Stream")

Jewish representations, which may seem to be a parochial concern, in fact function like Freud's return of the repressed: expelled and excluded, they keep coming back, raising uncomfortable questions. (Scrivener 7)

Gothic Fiction and the Wandering Jew

Burke's characterization of Jews, though a minor feature of the *Reflections*, invited further commentary on the relationship between Jews and the English nation. The investigations of Jewishness in D'Israeli's, Godwin's, and Walker's novels respond to Burke's comments and draw on a wider array of literary representations of Jews. A related stream of thought about Jews emerged in Gothic novels that similarly engaged with Jewishness in relation to wider political ideologies. As "*The Reflections* imparted to the word *Gothic* a new political charge" (Miles 46), which manifests itself in Godwin's Gothic-inspired novels, so Burkean politics also influenced seemingly less politically explicit Gothic texts, including Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796). This more sensational branch of the Gothic is also notable for its multiple adaptations of the Wandering Jew, a figure that initially had little to do with actual Jews, or even in some of its manifestations in literary culture, with religious faith. This distinction occurs in part because the

Wandering Jew is not historically located, but mythic and supernatural. As fictional constructs, the Wandering Jew and ordinary Jews embody separate concerns.

An early version of the Wandering Jew myth describes an incident in which a thirteenth-century Archbishop delivers an oral account of the Wandering Jew while visiting a monastery. This iteration has almost no bearing on actual Jews as the immortal man, Cartaphilus, is probably an Armenian, but certainly not Jewish. He recovers his youth every 100 years, behaves with monkish solemnity and obsesses over his folly in mocking Christ at the crucifixion (Rosenberg 190-191).²⁹ The legend was revived in a 1602 German pamphlet, *Volksbuch*. This time, the character is a Jewish cobbler named Ahaseurus who reacts with strong emotion when he hears a sermon about the crucifixion. He explains his response by saying he was there, had been cursed after he refused to allow Jesus to rest against him, and was subsequently driven by a perpetual impulse to travel (192-193).

These significant changes to the original tale create a richer symbolic potential for the figure of the Wandering Jew, a potential which may explain both its enduring popularity and

²⁹ Rosenberg's version of the story reads as follows:

In the year 1228 an Armenian Archbishop visited the monastery at St. Albans and regaled his hosts with fabulous Oriental stories. . . . Most particularly did the holy brothers want to know whether the Archbishop had heard anything concerning a certain Joseph who had supposedly talked to Christ shortly before the Crucifixion, and whose name had lately come to attract a good deal of attention. The Archbishop replied that he knew the man very well. He had dined with him shortly before setting out for England.

The man's name, the Archbishop reported, had originally been Cartaphilus. A Roman by birth, he had been Pilate's doorkeeper at the time of Christ's conviction. When Jesus was being led from the hall of judgement, Cartaphilus had struck Him on the neck, and driven Him from the gate with the words "Vade Jesu citius, vade, quid moraris?" "I will go" Christ answered, "but as for thee, thou shalt tarry until I return": "Ego vado, et tu expectabis me, donec redeam." Cartaphilus has been waiting ever since. Overcome by remorse, he entered the Church shortly after the Crucifixion. For twelve centuries he has been living the life of a devout Christian in Armenia and the countries around Armenia. Every hundred years he is seized by a trance and on recovering from it he finds himself remitted to the age of thirty, the age at which he had insulted Christ. In all other respects, his manners are laudable. He eats little and speaks only when he is spoken to. He refuses gifts from anyone. He never laughs, but occasionally he has been seen to burst into tears. On the rare occasions when he does speak, his subject is obsessively the same: Christ's Passion and Crucifixion. He still hopes for salvation because he sinned ignorantly and is fond of applying to himself the words of Christ uttered on the Cross: "forgive them, for they know not what they do." His conduct is, to all intents, that of a holy man. (190-191)

adaptability. R. Endelman suggests that the *Volksbuch* pamphlet and related oral stories concretized otherwise abstract ideas about how and why the Jews suffer – such as through their proverbial homelessness that was long interpreted as divinely mandated – and that the tale provided mass audiences with a readily-available narrative that justified anti-Semitism (9). Although popular in Germany, the Wandering Jew myth was less well established in England where he mainly appeared in several seventeenth- and eighteenth-century folk ballads. Details about the figure in such texts were inconsistent and his Jewishness was hardly relevant; his role as witness to major historical events, such as to the Norman invasion when he was fifteen, is more important (Rosenberg 194).

The simultaneous popularity of the Benevolent Jew and the reinvention of the Wandering Jew at the end of the eighteenth century suggest that a more intimate link between the two Jewish figures was being considered. Matthew Biberman posits that an equation was made between the Wandering Jew and Jewish effeminacy indicated by the Wandering Jew's usually pathetic, passive and ultimately doomed role (171). Thus, Biberman characterizes the Wandering Jew in Romantic-era fiction and poetry as an iteration of Jewish marginalization and disempowerment. The Wandering Jew in the Romantic period, however, is not simply an extension of the precursor Benevolent Jew. The figure also draws on a counter-tradition that identifies the Wandering Jew in demonic terms linked to his isolation from domestic society. Over the course of the Romantic period, the differences between these contrary types becomes more marked. Conventional negative, often anti-Jewish, traits are increasingly ascribed to the Wandering Jew, while the benevolent Jew in turn becomes more closely aligned with positive social values, especially as a preserver of family bonds, as is the case in *The Jew*, *Caleb Williams*, and *Theodore Cyphon*. During the period between 1794 and 1814, the roles of the

realistic and mythic Jews are in a sense reversed: The Wandering Jew loses his status as a penitent convert while benevolent Jews become Christians in everything but name.

While Shylock's impact on the development of the benevolent Jew figure has attracted wide commentary, the importance of the Wandering Jew myth in this regard tends to be underexplored. The Wandering Jew exerts a powerful influence on Jewish portrayals, an influence that extends beyond Gothic fiction since his popularity generated interest in Jews more generally. The influence of the Wandering Jew in British Romanticism begins with Matthew Lewis who revolutionized the Gothic genre by embracing the supernatural and violent tendencies that Ann Radcliffe and others tended to rationalize or diminish. Lewis's novel *The Monk* infused the Gothic with a new horror by introducing genuine supernatural elements, including ghosts, magic, the Devil, and, of course, the Wandering Jew. Lewis's Jew draws on the Wandering Jew myth, but leaves many details unexplained and introduces some darker elements borrowed in part from German Wandering Jew tales.³⁰ He drops the Wandering Jew's proselytism, and instead has the Jew lament over his undeserved victimhood while expressing a desire for oblivion: "Fain would I lay down my miserable life, for I envy those who enjoy the quiet of the Grave: But Death eludes me, and flies from my embrace. . . . The hungry Tiger shudders at my approach, and the Alligator flies from a Monster more horrible than itself. God has set his seal upon me, and all his Creatures respect this fatal mark!"(169). While readers may already have been familiar with the story of the Wandering Jew, this passage dovetails with the story of Cain forced to wander the Earth with a mark on his forehead reminding other people that he had

³⁰ In the notes to *Queen Mab* (1830), Percy Shelley records reading a similar characterization of the Wandering Jew who repeatedly tries to kill himself in a "dirty and torn" translation of a German pamphlet that he bought "some years ago" (318). The original is a poem by Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart called *Der Ewige Jude* (1784). It's possible that Lewis's Wandering Jew is based on this poem since his Wandering Jew describes a similar series of futile attempts at self-annihilation. See appendix for Shelley's transcription of the poem.

murdered his brother. In the description that follows, Lewis adds an allusion to the Cain myth: “there was in his eyes an expression of fury, despair, and malevolence, that struck horror to my very soul’ He continued: ‘I am doomed to inspire all who look upon me with terror and detestation’” (170).

While the power of the Wandering Jew’s eyes is new to Gothic, it had been a standard feature of anti-Jewish descriptions since at least mid-century. The author of a 1753 pamphlet against the Jew Naturalization Act notes:

You know a Jew at first sight. And what then are his distinguishing features? Examine what it is peculiar that strikes you. It is not his dirty skin, for there are other people as nasty; neither is it the make of his body, for the Dutch are every whit as odd, awkward figures as the Jews. But look at his eyes. Don’t you feel a malignant blackness underneath them, which gives them such a cast, as bespeaks guilt and murder. You can never mistake a Jew by this mark, it throws such a dead, livid aspect over all his features, that he carries evidence enough in his face to convict him of being a Crucifier. (Romaine, “A Modest Apology”8-9)³¹

In 1775, the anthropologist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach made a similar claim about members of “the Jewish race” who “can easily be recognized everywhere by their eyes alone, which breathe of the East” (122). With a variety of features traditionally available as markers of Jewish distinction, the eye seems the most persuasive for the eighteenth-century pamphleteer, anthropologist, and Gothic novelist alike.³²

³¹ A longer version of the pamphlet adds more Biblical justifications for the exclusion of Jews: “Scripture says, that they were to be dispersed among the nations – Naturalizing them is collecting the dispersed into one body” (“An Answer” 21).

³² Descriptions of the Jews’ penetrating or awe inspiring gaze abound in Gothic novels.

Lewis further blends Gothic and Jewish tropes by drawing on the more recent development of Cumberland's Sheva, an apparently threatening Jew who acts benevolently. Despite the hero Raymond's horrified first impressions of the Wandering Jew, the Jew acts entirely for Raymond's benefit by providing information on how to exorcise the ghost that follows him. The brief but symbolically rich episode in *The Monk* is a precursor to markedly more complex portrayals.³³ Gothic novels after *The Monk* often included a version of the Wandering Jew, and every major Romantic poet wrote about him. Some of this popularity came from the Wandering Jew's similarity to Faust, a figure appealing to Percy Shelley and Byron as a powerful anti-hero, a rebel against God. Perhaps because of his immortality and knowledge of secrets, the Wandering Jew combines easily with the story of Faust, whose magical power was so great that he felt he could outwit the demon Mephistopheles. In Romantic-era writing, the Wandering Jew's power more often originates with deals with the Devil (*Melmoth the Wanderer*), in magical science (*St. Leon*), or both (*St. Irvyne*) than, as is traditional, with God's curse. At times, the relationship between the Faustus-Wanderer and Jewishness is vestigial, as in the eponymous Melmoth the Wanderer who is an Anglo-Irish Protestant. In Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya* (1806), the title character is the Devil incarnated as a Moor who tempts the heroine, Victoria, into committing greater and greater crimes. Dacre changes much, but traces of the Wandering Jew myth clearly remain a powerful influence on the tale. Michael Scrivener notes that *Zofloya* invokes a series of Jewish tropes – the similarity of Judaism and Islam's Eastern otherness, Zofloya's ancestral knowledge of poisons and medicines, the setting in Venice, the contrast between dark and light bodies, and Victoria's extreme sexuality – which he links to Dacre's biography, laying particular stress on the fact that her father was the notorious

³³ *The Monk's* main plot involves the monk Ambrosio who makes several Faustian bargains with a demon, and later the Devil, in order to achieve his desires. While Lewis had relegated the Wandering Jew to a short incident in a subplot, the two images blended in later Gothic novels (Rosenberg 206-207).

moneylender John “Jew” King (*Jewish Representation* 149). Diane Long Hoeveler, like Scrivener, suggests that “it is more accurate to read Zofloya as a Jew, and an abjected, demonized, and Wandering Jew at that” (106).

Wandering Jews and Benevolent Jews: *Melmoth the Wanderer*

The relationship between the Wandering Jew and the Benevolent Jew is most starkly presented by Charles Maturin in *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820). Christina Morin has demonstrated how *Melmoth* fits in to the pattern of Irish writing and Maturin’s other works as a novel that draws attention to the rupture of personal identity caused by sectarian violence. This is the thematic link that ties the various narratives together (138) and relates to Maturin’s own anxieties as an Irish Protestant living during a period of Catholic resurgence in Ireland. Spanish Marranos, Jews who had nominally converted to Catholicism in order to avoid persecution, served as appropriate analogues. And, amid the contrast of persecuted Jews and a Wandering Jewish persecutor, *Melmoth* stresses the Jews’ instability as narrative subjects.

Like Lewis’s Wandering Jew, the unholy Melmoth the Wanderer possesses qualities that inspire dread in others, especially his eyes. Even in portraiture, Melmoth’s gaze has a supernatural quality. Young John Melmoth, the protagonist of the initial framing narrative, notices that the painting of his ancestor has eyes that seem to follow him (19). Eyes, as we have seen, are also traditionally a key means of recognizing and characterizing Jews, and are full of symbolic meaning in a novel that obsessively examines the role of surveillance in supporting tyranny. The Wanderer’s first would-be victim, Stanton, reveals an escalating state of paranoia as a result of his and Melmoth’s mutual spying. At the theatre, Stanton surveys the audience in search of Melmoth, while noticing people in masks and veils who enjoy “in secrecy the

licentiousness which they dared not openly patronize” (42). When Stanton finds the object of his researches, the role of viewer and viewed reverses: “He discovered the object of his search for four years He was standing up. There was nothing particular or remarkable in his appearance, but the expression of his eyes could never be mistaken or forgotten. The heart of Stanton palpitated with violence, - a mist overspread his eyes, - a nameless and deadly sickness, accompanied with a creeping sensation in every pore from which cold drops were gushing announced the * * * * *³⁴” (43). Afterward, Melmoth tells Stanton it is his turn to be pursued: “My voice shall ring in your ears . . . and the glance of these eyes shall be reflected from every object, animate or inanimate, till you behold them again” (44).

The role reversal in Stanton’s and Melmoth’s gazes speaks to the continual struggle for power and the convoluted interplay of watcher and watched, aggressor and victim, throughout *Melmoth the Wanderer*. In the theatre scene, Stanton tracks down Melmoth, a being who has a supernatural power of surveillance and the ability to disguise himself to the point that he can only be found if he wants to be. The location of the discovery thematizes surveillance since Maturin describes the theatre as voyeuristic spectacle where patrons spy on each other, hide behind masks, and enjoy a play in which the heroines “were rivals in real as well as theatrical life” (42). The play itself is thus an insight into the private affairs of its actors.³⁵

The longest narrative in the book involves a man who is condemned to live in a monastery and his greatest psychological torture is the feeling of always being watched and judged by his brother monks: “they all pledged themselves to each other to *watch me*; that is, to harass, persecute, and torment me into being the very character with which their malice, their

³⁴ The asterisks appear in the original and indicate a gap in a manuscript – the incomplete manuscript plays on the voyeuristic themes of the novel since its lacunae make complete vision impossible. At the same time, the plot is clear enough that the missing passages hardly matter.

³⁵ More symbolism: the principle actresses fight backstage over ownership of a veil and one stabs the other for real during the play.

curiosity, or their mere industry of idleness and wantonness of unoccupied invention, had invested me already. From that hour the whole convent was in a tumult of conspiracy and combination” (100-101). Melmoth is himself the subject of his descendant’s researches, and each of the narratives reveals a little more about the mysterious Wanderer. While Melmoth has a supreme power of surveillance, he spends most of the novel eluding discovery, only making himself known in order to tempt sufferers to accept from him his powers with the accompanying curse of damnation after 150 years. The curse too reminds us of two more watchers, the Devil, and by association, the omniscient God.

Melmoth is a variation on the Wandering Jew, a figure whose Jewishness is often ancillary, but Melmoth’s origins tie closely to several Jewish characters, especially Adonijah who sits at the centre of the novel and provides greater insight into the Wanderer than any other character.³⁶ Moncada, the Spanish Catholic hero of the story’s most prolonged narrative, escapes an inquisitorial dungeon during a fire and stumbles upon an underground passage that leads to the home of a crypto-Jew, Solomon, who is about to reveal to his son that they are Jews and not Catholics. Moncada’s first impressions of the Jews’ home and the ritual about to be performed draw on Gothic supernaturalism and exoticize the Judaic elements:

There was a table covered with cloth; on it were placed a vessel of a singular construction, a book, into whose pages I looked, but could not make out a single letter. I therefore wisely took it for a book of magic, and closed it with a feeling of exculpatory horror. (It happened to be a copy of the Hebrew Bible, marked with the Samaritan points). There was a knife too; and a cock was fastened to the leg of the table, whose loud crows announced his impatience of further constraint. I felt that this

³⁶ Moncada’s encounter with Adonijah expands the similar encounter in *St. Leon* when St. Leon confronts the Jew, albeit with much more Gothic flare: Moncada’s imprisonment is more brutal than St. Leon’s, his escape from the inquisition involves both a fire and a riot, and the family Adonijah the Jew clings to are dead bodies.

apparatus was somewhat singular – it looked like a preparation for a sacrifice. . . . A man of middle age, but whose physiognomy had something peculiar in it, even to the eye of a Spaniard, from the clustering darkness of his eye-brows, his prominent nose, and a certain lustre in the balls of his eyes, entered the room, knelt before the table, kissed the book that lay on it, and read from it some sentences that were to precede, as I imagined, some horrible sacrifice;—felt the edge of the knife, knelt again, uttered some words which I did not understand, (as they were in the language of that book). (245-246).

Solomon explains to his son that the ritual about to be performed will be for the absolution of sins in preparation for the New Year and will also be a symbolic dedication of the son to his newly discovered heritage. To an observant Jewish reader, the scene described might seem familiar, as it is a fairly accurate description of the ritual of *kaparot*, a prayer and animal sacrifice that symbolically transfers the sins of the practitioner onto the slaughtered rooster and which is done on any of the ten days between *Rosh HaShanah* (New Year) and *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement).³⁷ Likewise, the act of kissing a holy book before or after reading it is a daily occurrence for many Jews. Maturin embellishes the unfamiliar and seemingly magical qualities of the setting and its Jewish strangeness in order to lead readers into thinking that this is Melmoth's home. Though not Jewish, Melmoth still is a Wandering Jew figure and the exact origins of his powers are not yet known by this point in the novel. As well, Solomon's lustrous eyes recall Melmoth's and so the hint of a relationship is quite strong. In another of the novel's reversals, Moncada bursts out of hiding and demands protection from Solomon, but because he is

³⁷ In modern times, the animal sacrifice is usually replaced with a donation to charity, but the practice of slaughtering the rooster is still performed by some. The scene describes a rare instance of accurate portrayal of Jewish practice in fiction during this period (outside of conversionist texts), though the gibberish uttered by the Jew when he sacrifices the bird indicate that Maturin probably didn't do much research into the ritual.

dressed in inquisitorial clothes, the Jews become as horrified of Moncada as he had been of them. Moncada realizes he is in a safe place, since the Jews cannot betray him to the inquisition without condemning themselves, and the potential for horror subsides.

While hiding in the Jew's home, Moncada suffers from a sense of isolation, since as a prisoner of the inquisition, people at least had to monitor him, but living with the Jews he is "the outcast of the earth" and "weeps with bitterness and depression at the hopeless vastness of the desert I had to traverse". The Jew, Moncada says, was "not at all disturbed by these feelings" (251). Moncada distances himself from the Jew, but he ironically provides insight into the life of Jews in Catholic Spain. The vast desert and the bitter weeping both invoke some familiar Biblical imagery and the phrasing leaves open to readers whether the Jew is undisturbed because he doesn't experience these feelings or because they are so familiar that he has become inured to them. Moncada sees himself as very different from the Jews, but each has much to fear from the inquisition and each desperately needs to evade attracting notice. Moncada forgets this last point and exposes himself by stepping outside to watch a church procession. As rumour gets out that Moncada has been spotted, he must go into deeper hiding. Solomon therefore ushers him into a secret passage that leads Moncada to the chamber of an even more mysterious and off-putting Jew.

This second Jew, Adonijah, also lives among some strange artifacts, but this time, they have nothing to do with Judaism and are rather an assortment of scientific and occult objects: "maps and globes", "a curious *model of a rack* in ivory", "four skeletons", "few books, but several scrolls of parchment", "some gigantic bones . . . of the Mammoth", and "human and brute abortions" (263). The last object Moncada notices is the Jew Adonijah, whom he describes as "the grand wizard" (263). Here, the objects have no bearing on any real-life ritual, Jewish or

otherwise, and are instead explained as curiosities for research, except for the skeletons, which were formerly Adonijah's wife and child, and two of Melmoth's victims. Where Moncada had threatened the first Jew, Adonijah now stupefies Moncada with his strange collection of oddities and his thundering voice. Unlike Moncada, Adonijah does not threaten. Instead, he practices hospitality, asking Moncada who he is and offering refreshment. Moncada vehemently rejects the offer, expecting that the drink is poisoned and expressing a fear "of becoming a slave of Satan and a victim of one of his agents, as I believed this extraordinary figure" (264). This statement again offers the possibility that this man may be Melmoth, but instead, Moncada learns that this man is an ordinary Jew and a friend of Solomon's.

Adonijah's last link to the Wanderer lies in his role as the foremost scholar of Melmoth's history. Adonijah records stories about Melmoth as a religious obligation done in penance for a past crime and he believes that once he has communicated the information, he can ascend to heaven (268). Adonijah recognizes that Moncada has been visited and tempted by Melmoth and he reveals his own knowledge of the matter, claiming that Jews, Muslims, and Christians all shudder at the thought of renouncing God, a condition of Melmoth's bargain. Adonijah also seems best able to document Melmoth's life because the two have so much in common: Melmoth resembles Jews in his ability to magically appear and disappear like the Jews in Adonijah's Madrid who "have subterranean passages to each other's habitations, which have hitherto baffled all the industry of the Inquisition" (266). The encounter between Adonijah and Moncada begins almost at the midpoint of the novel and the contents of Adonijah's researches comprise nearly half the book (and, so he says, could fill many more). Adonijah thus occupies the literal centre of the novel, just as Melmoth comprises its thematic core.

Maturin has sometimes been criticized for the complicated and disorganized structure to the narratives in *Melmoth*. Chris Baldick highlights the theological conundrums that arise as a result of the seemingly haphazard embeddings:

The novel comes alive most forcefully when the fixities of Maturin's thematic contrasts begin to dissolve amid the inconsistencies of the narrative structure. When, for example, Melmoth defends the Protestant view of the Bible against the Catholic Church, and we recall that this uncharacteristic behaviour is being related to us in a Jewish text transmitted by a Catholic, something more is involved than mere clumsiness or forgetfulness: an inadvertent dissolution of distinctions is taking place in which the same voice can utter sacrilegious sarcasms and pious platitudes almost in the same breath, erasing the clear line that was expected to lie between them in an 'improving work' of fiction. The whispered execrations of the dying monk in Moncada's monastery, like the confession of the parricide, shocked the novel's first critics, partly because the disorderly nature of the narrative provided no stable means by which these utterances could be isolated; their corrosion spreads uncontrollably through the novel. (xv-xvi)

Just as Maturin's didactic aims become lost amidst the narrative and psychological confusion of the players, the meanings of the Jew become warped by the layers of fiction that lie above him. The placement of the Jew at the bottom of two other framing narratives, as Young Melmoth recounts Moncada's retelling of Adonijah's tales, points toward the layers of fiction that mediate British conceptions of Jews. Medieval ideas of Jews (Moncada's), filtered through Britain's more recent protestant culture of toleration (young Melmoth's), produce a composite image of the Jew that is incongruous, incomplete, and inauthentic. It is no coincidence that the tale

Adonijah imparts to Moncada involves an Indian girl and that this story takes place in an exotic climate: Jews had long been a dividing line between the familiarity of Europe and the foreign East. The Wandering Jew himself often served in late medieval texts as a world traveller who shares fantastic tales of foreign lands.

In its portrayal of Jews, *Melmoth* has the advantage of coming after a number of other works that had made the Jew powerfully symbolic rather than casually realistic, as Jews had been in the eighteenth century. Maturin plays with Jewish conventions by making his Jews mysterious and creating suspense as to whether they will be benevolent or evil. In keeping with one of the major themes of Gothic novels, Maturin explores relations of power and the roles of confinement and surveillance in enforcing control. As an Irish Protestant, Maturin was also greatly concerned with the dangers of Catholic enfranchisement and his commentary on Catholic views of Judaism demonstrate his preference for a Protestant leadership that would not persecute its others with violence. As Baldick argues, Maturin's critique of Catholic tyranny was not a mere fantasy, but rather a pointed commentary on his native Ireland: the Gothic Spanish setting "is partly a nightmarish extension of the anxieties he feels about the enduring priestly influence in Catholic Ireland, where the novel begins and ends" (xii). In short, Maturin takes advantage of the Jews' rich symbolic potential in the Gothic in order to forge a political allegory felt to be of pressing significance. In this regard, he follows the lead set by William Godwin's blending of the Gothic format with an overt political agenda while incorporating the self-conscious and self-reflexive commentaries about Jews found in *Harrington* and *Ivanhoe* (as will be discussed in the next chapter).

Gothic tales drew on a "fashionable anticlericism" and exaggerate the extent of Catholicism's association with cruelty (Rosenberg 218). The Jews serve as perfect objects of

Catholic violence since this relationship allows Britons to evaluate their own treatment of religious others as clearly superior. Nevertheless, Maturin's depiction of Jews repeats and intensifies some of the contemporary concerns surrounding Jewishness. The Jew's unstable identity, his penchant for secrecy and subversion, seem most pertinent in *Melmoth*. But, by ascribing necessity to the Jews' secrecy and relegating the more pernicious stereotypes to the non-Jewish Wanderer, *Melmoth* comments both on Jewish portrayal and on Irish politics, suggesting that the violence enacted upon Jews in Catholic Spain has the potential to be reproduced upon Protestants in Catholic Ireland. The combined force of these two arguments is articulated by Adonijah when he rebukes Moncada for holding prejudicial opinions:

'What,' said he, 'appals thee? Were I possessed of the powers the superstition of thy sect ascribes to me, might I not make thee a banquet for fiends, instead of offering thee food? Might I not bring from the caverns of the earth the voices of those that 'peep and mutter,' instead of speaking unto thee with the voice of man? Thou art in my power, yet have I no power or will to hurt thee. And dost thou, who art escaped from the dungeons of the Inquisition, look as one that feareth on the things that thou seest around thee, the furniture of the cell of a secluded leach? (265)

Maturin here implies that those who accuse Jews of being demonic persecutors, in this case Catholic institutions, do so in order to distract from their own oppressiveness. Thus, Jews for Maturin are aligned with Irish protestants. The Wandering Jew, however, is distinguished from Jews because he is in league with devils, and he is shunned by Jews and Christians alike.

Melmoth the Wanderer includes thematic and plot connections between Jews and the Wandering Jew, but also explicitly distances their origins and interests and thereby disentangles the mythic from the living Jew, even while honouring a strong literary connection between both

figures. Edgar Rosenberg, on the other hand, argues that the Wandering is part of an evolving tradition of stereotypes that he sees as entirely separate from the benevolent Jew or related critical reflections about Jewishness. Such a distinction fails to take into account the simultaneous emergence of the benevolent Jew and the Romantic variant of the Wandering Jew, the powerful influence each figure subsequently exerts, and, most important, their ultimate divergence.³⁸ The figurative associations of the benevolent Jew and the Wandering Jew at certain points merge, as might be expected given their shared heritage and simultaneous popularity. But the Wandering Jew accrues an independent set of meanings once he is adopted by Romantic poets as an intensely personal symbol.

Sympathy for the Rebel Apostate in Romantic Poetry

The first major Romantic poet to express an affinity for the cursed Wanderer was William Wordsworth whose poem “A Song for the Wandering Jew” (1800) contrasts the restlessness of nature with that of the speaker (who is *not* the Wandering Jew). While animals and geographic features such as clouds and water find a home at the end of the day, the speaker soliloquizes on the distinctive quality of his homelessness:

Day and night my toils redouble,
 Never nearer to the goal;
 Night and day, I feel the trouble
 Of the Wanderer in my soul (25-28).

³⁸ While most Wandering Jew figures possess magical abilities and are granted sublime status, numbers of works cast him in more mundane terms: the miserly Jew of *The Libertines; or, Monkish Mysteries!* (1800), for instance, prides himself on his affinity with the Wandering Jew (38), and, in Edgeworth’s *Harrington* (1817), Mowbray derisively nicknames a Jewish pedlar Wandering Jew – an epithet that seems to have been a common insult at the time..

The short poem names the Wandering Jew only in its title, presumably in order to signal a metaphorical restlessness unattached to Jewish subjectivity. Wordsworth's evocation of the Wandering Jew is a radical departure from the figure's mythological origins traditionally linked to the Jewish Diaspora and religious faith. Instead, Wordsworth capitalized on the newly-available sympathetic potential inherent in the tragic figure, and by so doing detaches him from specifically Jewish (or Christian) themes.

The ostensible subjects of Wordsworth's other Jewish poem, "A Jewish Family" (1835), are likewise emptied of uniquely Jewish content. The poem begins with an invocation of the "Genius of Raphael!" describes the beautiful family, laments that they come from a downcast people "Nor yet released from scorn," and rhapsodizes on the proud history of Israel (lines 1 and 40). Judith Page argues that Wordsworth appropriates Jewishness by converting his real life encounter with a Jewish family into a portrait that fails to take into account the actual identity of his subjects. Wordsworth idealizes and de-contextualizes the Jewish family, mythologizing his subjects and inserting them into a categorical type – the oppressed vagrant. He shows interest in and sympathy for the family's alien status, "but as is typical of his poetry, Wordsworth does not directly confront the political implications of this homelessness . . . Thus, his poem both commemorates rootlessness and distances it from the circumstances of the world" (170).

The more overtly ideological poetry of Byron and Shelley also focuses on the symbolic content of the Wandering Jew, in both cases in order to imagine political and religious resistance. Shelley embellishes the Wandering Jew myth in several of his early works by enhancing the figure's rebelliousness and emphasizing his relationship with the Devil. In the four-canto poem *The Wandering Jew* (1810), the Gothic novel *St. Irvyne* (1811), and *Queen Mab* (1813), Shelley depicts the Wandering Jew as a demonic, obstinate, tragic, and doomed outcast who embodies

Shelley's disdain for religious tyranny. Shelley incorporates some distinctly Jewish elements into *The Wandering Jew*. Speaking in the present to his lover, the eponymous Jew Paulo identifies with his Jewish roots by lamenting the violence done to his people, including his parents and descendants:

Jerusalem, Alas! My native place
 . . .
 The place where the sacred temple stood
 Was crimson-dyed with Jewish blood;
 Long since, my parents had been dead
 All my posterity had bled
 Beneath the dark Crusader's spear. (709-723)

When invoking the violence enacted on the Jews during the Crusades, Paulo identifies himself as a Jew by claiming a personal interest in his nation's history. The poem, unpublished until 1877, (excerpts appear as epigraphs in *St. Irvyne*) displays an early nineteenth-century tendency to associate the Wandering Jew with actual Jewish history.³⁹

³⁹ Likewise, in Caroline Norton's *The Undying One* (1830) in which the Wandering Jew, again speaking to a lover, remembers the horrors of the York massacre of 1190:

She stood by me and fear'd not, in that place
 When the sacred remnant of my wretched race
 Gave England's Richard gifts, to let them be
 All unmolested in their misery:
 And while their jewels sparkled on his hand,
 His traitor lips gave forth the dark command . . .
 Bade strong arms strike, where none their force withstood,
 And woman's wail be quench'd in woman's blood
 She stood by me and fear'd not when again, . . .
 Brother laid brother low, a prostrate corpse,
 Rather than yield their bodies up to those,
 In word, in act, and in religion --- foes. (3: 721-736)

Walter Scott's Jewish heroine Rebecca also draws on her nation's history as a source of pride and strength during her own trials, as discussed below in chapter four.

Shelley recognizes that if the Wandering Jew is Jewish, then he is unlikely to approve the Christianity in whose name violence against Jews is enacted. The Wanderer is left with a dilemma; he has seen the truth of God's power, evident in his own supernatural longevity, but he cannot love the God whose vengeance he daily suffers. This contradiction, in conjunction with Shelley's radical anti-religious stance, renders the Wandering Jew a particularly engaging political figure as a rebel against divine authority and a champion of personal freedom. The Jew's struggle against God associates the Wandering Jew with Shelley's other favoured archetypal rebels: Prometheus, whose defiance of the gods proceeds from his disdain for tyranny, and Milton's Satan.

The Wanderer's resistance is more explicit in *Queen Mab* when the Fairy Queen summons the Wandering Jew to testify against God. Ahasuerus the Jew justifies his mockery of Christ as motivated by the memory of "the massacres and miseries which His name / had sanctioned in my country, and I cried / Go! Go! In mockery" (7: 177-179). Jews and Christians are all contemptible to the Wandering Jew because of their slavish zeal in carrying out religiously sanctioned violence. But in one of the poem's notes, Shelley suggests that Jews themselves embody some of this rebellious spirit because they reject Christianity and "the Jews are at this day remarkably tenacious of their religion", despite the typological tradition that represents Christianity as the fruition of Jewish prophesy (323).

Shelley's vengefully defiant Wandering Jews in *The Wandering Jew* and *St. Irvine* also invoke the rebelliousness of Milton's Satan. Two of *The Wandering Jew*'s four cantos begin with epigraphs from *Paradise Lost*. The first includes Satan's statement that I "myself am hell" (*St. Irvine* 186). By association, then, the Wandering Jew is a Devil, but the rebellious heroic Devil as understood by Shelley. Satan's rebellion and punishment in *Paradise Lost* provoke Lucifer's

resentment at the angels' displacement by mankind and this jealousy aligns thematically with the Wandering Jew's unwillingness to accept Christ as the saviour. With the proof of Christianity's ascendancy clearly marked on his body, Paulo the Wandering Jew becomes angry enough to rebel against God altogether. The relationship between the Jew and Satan is compounded at the end of *The Wandering Jew* when Paulo summons the Devil and pledges himself to Satan in an act of desperation after his lover is murdered.

Shelley develops the relationship between the Wandering Jew and Satan further in *St. Irvine* where the Wandering Jew, Ginotti, draws the attention of Satan through his magical experiments. Like Wandering Jews before him, Ginotti has a "dark and mysterious gaze" (171). Ginotti also possesses the ability to see into the protagonist Wolfstein's thoughts, such as when he detects the plot to poison the leader of the banditti. With his knowledge of Wolfstein's motives, Ginotti tries to tempt him into making a deal with the Devil in order to gain supernatural powers. In this characterization of Ginotti, Shelley draws on Zampieri from Godwin's *St. Leon*, who provides St. Leon with the secret of the Philosopher's Stone. In his role as both contractor with the Devil and demonic tempter, Shelley's Jew incorporates elements of the Devil, the Wandering Jew, and Faustus, all of whom bear a thematic connection to Jews who were sometimes depicted as practicing sorcery and being in league with the devil.

Byron also draws on the interconnectedness of the Wandering Jew with other character types whom he incorporates into *Manfred* (1816). Byron appropriates Goethe's *Faust* (1808), but he also adds touches of the Wandering Jew. Manfred describes his efforts to kill himself in a manner that evokes the Wandering Jew's monologues in Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart's poem, *Der Ewige Jude* (1784), and Lewis's *The Monk*:

I have affronted death—but in the war
 Of elements the water shrunk from me,
 And fatal things pass'd harmless—the cold hand
 Of an all-pitiless demon held me back,
 Back by a single hair, which would not break.
 In fantasy, imagination, all
 The affluence of my soul—which one day was
 A Cræsus in creation—I plunged deep,
 But, like an ebbing wave, it dash'd me back
 Into the gulf of my unfathom'd thought.
 I plunged amidst mankind—Forgetfulness
 I sought in all, save where 'tis to be found,
 And that I have to learn—my sciences,
 My long pursued and super-human art,
 Is mortal here—I dwell in my despair—
 And live—and live for ever. (*Manfred* II.2.135-150)

John Cordy Jefferson cites this passage to demonstrate the direct influence of the English translation of Schubart's poem on the composition of *Manfred*, since Manfred repeatedly longs for death in the same manner as the Wandering Jew (1. 128). Manfred also resembles the Jew in his rejection of absolution and his summoning of spirits. But, as is the case with Shelley's Wandering Jews, Manfred's Jewishness is tangential to the poet's broader concerns. In a manner befitting Byron's other anti-heroes, Manfred asserts his individuality by boldly defying the spirit who comes to destroy him and he expresses a world-weariness that sets him apart from all

human society. As a variation of the Wandering Jew, Manfred is closely related to Childe Harold, who compares himself to the Wandering Jew: “It is that settled, ceaseless gloom / The fabled Hebrew wanderer bore; / That will not look beyond the tomb, / But cannot hope for rest before (*Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* 1: 853-856). As Sheila Spector notes, this statement coincides with Harold’s travels through Spain at the time of the Jewish expulsion and thereby links the character to the wider historical experience of Jews as well (*Byron and the Jews* 99).

Byron’s allusions to the Wandering Jew speak to his own experience as an exceptional and exiled figure. This comparison was not lost on Byron’s Hebrew and Yiddish translators who reinterpreted his poetry, capitalizing on its rich potential to voice Jewish concerns. A fin-de-siècle translator, David Frishman recognized Byron’s sympathy for Jews and characterizes “the biographical Byron in terms of a ‘Wandering Jew,’ unfairly exiled by a prejudiced mob” (Spector, *Byron* 145). Byron was also interpreted by Jewish readers as expressing an affinity with the Wandering Jew as “an archetypal figure through which to explore his own conflict between moral integrity and the hypocrisy of social compromise” (*Byron* 173).

Although such interpretations may overstate his interest in Jews, in the *Hebrew Melodies* (1815), Byron overtly adapts Jewish tropes and he associates himself with Jews as an outcast wanderer who rejects convention. Doing so tested the limits of reviewers’ sympathy since they found Byron’s implied identification with Jews problematic – not least because he lacked the religious conviction seen as necessary to write sacred poetry. The *Eclectic Review* in particular claimed that only a Christian poet could do justice to the Biblical subject matter and implied that the Jewish participants in the *Melodies*’ creation were interested only in profit and were therefore also unfit to take on such a project (Reiman 731).⁴⁰

⁴⁰ These were Isaac Nathan, the composer, and John Braham, a tenor, who commissioned Byron to write lyrics to be set to traditional Jewish melodies.

Two reviews took an even harsher tone: the *British Critic* and the *British Review* condemned Byron for associating himself too personally with his Jewish subject matter. The *Critic* reviewer lampoons the notion of a Christian adopting Jewish themes, and regards Byron as a convert along with other writers who show interest in Jews. The review begins with a comment on the conversion of Edmund Curll, an eighteenth-century bookseller whose reputation Alexander Pope repeatedly attacked. The review claims that Curll's biographer, Jonathan Swift, details his conversion to Judaism "with all the ceremonies of regular initiation" (Reiman 257).⁴¹ Building upon the mercenary character of both Jews and the book trade, the review draws a link to Byron's *Melodies*:

We suspect that he [Curll] is not the last of the trade who has been a convert to the Jews; but a certain number, even among those who are now alive, have proved themselves such; more, perhaps, by their dealings than by their professions. We suspect, indeed, that in the great City of London, the Society for the Propagation of Judaism among Christians is rather more successful in its endeavours, though not so loud in its pretensions, as the Society for the Propagation of Christianity among the Jews. The last noble Lord who became an open and professed convert to the Jewish faith was Lord George Gordon of turbulent memory, and as he was probably as admirable a divine as he was a politician, we cannot doubt the excellence of his motives. We know not how far these splendid conversions may have weighed with the noble Lord, whose book is now before us. (Reiman 257)

The reviewer sees a disturbing chain of public figures "Judaizing" and wonders whether something particular to literary men makes them susceptible. The critique seemingly relies on the recent vogue for sympathetic depiction of Jews and implies that the collection of poems has

⁴¹ This "biography" is actually a satire by Swift wherein Curll is forcibly circumcised.

nothing to do with religious devotion: “whether in their desire to add words to these national airs, Messrs. Braham and Nathan were actuated by the love of piety or profit, we cannot pretend to say; or whether the work was intended to assist the devotion of the synagogue, or to increase the trade of the shop, we are not sufficiently in the secrets of Duke’s Place to determine. Be this as it may, Lord Byron has accepted the chaplet of his Jewish brethren and may now be considered as poet laureate to the synagogue” (Reiman 257). Thus, Byron is construed as a fitting convert since his adaptation of Jewish subject matter flatters the similarly motivated Jews who also wish to capitalize on the Jews’ topicality.

The *British Review* similarly accuses Byron of opportunism in exploiting the popularity of both Jewish subject matter and national melodies: “The way to proceed is first to prepare your melodies, and then you have the whole world lying between the polar circles, north and south, wherein to choose for them a proper designation and origin. One only thing will remain, which is to sprinkle the composition over with a few names of places and persons belonging to its adopted country” (Reiman 424). This reviewer, like the *Critic’s*, links Byron with George Gordon and casts the Christian’s affiliation with Judaism as a kind of mania: “Upon the whole, we do not think that Lord Byron makes a better figure with his Jewish minstrelsy, than Lord George Gordon with his rabbinical beard; and if he persists in this perversion of his genius, we shall really be tempted to think him as little in his right senses, as the nobleman to whom we have alluded” (Reiman 425). And, like the majority of other reviews, both regard the *Hebrew Melodies* as an inferior work because of the author’s lack of veneration for the Bible and his blending of sacred subject matter with an amatory or lyrical style. In this respect, the contemporary reviews found far less to appreciate than did later Jewish translators who lauded

Byron's ability to universalize Jewish experience.⁴² Byron's sympathy for the Jewish Diaspora manifests itself in one of the few poems in the collection to actually address Jewish issues: "Oh! Weep for Those" (based on Psalm 137) laments the nationless status of Jews and has resonated with Jewish readers since.⁴³

Despite the mostly negative reviews, the *Melodies* were tremendously successful, a consequence presumably of Byron's established reputation, the popularity of national melodies, and the familiar Biblical subject matter, as well as the quality of the poetry itself. Shelley and Byron both explored Jewishness in new ways in their works, but, their self-identification with the Wandering Jew and the Biblical Hebrews paradoxically undermined earlier attempts by those such as Cumberland and Walker at fuller and more accurate depictions of Jews, insufficient though they were. Although Romantic poets increased awareness of Jews by embracing Jewish symbols as personally meaningful, they inadvertently obscured the presence of a distinct Jewish people whose habits and beliefs remained largely unknown to the reading public.

Changes in the depiction of Jews in British fiction coincided with dramatic national and international events of the late 1700s, including the Gordon riots, via George Gordon's later conversion, and the French Revolution. Burke's ambivalent characterization of Jews; D'Israeli's role as a Jew weighing in on Jewish portrayal; the dramatic redefinition of identity, both personal and national addressed by Walker and Godwin; and the aptness of Jewish characters and themes to Gothic novels and Romantic poetry all contributed to redefining how Jews were portrayed in British literature at the turn of the nineteenth century. While these developments led to an

⁴² In his introduction to the *Hebrew Melodies*, Thomas L. Ashton records Byron's relationship to the Jewish themes of the melodies as consistent with his other poetry, as well as with Shelley's and Wordsworth's appropriation of Jewishness: "the Jews would feature in metaphor serving the higher cause of Promethean liberty. While Byron's espousal was sincere its expression was consistently Byronic" (74).

⁴³ The poem retains this appeal to Jewish readers. For example, it has been quoted in a recent editorial by Efraim Karsh published in the *Jerusalem Post* dated August 11, 2014.

unprecedented diversity of literary representation, some obvious questions were left unexplored: where did stereotypes about Jews originate, why did they persist for so long, and how could they be subverted? What terms governed the relationship between invented and actual Jews? What role ought Jews to play in modern Britain? These are the kinds of questions addressed by Maria Edgeworth and Walter Scott in *Harrington* (1817) and *Ivanhoe* (1819) respectively and which are addressed in the following chapter.

Chapter Four

So incompetent has the generality of historians been for the province they have undertaken, that it is almost a question, whether, if the dead of past ages could revive, they would be able to reconnoitre the events of their own times, as transmitted to us by ignorance and misrepresentation. All very ancient history, except that of the illuminated Jews, is a perfect fable. It was written by priests, or collected from their reports; and calculated solely to raise lofty ideas of the origin of each nation. (Horace Walpole, *Historic Doubts of the Life and Reign of King Richard the Third*, Preface)

In the absence of an organized Jewish community in the period 1290-1655, demonological stereotypes of Jews still managed to survive. What was lacking for over 350 years, however, were concrete issues on which anti-Jewish feelings could be focused. There were no protracted struggles, as in Germany, Poland, and Italy, over economic privileges or rights of settlement. Englishmen did not have the opportunities to exercise their anti-Semitic beliefs in the way other Europeans did; for three and a half centuries, they had no practice in hating real Jews, and so they were not particularly well prepared to hate Jews when a Jewish community was reestablished at the start of the modern period. (Endelman, *the Jews of Georgian England* 95)

“What is a Jew?”

From the 1790s to the 1810s, depictions of Jews capitalized on latent rhetorical potential, enlarging the scope of Jewish characterization. This development in turn forced Britons to think more carefully about the subjectivity of Jews. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, cruel treatment of Jews was no longer regarded as comedy, but as tragedy. Portia’s entrapment of Shylock was once a demonstration of the Christian’s superior cleverness and morality, reaffirming her monopoly of power, but the Jew’s newfound humanity elevated Shylock to a sympathetic victim. William Hazlitt draws attention to this change in his summary of the character:

This is a play that in spite of the change of manners and of prejudices still holds undisputed possession of the stage. Shakespeare's malignant has outlived Mr. Cumberland's benevolent Jew. In proportion as Shylock has ceased to be a popular

bugbear, 'baited with the rabble's curse', he becomes a half favourite with the philosophical part of the audience, who are disposed to think that Jewish revenge is at least as good as Christian injuries. Shylock is A GOOD HATER; "a man no less sinned against than sinning". (*Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*)

Hazlitt recognizes a shift in attitudes toward Jews and Shylock specifically that typifies his contemporaries' awareness of the unfair treatment of Jews in earlier works, and he connects this sensitivity to wider cultural developments. He also backhandedly credits Cumberland for initiating the changes in Jewish portrayal that enable Shylock to become sympathetic.

As a result of such developments, there arose a complementary trend of questioning more seriously the validity of any Jewish portrayal. This in turn entailed deeper enquiries into the character and nature of actual Jews. The American novelist and devotee of William Godwin, Charles Brockden Brown, wrote an impassioned essay addressing the very issue in 1800. Responding to a fictional letter that condemns all Jews, Brown undermines the possibility of describing Jews as a group by demonstrating that Jewishness cannot be pinned down to a single category; since no one can even agree what makes someone Jewish, it is impossible to accurately describe the general behaviour of Jews and their physical traits. Through a series of Socratic questions, Brown dismisses categorical definitions of Jewish identity:

If we confine this appellation to one who is at once of the Hebrew nation and the Hebrew faith, we shall still be involved in considerable difficulty; for how shall a Jew's genealogy be ascertained? How shall we discover that some reputed Jew is not descended from a Christian proselyte to Judaism, who has been incorporated, by marriage or adoption, at some time or another, with the nation. If descent be the standard, then the convert of St. Paul, and all his posterity, are Jews, as well as he

whose father abandoned the fraternity last year; and the reputed Jew, whose ancestor three centuries ago became a proselyte to Judaism, is no Jew.

If opinion be the standard, then a convert to any form of Christianity ceases to be a Jew; and an aboriginal American becomes a Jew by circumcision or profession.

If opinion and descent together make a Jew, then it is impossible to ascertain the genuineness of a Jew. If definite pedigree be not necessary to make a Jew, what number of generations must pass before he acquires all the penalties and privileges annexed to this people? Are they five, ten, fifteen, or twenty generations? And where is to be found the tree of any Jew's pedigree?

In short, Mr. Editor, before I answer any of your correspondent's enquiries I should be glad to know what a Jew is. (358)

The title of Brown's essay, "What is a Jew", was a perplexing question for British and American writers (as it remains to this day both inside and outside Jewish communities). The Jews' uncertain affiliations of religion, ethnicity, and nation make it hard to even define who is and who is not a Jew. Fictional Jews of the Romantic era rarely practice Jewish rituals or profess traditional Jewish beliefs, and accurate depictions of Jewish practice are rarer still. More often, "Jew" indicates a set of imagined Jewish behaviours – cringing obsequiousness, greed, neurotic aversion to pork, and belligerence toward Christians. Brown's essay therefore interrogates the justice of these characterizations.⁴⁴

Brown demonstrates that the simplistic constructions of Jews typical in fiction would no longer be appropriate in a world where the complexities of history were appreciated. As he

⁴⁴Brown also devised his own benevolent Jew in the character of Ascha Fielding, a Sephardic Jewish widow who marries the eponymous hero of *Arthur Mervyn* (1798). Philip Barnard and Stephen Shapiro argue that Ascha's Jewishness is largely symbolic of more generalized concerns with American racism since the marriage "enacts the kinds of innovative relations that Brown's closest friends in abolitionist circles were arguing for: interracial sexual union and miscegenation as a means for overcoming phobic responses to ethno-racial others" (xl).

makes clear, Jews exemplify the fluidity of identity itself because they cannot be clearly defined by blood or by religion. This uncertainty about Jewishness plays out in fiction of the Romantic period as authors try to give their Jews more texture through intimate details about Jewish life. But such descriptions tend to rely on notions of Jewishness conventional in fiction, so absurdities often arise as a result of attempting to add realist details despite limited exposure to living Jews: while it is easy enough to say what Jews are not, describing them as they are is considerably more challenging. Maria Edgeworth provides a telling example of how little was understood about Jews and how that problem undermines the historically minded attempt to provide accuracy in her Jewish portrayals.

In *Castle Rackrent* (1800), Sir Kit marries a rich Jewish woman to whom Edgeworth grants some of the standard accoutrements of Jewishness. As the servant and narrator Thady Quirk describes her, “she was a *Jewish* by all accounts, who are famous for their great riches. I had never seen any of that tribe or nation before, and could only gather that she spoke a strange kind of English of her own, that she could not abide pork or sausages, and went neither to church or mass” (15). Sir Kit’s plan to use Lady Rackrent’s money to repair his own fortune fails since she jealously guards her wealth, especially a diamond cross that she keeps with her at all times. In revenge for the Lady’s refusal to sell the cross, Sir Kit insists that the cook always serve pig meat, forcing his wife to retreat to her chamber. The Jew’s supposed piousness in refusing to remain in the presence of pork (an extreme exaggeration of the law that only forbids consumption) sits strangely on a Jew who has no qualms about wearing a cross, which would be considered blasphemous or heretical in Jewish tradition. Edgeworth perhaps recognizes some of the irony in this, as one character claims that Sir Kit’s wife brings on misfortune “because she was so obstinate about the cross” (17). Thady takes this to mean her heretical Jewish beliefs, and

then is told that Sir Kit begrudges her an actual cross, rather than her religion. The cross may represent the Jewess's hypocrisy, since she is willing to compromise her beliefs where money is at stake; more likely, Edgeworth, influenced by the common tendency to conflate Judaism and Catholicism, failed to recognize how absurd this character was.⁴⁵ Given the author's efforts to preserve historical accuracy in the descriptions of Irish life, this latter explanation is most likely.

Like earlier adaptations of Jewish character, the Jew in *Castle Rackrent* only relates tangentially, at best, to the condition of living Jews. Esther Wohlgemut reads *Castle Rackrent* as a series of examples of bad landlords who demonstrate the flaws in Edmund Burke's defense of traditions rooted in patriarchal descent. Edgeworth instead promotes a view of cultural history in which nations develop best as a result of interactions with other nations. Although Ireland appears to be vastly different in all respects from England, Edgeworth indicates that the relationship between cultures is more "porous", and that the union of England and Ireland could benefit both nations (74-75). Edgeworth stresses the economic benefits of fluid borders that Jews exemplify because of their international business connections (Wohlgemut 94).

Although Edgeworth did not relate Jews to her cosmopolitan outlook, nor promote greater cooperation between Jews and other Britons (until *Harrington* in 1817), Sir Kit's foreign born Jewish wife nevertheless exhibits a degree of Edgeworth's favoured quality of cosmopolitanism that the lords of Rackrent lack. Lady Rackrent's decision to leave Ireland stems in part from its backwardness:

She had taken an unaccountable prejudice against the country, and everything belonging to it Had she meant to make any stay in Ireland, I stood a great chance of being a great favourite with her; for when she found I understood the weathercock,

⁴⁵ Clearly, Jews had taken on so much symbolism, at the same time that the identity of the real Jew became more of an interest in itself. As a result of competing meanings, Jews in fiction of this period had absorbed far more associations than could reasonably coexist.

she was always finding some pretence to be talking to me, and asking me which way the wind blew, and was it likely, did I think, to continue fair for England. But when I saw she had made up her mind to spend the rest of her days upon her own income and jewels in England, I considered her quite as a foreigner, and not at all any longer as part of the family. (23)

Thady cannot understand why Lady Rackrent dislikes the country, but her interest in his meteorological knowledge suggests that she grasps at the slight and rare opportunity to engage in intellectual exchange. Thady's utter rejection of her after she leaves also indicates the small-minded nationalism that Edgeworth opposes.

The Jewish woman receives some sympathy in the course of the narrative, and Sir Kit's openly mercenary goals and his adultery contribute to this. Yet, she also exposes her own prejudices through her mockery of Irish language and customs. Lady Rackrent therefore fails to represent the tolerance and morality that Edgeworth values. Thady finds the Jewess's accent strange, and she in turn laughs at the strangeness of Irish dialect and belittles Irish traditions when Thady shows her the grounds and explains to her the history of the bog of Allyballycarricko'shaughlin:

“My lady, you must not quarrel with any part or parcel of Allyballycarricko'shaughlin, for you don't know how many hundred years that same bit of bog has been in the family; we would not part with the bog of Allyballycarricko'shaughlin upon no account at all; it cost the late Sir Murtagh two hundred good pounds to defend his title to it and boundaries against the O'Learys, who cut a road through it.”

Now one would have thought this would have been hint enough for my lady, but she fell to laughing like one out of their right mind, and made me say the name of the bog

over, for her to get it by heart, a dozen times; then she must ask me how to spell it, and what was the meaning of it in English. (17)

The Jewess's insensitivity and arrogance offset her ability to be a positive example, and her religious prejudices limit her further. Edgeworth brings readers no closer to understanding what a Jew is, but as she found the notion of fixed national character suspect (Wohlgemut 76), perhaps that is the point. Even when she turns to experiments with the benevolent Jew in *Harrington*, Edgeworth continually distorts the supposedly clear distinctions between Jew and Gentile, much as Brown exposes the same religio-ethnic fluidity of Jews in his essay. But, at the same time that she demonstrates the injustice and falsehood of anti-Jewish prejudices in *Harrington*, Edgeworth renders the good Jew effectively a Christian and presents little that accurately or favourably characterizes Judaism itself.

The Roots of Prejudice: Maria Edgeworth's *Harrington*

Edgeworth regularly relied on the conventional relationship between Judaism and villainy in her earlier works and seems to have genuinely been unaware of the potential offence this could cause until she was alerted to it by a Jewish reader. Edgeworth's deeply personal and thoughtful re-evaluation of Jewishness in *Harrington* thus originates in her recognition of her own culpability in promoting stereotypes. Discussions of *Harrington* typically begin with a summary of how this revelation occurred when a Jewish American teacher, Rachel Mordecai, began a correspondence with Edgeworth. Mordecai's first letter (August 17, 1815) reverentially praises Edgeworth's writing and its moral tone, while apologetically inserting a single criticism: "How can it be that she, who on all other subjects shows such justice and liberality, should on one alone appear biased by prejudice: should even instil that prejudice into the minds of youth! .

. . Can it be that this race of men [Jews] are by nature mean, avaricious, and unprincipled? Forbid it, mercy” (MacDonald 6). The letter left a strong impact on Edgeworth and influenced her subsequent depictions of kind, generous, educated, and liberal minded Jews in *Harrington*, published two years later. Edgeworth’s letter of response (August 4, 1816) demonstrates the extent to which Mordecai has convinced her: “Your own letter is the very best evidence that could have been offered of the truth of all you urge in favor of those of your own religious persuasion. And the candour and spirit of tolerance and benevolence you shew, you have a right to expect from others” (MacDonald 8).

Admitting the justice of Mordecai’s remarks, Edgeworth apologized and immediately began work on a novel that would redeem Jewish character in fiction and demonstrate that Jews and Christians have much more in common than was typically admitted. While the letter was undeniably the immediate cause for Edgeworth’s decision to write *Harrington*, a variety of other factors were at play. Among these was a culture that made it conceivable for a Jew to directly confront an author’s prejudices – Mordecai must have believed that her opinion would matter and that Edgeworth would understand her objections (as early critics of *Harrington* did not). Such an exchange could not have taken place much earlier in time and the idea of a Jew standing up against prejudice was so novel that Edgeworth even expressed some suspicion in her response that Mordecai’s letter may not have been authentic, but rather some rhetorical ploy from a Christian writer in the manner of Richard Cumberland’s Abraham Abram’s persona. Edgeworth found it “an extraordinary coincidence that your brother’s name should happen to be Mordecai [the name of the villainous Jew in Edgeworth’s novel *The Absentee* (1812)], yet I am persuaded from the tone of truth throughout the letter that you are a real living person and that you think and feel all you say (McDonald 8). Through the exchange of letters, Edgeworth discovers that

Jews are living, thinking, and feeling human beings, and that existing fictions are no longer appropriate for describing them.⁴⁶

Although *Harrington* was unquestioningly a major step away from simplistic Jewish tropes, it has been deemed highly disappointing to contemporary and modern readers alike, though for different reasons. Early reviews of *Harrington* dismissed Edgeworth's apparent alarmism in describing anti-Jewish feeling as all pervasive, and tended to downplay both its existence and its potential for harm. Francis Jeffrey's critique in the *Edinburgh Review* rejects the novel's depiction of rampant prejudice as "narrow and fantastic. Nobody likely to read Miss Edgeworth's writings, entertains such an absurd antipathy to Jews as she here aims at exposing; and the unfavourable opinion that may be entertained . . . is not very likely to be corrected by a story professedly fabulous" (*Harrington* 323). Edgeworth anticipates such a response; Lord Mowbray, the novel's antagonist, claims that he is by no means prejudiced against Jews and that prejudicial attitudes cannot exist "among the higher classes – among people of any education" (179-180). And yet, Mowbray is the most fervent instigator against the Jews in the novel and his mother is the most implacable in her hatred.

Likewise, the reviewers who downplay the necessity of such a novel or who outright reject its arguments by citing conventional Jewish stereotypes exhibit the same blindness as Mowbray, and therefore demonstrate just how necessary the novel really was. *Blackwood's* review of the novel credits Edgeworth with a "motive" that "does honour to her candour and humanity", but dismisses the accuracy of her depictions in light of how Jews "occur to our

⁴⁶ Edgeworth gives the writer the benefit of the doubt, even though her father, Richard Lovell Edgeworth, did not. He expressed flat disbelief in Rachel Mordecai's authenticity: "Whether I am addressing a real or assumed character is more than I am able to determine; but the sentiments which your letter contained do honor to the understanding and to the feelings of the writer (MacDonald 7).

The problem of Rachel Mordecai's authenticity is obviated by both Mordecai's and the Edgeworths' insistence that the content of the letter is worthy of notice, regardless of who wrote it.

memories as the obstinate and merciless persecutors of Christ and the Christians”. As well, centuries of persecution and separation “have kept alive their spirit of hostility to the professors of the Christian faith, and engendered habits which may warrant, in some measure, the opinion generally entertained of their character”. Lastly, by representing Jews as “too uniformly perfect, she has thrown a degree of suspicion over the whole” (*Harrington* 318-319).⁴⁷

Both reviews have apparently missed the point of the novel – that the conventions of Jewish representation reinforce a false image in the minds of the public – and, by returning to conventional examples of Jewish villainy in order to refute *Harrington*’s arguments, the reviewers strengthen the claim made by Edgeworth that fiction, including her own tales, tends to displace the examples of living Jews. While the critics commend Edgeworth for attempting to redeem Jewish character, they also regard the effort as only reflecting the author’s sense of justice and magnanimity that is misapplied to a people whom everyone knows is irredeemable.

Not surprisingly, given the tremendous shifts in attitudes about prejudice over time, modern reviewers have seen *Harrington* as not going far enough in combating stereotypes and for failing to see through its own project of erasing religious factionalism, especially since Berenice turns out not to be Jewish after all. This last point has been particularly irksome to Jewish readers, beginning with Rachel Mordecai, who have understood the revelation that Berenice was raised according to her Protestant mother’s religion as symptomatic of Edgeworth’s inability, ultimately, to accept religious equality.

⁴⁷ These statements recall Lamb’s essayist Elia’s aversion to Jews that is based upon fiction: “Old prejudices cling about me. I cannot shake off the story of Hugh of Lincoln. Centuries of injury, contempt, and hate, on the one side,—of cloaked revenge, dissimulation, and hate, on the other, between our and their fathers, must, and ought, to affect the blood of the children” (76-77). Judith Page notes that “simply by bringing up the blood libel as a story that haunts him, even if he does not endorse the lie, Elia revives suspicions that Jews really are a threat” (42). The reviewer who lacks the ironic distance that Elia enables thus lends even greater credence to anti-Jewish fictions.

Eve Tavor Bannet's analysis of the correspondence between Maria Edgeworth and Rachel Mordecai demonstrates Edgeworth's discomfort with "unmitigated difference" (36). When Mordecai informed Edgeworth of her disappointment with the ending of *Harrington*, Edgeworth responded by halting her correspondence for four years. When the conversation resumed, Mordecai and Edgeworth avoided the subject, but in parallel conversations about the integration of Native Americans into missionary schools, Edgeworth imagined the natives as happily adopting a foreign culture, while Mordecai pointed out that they largely preferred to remain in their own communities (Bannet 36-37). The subtext of this discussion, Bannet argues, is a fundamental disagreement about the conditions of toleration. To Edgeworth, the outsider can only be integrated once he or she discards the fundamental condition(s) of otherness. Bannet notes how this belief plays out in *Harrington*: "no matter how civilized, how polite, how charming, how cultivated, how anglicized or how wealthy Mr. Montenero is, he and his daughter remain unassimilable by English society as long as they are Jews" (44).⁴⁸ Like Bannet, Judith Page attributes the ending to Edgeworth's moral vision that cannot accommodate religious relativism and must ultimately maintain the primacy of Christianity. Toleration of Jews is accomplished "from a position of power" and is an act of "general Christian charity" (141).

This charitable position is personified by Montenero in the role of father to a Christian woman. When Berenice's Christianity is revealed, the novel redefines the conversion narrative of the *Merchant of Venice* by obviating the destruction of the father-daughter bond. Montenero's relationship with his wife, though not depicted on the page, hints at a potential for equality between Jews and Christians, but such equality fails since the union produces only a Protestant

⁴⁸ While Berenice is absorbed into the English social body at the end of the novel, since she is a Christian, her father remains an outsider to some extent. Rachel Schulkins demonstrates the novel's exclusion of Montenero as *Harrington* continually refers to him as "the Spanish Jew," or, simply as "the Jew." . . . Society becomes tolerant of him, not out of acceptance but rather due to the understanding of his financial worth to the socio-economic structure" (492). Berenice's worth is, by contrast, internal as an idealized woman and a faithful Christian.

woman and no Jewish heirs.⁴⁹ Montenero thus becomes only a surrogate father to the Christian woman, providing an enabling logic for the interfaith marriage as valid only to the extent that it preserves a Protestant succession, affirming, as Page and Bannet argue, the superiority of Christianity.

Other serious complaints against the novel involve its failure to imagine good Jews who are anything other than good Christians, and Edgeworth's failure to portray authentic scenes of Jewish home life. Critics have attributed to Edgeworth an inability to fully identify with her Jewish subjects due to an uncomfortable position as an apologist (Ruben 67-68), to "failures of the imagination" (Schulkins 478), or to an inability to "imagine a British world in which 'real' Jews were at home" (Page 136). These problems arise both from Edgeworth's lack of familiarity with Judaism and with there being "no literary tradition of the respectable Jew to rely on" (Schulkins 479).⁵⁰ Thus, although readers learn about the injustice of anti-Jewish prejudice and how to sympathize with the other, they "would still think that Jews pray and dine in strange ways, no matter how much they look the part of the gentry" (Page 136). And, as Berenice's example demonstrates, "Toleration in *Harrington* is conditioned upon the other's social assimilation and social contribution" (Schulkins 479).

All these criticisms have merit, but they tend to obscure the very real accomplishments of *Harrington* while diminishing the daunting challenges that hamper the construction of "realistic" Jewish characters in the period. Within the context of the early nineteenth-century religious discourse, *Harrington* provided a fairly laudatory, if limited, study of Judaism. Edgeworth modifies existing tropes about Jews and marries them to the larger goals in her writings,

⁴⁹ Indeed, Berenice's retroactive conversion is a kind of wish fulfillment that hearkens back to Launcelot Gobo's suggestion to Jessica that she "hope that your father got you not, that you are not the Jew's daughter" (*Merchant of Venice* 3.5: 10).

⁵⁰ This last critique is not entirely accurate; we might rather say that the tradition of portraying respectable Jews was still very limited.

particularly in service of moral instruction and dispelling prejudice; this requires the ability to see beyond the stereotypes. Harrington develops the ability to empathize with Jews during a performance of *The Merchant of Venice*, a transformative moment that fictionalizes Edgeworth's own discovery of a Jewish voice; likewise, Harrington's public actions in favour of Jews resemble Edgeworth's decision to publish a novel meant to vindicate Jews. The novel of course does not provide accurate detail about Jewish life, perhaps out of ignorance, but it represents an intermediate step. Before an accurate sketch of Jewish life could be interesting to the general public, the false image of Jews already established must be swept away.

To that end, Edgeworth continually undermines expectations about Jews. When Harrington defends the Jewish pedlar Jacob from Mowbray's torment, the boys argue in terms that confound the proverbial usage of 'Jew' and 'Christian' to indicate vice and virtue:

"I always thought you a Jew at heart, Harrington."

"No more a Jew than yourself, Mowbray, nor so much," said I, standing firm, and raising my voice, so that I could be heard by all.

"No more a Jew than myself! pray, how do you make that out?"

"By being more of a Christian – by sticking more to the maxim, 'Do as you would be done by.'" (97)

Harrington also claims to be "on the side of humanity" rather than of Jews or Christians (97).

The exchange involves good Jews and bad Christians, and destabilizes the simple binaries involved. In effect, Edgeworth demonstrates that the categories of Jew and Christian cannot contain the more profound individual differences that go beyond group affiliation. Nevertheless, the colloquial associations of "Jew" with evil and "Christian" with good remain unchallenged,

since Harrington still identifies benevolence as a distinctly Christian trait, and meanness as Jewish.

Harrington's defense of Jacob relies on the Jew first revealing his goodness. In this regard, Edgeworth draws on her own experience of her correspondence with Rachel Mordecai by putting the onus on Jews to assert themselves and to behave in publicly virtuous ways in order to gain acceptance. The pattern repeats itself throughout the novel, where the Jew must act with absolute virtue in any situation in order to be accepted. At the same time, certain Christian characters act cruelly in order to reinforce Edgeworth's claim (borrowed from earlier writers, including Smollett, Cumberland, and Walker) that religious and class affiliations are not predictors of vice or virtue.

The episode involving the rivalry of the Jewish and Christian pedlars, Jacob and Dutton respectively, awakens Harrington to the dangers of an oversimplifying prejudice. While Jacob deals honestly with the children, his rival, Dutton, overcharges, but Harrington's neurotic aversion to Jews and his natural affiliation with Mowbray initially leads him to support Dutton in an election to decide which pedlar would be allowed to do business at the school. Once Jacob is voted in, Harrington and Mowbray's "party commenced the attack upon '*the Wandering Jew*', as we called the poor pedlar. . . . We twanged at once upon a hundred Jew's harps in his ear, and before his eyes we paraded the effigy of a Jew dressed in a gabardine of rags and paper" (89-90). Despite evidence that Jacob was "as unlike to Shylock as it is possible to conceive", the boys torment him by raising every emblem of stereotypical Jewishness they can imagine (90). Presented with evidence that contradicts their notions of a Jew, the children try to assert their version of Jewishness upon Jacob, to convert him to the fictional Shylock they are familiar with.

The narrative regularly thwarts such inversions, as Jacob's relatively sophisticated characterization denies such reductiveness.

It is insufficient, Edgeworth implies, to simply be told that real Jews don't resemble their stereotypical counterparts. A person such as Harrington, who has "a strong false association" and "mental antipathy" to Jews requires experiential proofs (91). When Jacob stands up to Mowbray's bullying and defends the honour of his father, Harrington becomes convinced of the Jew's humanity. Throughout the incident, Jacob defies expectation by standing his ground while remaining calm; he neither expresses the vindictive rhetoric of Shylock, nor does he allow emotion to overcome him in the manner of the Jew in *Roxana*. During this incident, Harrington changes from oppressor to defender and he discovers the insufficiency of his prejudices to judge reality. Harrington admits that Jacob doesn't deserve his torment, but he follows Mowbray's lead because he feels that the authority of rank and the nationalist pride which Mowbray represents justify the abuse of any Jew.

When another boy stands up for Jacob, Harrington begins to question his own loyalties, but it is the Jew's stoic fortitude that finally makes Harrington act in Jacob's defence. Harrington, motivated by a strong sense of justice, steps outside his fantasy of Jewish representations and judges the immediate facts – that the religion of the pedlar is far less important than his moral position. Although Harrington realizes relatively early in life that his prejudices are false and self-destructive, he struggles to persuade his family, and readers, of the same thing.⁵¹

In addition to subverting expectations about Jews, the novel also satirizes generic conventions, particularly of the Gothic, that reinforce Jewish stereotypes. The descriptions of

⁵¹ Mowbray reinforces the harmful effects of harboring prejudice, as he ultimately dies in a duel as a result of an argument about the treatment of Jacob.

Harrington's early experiences of Jews, for example, play with Gothic style and set up the Jews as a terrifying mystery that grows into supernatural horror:

His torch flared on the figure of an old man with a long white beard and a dark visage, who, holding a great bag slung over one shoulder, walked slowly on straight forwards, repeating in a low, abrupt, mysterious tone, the cry of '*Old clothes!—Old clothes!—Old clothes!*' The old man's eyes were upon me; to my fancy the look of his eyes and his whole face changed in an instant. I was struck with terror To sleep I could not go, but full of fear and curiosity I lay, pondering on the thoughts of Simon the Jew and his bag, who had come to carry me away at the height of my joys. (69-70)

Harrington describes how his nurse, Fowler, preyed upon his already sensitive imagination, compounding his fears by inventing “stories of Jews who had been known to steal poor children for the purpose of killing, crucifying, and sacrificing them at their secret feasts and midnight abominations. The less I understood, the more I believed” (70). Although she capitalizes on Gothic language, Edgeworth actually satirizes Gothic tales of bloodthirsty Jews and shadowy mysteries by making such things believable only to a child. As the adult Harrington reflects on his experiences, he admits the absurdity of the stories Fowler tells of Jews. He credits his antipathy to Jews later in childhood to these early stories since they leave an impression on his overly sensitive mind that has him clinging to the idea that Jews are all villains.

Harrington generalizes his early realization about Jewish portrayal because he recognizes that popular fiction in general imposes negative feelings toward Jews onto the public. Edgeworth thereby exposes the anti-Jewish sentiment found within the entire English literary tradition:

I never saw the word Jew in any page of any book which I happened to open without immediately stopping to read the passage. And here I must observe that not only in the

old story-books, where the characters of Jews are as well fixed to be wicked as the bad fairies, or bad genii, or allegorical personifications of the devils, and the vices in the old emblems, mysteries, moralities &c, but in almost every work of fiction I found the Jews represented as hateful beings; nay, even in modern tales of very late years. Since I have come to man's estate, I have met with books by authors professing candour and toleration – books written expressly for the rising generation, called if I mistake not, *Moral Tales for Young People*; and even in these, whenever the Jews are introduced I find that they are invariably represented as beings of a mean, avaricious, unprincipled, treacherous character. (83)

Harrington's critique of the role of Jews in fiction encapsulates Edgeworth's apology for propagating the image of the stereotypical Jew, especially in her own children's writing. Edgeworth locates the source of the problem as primarily literary, lying with the "old story-books" that seize upon Jews as a variety of emblematic evil being, a role also often played in Romantic fiction and poetry by the Wandering Jew. Implicitly, these depictions of Jews can be excused as iterations of superstition and ignorance that contemporary Britons have long ago discarded and which are linked to Harrington's ridiculous juvenile fears. But the passage immediately rejects such easy dismissal by noting how the author of *Harrington* herself had very recently reproduced, in modern contexts, such mean-spirited caricatures. Edgeworth excuses her portrayals of modernized Jew-villains by stating that promoting intolerance was "far from . . . the serious intention of these authors" (83). She nevertheless demonstrates how slavish adherence to narrative convention perpetuates an uncritical acceptance of Jewish stereotypes as reliable analogues for living Jews.

Beyond his reading material, Harrington's Gothic ideas of Jews are intensified by his father, whose casual prejudice leads him to joke that dealing with the Jews is "something very like dealing with the devil" (83). Since Harrington's early reading actually equates Jews with the devil, his father's joke is especially pernicious. Harrington Sr.'s prejudices against Jews, though less neurotic than his son's, originate in the same culture whose repeated depiction of evil Jews leads to a tacit acceptance that Judaism is synonymous with vice. Edgeworth thus presents England's relationship to Jews as a self-perpetuating network of prejudice. Rachel Mordecai took a major step to disrupt this reproduction of stereotype by confronting Edgeworth and influencing her to write the first English novel to take the representation of Jews as primary subject matter; similarly, Jacob demonstrates to Harrington that Jews can be good people, inspiring Harrington to cultivate friendships with other Jews in order to learn more about them and to dispel prejudice amongst his friends and relations. Although Edgeworth stresses the need for Jews to prove themselves, she also admits that prejudice is so strong in some individuals that they cannot be cured of it.

Mowbray and his aristocratic mother typify the entrenchment of anti-Jewish sentiment among the upper gentry who represent the greatest threat to Jews (and social harmony). Edgeworth makes this clear in the incident involving Mr. Manessa (whose name is likely a direct reference to the benevolent Jew, Joshua Manasseh, of *Ferdinand Count Fathom*). Manessa, a London Jeweller, had run a profitable business in Gibraltar by supplying provisions to English soldiers. When a troop led by Mowbray arrives, the business starts to fail as a direct result of Mowbray's cruel insults. When he recognizes Jacob, who is working for Manessa at the time, Mowbray greets him jestingly:

“Young Shylock! What brings you to Gibraltar? You are of the tribe of Gad, I think, you *wandering Jew!*”

Lord Mowbray’s servants heard, and caught their lord’s witticism: the sergeants and soldiers repeated the colonel’s words Poor Jacob was called young Shylock by some; and by the others, the Wandering Jew. It was a bitter jest and soon became bitter earnest. The ignorant soldiers really believed me to be that Jew whom Christians most abominate (155).

This joke later turns violent when a party of drunken soldiers ransacks Manessa’s house because he refuses to deliver Jacob up to their vengeance. Edgeworth faults the ignorant soldiers with turning prejudice into violence, but she attributes more blame to their leaders, in this case Mowbray, who is ultimately responsible for stirring up anti-Jewish sentiment here and elsewhere in the novel. Mowbray’s family, especially his mother Lady de Brantfield, represent the cultural elite whose perpetuation of anti-Jewish ideas is symptomatic of deeper problems: narrow-mindedness and a lack of sympathy among the higher ranks.

Lady de Brantfield’s disdain for Jews proceeds from her obsessive self-identification with her family’s ancient reputation and the family heirlooms that remind her of it. Most of these objects are furniture that had been used by various kings and queens, but the object that most captivates Harrington’s attention is

an old picture called ‘*Sir Josseline going to the Holy Land*’, where Sir Josseline de Brantfield stood in complete armour, pointing to a horrid figure of a prostrate Jew on whose naked back an executioner, with uplifted whip, was prepared to inflict stripes for some shocking crime, some deed without a name . . . Sir Josseline stood miraculously

tall, and the Jew, crouching, supplicating, sprawling, was the most distorted, squalid figure eyes ever beheld, or imagination could conceive. (118)

This picture is displayed with equal prominence as the other artifacts of the de Brantfield family history, and perhaps accounts for Mowbray and his mother's inability to discard their own warped images of Jews in the face of living examples, even after Montenero offers Lady de Brantfield and Lady Anne sanctuary during the Gordon riots. The de Brantfield-Mowbrays' over-identification with their ancestors contributes to the family's prejudice as a symptom of the corrupting effects of elitism. Edgeworth had earlier demonstrated the benefits of humility and kindness in social superiors in *The Absentee* (1806). In that novel, Lord Collonbray redeems his family's property and good name as he discards ancient prejudices by establishing personal connections with his tenants, thereby reinvigorating his estate through application to their advice. So too, *Harrington* implies that relationships of reciprocal duty and kindness must be maintained between Christians and Jews for their mutual benefit within England.

Although Lady de Brantfield is only very reluctantly and minimally convinced by the end of *Harrington* that Jews aren't vicious enemies, Harrington's family is more easily and fully persuaded. Edgeworth thus demonstrates that the remedy to the endless repetition of stereotype can come from the margins of British culture, from Jews themselves.⁵² Jewish characters in *Harrington* must repeatedly prove their virtue before even Harrington can stop doubting them. The public's feelings against Jews appear almost justified until the moment of vindication; until that point, though, the Jew can be labeled a villain, a Shylock or a Wandering Jew, without burden of proof. But, once a Christian is convinced of Jewish virtue, he or she must in turn share that view with others, as Harrington does, and as do his parents, eventually. Harrington Sr. gives

⁵² Edgeworth's earlier works function similarly, as she, an Anglo-Irish woman, wrote novels and essays in defense both of the Irish and of women.

up his anti-Jewish feelings in response to Montenero's aid in saving the family fortune. His praise of the Jew implies that Jews must take steps to defeat prejudices against them: "after all I have seen of you – all you have done for me – can you conceive me to be such an obstinately prejudiced brute? My prejudices against the Jews, I give up – *you have conquered them*" (290, emphasis mine). This attitude, that the other must prove the stereotypes incorrect, though contrary to modern ideals of acceptance, was nevertheless a positive, perhaps revolutionary, notion. It suggests that Jews are not what fiction says they are, and that they have the capacity to react rationally and emotionally to the things said about them.

Not surprisingly, as Shylock is the figure with the most enduring influence on representations of Jews, Edgeworth takes aim at exposing the dissonance between Shylock and the Jews he is understood to represent. Michael Ragussis thus credits Edgeworth's "revisionist novel of Jewish identity" with struggling to insert a substitute for Shylock into the literary tradition. This effort leads to the inclusion of "Charles Macklin's brilliant revival of the role of Shylock, and his restoration of Shakespeare's text to the English stage" as the central literary event of the novel's historical structure and the model of Jewish reinvention that Edgeworth adapts for her own work (*Figures* 59). Edgeworth recognizes the power Shylock holds over the British public's conception of Jewishness and she therefore taps into this potential by including a description of Macklin's performance of Shylock and its impact on Christian and Jewish viewers alike. In so doing, she reveals the artificiality of the performance and offers her own version of Jewishness in its place.

The novel undermines Shylock's typicality as a Jew by drawing attention to the relationships between Christian actor and Jewish role, as well as the division between Jewish role and Jewish spectator. When Harrington and Mowbray reunite four years after the incident

with the pedlars, Mowbray, finding Harrington unable to locate the address of Montenero, offers a substitute Jew: “Mowbray said he thought he could console me for the loss of my chance of seeing my Spanish Jew by introducing me to the most celebrated Jew that ever appeared in England” (114). Mowbray repeats this description of Charles Macklin as “the most celebrated Jew” during the rendezvous, and he refers to Macklin as “the real, original Jew of Venice: ‘This is the Jew, / That Shakespeare drew!’” (114).

Macklin was, of course, not a Jew at all, as Edgeworth knew, and Mowbray’s conflation of the actor with the role ironically distances both from any actual Jews. Mowbray attempts to placate Harrington by demonstrating how “celebrated” a Jew could be in England, but only when he is entirely fictional.⁵³ Mowbray in his ignorance sees no difference between the fictional and the actual Jew. Similarly, when Mowbray is later jilted and cheated out of some money by the actress who plays Jessica, he decides to “make one Jewess pay for another” by pursuing Berenice (200). Mowbray is attracted to Berenice originally for her fortune alone, and he therefore distinguishes himself as cruel and mercenary, traits reserved for Jews in Edgeworth’s earlier fiction. Mowbray’s lack of discrimination between fictional and real Jews, combined with his own villainy, reveals the artificiality of Shylockian Jewishness imposed upon audiences by fictions such as *The Merchant of Venice*.

Edgeworth further denies the representativeness of fictional Jews when Montenero claims that Shakespeare reversed the religions of Shylock and Antonio, since in the “*true story*” it was the Christian who demanded a pound of flesh from the Jew (144). Montenero mitigates his claim by suggesting that “perhaps his was only the Jewish version of the story”, but this admission of bias acts to his credit and also alerts readers that Jews cannot adore *The Merchant of Venice* in

⁵³ Edgeworth also likely considered that Macklin’s Irish origins would further complicate the relationships between England and its others, since the period’s most celebrated actor was Irish and his role was Jewish; both ethnic groups are linked as figures of difference.

the same way that its Christian viewers do (144). Nor can Harrington enjoy the play once he recognizes the difficulty with which Jews must approach it.

Harrington at first views the performance with admiration: “Shylock appeared – I forgot everything but him. Such a countenance! Such an expression of latent malice and revenge, of everything detestable in human nature! . . . I forgot it was Macklin; I thought only of Shylock” (136). But Harrington’s delight quickly turns to concern when he notices that Berenice suffers greatly from the performance. She attempts to shield herself from the view of other playgoers and she avoids watching the performance herself. Once “apprehensive of the pain which it must give the young Jewess”, Harrington regrets that the play even exists, or that Macklin plays it so well. Thanks to his sensitive nature, Harrington now reacts entirely differently, shrinking “as I had myself been a Jew” (137). Harrington “longed so much to have a look at the Jewess” that he “took an opportunity of changing . . . position” in order to see her better; a figurative change of position also takes place as he can now imagine Berenice’s radically different relationship to the play (139). Harrington’s reactions destabilize the apparent distance between Jew and Christian since he can imagine Berenice’s response as he draws on the power of sympathy to almost feel as she does.

Edgeworth had the advantage of seeing Edmund Kean’s more sympathetic version of Shylock, and this contemporary perspective finds its way into the novel when Harrington recognizes that justice isn’t entirely against Shylock. Berenice and Montenero’s antipathy to Shylock helps draw attention to the character’s offensiveness to living Jews, while the stark contrast between Shylock and the Monteneros reinforces Edgeworth’s arguments about the inadequacy of fictions about Jews. Having dismissed Macklin’s Shylock as the literary model, Edgeworth inserts her modified versions of the benevolent Jew. She improves upon

Cumberland's Sheva by including a larger array of Jews that cuts across nation, class, and gender.⁵⁴

Finding Harrington curious about the lives of Jews, Jacob introduces him to Israel Lyons, a Jewish scholar and rabbi whose modern dress and un-Jew-like appearance surprise Harrington considerably.⁵⁵ Jacob, the poor pedlar, conforms to Harrington's expectations for Jews because of his poverty and obsequiousness, but Lyons actively rejects stereotypical expectations because he is perhaps "aware that Jews are in general supposed to be too *careful*, and he might therefore be a little vain of his own carelessness about money matters" (107). Lyons takes control of his public persona with more care than do the Jews of earlier novels and he cultivates private habits, including worldliness, literary taste, and a refined manner, that are not typically associated with Jews. Later, Montenero appears as a more detailed example of a modern Jew, and he is equally distinct from what *Harrington* imagines Jews must be like.

Edgeworth establishes her benevolent Jews on the model of Smollett's and Cumberland's, adding more depth and personality by carefully considering the Jew's perspective and researching to some extent the life of Anglo-Jews. While the details of Jewish life may be "stilted and unnatural" (Page 136), Edgeworth at least attempts to add an authentically Jewish texture to her characters, such as when Jacob quotes the "Hebrew proverb . . . *A lie has no feet*" (278).⁵⁶ Aside from distinguishing himself as generous and educated, Montenero speaks in terms that consistently remind readers of his Jewish background such as when he boasts of the Jewish role in inventing paper money as a credit to the Jewish people, "the bankers and brokers of the

⁵⁴ Although Berenice turns out to be an English protestant on her mother's side, she is still ethnically Jewish, since Montenero is her father. Until the moment of revelation, she is characterized as Jewish and foreign and, Heidi Kauffman argues, Berenice does not change, but reader expectations for her do when she "transforms" from a Jew into a Christian (45).

⁵⁵ Lyons was a real person. Susan Manly notes the accuracy of his depiction as a "brilliant independent scholar" but notes that Edgeworth deemphasizes his rakish reputation (*Harrington* 103, footnote)

⁵⁶ This is in fact a saying found in a midrashic text, "The Alphabet of Akiba ben Yosef", and referenced in the Talmud and by Talmudic commentators.

world” (179). Though Montenero proudly accepts the association of Jews with money, he, like Lyons, uses his wealth and education to influence the way Jews are depicted.

Edgeworth’s project to expose and destroy false and hurtful images of Jews is doubled within the novel when Montenero purchases and destroys the painting, “The Dentition of the Jew”, that portrays the Jew as a helpless victim of extortion at the hands of “our merciful Lords, the Kings John, Richard, or Edward” (185). Montenero buys the painting in order to destroy it and prevent an engraver from making copies. Judith Page notes that Montenero’s expertise as an art collector enables him to recognize the impact imagery has on the popular consciousness and to comment “obliquely on the way that such images infiltrate the culture and perpetuate the obsessive repetition of anti-Semitic stereotypes” (147). The episode also builds upon the failure of Cumberland’s *Jew* which retains the caricature of Jews in both Sheva, through his accent, and Jubal, through his oafishness and lust for pork, and also through their incongruous names. Edgeworth recognizes that Jews might not find such mixed portrayals flattering, and she recommends that other Jews follow Montenero’s example by asserting control over their own depictions.

At the same time, Edgeworth takes advantage of existing claims about Jews and demonstrates that even traits typically essentialized as Jewish can actually be positive qualities. This more subtle aspect of Edgeworth’s arguments comes across as a result of the commonalities between the Jewish characters. All of the male Jewish characters except Israel Lyons are merchants, but their commercial prowess allows them to practice benevolence in numerous instances. Similarly, Jewish partiality, the supposed tendency to favour fellow Jews over other people, is regarded positively because these strong bonds of camaraderie enable the Jews to

thrive despite adversity and because it does not preclude equally ardent generosity toward non-Jews: Montenero is as much a patron to the Harringtons as he is to Jacob.

Furthermore, Edgeworth also grants qualities to her Jewish characters that mark them as something other than Jewish, and this enables their integration into the larger social body. Berenice, for example, behaves like other virtuous women in contemporary fiction. Her reactions to the performance of *The Merchant of Venice* demonstrate her acute sensibility, for example. Berenice is also repeatedly contrasted favourably with Mowbray's sister, Lady Anne. Anne is self-important, callous, and frivolous where Berenice is humble, caring, and intelligent. In physical features they form an illustrative contrast typical of contemporary fiction. Harrington describes Lady Anne as plain, and he finds her love of modish fashion vain and uninteresting. Berenice, on the other hand, is described by Lady Anne as "an East Indian, I should guess, by her dark complexion", while Harrington describes her countenance as "uncommonly interesting, though with a peculiar expression and foreign air" (135). Although the darker skin is uncommon for contemporary heroines, it distinguishes Berenice as having out of the ordinary virtue, and makes her a foil for Lady Anne's shallow nature. As the novel (and Edgeworth's other works) refutes conventional wisdom about outward beauty indicating inner virtue, Berenice's uncommon physical features and uncommon virtue go hand in hand.⁵⁷ Berenice's apparently foreign extraction also exemplifies Edgeworth's valuation of a more inclusive and cosmopolitan sense of Britishness.

Like Berenice, Jacob is also an object of desire, because he has value as a good servant in terms of his loyalty and dedication to Montenero and Harrington. In return for Jacob's good service and honesty, Harrington attempts to assist him in clearing his name after Lady de

⁵⁷ A similar example occurs in Edgeworth's "The Good Aunt" (1801) in which the freed Jamaican slave Cuba exhibits extreme kindness and devotion to her patroness.

Brantfield has accused Jacob of theft. He and Harrington use their complementary abilities to navigate different social strata in inter-class participation. This begins when Harrington defends Jacob from Lady de Brantfield's accusations that he has stolen an heirloom ring. From Harrington's details about the interview with the family, Jacob gleans the information that is necessary to track down the missing ring and takes the lead. As he and Harrington search out the premises of the pawnbroker who has gotten hold of Lady de Brantfield's heirloom, Jacob exhibits a heretofore unseen cleverness in navigating the lower rungs of commercial society. His expertise in disguise and subterfuge allows him to outwit the crooked pawnbroker who has conspired with Fowler to sell the stolen ring. In order to complete their disguise, Jacob advises Harrington that "it is not the shabby coat that will make the gentleman look shabby, no more than the fine coat can ever make the shabby look like the gentleman" (276). Having provided Harrington with a more suitable outfit, he again corrects his social superior by preventing him from immediately seizing the muff in which the ring had previously been hidden and Jacob instead keeps up the charade by bargaining for other articles, only asking for the muff as a throw-in and casually asking to see a selection of rings. Jacob thereby ensures that their efforts to undo the conspiracy will remain undetected.

In light of these events, Edgeworth implies that the mystery of the missing ring could *only* have been solved with the assistance of Jacob's insider knowledge. Jacob puts his abilities to the service of justice and reconciliation, demonstrating how cooperation between classes and religions can contribute to a just social order.⁵⁸ Harrington and Jacob's complementary skills, which work toward their mutual benefit as a result, speak to Edgeworth's broader cosmopolitanism that breaks down boundaries between classes and nations. Although this

⁵⁸ Edgeworth's earlier novel *The Absentee* (1806) had developed the theme of mutual beneficence across the social hierarchy in more detail.

interfaith and interclass relationship affirms essentialist categories, it also demonstrates that Jews and Christians need not be at odds since each has something to offer the other.

Edgeworth extends her message of toleration and its benefits beyond Jews as she frequently intertwines Jewish interests with those of other marginal groups. Edgeworth does this most overtly by using the Gordon Riot scene to theorize an harmonized British community that cuts across ethnic, religious, and class divisions. Although the violence of the riots is directed at Catholics, Jews become targets through sheer coincidence of language: “unfortunately, ‘Jews’ rhymed to ‘shoes’; these words were hitched into a rhyme, and the cry was ‘*No Jews, no wooden shoes!*’ Thus, without any natural, civil, religious, moral, or political connection, the poor Jews came in remainder to the ancient anti-gallican antipathy felt by English feet and English fancies against the French wooden shoes” (235-236). Several critics have noted that this slogan was actually chanted during the Jew Bill controversy, and not during the Gordon riots, but its inclusion here draws attention to the irrationality of religious and national prejudices in the first place.

This violence and confusion is intensified when the crowd’s anger lands on the Anglican Lady de Brantfield on suspicion of her being a secret Catholic. This suspicion is not entirely absurd, Toby Benis suggests, as Mowbray’s mother’s prized ring, which was given to King John by Pope Innocent, links her to Catholicism and subtly “position[s] Mowbray’s family, theoretically a pillar of British aristocracy, as foreign in values (lacking a sense of honour and fair play) as well as in extraction” (Benis 150). Edgeworth further undermines the moral superiority of the elite de Brantfields by indicating that their prejudicial views disrupt a healthy social order. As a family that holds the same narrow-minded prejudice as the mob, the de Brantfield’s become symbolic victims of their own extreme intolerance.

Just as Lady de Brantfield's social position and prejudice go hand in hand, the lower classes are granted a superior ability to feel compassion. The Irish Catholic widow Levy thus exemplifies an idealization of reciprocal kindness between people of differing ranks and religions. Levy, a poor orange seller, helps deflect attention from the Monteneros' house in recognition of both the kindness of her Jewish patrons and of her own experiences of intolerance. Even though she has evidently absorbed anti-Jewish tropes from stories, they remain to her mere stories and she readily identifies with her Jewish patrons, recognizing their shared interests and history:

‘Never fear, Jewel! Jew as you have this day the misfortune to be, you're the best Christian any way ever I happened on. . . . So only you keep quite (quiet), and don't be advertising your-self any way for a Jew, nor by showing your cloven *fut*, with or without the wooden shoes. *Keep ourselves to ourselves*, for I'll tell you a bit of a secret – I'm a little bit of a cat'olick myself, all as one as what *they* call a *papish*, but I keep it to myself and nobody's suspect the like. They call you a Levite, don't they? Then I, the widow Levy, has a good right to advise ye,' added she, 'we were all brothers and sisters once – no offence – in the time of Adam, sure, and we should help another in all times. . . . And little as you may think of me, the devil a guardian angel better than myself, only just the widow Levy, such as ye see!' (236)

As ridiculous as this speech is with its ironic contrasts, it represents Edgeworth's most articulate vision of a unified community that can accommodate religious difference. Levy's speech and the ensuing action subvert the hierarchies of class and religion that enable the mob violence. Amidst the anti-Catholic riots, the Irish Catholic street-pedlar protects the foreign-born Jewish merchants, who in turn protect the Anglican gentry; far from plotting the ruin of England,

Catholics and Jews cooperate to ensure its preservation. Montenero reaffirms social order again when he offers accurate testimony against accusations that he had shot and killed a man in defense of his home and he is “happy to have escaped having injured any person, even in the most justifiable cause” (251). The constant subversion of identity categories and the casual slippage between Jews and Christians throughout the novel – the widow’s name and her trade in oranges are both more commonly associated with Jews – sustains an atmosphere of confusion that destabilizes any easy connection between religion and virtue, or lack thereof.

In her handling of the imprecise nature of Jewishness, Edgeworth draws on contemporary interest in the effect of history on individuals. Indeed, emerging historical awareness was perhaps the most important influence on the changed perspective toward Jews in the Romantic period. Mark Phillips argues that the combination of a new valuation of sentiment and the desire for greater historical awareness resulted in a movement to record the history of manners and social movements. Drawing on Hume’s historiography, his “‘axiom’ that beneath the appearance of force lies the reality of opinion”, Phillips argues that public opinion “carries large implications not just for origins of government, but for the writing of history. Historical writing, after all, had traditionally focused on the actions of the few, whereas Hume suggests that a history written with a ‘philosophical eye’ would depict the changing climate of opinion as it affected the interests, fears, and affections of humankind” (50). Writers of historical fiction in turn used this focus to combine the sympathetic and symbolic qualities of fiction with the careful research and detail of historical writing. Walter Scott in particular successfully adapted Hume’s theories to establish a “genuine engagement with the past” and to “celebrate the distinctive textures of other times” (Phillips 33). Anne Stevens notes the parallel rises of modern historiography and the

mainstream success of the serious novel, claiming that “the Historical age was simultaneously the novelistic age” (1).

The events of *Harrington* overlap with what Edgeworth perceives as two critical events for Anglo-Jewish history in the eighteenth century: the Jew Bill controversy (actually, a fictional attempt to reinstate the Bill in 1763/4) and the Gordon riots. During both events, Edgeworth depicts the popular responses, and *Harrington*’s development over the course of the novel reflects Edgeworth’s idealized vision of the improved popular attitudes toward Jews from the 1750s through to the 1810s. In real terms, these two historical events meant little to Anglo-Jews, but they did influence public opinion about them. As we have seen, the Jew Bill was extremely limited in scope, but had long-term cultural effects. Likewise, Heidi Kauffman demonstrates how the Gordon Riots, which had nothing to do with Jews at all, became important after the fact as an historic touchstone for investigating the Jewish role in British culture, partly because its instigator, George Gordon, later converted to Judaism.

Kaufman posits that early nineteenth-century English fiction struggles to reconcile the Biblical roots of the nation with a desire to disassociate from a Jewish past (29). As an historical novel, then, *Harrington* positions its heroes as rooted in Jewish history – Berenice’s Jewish father and *Harrington*’s early obsession with Jews make this a personal history – but moves beyond that past into a distinctly English present. The Gordon Riots, however, disrupt the possibility of such a smooth evolution: “when read within the fuller context of Edgeworth’s engagement with border crossings and mixed-up identities, the attack against Mr. Montenero during the riots is more than just an anachronistic reference to attacks against Gordon’s conversion to Judaism; the riot chapter . . . raises the very problem of creating hermetically sealed nation spaces and homes” (Kaufman 42). The de Brantfields typify Edgeworth’s

challenge to a supposedly stable English identity, as their deep roots in English history fail to prevent the confusion over whether they may be Frenchified Catholics. These paragons of English Protestantism must in fact be protected by their British others, the Irish Catholic and the Spanish Jew. To create an harmonious English present, Edgeworth implies that England must accept its racial and religious others, although these must also be contained within certain hierarchies. She deliberately overstates the contributions of Jews in order to cement the Jews' place in England through their inclusion in English history and to bolster a conception of Britishness that can accommodate diverse religious and ethnic groups.

By setting her Jewish novel in the eighteenth century, Edgeworth locates the first significant English-Jewish encounter in the recent past. Her Jewish characters are foreigners with tenuous roots in England. Only Berenice is truly English, and only because she embraces her mother's heritage. By considering Jews as recent immigrants to England, Edgeworth renders good treatment of Jews merely an act of generosity. Walter Scott, however, positions the beginnings of the English-Jewish encounter in the twelfth century, at the very inception of English history. By making Jews crucial to the events of *Ivanhoe*, Scott changes the relationship between Jews and the English, positioning Jews as something more than kind outsiders who may have something positive to contribute and who deserve sympathy. Rather, Jews have ancient ties to England that have hitherto been ignored and they have been denied the rights and privileges to which they may justly lay claim. Identifying Jews as key actors in the formation of England allows Scott to counter the myth of pure English lineage that the de Brantfields idolize in Harrington and to open up Englishness across a broader ethnic spectrum.

The Debts of History: Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*

Although *Ivanhoe* is subtitled “A Romance”, the novel nevertheless maintains the historiographical sensibility of Scott’s earlier works, such as when carefully illustrating some errors common in the representation of medieval history. Scott exposes the romanticization of history by focussing on the barbarous practices, prejudices, and superstitions of medieval England. There are many examples of such correctives in the novel, and one of the most striking involves the depiction of Jews.⁵⁹ The central roles given to Isaac and Rebecca represent Scott’s participation in the larger movement to reform Jews in fiction and to acknowledge or encourage their positive contributions to contemporary society. Scott takes this to an extreme by making his Jews instrumental in the foundation of English society and culture. Jewish moneylenders, the novel insists, fund many of the nobility’s projects, including the tournament at Ashby-de-la-Zouche (125), and the Hebraic roots of English religion are dramatically evoked by the context of the Crusades, whose mission was to reclaim Jerusalem as Christian territory.

Earlier developments in eighteenth century and Romantic literature had gradually made Jews more sympathetic subjects. Yet sentimentalism, best exemplified by Cumberland’s *Jew*, had failed to reject the othering of the Jew, and the rhetorically constructed Jews of Godwin and Walker betray little interest in the reality of Jewish life on the part of the authors. Scott doesn’t entirely correct these shortcomings, but his handling of history allows him to portray the real hazards and challenges that Jews would have faced in medieval England. In so doing, he also provides an historical framework that can help to better understand Jews of his own time. More

⁵⁹ Scott also draws attention to the mistaken notion that grandiose medieval structures are in any way amenable to modern tastes: “let not modern beauty envy the magnificence of a Saxon princess. The walls of the apartment were so ill finished and so full of crevices, that the rich hangings shook to the night blast. . . . Magnificence there was, with some rude attempt of taste; but of comfort there was little, and, being unknown, it was unmissed” (73).

importantly, by invoking Jewish history within *Ivanhoe*, Scott alerts readers to the Jews' participation in Biblical traditions and in the English past and present.

Scott adapts the apparatus of the historical novel to emphasize the claim that the negative characteristics so often ascribed to Jews in literature are the product of centuries of abuse and conditioning imposed by Christians, and that their "natural" characters are no different from other men's, though their religion may indeed be foreign. This argument builds on Scott's underlying premise that individuals are shaped by larger historical movements and by the cultures in which they live. The cultural authority given to history during the Romantic period, as Ina Ferris demonstrates, also contributes to *Ivanhoe's* handling of the Jewish subject matter: "a national past had to present itself as 'history' in order to gain sanction. Only history could authorize a past to justify or motivate the present, and so access to the prestige of history was crucial (as it still is) in the pursuit of legitimacy, particularly on the part of marginalized groups" (140). Ferris here refers to Scott's depictions of Scottish history, but her comments are equally applicable to the treatment of Jews in fiction and help to clarify why Scott's positive Jews resonated more strongly with audiences than did earlier Jewish characters.

Isaac the Jew exemplifies Scott's use of the historic to explain and legitimize present relationships. Isaac is first presented in ways that would have been more or less familiar to readers: he is the cringing, avaricious, and secretive Jew. Yet Scott denaturalizes this stereotype by explaining that these features are not natural to Jews, but rather the product of their treatment in Europe. Isaac's continual fears of betrayal and persecution, for example, are justified since "there was no race existing on the earth, in the air, or the waters, who were the object of such an unremitting, general, and relentless persecution as the Jews of this period" (81). The hazards

Jews run as a result of such persecution, in their imposed roles as moneylenders and brokers place them in continual danger. Scott tells us that

The avarice of the Jews being thus . . . placed in opposition to the fanaticism and tyranny of those under whom they lived seemed to increase in proportion to the persecution with which they were visited; and the immense wealth they usually acquired in commerce, while it frequently placed them in danger, was at other times used to extend their influence, and to secure to them a certain degree of protection. On these terms they lived; and their character, influenced accordingly, was watchful, suspicious, and timid – yet obstinate, uncomplying, and skilful in evading the dangers to which they were exposed. (82)

Avarice, one of those passions which Scott argued in the introductory chapter of *Waverley* (1805) was common to all mankind in all times, is intensified in Jews because money is, for the Jew in this culture, security.

Scott argues that Jewish life is shaped by the conditions of survival, and this is the key to understanding why the events of *Ivanhoe* matter to contemporary Britons with regard to Jews. In the preface to *Waverley* (1814), Scott proposes to throw “the force of my narrative upon the characters and passions of the actors; - those passions common to all men in all stages of society”. Social conditions shape how those passions are expressed, but the feelings themselves are of the same intensity and kind:

The wrath of our ancestors, for example, was coloured jules; it broke forth in acts of open and sanguinary violence against the objects of its fury: our malignant feelings, which must seek gratification through more indirect channels, and undermine the obstacles which they cannot openly bear down, may be rather said to be tintured

sable. But the deep ruling impulse is the same in both cases; and the proud peer, who can now only ruin his neighbour according to law, by protracted suits, is the genuine descendent of the baron who wrapped the castle of his competitor in flames, and knocked him on the head as he endeavoured to escape from the conflagration.

(Waverley 5)

When this notion of unchanged human passions is applied to the treatment of Jews, it is clear that Scott intends to demonstrate that contemporary prejudices against Jews, whether expressed through fiction, law, or social stigma, stem from the same rapacious impulses that motivate Front de Boeuf to torture Isaac, or the superstitious revulsion of the Saxons toward Jews.

Rebecca uses a similar argument to defend herself against Brian de Bois-Guilbert when he accuses Rebecca and all Jews of excessive greed:

“Thou hast spoken the Jew,” said Rebecca, “as the persecution of such as thou art has made him. Heaven in his ire has driven him from his country, but industry has opened to him the only road to power and to influence, which oppression has left unbarred. Read the ancient history of the people of God, and tell me if those, by whom Jehovah wrought such marvels among the nations, were then a people of misers and usurers!”

(433)

Avarice is a necessity, but it by no means defines the Jew, nor ancient Jewish history.

Furthermore, if Jews are vicious, it is only because people such as Bois-Guilbert have forced them to be so in order to survive. Nevertheless, natural inclinations are so much influenced by material conditions that Isaac weighs his daughter’s life in the balance against the financial cost. Isaac hesitates to pay Robin Hood a thousand crown ransom, even though any delay increases the risk to Rebecca. At this moment, Isaac resembles Shylock, whose passions also contend

between his daughter and his ducats when he sees both are missing. But Scott invokes “inveterate habit”, as opposed to inborn love of money, as an explanation of Isaac’s willingness to haggle at this crucial moment (362).

In *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Adam Smith comments on the power of habit and custom to influence human behaviour, sometimes to the point of justifying actions that might otherwise seem naturally abhorrent. He refers, for example, to the commonly sanctioned practice of infanticide in ancient Greece and “among all savage nations” (246). Where custom supports general practices, habit can inure individuals and groups to moral wrongs (234). Furthermore, David Hume argues that national characters, the generally observed habits of various peoples, are shaped by moral causes, or what we would today call social conditions (244-258). Following from Hume and Smith, Scott shows how Isaac’s character is formed by the oppression of the Jewish people, who, “perhaps owing to that very hatred and persecution, had adopted a national character, in which there was much, to say the least, mean and unamiable” (*Ivanhoe* 64). The crucial argument here is that Jewish greed is the result of external pressures – the fault of host cultures – rather than an inevitable condition of being Jewish. If Jews in England continue to exhibit these negative traits, it is only because the English continue to exhibit the same prejudices as their ancestors.

Scott historicizes the Jews by explaining their involvement in national finance and their general treatment at the time, but the question remains as to why Jewish characters figure so prominently in *Ivanhoe*, particularly as it is the first of Scott’s novels to look closely at English, rather than Scottish, history. Scott boldly asserts the role of Jews in the foundation of English society at a moment of powerful symbolic memory: the reign of Richard the First. Michael Ragussis emphasizes the importance of this setting: “by depicting the persecution of the Jews,

including the attempt to convert them, at a critical moment in history – the founding of the English nation – *Ivanhoe* located ‘the Jewish question’ at the heart of English national identity” (Figures 12). Just as Scott’s earlier novels brought Scottish history to the forefront of modern British culture, *Ivanhoe* suggests that Jews have had, and will continue to have, a greater role in the nation than had commonly been thought.

This makes sense given the frequently interchangeable roles of Jews, Scots, and Irish in the Romantic period, especially on the stage.⁶⁰ Non-English Britons demarcated the limits of English acceptance of difference, and these “domestic others”, as Ragussis terms them, shock the reader through contrast with the more familiar, civilized English (Ragussis *Theatrical Nation* 11). More importantly, Scott attempts to enact conciliation between cultures through greater recognition of their past relationships and his novels help illuminate the impact of those encounters. Whether or not Jews in fact influenced the course of English history to the extent that *Ivanhoe* suggests, the novel was extremely popular among nineteenth-century audiences for whom Jews were an increasingly common sight, both in literature and in daily life.

Ivanhoe’s Jewish plot therefore serves to better elevate Jews in the English imagination. One method of doing this was to assert that Jews and Christians had much in common. Scott makes such a claim in *Ivanhoe*’s dedicatory epistle where he says that “our ancestors were not more distinct from us, surely, than Jews are from Christian; they had ‘eyes, hands organs (etc)’” (19-20). This sameness is reinforced when Rebecca implores Rowena’s protection “in the name of the God whom they both worshipped”, and when Isaac, while under torture from Front-de-Boeuf, swears “by all which we believe in common” (207, 233). These statements tend to

⁶⁰ Stage drama is especially important in *Ivanhoe*, given its frequent invocation of Shakespeare, particularly in the chapter epigraphs.

reinforce the position maintained by previous defenders of Judaism because they assume theological similarities between Judaism and Christianity which Scott can comfortably invoke.

In addition to demonstrating the shared religious roots of Jews and Christians, Scott encourages conciliation between Jews and the English by presenting a mutual interest in the founding of the nation. Rebecca claims for Jews a vital role in English civic life:

We also have advantages. These Gentiles, cruel and oppressive as they are, are in some sort dependant on the dispersed children of Zion, whom they despise and persecute. Without the aid of our wealth, they could neither furnish forth their hosts in war, nor their triumphs in peace; and the gold which we lend them returns with increase to our coffers. We are like the herb which flourisheth most when it is trampled on. Even this day's pageant had not proceeded without the consent of the despised Jew, who furnished the means. (125)

In response, Isaac tells her that Christians are unlikely to repay debts to Jews "unless under the awe of the judge and jailor" (126). This conversation projects a Jewish influence into the English past, a note which is intensified by the novel's implication of the Hebraic roots of Christianity as invoked by Isaac and Rebecca, and the overarching context of the crusades as a contest between Christians and Muslims for control of the Jewish ancestral homeland.⁶¹ At the same time, Rebecca and Isaac's conversation hints that the Jews, who played such a large role in England, have not yet received their due. This last point is reinforced by the ending of the novel when Rebecca deposits her jewels with Rowena, symbolically leaving a balance that must be repaid.

Determining the degree of Jewish involvement is therefore critical to understanding how Jewishness is connected to English national identity. The historical romance genre to which

⁶¹ Scott understates the idea of Palestine as the Jewish homeland, but Benjamin Disraeli's *Tancred* (1847) later seizes upon this thread of the story to demonstrate the shared sacred history of Jews and Christians.

Ivanhoe belongs itself participates in the formation of national identity, and Scott is part of “the romance revival [that] meant the recovery of an archaic native culture, popular as well as literary, felt to be vanishing into the past” (Duncan, *Modern Romance* 14). The Jews, who were more often viewed as recent immigrants, alien others flocking to England throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, could also be construed as one of these forgotten native cultures. Jews had become prominent in British fiction and culture, yet their history and culture remained mysterious. By foregrounding Jewish characters and their relationship to England’s past, *Ivanhoe* acts as a kind of recovery of the Anglo-Jewish past.

The Jews’ relationship to a spiritual homeland complements the notion of England as a New Jerusalem: the Jewish role in consolidating English identity in *Ivanhoe* enacts a symbolic transference of chosenness onto the English nation. Isaac’s Jewishness contributes to the hybridity of “the new England that emerges at the end of the book . . . embodied in the person of Ivanhoe” (Rigney *Afterlives* 83) and this is best exemplified by Isaac’s loan of the armour that Ivanhoe wears. However, Isaac’s “Patriarchal and Pawned armour [is] brilliant, but useful only if temporary: none of it is to keep” (Wilt 22); Jewish settlement in England and the fairer treatment of Jews there compared to other European nations could potentially signify England’s acceptance of its Jewish roots, but the Jews’ exile at the end of *Ivanhoe* and their precarious relationship to Scott’s contemporary England also leaves open the question of whether Jews can fairly be subsumed under English, or even British, identity. In the end, Ivanhoe returns Isaac’s armour and steed, as if to suggest that even the superficial attachments to Judaism have been shed from England’s national character.

Scott here demonstrates how England has exhibited an inconsistent and uncomfortable relationship to a Jewish past. But *Ivanhoe* represents the first serious consideration of what

Britain owes its Jews by representing the removal of Jews from England as a tragedy that requires redress. This is significant since “the Jews in *Ivanhoe* represent above all a superior authenticity of cultural value, which has everything to do with their condition of exile. They occupy an extreme position in the novel’s scheme of alienated nationality. Their loss of a homeland obliges them to reconstitute Zion as a purely spiritual property” (Duncan, *Ivanhoe* xxiii). Scott does not suggest that Zion can ever be recovered by the Jews, but he does imply that modern England can welcome Jews as rightful citizens in compensation for that loss. This dimension of the novel would have a tremendous impact on later nineteenth-century writers who increasingly imagined the possibility of a Jewish return to Palestine.

The idea of compensating Jews for their historical treatment in England follows from the discussion of debts in the novel, which borrows from the language of moneylending. Prince John’s schemes rely on his followers’ faith in his ability to repay them for his support. These are debts which refer to honour, as well as wealth. Similarly, Ivanhoe rushes to fight for Rebecca in order to repay her for saving his life earlier. Moneylending, since it involves usury, or interest, is of a different character from these kinds of honourable debts since Jews in fiction are typically punished for their greed in pursuing debts and because they value nothing but money. But Isaac rarely demands, nor expects repayment and only tries to lend as little as possible in order to avoid personal violence. Isaac expects repayment only from Ivanhoe regarding the armour and only because Isaac recognizes that Ivanhoe is an exceptionally virtuous character who honours his debts, even to a Jew.

King Richard also participates in a kind of usury in the contest of blows with Friar Tuck. Richard, still disguised as the black knight, accuses Tuck of breaking his vow of fasting (another

unpaid debt), so Tuck proposes to hit him. Their exchange comically borrows from the language of moneylending:

[Tuck]: “Truly friend . . . I will bestow a buffet on thee.”

[Richard]: “I accept of no such presents . . . I am content to take thy cuff as a loan, but I will repay thee with usury as deep as ever thy prisoner there exacted in his traffic.”

(355)

Scott repeats this joke after Richard reveals his identity and assures Tuck that all is forgiven. Tuck claims his blow was “returned, and with usury – may your Majesty ever pay your debts as fully!” To this, Richard replies “If I could do so with cuffs . . . my creditors should have little reason to complain of an empty exchequer” (453). While the first joke is inspired by Isaac’s presence, the assurance that the king will repay loans occurs when Isaac is absent. Isaac here, as during the tournament, is the butt of the joke, since he is unlikely to see his investments returned, except in the way that Richard suggests – with violence.

Richard and Tuck’s appropriation of such commercial language intensifies the problem of England’s Jewish roots by alluding to the larger question of the validity of Christianity’s (violent) appropriation of the Jewish Biblical past. Set in the shadow of the Crusades, *Ivanhoe* explores the relevance of pan-European religious politics to the consolidation of a distinct English culture. Ivanhoe is himself the ideal Englishman, a blending of his native Saxon heritage with Norman refinement that he has adopted while fighting in the Crusades under Richard the Lionheart’s command. As the newly formed Englishman, Ivanhoe returns to England and helps unite the Saxons and Normans in a common cause in much the same way that the Crusades unite Christendom in a conflict against Islam competing for ownership of Biblical inheritance. The contest for the Holy Land, however, disregards the Jewish faction, who, as an already defeated

entity, appears to have no stake in the conflict. But Scott reminds readers that Jews also lay claim to Jerusalem, as Isaac earlier puts his “trust too in the rebuilding of Zion” (126).

Scott draws attention to the elided Jewish presence in the Crusades through the use of Jewish characters in the thematically connected struggle for mastery in England. Like the eastern Jews who were a third party in the crusades, not militarily involved, but still targets of violence, Isaac and Rebecca stand on the margins of the Norman-Saxon conflict that nevertheless imperils their lives. As a result, the Jews are forced to take an interest in these domestic conflicts in order to protect themselves. Anne Rigney demonstrates how the inclusion of Jewish characters in *Ivanhoe* thereby complicates the unstable binary between Normans and Saxons by inserting a third faction with its own set of interests: “Ivanhoe, with his hyphenated identity as a Normandized Saxon, occupies a space between the two main groups, where Rebecca occupies a place outside the basic categories” (*Afterlives* 88). The narrative most poignantly exposes the Jews’ outsider status at the end of the novel when Rebecca explains her reasons for leaving England: “the people of England are a fierce race, quarrelling ever with their neighbours or themselves, and ready to plunge the sword into the bowels of each other. Such is no safe abode for the children of my people” (499). Her preference for Granada as a safe haven is only marginal: “thither we go, secure of peace and protection, for the payment of such ransom as the Moslem exact from our people” (499). In either case, the Jews’ safety depends on their wealth and ability to placate a hostile host culture.

With no significant investment in either Christian or Muslim conquests, the Jews in *Ivanhoe*, and especially Rebecca, “the moral and aesthetic centre of the story” (*Afterlives* 88), provide an outsider’s perspective to the novel’s historical subject matter. The Crusades and the Norman Conquest were both significant events in England’s past, and by making Jews players in

them, Scott enables Rebecca to speak both as a voice of modernity and of her people's ancient experience. She can impartially judge the events from a disinterested position that resembles Scott's advantageous perspective of historical distance. Rebecca's dim views on medieval martial culture are featured during two long conversations, one with Ivanhoe about the nature of war and one with Brian de Bois-Guilbert about faith.

The first conversation occurs during the siege of Torquilstone castle. Ivanhoe, barred from the battle because of his injury, asks Rebecca to describe the scene to him as she sees it from the window. In the ensuing conversation, the pair articulate distinct views on the merits of combat. Rebecca, recalling her people's once proud history and current lowness, expresses a distinctly modern attitude toward the violence and war, describing the battle with horror and sadness. Ivanhoe, however, reacts with excitement, revelling in the descriptions of what he perceives as heroic combat. In answer to Rebecca's dismay at the loss of life, Ivanhoe celebrates the achievement of "glory . . . which guilds our sepulchre and embalms our name" (316). As this morbid vision of personal glory still fails to inspire the Jewess, Ivanhoe chides her: "Thou art no Christian, Rebecca; and to thee are unknown these high feelings which swell the bosom of a noble maiden . . . Chivalry! – why, maiden, she is the nurse of the pure and high affection – the stay of the oppressed, the redresser of grievances, the curb of the power of the tyrant . . . and liberty finds the best protection in her lance and her sword" (316). Rebecca in turn alludes to the failure of chivalry: the degradation of the Jewish people despite their once great military prowess contradicts Ivanhoe's insistence that military might makes right, and her people's present treatment in England and across Europe further discredits Ivanhoe's belief in Christian chivalry's defence of the oppressed.

As a Jewish outsider, Rebecca posits an alternative view of combat. Instead of glorifying battle for its own sake, she admits of its value only in the support of a righteous cause. Once, she says, the Jews were a “race whose courage was distinguished in the defense of their own land, but who warred not, even while yet a nation, save at the command of the Deity, or in defending their country from oppression”, but now, as they are exiled and powerless, “it ill beseemeth the Jewish damsel to speak of battle or war” (316-317). Rebecca believes in something more than “the fantastic chivalry of the Nazarenes”: she would willingly sacrifice herself if shedding her “own blood, drop by drop, could redeem the captivity of Judah!” (317). Rebecca holds that war only has value in a limited number of cases and only for the sake of the greater good. *Ivanhoe* instead believes in personal glory won through combat as its own good (a value also embodied in the structure of the earlier tournament at Ashby de la Zouche).

The two speakers have vastly different relationships to the world around them, and this in turn shapes their disagreement. *Ivanhoe* is a young idealist who has adopted a new name while fighting in Palestine and has returned to England to help defend the emerging nation, so combat has shaped his identity and it is his primary contribution to social betterment. Rebecca, though young, sees herself as the latest in a long line of downtrodden and ancient Jews. She remembers her nation’s former greatness and translates her people’s past onto her own life. Rebecca has the perspective of experience and of history and is therefore able to judge the present in light of the past. At the same time, Rebecca is more invested in the past than the present and her attractiveness as a character rests largely on her sincere devotion to a doomed cause. Her conversation with Brian de Bois-Guilbert reveals the extent of this commitment. While he has abandoned his religious principles in abducting the Jewish woman and holding her in defiance of

the Papal agent Lucas de Beaumanoir, she refuses to reject her beliefs for the sake of pleasure or convenience, or to save her own life.

As a result of his impious lust for Rebecca, Bois-Guilbert has abducted her and is now forced to fight against her champion in order to redeem himself in the eyes of Beaumanoir. Caught between his desire for Rebecca and his duties to the Church, Bois-Guilbert hopes for an alternative, to run away with Rebecca to a place where he can escape judgement. To explain his plan, he must reveal to Rebecca the extent of his hypocrisy: “There are spheres in which we may act, ample enough for my ambition Rather with Saladin will we league ourselves, than endure the scorn of bigots we contemn” (431). Rebecca rejects his vision of amoral and selfish power as “a dream” and a violation of the bonds of patriotism and religion. Nor can she “esteem him who is willing to barter these ties . . . in order to gratify an unruly passion for the daughter of another people” (432). Rebecca potently casts herself as “the daughter of another people”, rendering her outside the purview of Christianity, but still as a defender of its principles. In this exchange, Scott depicts Jewish faith without casting Judaism as either an obstinate rejection of all things Christian or as Christianity in disguise. Instead, Rebecca expresses her sincere Jewish faith while paying respect to Christian beliefs, though she regards these as apart from herself: as she earlier tells Bois-Guilbert, “thy resolution may fluctuate on the wild and changeful billows of human opinion, but mine is anchored on the Rock of Ages” (427).

In these two conversations with Ivanhoe and Bois-Guilbert, Rebecca is a voice out-of-time who objectively criticizes the violent and bigoted culture of medieval England. Though Bois-Guilbert also provides a modern voice, his nihilism is contrasted with Rebecca’s religious sincerity. Rebecca’s Jewish roots enable her to view the religious politics around her with a backward glance that draws on her knowledge that every culture passes, but that faith is eternal.

Bois-Guilbert is a modern cynic who believes that faith is a tool for gaining power over the ignorant. Scott's sympathy of course lies with the sincere Jew. Bois-Guilbert assumes that, as a Jew, Rebecca shares his disdain for religion and martial glory, and that Jews are "conversant with ingots and shekels, instead of spear and shield . . . only terrible to the shivering and bankrupt debtor" (433). Dismissing this characterization as the product of Christian oppression, Rebecca reminds him of the glories of the ancient Jews, remembering that:

"The princes of Judah . . . are trampled down like the shorn grass, and mixed with the mire of the ways. Yet are there those among them who shame not such high descent, and of such shall be the daughter of Isaac the son of Adonikam! Farewell! – I envy not thy blood-won honours – I envy not thy barbarous descent from northern heathens – I envy thee not thy faith, which is ever in thy mouth, but never in thy heart nor in thy practice. (434)

Rebecca thus recognizes a distinction between the past and the present in the shaping of her own identity, and how her relationship to history continues to affect that self-image. In his sophistry, Bois-Guilbert fails to accept her argument that the Jews are more sincere in their faith than he is. As the Christians in the novel are Catholics, and therefore not amenable to mainstream belief in Scott's England, Rebecca's sincere Jewish faith can be read as the more historically plausible analogue to Protestantism. Though she is not a Christian, Rebecca's Jewish faith has much more in common with the enlightened modern Englishman than his barbaric ancestor.

For this reason, Rebecca, in her dignity and wisdom, outshines the more primitive actors in the novel, as well as the hyper-modern cynic Bois-Guilbert. Rebecca's modern and distinctly Jewish qualities endeared her to contemporary readers as well. Although Shakespeare's Jessica had also been regarded as a desirable character, this had much to do with her easy assimilability

and passive femininity. But Rebecca's appeal lies to great degree on her *unwillingness* to convert and her respect for both her own and Christian traditions. She rejects Rowena's proposal to stay in England and have the "counsel of holy men wean you from your erring law" (501). Although this proposal appeals to Rebecca, she rejects it, stating that "I may not change the faith of my fathers like a garment unsuited to the climate in which I seek to dwell, and unhappy, lady, I will not be" (501). Her resolution to live a kind of Jewish monastic life dedicated to serving God through actions of kindness and charity is often regarded as a Jewish version of the Catholic institution of monasticism, but it more closely resembles women belonging to charitable aid societies common in Georgian England. The distinction of non-celibacy is crucial in making Rebecca palatable to the contemporary English audience and leaves open the possibility that Rebecca may one day achieve a happier fate.

If, as Heidi Kauffman argues, English identity in the nineteenth century depended on "registering the past filiative bonds linking Jews and Christians" while also relegating Jews to the status of the unevolved others who failed to become Christians (18), then Rebecca's moral superiority among her barbaric, Catholic English contemporaries places her in a delicate position between England's past and present. Scott locates Rebecca's Judaism at the origins of the English nation and does not entirely excise Jewishness from English history: Rowena admires and respects Rebecca, while the narrator inquires whether "Rebecca's beauty and magnanimity did not recur to his [Ivanhoe's] mind . . . frequently" (502). And so, although the Jews have moved on, their influence lingers in another iteration of unpaid debt.

Rebecca's memory is tinged with a barely contained eroticism that adds a further dimension to the relationship between Jews and the English in which desire for the Jewish other influences English identity. Scott draws attention to the erotic dimension of the Jewess as part of

a deeper criticism of Jewish conversion narratives that interpret Jessica's conversion as religiously sincere, and not sexually motivated. By quelling her desire, Rebecca exposes the sexual logic of conversion and demonstrates instead a superior quality of faith.

The anti-conversion plot of *Ivanhoe* offers a commentary on *The Merchant of Venice* that contributes to Scott's larger reimagining of Jewishness, particularly in the depiction of Jewish women. Being well aware of the mediating effect of the historical artifact and of the book, Scott rewrites English history as also Jewish history.⁶² Just as the myth of a monolithic English identity is disrupted by *Ivanhoe*, so too is the myth of the Shylockian Jew, because the sympathetic and noble Jews in the novel predate both the setting and composition of *The Merchant of Venice* and thereby offer more valid alternatives to Shylock. In substituting one fiction for another, Scott is not original, but his manner of doing so is. Scott does more than show that Jews can be good people; he suggests that Jews have positive and desirable qualities derived from their unique cultural heritage. And, rather than casting the good Jew as one who has adopted Christian principles, Scott recognizes that Jewish values may not always be compatible with Christianity, since Rebecca does not convert.

⁶² As a Scottish writer of English history, Scott has a special interest in exposing the erasures of multi-cultural influence in the development of English identity. A similar impulse occurs in *Waverley*, as articulated by Ian Dennis. Many of the set pieces of the novel – notably the painting of Edward Waverley and Fergus MacIvor in Highland dress that commemorates and idealizes the conflict of the '45 – and the novel itself obscure the violence of the past by foregrounding a sentimental nostalgia, while also implying that the present is gentler still. This strategy is emblemized by the portrait of Waverley and MacIvor in Highland dress that “will preside magisterially over the toast-world of accommodation and domestic love [and] romanticizes the ‘barbaric’ culture that was once a real threat to England but which can now safely be resigned to the world of books” (Dennis 85). Nevertheless, the cultural resonance of the defeated highlander as a popular image of nationalist desire participates along with “the structural device of *Waverley's* love story [and] draws attention to the complexities of interdependent desire which drive the formation and mutation of national identity” (Dennis 86).

As Dennis suggests, the question of the interdependency of dominant and defeated culture persists throughout Scott's work. Prior to *Ivanhoe*, Scott had only explored this issue with regard to Scotland, but his approach to Anglo-Jewry follows the same model. Just as *Waverley* explores the meaning of contemporary obsession with Scottish culture and the violent past that enabled such cultural consumption, so too does *Ivanhoe* provide new insights into England's Jewish past.

By locating Isaac and Rebecca further back into history than Shylock, Scott reverses what Michael Ragussis describes as a parasitic relationship in which *The Merchant of Venice* infects all later texts about Jews. At the same time, revisionist texts (beginning with *Harrington*) reimagine the play and develop strategies for undermining the Shylockian trope (*Figures* 58). Ragussis identifies *Harrington* as the seminal text of Jewish reinterpretation since the inclusion of a performance of *The Merchant of Venice* displaces the possibility of actual Jewish identity and offers up instead a Jewishness available “only in a performance, only through a Christian mediation that confounds and absorbs it” (60). But *Ivanhoe* goes a step further, not merely revealing the artificiality of the Jew in fiction but also itself displacing Shylock as *the* Jew and Jessica as the eager Jewish convert. The setting of the novel hundreds of years before the events of *The Merchant of Venice* ensures this inversion. Isaac and Rebecca become quintessential Anglo-Jews who have a stake in England’s culture and history and who share some beliefs and practices.

Nadia Valman notes that Jewish women are especially important for gauging the conceptual distance between Jews and Christian as “empty signifier[s] onto which fantasies of desire or vengeance are arbitrarily projected” (3) and that Jewish women have the potential for either a “redemptive spirituality” or an extreme “carnality” (1). Conversion resolves this tension by subsuming the Jewess’s dangerous sexuality under the aegis of a Christian husband and relegating carnality to the unconverted other. Stories of benevolent Jews, however, downplay the ambiguity of the Jewess by achieving a synchronicity of Jewish and Christian identity through the interfaith love plot built upon shared values, rather than through conversions that expose the antagonistic relationship between Judaism and Christianity suggested by Jessica’s complete rejection of her father Shylock.

In *Theodore Cyphon* (1796), for example, Hanson legitimizes his marriage to the Jewish Eve by professing a religion that “embraces all sects, countries, and tongues . . . and I do not see why, because I do not think exactly like another, that the affairs of life should be retarded” (203). Cumberland avoided the question of conversion altogether simply by eliminating the role of the daughter, while Edgeworth constructs her plot so that the Jew’s daughter was never really Jewish in the first place. Where Jessica must abandon her Jewish beliefs as well as her familial ties to Shylock, Berenice’s sudden exposure as a Christian demonstrates less a willingness to accept Jews as such, than a means of repositioning Jewishness as already integrated into British identity. Because Berenice continues to have a positive relationship with her Jewish father, the novel rewrites the conversion narrative so that the Jew can retain an active and positive role in Christendom. Scott explicitly rejects the Jewish conversion, but Isaac and Rebecca’s contributions to the establishment of England indicate an ongoing partnership between Jew and Christian that does not call for the erasure of a Jewish stake in England’s future or its religious character. At the same time, Scott recognizes that Jews maintain their religious beliefs and that conversion is not a viable method for rendering them equal.

In each case, the text struggles to overcome the precedent set by Shakespeare, and is at once entrapped and inspired by *The Merchant of Venice*. In *The Merchant of Venice*, Jessica must completely reject her unconverted father and there can be no union between Jew and Christian short of conversion. In Scott’s hands, the conversionist plot takes a dramatic turn when Rebecca refuses to become a Christian because she holds that both religions are distinct and sacred, and that a conversion of convenience, not faith, would tarnish both. Rebecca resists the conventional conversion plot reserved for Jewish daughters, and although this necessitates her

exclusion from English society, it also vindicates Judaism as a valid religion and has tended to endear Rebecca to readers.

Isaac and Rebecca's instrumental role in the action of *Ivanhoe* and their ultimate exclusion from England's future at the novel's end presents a considerable challenge to the reader. In one sense, the novel depicts a fairly typical resolution in which the benevolent Jew who helps restore harmony amongst the Christian heroes is nevertheless excluded from romantic love. But Scott criticizes this structure by inverting the gender of the benevolent Jew. The elder Jewish man on stage typically "offers no sexual threat whatsoever", protects a heroine, and "facilitates her marriage in a Christian family" (Ragussis *Theatrical Nation* 104). By assigning some of this role to Rebecca, who is in fact a potential rival to Rowena, and by having her so adamantly hold on to her religion, Scott rejects the apparent ease with which Jews in fiction are able to resolve the tension between faith and love. Where the Jewish woman is usually converted or not a Jew at all, Scott has left Rebecca still single, still Jewish, and still an object of desire.⁶³

The conversion of the beautiful Jewesses, Scott implies, likely has less to do with religious motives than with legitimizing a forbidden desire for the other. Refusing the conversion establishes "Scott's special position" as a critic of the conversion plot "used by writers of

⁶³ Rebecca's attractiveness lies to a great extent on her otherness that is most evident in her appearance. At the tournament, Rebecca is described in an Orientalist fashion that emphasizes her exotic sexuality:

Her turban of yellow silk suited well with the darkness of her complexion. The brilliancy of her eyes, the superb arch of her eyebrows, her well-formed aquiline nose, her teeth as white as pearl, and the profusion of her sable tresses, which, each arranged in its own little spiral of twisted curls, fell down upon as much of a lovely neck and bosom as a simarre of the richest Persian silk, exhibiting flowers in their natural colours embossed upon a purple ground, permitted to be visible – all thee constrained a combination of loveliness, which yielded not to the most beautiful of the maidens who surrounded her. It is true, that of the golden and pearl-studded clasps, which closed her vest from the throat to the waist, the three uppermost were left unfastened on account of the heat, which something enlarged the prospect to which we allude. A diamond necklace, with pendants of inestimable value, were by this means also made more conspicuous. The feather of an ostrich, fastened in her turban by an agraffe set with brilliants was another distinction of the beautiful Jewess, scoffed and sneered at by the proud dames who sat above her, but secretly envied by those who affected to deride them. (93-94).

Bois-Guilbert abducts Rebecca because of her beauty and only later comes to esteem her character. Likewise, it can be assumed that Rebecca's exotic beauty is a large part of her appeal to Ivanhoe.

English history to construct, regulate, maintain, and erase different racial and national identities” (*Figures* 93). Scott takes a critical look at conversion in a manner that is closely linked to the nostalgic streak in his other writings. Just as in his Scottish novels where native cultures are celebrated at the moment when they are tragically subsumed by new ways of life, so too does Scott regard the conversion or exile of the Jews as an irrevocable loss. Rebecca refuses conversion, yet remains heroic and desirable, thereby undermining the logic of conversion and exposing the sexual motivation behind it. Thackeray’s sequel, *Rebecca and Rowena* (1850), helps to illuminate Scott’s critique of the sexual politics of conversion.

Thackeray describes Ivanhoe and Rowena’s home life after the events of *Ivanhoe* as cold and unloving. Rowena bullies her husband and shames him by “always flinging Rebecca into Ivanhoe’s teeth. There was not a day in his life but that unhappy warrior was made to remember that a Hebrew damsel had been in love with him, and that a Christian lady of fashion could never forgive the insult” (110). Rowena’s early death enables Ivanhoe to pursue his more fervent love for Rebecca, who also longs for the forbidden other, Ivanhoe. When pressed by her Jewish friends and family to choose a Jewish suitor, Rebecca reveals her true feelings:

“I am of *his* religion . . . who saved my life and your honour: of my dear champion’s. . . . Do you think, after knowing him and hearing him speak, -- after watching him wounded on his pillow, and glorious in battle” (her eyes melted and kindled again as she spoke these words), “I can mate with such as *you*? . . . My prayers are his; my faith is his. Yes, my faith is your faith, Wilfred – Wilfred! I have no kindred more, - I am a Christian!” (155).

Rebecca’s proclamation of faith is a statement about her desire for Ivanhoe, not her commitment to his religion. The speech is entirely out of character for Rebecca in *Ivanhoe*, but it satisfies the

desire of many readers who had hoped for the marriage to occur, including Thackeray's narrator who indicates this wish at the beginning of the story.

Rebecca and Rowena is a satire on the more romantic aspects of *Ivanhoe*, but also on the romantic expectations of readers, hence Rebecca's conversion. Thackeray re-enacts Scott's critique of conversion by rewriting the love plot in the form of a Victorian comedy of manners, thereby drawing attention to the ways in which desire is projected onto the past: Rebecca and Ivanhoe can *only* be wed when the story ceases to be historical.⁶⁴ The Rebecca of *Ivanhoe* and the Rebecca who marries Ivanhoe cannot be the same person since the moment Rebecca renounces her faith, she places sexual and romantic desire above religion and thereby loses the integrity of faith that defines her. Scott himself says as much in the Magnum Opus introduction to *Ivanhoe*, observing "that he thinks such a character of a highly virtuous and lofty stamp, is degraded rather than exalted by an attempt to reward virtue with temporal prosperity" (12).

Although Rebecca excludes herself from England's future, adaptations of the novel such as Thackeray's reinsert her into England's past, and in the many stage versions of *Ivanhoe*, "nowhere is there an explicit reference to the exile of Isaac and Rebecca in Spain and so their ultimate fate in the midst of national reconciliation is left undetermined" (Rigney *Afterlives* 99). As Anne Rigney has demonstrated, reinterpretations of the story struggle to take up the challenge of the novel's ending. Rebecca cannot realistically be converted, nor can her exile mar the plays' resolutions. Leaving out or making ambiguous the Jews' exile opens up the book of history and follows through on Scott's invitation to welcome Jews into the English nation by acknowledging their place in its past. Thackeray's revision in which Rebecca converts and marries Ivanhoe is especially important because it posits the disappointing result of this impossible marriage in the

⁶⁴ There is much to be said on how Thackeray satirizes Scott's historical fiction more generally in *Rebecca and Rowena*, such as how a true sense of the past is impossible because the past is only understood in terms of contemporary cultures, but this requires much more discussion than is possible or relevant here.

flat concluding sentence of *Rebecca and Rowena*: “Of some sort of happiness melancholy is a characteristic, and I think these were a solemn pair, and died rather early” (158). After the conversion and marriage, there is nothing left of any interest about Rebecca. In effect, *Ivanhoe*’s critics and adapters project a desire to change history and undo past prejudice, but are left with a conundrum of desiring what is Jewish, yet requiring conversion to justify this desire. If Christianity is the universalization of Judaism (as Benjamin Disraeli, George Eliot, Matthew Arnold and others would later assert), then the converted Jew is no longer Jewish at all, and the values, including literary ones, associated with Jewishness are therefore lost.

Because it anticipated these contradictory impulses in accepting Jewishness, in addition to depicting an unprecedented degree of complexity in its Jewish figures, *Ivanhoe* achieved a level of influence in Jewish characterization that for the first time rivalled *The Merchant of Venice*. Every prior benevolent Jew takes Shylock as its immediate inspiration, but Victorian Jewish characters just as often take Isaac and Rebecca as their models. Spiritual sequels to *Ivanhoe*, in which the role of Jews in other major historical periods is similarly explored, seize upon Scott’s powerful combination of historical sensibility and insight into unique Jewish experience. *Ivanhoe* provides a perspective of the Jewish people’s tenuous relationship to national identities that becomes the new primary focus in nineteenth-century depictions of Jews.

Taken together, *Harrington* and *Ivanhoe* represent major developments in the depiction of Jewish characters. The combined weight of historical legitimacy, religious sincerity, and personal dignity attributed to Jews in these works left a far greater impact on later characterizations of Jews than did the innovative but superficially Jewish characters of the Gothic and sentimental narratives. The following chapter explores how Victorian novelists, following from Scott’s lead, consider more deeply how the Jewish role in the European past has

influenced the present. *Ivanhoe* posits a Jewish right to participate in the future of Britain, but also notes a clear demarcation between Jews and other peoples. Scott's imitators in turn attempt to determine the nature and extent of this division, with a particular interest in separating out what is Jewish from what is Christian or European.

Chapter Five

Neither complete cultural insiders within England's national boundaries nor colonial others, depictions of English Jews do not fit neatly into the study of the novel's role in imagining national identity. Jewish discourse is central to such discussions, however, not only because of the political issues raised by the presence of the Jewish people living in the British Isles and British Colonies in the nineteenth century, but because of the sheer abundance of Jewish discourse in novels from this period. (Kaufman 2)

The Chosen People have been commonly treated as a people chosen for the sake of somebody else; and their thinking as something (no matter exactly what) that ought to have been entirely otherwise; and Deronda, like his neighbors, had regarded Judaism as a sort of eccentric fossilized form which an accomplished man might dispense with studying, and leave to specialists. But Mirah, with her terrified flight from one parent, and her yearning after the other, had flashed on him the hitherto neglected reality that Judaism was something still throbbing in human lives, still making for them the only conceivable vesture of the world. (*Daniel Deronda* 306)

Anglo-Jews, or Jews in England?

Harrington can be regarded as the culmination of an era in Jewish portrayal that sought to investigate the truth about Jewish stereotypes and to revise Jewish tropes to suit a multi-ethnic British public. Edgeworth makes her characters' Jewishness an unfortunate accident of birth and a trait that ultimately has little bearing on character, but Scott challenges this notion of an immaterial Jewishness by reminding readers that Jews carry a burden of history that shapes their present character. Rebecca refuses to remain in England because her identification with her people's past encourages her feeling that assimilation, while tempting, would be a betrayal of her Jewish identity. Her decision to leave for the relative safety Jews can find in Spain evokes the impending expulsion of the Jews from England in 1290, a century after the events of *Ivanhoe*. But even though Scott posits a Jewish antipathy to English and Christian culture, the novel takes an interest in Jews mainly as participants in the shaping of an English national identity. He positions Jews as key players in the English past, but does not consider what the events of *Ivanhoe* indicate about *Jewish* history.

Ivanhoe chronicles the role of Jews in the shaping of the English nation and considers at least how Jews ought to be more included in the nation that they helped found. The love plot that typically joins warring factions in Scott's novels here fails since Ivanhoe and Rebecca do not marry. This frustrated affair in turn inspired numerous stories that further explore the Jewish role in European history. These texts also re-enact Scott's use of the language of debt and repayment idealized in Ivanhoe's recognition of what he owes to Isaac and Rebecca. The disregard for these debts typified by most of *Ivanhoe*'s other characters indicates the injustice of failing to recognize the Jews' role in England's past, though Scott acknowledges that in recent history Britain had begun to make amends for this forgetfulness. *Ivanhoe* thus performs a double function of making Jews British, and of registering the several other texts engaging with Anglo-Jewish themes on which the novel builds. The most significant of these is of course Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*. Isaac and Rebecca's parallels to Shylock and Jessica are so numerous and well documented that they do not warrant discussion here⁶⁵.

But in addition to the direct reinterpretation of *The Merchant of Venice*, Scott obliquely references two additional plays that sought to represent Jews as positive figures. Isaac says that his brother Sheva has access to his business (368), invoking Cumberland's benevolent Jew Sheva. Scott also presents the more developed figure of Rabbi Nathan Ben Israel/Ben Samuel, a character possibly influenced by G.E. Lessing's play, *Nathan the Wise* (1779), whose English adaptation also inspired Cumberland's play *The Jew*.⁶⁶ *Nathan the Wise* supports an idealistic

⁶⁵ Brewer Wilmon's *Shakespeare's Influence on Sir Walter Scott* provides a detailed account of the relevant borrowings.

⁶⁶ Like *Ivanhoe*, *Nathan the Wise* takes place during the third crusade, but in Jerusalem. The main theme of the play is religious toleration between Jews, Muslims, and Christians and the plot follows a romance involving Nathan's daughter and a templar. At the end of the play, it is revealed that, Recha, Nathan's adopted daughter, is the templar's brother, and the sultan Saladin is their uncle. The confusion of religious and national identities invades a single family and this figuratively mirrors the close family relationship between the three Abrahamic religions. The incestuous love plot that is only barely avoided reminds us that Judaism, Christianity, and Islam cannot be fully reconciled to each other, and this danger of the mixing of race and religion underscores *Ivanhoe*, certainly, but

transcendence of religious difference in favour of ties based on universal humanity. The character Nathan in *Ivanhoe* functions differently as he instead affirms essential differences between Jews and Christians.

Nathan plays a minor role in *Ivanhoe*, but his interaction with Isaac is a very rare instance of non-familial, intra-Jewish relationships as theirs is perhaps the first prolonged instance of conversation between Jewish men in English fiction. These scenes allow Scott to imagine, if only briefly and superficially, a Jewish community and to portray Jewish behaviour that is unmediated by a non-Jewish presence (ignoring the complication that this scene is written by a non-Jewish writer for a largely non-Jewish readership). In his first conversation with the rabbi, Isaac projects an air of forthright confidence that contrasts with his submissive manner in the presence of non-Jews. Isaac and Nathan discuss broader political issues, such as the arrival of the Papal agent Beaumanoir in England, having access to such knowledge through their continental relations (380-82). Nathan also heals Isaac's wounds, demonstrating "kindness which the [Jewish] law prescribed, and which the Jews practiced to each other" (380). In the second conversation between Isaac and Nathan (this time surnamed Ben Samuel), the rabbi offers advice and support to Isaac. At both times, the language of the Jews is less formal and draws more extensively on Biblical allusions than in conversations with the other characters. This imagination of Jewish community members who relate to each other in terms distinct from outsiders is mostly absent from texts before *Ivanhoe*, but receives some attention in later works, even before *Daniel Deronda* (1876), notably in Bulwer-Lytton's *Leila* (1838) and Benjamin Disraeli's *Tancred* (1847).

becomes increasingly overt in later nineteenth-century novels that more directly consider the shared history of Occident and Orient, particularly in Scott's *The Surgeon's Daughter* (1826) and Edward Bulwer-Lytton's *Leila* (1838).

Scott carefully references Nathan and Sheva as key precursors to his own Jewish character, and Isaac and Rebecca are in turn models for a number of further adaptations of the benevolent Jew. Nevertheless, a counter-tradition of increasingly negative portrayals persists after *Ivanhoe*, among the most notorious of which include Fagin, the Jewish scoundrel of Dickens's *Oliver Twist* (1838), and the numerous avaricious, cruel, and duplicitous Jews in Anthony Trollope's novels.⁶⁷ The familiarity of these types distracts, however, from the more dramatic changes in Jewish characterization wrought in response to *Ivanhoe*. Scott builds on the benevolent Jew trope, but goes beyond attempts to describe Jews as either benevolent or malevolent, expanding the discussion of Jewishness to include broader and more complex terms relating to the Jews' national, historical, and communal status.

Rebecca's exile at the end of *Ivanhoe* and the injustice it represents was evocative in relation to the "Jewish question", an ongoing nineteenth-century debate about the appropriate status of Jews in European societies. Thomas Babington Macaulay assumed that England had Hebraic roots when in 1833 he argued that Jews should be allowed to serve in political office, since "a legislature composed of Christians and Jews should legislate for a community composed of Christians and Jews" (qtd in Himmelfarb 33-34). Macaulay's assertion that modern Britain was both Christian and Jewish was perhaps not shared by many, but his conception of such a political body owed much to the idea in *Ivanhoe* that the Jews left an impact on the development of English society. Simone Beate Borgstede describes a similar example of how perceptions of Jewish influence in the past affected policy when, in 1847, the Unitarian minister and activist William Johnson Fox championed the rights of dissenters and defended the Jews' right to "citizenship because their 'moral law' had contributed to that of Britain" (35).

⁶⁷ Fagin's Jewishness is incidental, largely because the real-life criminal upon whom Fagin is based, Ikey Solomons, was Jewish. Dickens later changed references to the character as "the Jew" to "Fagin" in response to an acquaintance's complaint (Julius 203).

On the opposite end of the debates about Jewish enfranchisement was the Earl of Shaftesbury who opposed the removal of restrictions on Jews, but who nevertheless championed Jewish causes in Europe and the Middle East, including his advocacy in 1853 for granting the Jews territory in Palestine (Himmelfarb 38-39). Shaftesbury claimed to have “the highest regard for Jews, not only as potential Christians but also as Jews”, even if he did not regard Jews as deserving the rights of full British citizens (Himmelfarb 39-40). Shaftesbury’s equivocal position on Jews and his belief that Jews needed their own political centre separate from any other host nation characterize a common attitude toward Jews that plays out in nineteenth-century fiction. After *Ivanhoe*, texts regularly seem to take for granted the humanity, perhaps even the religious sincerity, of Jews. With this premise entrenched, ensuing questions of Jewish nationalism and the history of Jews in Europe take advantage of Scott’s use of historical fiction to upset accepted beliefs in religiously and ethnically stable national identities.

Heidi Kaufman accords Jews special relevance as literary figures that have the potential to disrupt nationalist ideology. Revealing the “intertwined and overlapping” contexts of British and Jewish discourse in nineteenth-century texts in turn allowed non-Jewish cultures “to gain by imagining their own history and culture as emerging from or intertwined with a Jewish past” (2). At the same time, the notion of a shared European and Jewish past was often deemed absurd or disturbing, so attempts were also made to disentangle past relationships with Jews. These efforts typically rely on characterizing Judaism as a primitive religion and its practitioners as having failed to develop into Christians (Kaufman 18). Acknowledgements of the debt owed by modern Christians to Jewish culture and attempts to distinguish Christendom from its Jewish roots are therefore prominent in nineteenth-century discussions of Jews.

Novels that take part in these discussions tend to extend sympathy to Jews, but also assert that Jews are and will remain distinct from their host cultures. Such works, whether implicitly or explicitly, tend to advocate for the establishment of an independent Jewish political body, usually in Palestine. Though the Zionist impulse of *Daniel Deronda* may seem like an uncanny chance, or the result of George Eliot's thorough immersion into Jewish culture and belief, her protagonists' decision to effect a Jewish return arises just as much from Eliot's place as a novelist building upon fictions detailing the Jews' unique history in Europe and their involvement in its political affairs.⁶⁸ Indeed, England's role in the formation of the modern Zionist movement can be traced back to this literary trend. *Daniel Deronda* marks the culmination of a long period of consideration of Jewish political affairs and the historical relationship between Jews and Britain that can be dated at the latest to the publication of *Ivanhoe*.⁶⁹ In order to demonstrate this link from *Ivanhoe* to *Daniel Deronda*, several novels that similarly investigate the Jewish role in European history are here discussed. These are Scott's *The Surgeon's Daughter*, which takes advantage of Jewish tropes to comment on British colonialism; Edward Bulwer-Lytton's *Leila*, which examines the role of Jews during the fall of Granada; and Benjamin Disraeli's *Tancred*, which emphasizes the Jewish influence on Christian and Muslim societies alike.

⁶⁸ Bernard Semmel's suggestion that Eliot's sympathy derived from her belief that she may have had some Jewish ancestry (117-118), whether plausible or not, implies that *only* an author with some personal stake in Jewish portrayal could be motivated to write such a text. This assessment of Eliot's motivation diminishes the importance of Eliot's antecedents, who certainly were not descended from any Jews, in shaping her Jewish novel.

⁶⁹ Millenarian theology also promoted the establishment of a Jewish state, in Palestine, but as the ultimate aim of such a return was Jewish conversion and the second coming of Christ, it would be anachronistic to compare this movement to Scott's more empirical and non-messianic view of English-Jewish relations.

Jewish Self-Fashioning in the Imperial Context: Scott's *The Surgeon's Daughter*

Scott took up his own challenge to consider modern Jews in light of their historical connection to England and Europe in the third of his *Tales of the Canongate*, *The Surgeon's Daughter* (1826), a thematic sequel to *Ivanhoe* that further investigates the multi-ethnic and multi-faith quality of Britain. *Ivanhoe* is set at the earliest historical period in Scott's oeuvre, while *The Surgeon's Daughter* takes place in the recent past of the late eighteenth century. The former considers the influence of "foreign" cultures at the beginning of English history, and the latter investigates the cultural violence incidental to British imperial conquest in the present, especially in terms of the rupture of stable identity categories precipitated by imperialism. *The Surgeon's Daughter* follows the fate of Richard Middlemass beginning from his birth when his Portuguese Jewish mother, Zilia de Moncada, is forced to leave him in the care of a kindly Scottish country doctor in order to appease the wrath of her father who objects to the boy's father, a Catholic Jacobite rebel. The boy grows up longing for a connection with his biological family. His only knowledge of them is that his wealthy grandfather funds his education and maintenance. The doctor, Gideon Gray, insists, however, that Richard consider his future and not imagine that his high born parents will ever claim him.

Scott early in the novel distances Middlemass's faults from his Jewish roots alone, as Dr. Gray's friend, Lawson, offers a defense of Jews in response to Mrs. Gray's disgust at finding out that Zilia was Jewish:

The Jews are often very respectable people, Mrs. Gray; they have no territorial property, because the law is against them there, but they have a good bank in the money market – plenty of stock in the funds, Mrs. Gray; and, indeed, I think this poor young woman is better with her ain father, though he be a Jew and a dour chield into

the bargain, than she would have been with the loon that wranged her, who is, by your account, Dr. Gray, baith a Papist and a rebel. The Jews are well attached to government; they hate the Pope, the Devil, and the Pretender as much as any honest man among ourselves. (175)

Lawson regards Jewishness as a redemptive quality for child and mother alike since it can be taken for granted that Jews are loyal subjects and their religious views are at least less offensive than the Catholicism of the father. Although Jewishness is here defended, the novel later draws symbolically on several traits typically associated with Jews, such as Richard's dissipation and his uncertain affiliations.

The question of the Jews' loyalty is especially important in this text because Middlemass's later actions seem to undermine Lawson's claims that Jews are potentially ideal British citizens. The contradiction can be resolved because Richard is not wholly Jewish. His mother, Zilia, instead stands in the story as the more authentic version of Jewishness. Her sense of responsibility to her son, her commitment to her Jewish background, and her motherly influence actually grant the possibility, though never realized, for Richard's reform.

Before her death, Zilia writes a letter in which she promises her son monetary support. She also apologizes for her past actions and beseeches Richard to be better and to remember their spiritual connection to each other: "the love of a mother! Is it bounded by seas, or can deserts and distance measure its limits? Oh, child of my sorrow! Oh, Benoni! Let thy spirit be with mine, as mine is with thee" (241). The Biblical allusions confirm Zilia's connection to Judaism, while the passion of the letter, Richard's friend Hartley believes, will cure Richard of his delusions of grandeur. The narrator confirms that the letter has at least some effect, as "Richard's heart had been formed of the nether millstone, had he not been duly affected by these first and last tokens

of his mother's affection. He leant his head upon a table, and his tears flowed plentifully" (241). This Biblical phrasing ("tears flowed plentifully") can be taken as Richard's partial re-absorption into his Jewish heritage. The mother's love and the influence of Hartley fail to cure Richard completely of his desires, however, and he returns to his mercenary ways.

Middlemass's fractured relationship to his familial and national background, and not simply his Jewishness, more clearly unsettles his character. After listening to his nurse's fanciful recounting of the events that led to his adoption, Richard envisions a fantastical future for himself:

He was interested with the idea of his valiant father coming for him unexpectedly at the head of a great regiment, with music playing and colours flying, and carrying his son away on the most beautiful pony eyes ever beheld; or his mother, bright as the day, might suddenly appear in her coach-and-six, to reclaim her beloved child; or his repentant grandfather, with his pockets stuffed out with bank-notes, would come to atone for his past cruelty, by heaping his neglected grandchild with unexpected wealth.

(180)

These early visions of greatness play upon idealizations of the characters – the father's military splendour recalls *Waverley's* fascination with the charismatic Bonnie Prince Charlie in *Waverley*, and the Jewish grandfather's repentance and sharing of wealth is a conversionist fantasy. The mother's beauty is not exoticised here, partly because Richard doesn't know that she is Jewish, but Richard is a hodgepodge of foreign elements and it is fitting that he finds a retired Scottish country life unbearable.⁷⁰ Thwarted in his desire for parental recognition, Richard instead envisions a romantic future by becoming a soldier in India "where gold is won

⁷⁰ Zilia is elsewhere described in an Oriental fashion as when Dr. Gray first looks upon "the peculiar style of her beautiful countenance" and reflects on her speech, "the very sounds and accents of which were strange" (166).

by steel” (198). His love of both wealth and military glory are by his own admission the legacy of his forefathers: “I have a natural turn for India, and so I ought. My father was a soldier . . . and gave me the love of sword, and an arm to use one. My mother’s father was a rich trafficker, who loved wealth, I warrant me, and knew how to get it” (199). Richard’s corruption is evident in his decision to take advantage of the soldiering life, which the novel implies ought to be pursued for more noble reasons rather than as a means of acquiring wealth and glory.

Richard’s hopes are dashed once again when his friend Tom Hillary tricks him into enlisting so that Tom can rob him, and then leave him to die of disease in a military hospital. The plot is discovered by Richard’s childhood rival Adam Hartley, now serving as a navy doctor, who alerts General Witherington of the situation and recommends Richard as an officer. As Hartley tells the general about Richard, various clues are dropped to the reader that Witherington and his wife are actually Richard’s parents, Richard and Zilia Tresham, who have changed their names in order to hide the infamy of their past. Recognizing that Richard may be his lost son, Witherington requests a meeting with Middlemass to ensure that this is the case. Richard, having no inkling of the true identity of the general and his wife, disparages his unknown father when questioned about his past. The shock of the meeting and Richard’s criticisms cause Zilia to faint away dead (after first performing a frantic piano solo that Scott’s notes insist is based on a true story). In a rage, the General reveals to Richard their true relationship: “see you not my hair streaming with sulphur, my brow scathed with lightning? – I am the Arch-Fiend – I am the father whom you seek – I am the accursed Richard Tresham, the seducer of Zilia, and the father of her murderer. . . . My son, thou art the fiend who hast occasioned my wretchedness in this world, and who will share my eternal misery in the next. Hence from my sight, and my curse go with thee!” (233).

This Gothic outburst is a strange digression from the more realistic and historical framework of the tale, but appropriate as Richard's own patchwork ethno-religious origins manifest through a complementary disruption in generic constructs. Molly Youngkin argues that despite criticisms of the novel's apparently poor structure, including its failure to adequately connect the Scottish and Indian halves of the tale, Richard's Jewishness actually provides a thematic link between England, Scotland, and India that resolves such apparent disunity. Youngkin deems Richard a variant of the colonized other since his Jewishness is stripped from him at birth and he is taught, like the subaltern, to mimic his colonial superiors. Richard displaces the colonized Indians in the story, particularly since he later adopts their clothes and manners (39). Richard's divided origins therefore speak to the confusion of identities and cultures that devolve from imperial rule.

This chaos of identity can also be linked to Jewishness that is often taken as a symbol for all otherness, a point that Judith Page makes in her comparison of Frankenstein's monster to Jews, since the physical traits ascribed to both made them "difficult to integrate into civilized society" (10). Frank Felsenstein also makes this connection when he questions whether the monster can be taken as a Jewish figure. At the very least, the monster's antagonism with his creator can be read symbolically as an ideological conflict in which the monster embodies a variety of qualities also attributed to Jews (157-162). Fittingly, the moment of confrontation between father and son in *The Surgeon's Daughter* borrows heavily from a similar moment in *Frankenstein* (1818) when Victor first meets his creation: "Abhorred monster! Fiend that thou art! The tortures of hell are too mild a vengeance for thy crimes. Wretched devil! You reproach me with your creation" (Shelley 126). Witherington's description of his son as an "Arch Fiend" and "Wretch" in particular echo the phrasing of *Frankenstein*, and the use of a high-Biblical oratory in both texts

confirms a Jewish connection. Understood in this way as a jumbled identity, Jewishness is linked to Middlemass's uncertain affiliations. This instability begins in a small Scottish village, but spills over into India, eventually impacting colonial relations in a significant way.

After the meeting with his father, Richard finally makes his way to India as a soldier, where he soon kills his superior officer in a duel of honour regarding Richard's parentage. After deserting the army, he later re-emerges as a spy in Tipoo Ali's inner circle.⁷¹ Hartley discovers that Middlemass has disguised himself as an Arab Muslim and intends to assassinate the Mysore leader. To get close to Tipoo, Richard attempts to procure for him Menie Gray, the Doctor's daughter and the love interest of both Richard and Hartley. Hartley, with the help of a local Fakir, therefore warns the prince of Richard's treachery and Richard is executed. Tipoo's father Hyder Ali rewards Hartley, but promises vengeance on the British, and Scott reminds readers of the history of "how dreadfully the Nawaub kept this promise, and how he and his son afterwards sunk before the discipline and bravery of the Europeans" (285).

Because *The Surgeon's Daughter* is Scott's only tale set in India, the central role of a Jewish character should not be read as merely accidental. Richard's ability to pass as an Indian is inherently related to his Jewishness. Richard's ability to act as an intermediary between cultures symptomizes the breakdown of clear ethnic and cultural boundaries. This erasure of ethnic distinctiveness manifests most clearly when Richard appears in disguise in India. Richard's mentor in espionage is an Italian woman, Madame Montreville. She is a monstrous voluptuary whose love of power grants her a capacity for extreme cruelty and it is she who suggests the plot to abduct Menie Gray. Like Richard, Montreville adopts an Oriental guise that displaces actual

⁷¹ Claire Lamont's notes to the *Tales of the Canongate* provide a detailed summary of the relevant historical contexts. Lamont dates the climax of the novel to the mid-1770s, between the first and second Mysore wars, conflicts instigated by Haidar Ali, a Muslim leader who usurped the power from the Hindu Rajah of Mysore and led a successful campaign against the British from 1767-69. Haidar died in 1782 during a second campaign, and was succeeded by his son, who was eventually defeated in 1799 (Lamont 359).

Indians in the novel. Her name, like Richard's patchwork identity, is intimately linked to monstrosity and indicates the enormity Europeans are capable of in the service of Empire.⁷²

Youngkin notes the moral justification of empire through the example of the Jewish subject when she argues that Middlemass stands in for the Indian other in *The Surgeon's Daughter*, enabling a discussion of Indian rule that ignores the existence of the eastern other: "By displacing Dick into the Indian setting, Scott universalizes the Other in a way that prevents any rigorous critique of imperialism and impedes any significant representation of the Indian colonized subject" (39-40). Hartley serves as a moral counterpoint to Richard's extravagance and his cooperation with the Fakir seems to support a perceived British right, even responsibility, to rule India. Zilia calls Hartley "the guardian angel of us all", positioning Hartley the representative British figure and as a moral authority.

While Youngkin sees the novel as an apologetic for empire, J.M. Rignall argues the opposite, that *The Surgeon's Daughter* is a nearly anti-colonial text since the Indian encounter leaves everyone in a worse position than they would otherwise be in. Even Hartley, the good soldier and voice of conscience, dies of infection and never marries Menie Gray. Although Hartley acts according to the best principles, his role in the subjugation of native populations by necessity condemns him. Scott, Rignall observes, avoids the adventurous plots common in novels of empire, rejecting especially their idealistic conclusions. Instead, Scott's "imagination works sceptically and critically on the exercise of power and privilege. In so far as his novels engage directly or indirectly with imperial ambitions, their formal devices, characteristic motifs and symbolic structures interrogate rather than endorse notions of empire and the practice of empire-builders" (13). Accordingly, the Indian campaign that was meant to bring Middlemass wealth and glory has in fact brought him only infamy and death. As Richard's desires are shaped

⁷² Since "monster" derives from the French "montre".

by his fractured background, his failures demonstrate the potential harm that alienation from a communal past can bring – a notion once again borrowed from *Frankenstein*. As an individual cut off from his family, Middlemass is an apt figure to exemplify the dangers of imperial domination that damages conqueror and conquered alike. The worst aspects of both combine in Madame Montreville and Middlemass, violent and amoral individuals who see the foreign space as a forum for gaining and exercising power.

His anxieties about origins motivate Richard to take advantage of the imperial project to refashion himself, as do his parents by adopting new names and hiding their non-English, non-Protestant backgrounds. Empire enables these radical erasures of the past, but as the events of the story show, the past returns with a vengeance and the intercultural politics of Britain are not forgotten, but merely transported to India, manifesting in new and dangerous ways. India's already tense religious rivalries between Hindus, Muslims, and the British intensify due to Richard's further destabilization when he disguises himself in order to work his political manipulations. As Rignall demonstrates, the greatest defender of empire in the novel is Tom Hillary, whose statement in favour of an Indian adventure ironically exposes the "brutality, greed, and racial prejudice" that "severely qualifies the blandly approving historical portrait of the [East India] Company". Furthermore, the "clearly implied moral criticism of the scramble for loot" is deepened by the "symbolic patterning" of the story in which the Indian frontier is a place for "young men without patrimony" to reveal their true moral character (Rignall 19). Middlemass's actions inspire Hyder Ali's wrath, demonstrating that colonialism is inevitably infected by the self-interest of the individuals who use empire to justify their own amoral behaviour and that such behaviour results in violence.

In *The Surgeon's Daughter*, Scott takes the opportunity to build on his portraits of Jews from *Ivanhoe* and to think more deeply about what the idea of Jews can indicate about modern Britain. Instead of trying to bridge the gap between Jew and Christian as *Ivanhoe* had done, *The Surgeon's Daughter* takes the humanity and religious sincerity of the average Jew for granted, leaving Scott free to consider other facets of Jewishness to help make his claims about inter-cultural politics that, while a complicated challenge in British India, were just as problematic in Britain. Richard is an unstable element, not quite fully British, not fully Jewish even, and not an Indian native at all. Yet, he is able to tap into any of these identities while abroad to further his selfish aims, all while justifying himself through claims of British loyalty. Throughout, Richard's anxiety first to reclaim his roots and then to live as if he has none motivates his actions. By implication, this uncertain sense of the past and its relation to identity is endemic in modern Britain and exacerbated by imperial conquest that further blends cultures.

Jewish Independence: Edward Bulwer Lytton's *Leila*

Middlemass's apparently divided loyalties largely derive from his fragmented identity, but his Jewishness can potentially be regarded as influencing his selfish characterization, particularly as the modern Jews' history in Europe, including their transnational community, was sometimes used to implicate the uncertainty of Jewish loyalty to host nations. Scott downplays such readings when Lawson defends Jewish patriots, but Edward Bulwer-Lytton addresses the doubtfulness of Jewish political affiliation and implies that Jews in general might be prone to manipulating host cultures to their own advantage. Lytton's historical novel *Leila* (1838) owes much to *Ivanhoe*, but although Lytton pays lip service to portraying Jews sympathetically and recognizing the validity of Jewish religion, *Leila* more often adapts negative stereotypes of Jews

to demonstrate why they are out of place in Christian or Muslim nations. *Leila* can be read as a spiritual sequel to *Ivanhoe* since it imagines what might be the fate of Rebecca's descendants in Granada. Rebecca's assumption of finding better security there is early proven false, because "at that time, the moors of Spain were far more deadly persecutors of the Jews than the Christians were" (Lytton 639).

Set during the last days before the Spanish conquest of Granada, *Leila* follows the story of a Jewish man named Almamen, who, hiding his religion, has risen to the position of king Boabdil's closest advisor by preying on his superstitions, claiming to be a wizard. At the same time that Almamen manipulates the Moorish king, he offers strategic information to the Spanish invaders whom he thinks will likely defeat the Moors. In all his political manoeuvres, Almamen's singular goal is to protect Jewish interests, but he also revels in the violence between Muslims and Christians as a just revenge for both sides' ill treatment of Jews. *Leila* demonstrates the degree of persecution Jews experience in Granada, and explains why Jews have assumed a mercantile character. When Almamen criticizes Boabdil's treatment of Jews, Boabdil claims that their treatment is deserved:

"The base misers! they deserve their fate," answered Boabdil, loftily. "Gold is their god, and the market-place their country; amidst the tears and groans of nations, they sympathize only with the rise and fall of trade; and, the thieves of the universe! While their hand is against every man's coffer, why wonder that they provoke the hand of every man against their throats?"

...

"Your laws leave them no ambition but avarice," replied Almamen; "and as the plant will crook and distort its trunk, to raise its head through every obstacle to the sun, so

the mind of man twists and perverts itself, if legitimate openings are denied it, to find its nourishment in the gale of power, or the sunshine of natural esteem. These Hebrews were not traffickers and misers in their own sacred land when they routed your ancestors, the Arab armies of old". (632)

Almamen here echoes Rebecca in his reference to the ancient Israelitis military prowess. But despite this apparently supportive introduction to the theme of Jewry in the novel, Lytton tends rather to diminish the idea of Jews as undeserving sufferers, instead characterizing all the Jewish characters, with the exception of Almamen's daughter Leila, as despicable in some way, though many of the Moorish and Spanish characters are equally demonized.

The narrator describes the Jews in general as hapless victims of a greater conflict, but when the attention turns to individual Jews, they are described as crafty, greedy, and cruel. Almamen's Jewish servant Ximen is a particularly vicious character who hates his master and lusts after his wealth. Elias, a wealthy merchant and a leader of the Jewish community, sympathizes with Almamen's goals and claims even to have encouraged his rise to power, believing Almamen "would work mighty things for his poor brethren" and that "amid these differences between dog and dog . . . the lion may get his own" (684, 677). But Elias's greed ultimately wins out over his ambitions when, after seeing Almamen's plans fail repeatedly, he conspires with Ximen to expose Almamen to Boabdil, and thus take hold of his property. The plan backfires when Elias is himself killed by anti-Jewish rioters once Almamen's treachery to the king is exposed.

One of the novel's last words on Jews comes from Almamen himself, who reduces the Jewishness of his less fanatical brethren to a bare stereotype: "'are ye Jews?' said Almamen. 'Ah, yes! I know ye now – things of the marketplace and bazaar! Oh, ye are Jews indeed!'"

(705). Jews, the narrative tells us, cannot be trusted even amongst each other because of their mercenary desires and clandestine ways. When the exceptional Jew Almamen condemns his brethren as debased merchants, Lytton confirms Boabdil's earlier claims about Jewish greed and collapses Judaism into its most familiar trope.

Even Almamen is violent and duplicitous in his dealings with non-Jews, acting in this regard more like Barabas or Shylock than like Isaac, and this would seem to indicate a backsliding into the old stereotypes. Yet Almamen, for all his terrible fury, retains some of the softness of Isaac or of Kean's Shylock because of his internalization of Jewish suffering and because his desire for the vindication of all Jews makes him much more than a violent enemy of non-Jews. Furthermore, the actions of both the Moors and the Spanish justify his hatred. King Ferdinand, for example, after having signed a contract with Almamen promising Jews equal rights after the Spanish conquest, tells his priest that the notion of "insolent blasphemers" possessing equal rights is ridiculous, and that the church must nullify the agreement (640).

The Spanish are portrayed throughout *Leila* as duplicitous and bloodthirsty fanatics, but Lytton also suggests that the Moors are equally dangerous to the Jews. This is demonstrated most clearly when the general population of Jews in some towns renounce "the neutrality they had hitherto maintained between Christian and Moslem" and fight alongside the Moors (682). In response, Ferdinand reveals the details of the contract Almamen had signed in which he promised to betray the Moors. In turn, the Moorish leaders "always distrusting their allies" turn against the Jews on the suspicion that they want to raise an independent army fighting for their own interests (683). Clearly, such was not the intention of these Jews, especially since Almamen's contract was completely unknown to them. But Lytton here emphasizes that Moorish distrust and Catholic zeal are equally dangerous to the Jews who are inevitably caught in the

middle and have no security amongst either group. For all his criticism of Jewish avarice and self-interest, the Jews' ill-treatment at the hands of the Moors and the Spanish alike justifies their behaviour to some extent.

Lytton attributes to the Jewish and Christian characters a degree of religious hypocrisy that further condemns them. The narrator characterizes Almamen's desire for revenge as a tragic flaw that blinds him to more positive iterations of Jewishness: "Perhaps, had his religion been prosperous and powerful, he might have been a sceptic; persecution and affliction made him a fanatic. Yet . . . Almamen desired rather to advance, than to obey, his religion" (639). Almamen inculcates in his daughter Leila an appreciation for the mysteries of the universe, but because he also conceals from her any specifically *Jewish* religious teaching, she is only "a Jewess in name . . . a deist in belief" (669). Almamen's failure to teach Leila about Jewish views of the afterlife is seized upon in particular by Donna Inez, Leila's convertor, as the weak point through which to target her for conversion. Almamen's desire for the continuity of Judaism rather than his belief in its theology explains Leila's susceptibility. Inez is likewise depicted as insincere when, believing that exposing Leila to Christian sectarianism might discourage her from converting, "the wise and gentle instrument of Leila's conversion . . . forebore too vehemently to point out the distinctions of the several creeds, and rather suffered them to melt insensibly one into the other" (669). Lytton juxtaposes Almamen's dismissive approach to Jewish belief with Donna Inez's elision of Christian heterodoxy so that even as conversion becomes central to the narrative, Lytton implies that Catholicism and Judaism are virtually indistinguishable, a sentiment that Leila at least shares: although "Leila was a Christian, she still believed herself a Jewess" (669).

Almamen and Inez's factionalism indicate that religious affiliation, divorced from particularities of belief and practice, leads to violent confrontation. Boabdil's religious beliefs are dismissed as ignorant superstition, particularly since he believes that his impending defeat is foretold. Lytton defends neither Spaniard nor Moor in the novel, but nor does he position Jews as voices of modernity, as Scott had done. Scott sought to reconcile foreign cultures in the birth of the English nation, and made Jews the perfect intermediaries, but Lytton does the opposite. By rendering the Jews victims and gadflies to both Spaniard and Moor, Jews in *Leila* are rather a fifth column with circumstantial loyalties. Instead of working to resolve the Moorish-Spanish conflict, Almamen inflames it.

Lytton questions Scott's belief in the Jewish contribution to European cultures through this depiction of the siege of Granada, a seminal event in European history with regard to East-West relations and a moment rich in symbolic memory. The Jewish community leaders in *Leila* discuss the political situation as if the Jewish players have an influence equal to that of the Moors and Spaniards, whose court and counsel sessions are also featured in the novel. Lytton thus assigns a separate set of interests to the Jews that necessarily opposes them to the novel's other factions. Lytton puts particular stress on the incompatibility of Jewish interests with those of either the Moors or the Spanish since Almamen believes that the Jews can achieve power by working *against* both warring parties. Initially, the other Jews support him, even though they are quick to disown him when the plan starts to fail.

The Jews' actions in the novel suggest that Jews have communal interests that distinguish them from Christians and Muslims alike. Lytton's investigation into the religious and national character of the modern European nation leaves Jews with no place at all in Europe, or in Muslim controlled territories. As an historical narrative, *Leila* acknowledges the difficulty Jews

have had in becoming an accepted part of any culture since they have been victimized by Christians and Muslims alike. Perhaps Jews have fared better in Protestant Britain, but Lytton demonstrates that Jews constitute a completely separate culture which cannot be absorbed to positive effect for either them or their host nations. By setting the Jews up as an independent faction, Lytton addresses the question of whether the time has come for the reestablishment of a Jewish homeland. Almamem at one point asks Elias “how can Israel be restored,” more likely referring to the elevation of the Jewish nation from low circumstances rather than specifically to the establishment of a Jewish nation-state (677). The Jews’ belief in Almamem’s potential to elevate the Jews, however, is implicitly messianic and this hope also characterizes a Jewish antipathy to anything short of self-rule.

Lytton’s ambivalence about Jews throughout *Leila* can therefore be ascribed to the much wider problem of how to accept Jewish particularism. Nadia Valman has demonstrated that nineteenth-century efforts toward “Jewish emancipation were grounded in the Enlightenment principle of striving to eliminate superstitious intolerance as it was inscribed in traditional discriminatory laws against Jews”. But, as Jews were themselves considered superstitious, intolerant and discriminatory, “emancipationist logic . . . both privileged the Jews as potential modern citizens and considered them profoundly uncivilized as Jews” (17). These contradictions pervade *Leila* as the novel re-enacts the central conflict common to popular Jewish conversion narratives when Leila’s desire for conversion is thwarted by an oppressive patriarchal figure.

Lytton, however, adds more complexity to the standard conversion plot by making the novel about nations rather than religions. Conversionist texts were typically written by women and involved the domestic sphere only and the Jewess’s conversion is figured as a deeply

emotional means of transcending an oppressive Jewish lifestyle.⁷³ Because *Leila* is also a novel about the Spanish conquest of Granada, the violence of the Inquisition is invoked in the context of Leila's conversion and the Grand Inquisitor Torquemada presides over the Jewish convert's confirmation ceremony. The conversion, which is usually depicted as a moment of emancipation in conversion stories, is here transformed into the moment when Leila is most oppressed.

Surrounded by a representative paternal figure from each of the three factions (Almamen, Muza, and Torquemada), Leila must choose to which man she will be devoted: her Jewish father, her Muslim lover, or her Catholic confessor. Michael Ragussis regards this climactic scene as revealing "the highly symbolic character of the Jewish daughter in the clash among three religions and races that claim her" and which relates to larger issues regarding the character of the modern nation (*Figures* 139).

⁷³ Early nineteenth-century novels of Jewish conversion typically portray Judaism as misguided and sometimes cruel, but nevertheless sympathize with Jewish oppression and encourage Jewish people, especially women, to reject their erroneous beliefs. Conversion fiction was disseminated by the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews (LSPCJ), usually written by women, and inspired by supposedly true accounts of Jewish converts. Although Jewish rituals and belief are described in detail in some of these novels, such descriptions are designed to make Christian readers aware of Jewish suffering and their need for spiritual salvation, in turn generating more funds and support for the LSPCJ. A statement indicating the utility of such novels appears in the preface to *The Orphans of Lissau* (1830), the third in Amelia Bristow's series of novels about the trials of a Polish Jewish family living in England:

The deep and increasing interest felt for the Jewish People, and their peculiar situation at this momentous period, when their spiritual and temporal circumstances are, in an especial manner, brought before the Public, both by the religious and the political world, though with views essentially differing, will, it is hoped, render the minute details of the customs, opinions, and habits of this interesting people, as depicted in the following pages, neither unuseful nor unacceptable. . . . Many, even of the religious world, are but slightly acquainted with the opinions, prejudices, and habits, of a people tenacious of their traditional observances, and guarded in the expression of their real views, when they are brought in contact with Christians. (i)

Bristow's novels periodically digress on the backwardness of Jewish belief and practice in order to correct a perceived lack of authentic portrayals of Jews. The "guarded expressions" Bristow mentions likely refer to a deep-seated hatred of Christians that characterizes the most fanatical characters of her novels. Bristow's novels provide descriptions of Jewish life to bridge a gap between Jews and Christians with knowledge that can be used to save Jewish souls. For this reason, descriptions of the Jewish lifestyle are not designed to flatter Judaism or its practitioners and are instead meant to alert Christian readers to the kinds of challenges they might face when dealing with Jews. The piety of Jewish converts such as Emma de Lissau, the subject of the second novel in Bristow's series, likewise demonstrates the potential for successful conversions. Although the LSPCJ had many prominent donors, it was notoriously ineffective at actually converting Jews. The failure of the society was pointed to by Jewish and Christian critics alike as proof of the movement's naivety. Michael Ragussis provides detailed description and discussion of this conversion genre in his *Figures of Conversion*.

In the conversion plot, Leila's body and soul are construed as a battleground for Jewish, Muslim, and Catholic control. The Spanish prince Don Juan attempts to seduce Leila, and though he fails, Donna Inez nevertheless conquers her soul and converts the Jewish woman. Boabdil's son Muza, meanwhile, claims her love. Thus, the Jewish daughter, whose desirability as a convert and whose hyper-eroticism had already been emphasized in *Ivanhoe*, becomes torn between her Muslim suitor and Christian convertor. Almamen joins Muza to infiltrate the church in which Leila will perform the ceremony to become a nun, and violently intervenes in the religious and romantic conflict by claiming her "as a father, in the name of the Great Sire of Man" (703). Almamen asserts a patriarchal control that is justified by God and which negates Leila's romantic attachment to the Moor and her religious affiliation with the Spanish. But, finding Leila fully devoted to her new faith, Almamen's only recourse is to murder her, proclaiming "thus Almamen the Jew delivers the last of his house from the curse of Galilee" (703).

Almamen defends the murder of his daughter as a necessary step in the preservation of Judaism and the act has an heroic quality because he is motivated by Jewish pride, fanatical though it is. The sacrifice can almost be described as an act of the love, as Almamen considers Leila a victim of her convertors. In this scene, Lytton reinvents Marlowe's Barabas by ascribing more generous motives to the Jewish filicide. Almamen, like Barabas, is inspired by his equal hatred for Christians and Muslims, but his attachment to an ideal of the Jewish people redeems him. The chapter of the title in which the murder occurs, "The Sacrifice", also reinforces Almamen's justifiable religious motivations.

Michael Ragussis argues that Leila's conversion and the conquest of Granada are related events in "the birth of the modern nation-state" that mandates simultaneous religious and military dominance (*Figures* 140-141). But Ragussis links Boabdil's defeat with Leila's

conversion as if the Moors and Jews were a unified group, an arrangement that Lytton repeatedly reminds us was not the case. Some elements of the plot indicate Jewish cooperation with the Moors, such as Almamen's place in Boabdil's court and Leila's romance with Boabdil's son Muza, but these are illusory since Almamen must hide his Jewishness and the lovers can only meet in secret. Because the Jews are already subsumed by the Moors, the conquest of Granada does not include the conquest of the Jews, since they are not recognized as an independent political group and the status of the Jews is not significantly altered by the Spanish conquest.

If, as Ragussis claims, "nineteenth century historians and novelists alike began to use fifteenth-century Spain as a paradigm for the birth of a nation based in racial and religious homogeneity" (*Figures* 127) this does not necessarily mean that the Spanish model of forcing conversion or exile was regarded as a viable solution to the Jewish question that could be adapted in Britain. Nor was the Spanish solution necessarily effective: Jews in Spain continued to adhere to their beliefs in secret, undermining the efficacy of the Inquisition's power to enforce cultural and religious purity.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, the idea of a nation unified through common religion and race affected the idea of Jews through the nineteenth century as writers grappled with the question of Jewish difference. Cosmopolitan and unprejudiced Jewish characters such as Sheva and Montenero characterize Jews as assimilable, but Rebecca's role in the vindication of a distinctively Jewish religious culture tends rather to dominate ideas of Jews in later fiction and eventually leads to depictions of Jews who are too different from other Europeans to be fully integrated. Nevertheless, notions of Jewish particularism could still be infused with positive qualities. Benjamin Disraeli was one of the most emphatic defenders of Jewish uniqueness and

⁷⁴ Benjamin Disraeli makes this claim in *Coningsby* when he describes his Sidonia's Marrano genealogy: "No sooner was Sidonia established in England than he professed Judaism; which Torquemada flattered himself, with the faggot of San Benito, he had drained out of the veins of his family more than three centuries ago" (284).

the supportive role Jews played in European culture. His novel *Tancred* is especially important for its impact on Jewish discourse in the middle of the century.

Hebraism, Hellenism, and the Hebrews: Benjamin Disraeli's Theories of Race

The kinds of questions about Jewish loyalty, the safety of Jews in Europe, and the potential for Jewish independence dealt with in *Ivanhoe*, *The Surgeon's Daughter*, and *Leila* gave rise to more contemporary and realistic treatments of the possibility of the establishment of a Jewish state, and what role Europe, and especially Britain, would take in shaping it. If, as Scott implied, Britain owed its Jews a debt for assisting in the foundation and maintenance of that nation, then what Britain perhaps owed in turn was assistance in the founding of a new Jewish state. The meaning of the European debt to Judaism is the subject of Benjamin Disraeli's *Tancred* (1847), the third novel in his "Young England" trilogy that follows the education of men who represent England's next generation of political leaders.

The novel's hero, Tancred, is the son of an MP whose parents envision his success as a bright political leader. But Tancred is disillusioned by the materialism of a modern Britain that he thinks has replaced religious values. In order to restore his own faith, Tancred travels to Palestine to rediscover Christianity's Hebraic roots. While atop Mount Sinai, the angel of Arabia appears to him in a vision and tells him that the suffering of Europe is caused by its alienation from God and that Tancred must reinvigorate Europe with religious fervour. The angel claims that "vain philosophy" cannot solve the "social problems" of Europe and that "the equality of man can only be accomplished by the sovereignty of God" (291). Within *Tancred*, the meaning of the angel's statements is obscure, but considering that Tancred's anxieties about politics, materialism, and faith are equally vague in his own mind, this hazy vision is fitting.

In the context of the trilogy as a whole, the angel's point becomes clearer. The first two novels in the series deal at length with the 1832 reform bill and class politics; the heroes of those novels are upper class Tories who fall in love with women whose families are from different classes and who have Whig sympathies. The conciliatory marriages between the heroes and their wives thematize Disraeli's advocacy for greater cooperation and understanding between Britain's fragmented social and political groups. In *Coningsby* (1844) and *Sybil* (1845), as well as in his speeches, Disraeli supports increased political representation of the lower classes, and so Tancred's vision relates to creating harmony amongst all the conflicting social, religious, and political factions in Europe, and England especially.

Tancred comes to believe that he can save Europe by leading an army to establish Arabic rule in Syria from where his Hebraic influence can spread, but his mission fails, largely because his allies do not share his convictions. His most trusted compatriot and advisor in his cause, Fakerdeen, is a cynical political manipulator who uses Tancred's zeal to advance his own career. Although selfish and irreligious, Fakerdeen is nevertheless inspired temporarily by Tancred, but his fickleness and lust for power later lead him to betray Tancred at a crucial moment. Tancred is unlike the heroes of the prequels *Coningsby* and *Sybil*, sons of established Tories families who marry a Whig factory owner's daughter and a working class woman respectively. Simone Beate Borgstede has noted that the marriages in the prequels are depicted as symbolic unions that harmonize conquered and conquerors, creating more equality, and this device follows in the spirit of Scott's use of the symbolic marriage in his novels. But in *Tancred*, the symbolism of the marriage plot is less clear. Tancred sees the marriage as a last chance to effect the spiritual regeneration of the English church through a closer connection to Judaism, but, Borgstede asks, "what would the Jews gain in such a union of Tancred and Eva? Would it end discrimination and

give them political rights in England? Would it signify a new relationship between Judaism and Christianity and give the Jews their proper place amongst the people of the world?" (62)

Presumably not, Borgstede suggests, and hence denying the marriage has a stronger rhetorical effect because it leaves these questions open and draws attention to the especially difficult case of the relationship between Jews and the English.

As in its predecessor *Ivanhoe*, *Tancred* sets up the narrative possibility of an interfaith marriage that cannot realistically occur since the marriage of Tancred to the unconverted Eva would signify a Christian-Jewish partnership ensuring full integration of Jews at a time when this possibility was still obscure. Disraeli would defend Jewish enfranchisement in parliament just a year after *Tancred's* publication, and it was a topic that had been debated beforehand as well, but the degree of Jewish political rights in England was still being considered, and so the novel necessarily makes the union of Eva and Tancred ambiguous. Tancred is on the verge of convincing Eva to marry him when they are interrupted by a loud noise and a bustle of activity as a crowd of English travelers arrives. At the moment that Tancred pleads his love to the Eastern Jew, he is interrupted by the arrival of an English travelling party that includes a colonel, a reverend, servants, and Tancred's parents, "the Duke and Duchess of Bellamont [who] had arrived at Jerusalem" (487). This is the final line of the novel and leaves the marriage question open. On one side, this is a hopeful moment, since the union of Jew and Christian remains possible. But this is an unlikely reading in the presence of representatives of the English military and religious forces that, as Ragussis demonstrates in *Leila*, are the two arms of the modern nation-state. As well, given Tancred's parents' earlier bewilderment at their son's religious fervor, their arrival reasonably indicates that they have run out of patience and have come to retrieve their son in order to make him fulfill his duties at home. This reading is enhanced by the

Duke's statement much earlier in the novel regarding Tancred's journey: "better to go to Jerusalem than go to the Jews" (79) In context, the "Jews" are moneylenders and the Duke indicates that it is better for his son to be a fanatic than a profligate. But the more literal meaning of this statement is in danger of coming true since Tancred, who originally came to Jerusalem to strengthen his Christianity, is now at risk of marrying an unconverted Jew.

Tancred begins his pilgrimage believing that modern Britain requires more influence from its Judaic past in order to prosper in a more-than-materialistic way. The return of parental and English imperial authority in Jerusalem, however, counteracts Tancred's mission by reasserting the supremacy of English rule, thereby rendering complete Tancred's failure. This defeat helps to mitigate Disraeli's claim of Jewish racial superiority that was so inflammatory and bizarre, as critics were quick to point out. The message thus becomes more potent because of Tancred's inability to achieve the restoration he desires. Europe, Disraeli implies, is not ready to accept its spiritual regeneration and the novel thereby exhibits a greater sense of urgency. Tancred believes he is working to strengthen European faith, but as he becomes more absorbed by Eastern politics, he comes to identify less and less as a European and his love for Eva tends to confirm this. The narrator and Eva also work against Tancred's religious schemes by alerting readers to Jewish interests as distinctly separate from Christian European ones.

As might be expected in a novel about the Hebraic roots of Anglican Britain, discussions of Judaism and Jews are very prominent throughout. Tancred's name evokes his ancestor, a German crusader, and the mission to Jerusalem is, as the subtitle of the novel says, a "new crusade". But when Tancred arrives in the east, envisioning encounters with peoples more dedicated to faith than are Britons, the reader instead finds that decadence, political manoeuvring, apathy for true religious feeling, and petty commercialism are just as prominent in

the east as in Europe. But Tancred seems blind to this. Eva generally approves of Tancred's mission and even encourages his belief in Judaism's centrality as the parent of Christianity, but she also occasionally challenges Tancred by drawing attention to how he makes Judaism only instrumental to his own faith instead of regarding it as a living culture. Thus, Tancred's grandiose idealism tends to warp his perception of eastern others.

Shortly before Tancred arrives at Mount Sinai, the narrator reflects on the influence Judaism has had on the modern world, and the British especially: "It was 'the sword of the Lord and of Gideon' that won the boasted liberties of England; chanting the same canticles that cheered the heart of Judah amid their glens, the Scotch, upon their hill-sides, achieved their religious freedom" (266). As the narrator demonstrates that European ideals of liberty are indebted to the Jews, Tancred, musing upon the same idea, concludes that "I have a right to be here" (266). Tancred's high-minded ideal of the British right to intervene in world affairs is satirized by Disraeli, Borgstede suggests: "this self-assurance and presentation of belonging to the right people or class doing the right thing – righteousness, this mentality of crusading – is exactly . . . the kind of attitude that Disraeli attacked in his novels" (15). Tancred believes in his right to visit Jerusalem and to reform his own country through his actions in the east, but he has little awareness of the real living conditions of the region's natives. Tancred assumes that because Arabs and Jews are linked more closely by geography and race to the originary moment of monotheism, they have no need of the spiritual regeneration he envisions for Europe and that they will graciously support his reforming mission.

Tancred believes so strongly in his English right to embark upon his modern crusade that he reduces all the local populations to static exemplars of his own idealistic convictions. As Fakerdeen recognizes, this self-delusion makes Tancred an easy target for exploitation. But Eva

emerges as a reminder that the Jews who practice the faith that Tancred so idolizes, are not ready to be dismissed so easily, nor are they as invested in Europe as he is. Tancred sees the east as an uncorrupted civilization preserved for just the moment when it is needed by Europe. Eva instead reminds him that eastern Jews remain a people with a distinct history from the Christians. She also points out to Tancred the inequalities imposed upon Jews in Europe which must be corrected before he can hope to win the support of her people. Tancred has laudable goals, but he fails to recognize the absurdity of his task, instead trusting to like minded idealism amongst his followers and partners. Eva therefore emerges as a voice of criticism as she defines the Jews as a distinct nation that does not require Tancred's reforming mission, and she offers Tancred new perspectives.

In their first conversation, Tancred urges Eva to adopt Christianity because she is knowledgeable about it and sympathetic to its principles. But Eva refers to Jesus as a Jew and claims that it would be impossible for her to convert because Christianity is too much divided by factions: "in this perplexity it may be wise to remain within the pale of a church older than all of them, the church in which Jesus was born and which he never quitted, for he was born a Jew, lived a Jew, and died a Jew" (190). Eva continues to discuss at length a variety of issues regarding Jews, the purport of her arguments being that modern Jews continue to practice faithfully and reject Christian characterization of Judaism as a failed religion and of its adherents as deicides. Eva regards Tancred's mission as misguided, since his first impulse upon meeting the Jewess is to convert her, rather than to seek her wisdom.

Eva's conversation of course recalls Rebecca, who likewise defended her religion against its detractors, but Eva is more hopeful as she sees the influence Judaism has had on modern Europe. Rather than lamenting the loss of the Jewish homeland, Eva insists that Jews already

possess a great degree of worldly power since Judaism is really the inspiration for both Islam and Christianity. Furthermore, she argues that since Jewish money supports so many great nations in Europe, then those nations are actually Jewish.⁷⁵ Lastly, she posits: “we agree that half Christendom worships a Jewess, and the other half a Jew. Now let me ask you one more question. Which do you think should be the superior race, the worshiped or the worshippers?” (196). Eva argues that despite their ill treatment at the hand of Christian nations, Jews are in fact the real power in Europe.

This Jewish power is represented by Sidonia, the rich Jewish merchant who agrees to help Tancred fund his journey by providing a pair of letters that “will open Syria to you, and any other land, if you care to proceed” (126). Sidonia is a figurative link between Europe and the east, construing himself as a kind of gatekeeper whose wealth and connections can open any door for the English traveler. In Disraeli’s imagination, Jews are also a racial link between nations. Sidonia recommends Tancred to a Spanish prior of a Jerusalem convent whom he claims has a closer connection to Judaism because of his race, unlike English bishops who “know nothing of these things. How can they? A few centuries ago they were tattooed savages Theology requires an apprenticeship of some thousand years at least; to say nothing of clime and race” (125). The Spanish prior is more closely related to Jews (through the Spanish heritage of Sephardi Jews) than the English, and so better able to understand Judaism because of a genealogical, and not merely theological, connection. The narrator repeats this claim to explain why the crusades were doomed to fail:

The Crusaders looked upon the Saracens as infidels, whereas the children of the Desert bore a much nearer affinity to the sacred corpse that had, for a brief space, consecrated the holy sepulchre, than any of the invading host of Europe. The same blood flowed in

⁷⁵ Disraeli here alludes to the influence of the Rothschild family in European finances.

their veins, and they recognized the divine mission of both Moses and of his greater successor. In an age so deficient in physiological learning as the twelfth century, the mysteries of race were unknown. Jerusalem, it cannot be doubted, will ever remain the appendage of either Israel or Ishmael. (171)

As most Europeans are racially distinct from Jews, Tancred and other Europeans can therefore only experience Jerusalem through the intercession of the more racially acclimatized, especially Jews and Arabs.

Disraeli insists that Europeans cannot truly understand the Jewish faith, and therefore their own origins, unless they are led by others, and Jewish characters are intermediaries for interpreting Christianity. Disraeli's theories of race are very idiosyncratic and are not representative, but his thinking on the matter illuminates the obsession with Jewish origins in so much of nineteenth-century British writing. Race is for Disraeli a means of distinguishing Jewish and English history, relegating religion to a lesser importance and thereby providing one method of distinguishing Jews from Englishmen. Unlike his contemporaries, Disraeli concludes with the superiority rather than the inferiority of Jews as a result of his disentangling of them from Britain.

Disraeli contradicts himself on the question of race at times because, although he regards the English as a distinct race from Jews, he also attempts to demonstrate that the two groups have a racial connection; Sidonia claims that Jews and Englishmen are both Indo-European peoples and that this explains, or rather necessitates, their ongoing cooperation. Sidonia suggests that Europeans are indebted to Jews for culture as well as monotheism when he claims that the bulk of Europe's great intellectuals are Jewish. His statements are clearly false, as most of the individuals he names were not Jewish at all, but Disraeli's point is that Jewishness pervades

Christendom, not just ideologically, but racially as well. Sidonia's ancestors were marranos whose descendants infiltrated even the highest ranks of Spanish society and kept their Jewish origins secret for generations. When Sidonia claims that Jews are involved in all "great intellectual movements in Europe" and that "the first Jesuits were Jews", along with dozens of other prominent non-Jews living and dead, Disraeli may not intend for him to be understood literally (*Coningsby* 332). Rather, Sidonia implies that Jews forced to convert in other parts of Europe may have similarly produced highly respectable descendants who are not aware of their Jewish ancestors. The important thing here is race, not religion, and so Sidonia has slightly more leeway in claiming that Jews have had a profound impact on Europe. On a more remote level, we might say that because Judaism inspired all of European culture through the early Christians, then all that Europe has produced is rightly Jewish.⁷⁶

Whether visibly or not, through direct influence or racial heritage, Jews have found their way into European society and enriched it. But Disraeli tries to have it both ways. He also claims that Jews have retained ethnic purity even amid the Diaspora, and this is embodied in their continuous practice of ancient rituals. For this reason, Disraeli includes a detailed observation about the festival of *Succot* as an example of how Jews have maintained their racial and religious integrity:

There is something profoundly interesting in this devoted observance of Oriental customs in the heart of our Saxon and Sclavonian cities; in these descendants of the Bedouens, who conquered Canaan more than three thousand years ago, still celebrating the success which secured their forefathers, for the first time, grapes and wine. Conceive a being born and bred in the Judenstrasse of Hamburg or Frankfort, or

⁷⁶ Thackeray's satire "Codlingsby" (1847) ridicules Sidonia's insinuations of Jewish power by taking the claim to the extreme. The tale concerns a Jew of near omniscient power who has intimate connections with the Pope and the king of Spain, both of whom are secretly Jewish.

rather in the purlieus of our Houndstitch or Minorities, born to hereditary insult, without any education, apparently without a circumstance that can develop the slightest taste, or cherish the least sentiment for the beautiful, living amid fogs, and filth, never treated with kindness, seldom with justice, occupied with the meanest, if not vilest, toil, bargaining for frippery, speculating in usury, existing for ever under the concurrent influence of degrading causes which would have worn out, long ago, any race that was not of the unmixed blood of Caucasus, and did not adhere to the laws of Moses; conceive such a being, an object to you of prejudice, dislike, disgust, perhaps hatred. The season arrives, and the mind and heart of that being are filled with images and passions that have been ranked in all ages amongst the most beautiful and most genial of human experience; filled with a subject the most vivid, the most graceful, the most joyous, and the most exuberant; a subject which has inspired poets, and which has made gods; the harvest of the grape in the native regions of the Vine. (389-390)

Some imagined European observers note the evolution of the Jewish ritual: “‘they used always to crucify little boys at these hullaballoos, but now they only eat sausages of stinking pork.’ ‘To be sure,’ replies his companion, ‘we all make progress’” (391). Understood by these men as having finally evolved from more barbarous practices, the modern Jew in fact celebrates an ancient ritual that connects him to Jews living much closer to the ancestral homeland, and to the Biblical Jews. The hopelessly ignorant comments of the observers demonstrate by contrast the alienation of the European from his own religion, since he fails to understand its Jewish roots (*Succot* being the precursor to the Feast of Tabernacles). The long digression on German Jews’ practice of the holiday of *Succot* is a preamble to the description of how Besso, Sidonia’s merchant friend in

Jerusalem, celebrates the same holiday in the same manner, in evidence of an intimate and global link between all Jews that transcends the adulterating force of the Diaspora.

The digression on the Jewish holiday draws attention to the connectedness of Jews across Europe and this theme is best personified in Sidonia who, already established as a patron of the arts in *Coningsby*, takes special interest in a family of Jewish tumblers, musicians, orators, and actors whom he encounters while traveling in Flanders. The Baronis live hand to mouth, and despite their immense talent, can only attract small audiences to their outdoor travelling shows until Sidonia witnesses their performance and offers to make each family member a master in the art of his or her choosing. Through Sidonia's charity, all the family members are installed in schools and institutions in which their talents can be recognized. For example, Madame Baroni becomes a celebrated opera singer and the oldest son a sought-after painter.⁷⁷ The tale of Sidonia's generosity as told by Baroni addresses the question of Jewish loyalty that underpins similar texts with a strong Jewish theme. Baroni's tale clearly indicates that Jews stand with each other first in an international brotherhood, but Disraeli also insists that Jews have at heart an interest in the improvement of all mankind.

The story of the Baroni family interrupts the main narrative of *Tancred*. In terms of the plot, it merely explains Baroni's presence in Jerusalem: he is a spy in the service of England gathering information on Turkish intentions in Syria. Baroni invokes the same notion of Jewish espionage that *The Surgeon's Daughter* and *Leila* had explored. Baroni, however, has no personal agenda and serves his country faithfully. He is no selfish Middlemass or vengeful Almamen, but Disraeli still draws on tropes of spycraft, of disguise, and of political

⁷⁷ This idea of Jewish artistry has predecessors, but comes in to play most obviously in the character of Svengali, the Jewish artistic genius of *Trilby* (1894). The Jewish theatre owner in Oscar Wilde's *Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891) is another iteration of the Jewish artist whose valuation of artistry trumps other moral considerations. More significant is Klezmer, the Jewish music teacher of *Daniel Deronda* whose devotedness to his art is signified by his name that is taken from a Jewish-European musical form.

manipulation. Even the Baroni name is a kind of code that confuses Tancred, who expects the Baronis to be Italian, but they are not:

[Tancred:] “How fortunate for you all that Sidonia had so much feeling for genius!”

[Baroni:] “And some feeling for his race.”

...

[Tancred:] “You do not mean that you are Jews?”

[Baroni:] “Pure Sephardim, in nature and in name.”

[Tancred:] “But your name surely is Italian?”

[Baroni:] “Good Arabic, my lord. Baroni; that is, the son of Aaron; the name of old clothesmen in London, and of Caliphs at Baghdad.” (336)

His name alone makes Baroni a cosmopolitan, with racial ties to Italians, Arabs, Jews, and Englishmen. Still, he is a Jew first.

Disraeli’s theories of race and his idea of Jewish racial purity were as alarming in his time as they are today, but for different reasons of course. Racialism was an emerging “science” in the mid-nineteenth century, but the idea that Jews could be racially superior or even racially similar to other Europeans was ridiculous to many of *Tancred’s* readers. Moreover, the privileging of Jews in Disraeli’s works tended to exacerbate claims of Jewish separatism and Disraeli himself was taken as an example of how Jews might subvert host cultures for their own gain. Disraeli’s vindications of Jews ironically caused new waves of anti-Jewish feeling as caricatures and criticisms of him traded on virulent Jewish stereotypes. When Disraeli supported Turkey over Russia during the Eastern Crisis, his political rival Goldwyn Smith argued that “had England been drawn into this conflict, it would have been in some measure a Jewish war, waged with British blood to uphold the objects of Jewish sympathy or to avenge Jewish wrongs” (qtd.

in Cheyette 15).⁷⁸ Disraeli, although a confirmed Christian, was nevertheless seen to embody the divided loyalties of the Jews whom he so much revered in his fiction and from whom he was immediately descended.⁷⁹

Disraeli's interest in Jewish messianism, evident in his early historical novel *Alroy* (1833) could not have helped his cause either.⁸⁰ Lord Stanley records in his diary an 1851 conversation in which Disraeli "spoke movingly about the return of the Jews to their homeland and even suggested the means of achieving it . . . Stanley observed that Disraeli was completely in earnest and that this was the only occasion when he showed any signs of real emotion" (Himmelfarb 41). In 1878, rumours spread that Disraeli had now become engaged in such a scheme, though this was untrue. Newspapers then criticised him for failing to execute the idea which would have improved the Jews' condition and removed them from England (Himmelfarb 41-42). As Himmelfarb notes, regardless of his actions on Jewish issues, Disraeli had during his lifetime come to embody much of the public discourse about them. In this light, the rise in anti-Jewish discourse in the later nineteenth century tended to be more about Disraeli's politics than about Jews, very much as the Jew Bill controversy was not really about Jews. Dismissing pro-Jewish arguments was a defensive measure against Disraeli's criticism of modern Britain. The "Young England" trilogy as a whole condemns the state of English politics and works toward the education of a younger generation that Disraeli believes will take the nation from the brink of

⁷⁸ This was the series of conflicts from 1875-1878 involving the Ottoman Empire and Russia for control over the Balkan states.

⁷⁹ Milos Kovic's study of Disraeli's motivations during the Eastern Crisis concludes that such criticisms were largely faulty: "Disraeli's prime ministerial decisions were determined to a lesser degree by his own ideological views and his Anglo-Jewish identity, British diplomatic tradition playing a much more important role instead" (317).

⁸⁰ This historical novel tells the story of a young Jewish prince who leads a Jewish revolution against the caliphate and establishes an independent state in Israel. Alroy oversteps his bounds by attempting to build an empire across the Middle-East, is betrayed by his more conservative advisors, and dies a repentant martyr. The novel is based on a twelfth-century revolt led by David Alroy. Disraeli, citing poor historical records, greatly exaggerates Alroy's success.

disaster. As *Tancred* advocates the return to Jewish origins to help effect this curative, attacking this aspect of the novel is a necessary move for Disraeli's political opponents and those who do not believe that the nation is heading toward a crisis.

The *Punch* review of *Tancred* dealt with Disraeli's Jewish interests in a manner similar to that of the 1754 *Times* article describing a Jewish Britain. That article exaggerated the impact of the Jewish Naturalization Act by imagining a future in which the pillars of English culture, represented by Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, would be struck down by England's Jewish leadership. In a similar fashion, *Punch* overstates Disraeli's toleration for Jews and his desire to see their enfranchisement, claiming that Disraeli wants Jewish rule in England: "MR. DISRAELI has written no less than three novels to further the great cause of Jewish ascendancy, and to prove that the battle of the Constitution is to be fought in Holywell Street. . . . It is evident that MR. DISRAELI has determined in his own mind, that until there is a Mosaic Parliament, sitting in Rag Fair, the object of his great mission will be unaccomplished" (Stewart 231). The tone of the review might indicate little progress in attitudes toward Jews over the course of a hundred years, but Disraeli's claims about Judaism were incredibly bold and therefore easy fodder for *Punch*'s satire.

Punch claims that Disraeli really desires Jewish "ascendancy", not just equality, and that this indicates his and the Jews' too-high ambitions. While *Punch* goes on to list a series of complaints about corrupt Jewish business practices and to justify Jewish disabilities on these grounds, other reviews of *Tancred* tend to ignore the statements about Jewish rights altogether, perhaps because it was a familiar enough subject to warrant no commentary. But these reviews are careful to reject the arguments about Jewish racial superiority and the need for English rediscovery of the Jewish past. R.M. Milnes's review of *Tancred* accepts the notion that "the

daily spiritual life of the English people” owes much to Judaism, but we “should observe that our interest and sympathy are nearly confined to such portions of the history and writings of the Jews as are not of Jewish but universal application” (Stewart 225).

George Eliot’s assessment of *Tancred* reiterates this distinction between the universal and the particular aspects of Judaism by dismissing the notion that Judaism is responsible for all the achievements of Europe or that the local and distinct racial character of Jewishness can be counted as a driving force in world culture:

My Gentile nature kicks most resolutely against any assumption of superiority in the Jews. . . . I bow to the supremacy of Hebrew poetry, but much of their early theology and almost all their history is utterly revolting. Their stock has produced a Moses and a Jesus, but Moses was impregnated with Egyptian philosophy and Jesus is venerated and adored by us only for that wherein He transcended or resisted Judaism. The very exaltation of their idea of a national deity into a spiritual monotheism seems to have been borrowed from the other oriental tribes. Everything specifically Jewish is of a low grade. (to John Sibree, Feb 11, 1848. *Letters I*, 246-247).

Eliot describes an emotional reaction to *Tancred* motivated by her own Christian affiliation, implying that Disraeli only believes so strongly in Jewish superiority because of his race. His exceptional views on Judaism, Christianity, and race, ascribed as they are to his racial background, could be used against him to help distinguish Jews from other Britons.

Disraeli attempts to show that English and Christian culture sprung entirely from Judaism, but Matthew Arnold rejects this theory in *Culture and Anarchy* (1870) and offers an alternative genealogy: “the planters of Christianity had their roots in deep and rich grounds of human life and achievement, both Jewish and also Greek. . . . and generations arose who had

their roots in neither world” (22). Arnold also draws attention to the importance of racial background, but he emphasizes the hybridity of Jewish and Greek culture in the early Christian faith and asserts that Christians are likewise descended from a variety of ethnic groups. Although Arnold nowhere in *Culture and Anarchy* addresses Disraeli or his arguments directly, Borgstede and Ragussis have both read the collection’s conception of Hebraism and Hellenism as being heavily influenced by Disraeli’s favoring of the Hebraic, and by *Tancred* in particular. The inspiration for the Hellenic/Hebraic contrast can be found in *Tancred* itself as Tancred believes that his conquest of Syria will only be possible with the aid of the Ansari, a reclusive but militarily strong people who worship the Greek deities. When Tancred reveals his plan for spiritual regeneration, the Ansari Queen questions the nature of the Asiatic God whom Tancred reveres. When he in response names the Creator “who spoke on Mount Sinai, and expiated our sins upon Mount Cavalry”, she reminds him that “there is also mount Olympus” where lived “the gods of the people; who loved the people, and whom the people loved” (422).

The Queen respects Tancred’s moral vision, but she believes it is incomplete without acknowledgement of the beautiful, which the Greek gods represent. The Queen’s gods are unknown to the Muslims who surround the Ansari, but because Tancred is European, he is familiar with the Ansari deities, leading the Queen to believe that “he is one of us” (425). Tancred therefore avows that he is a foreigner, “sprung from a horde of Baltic pirates who never were heard of during the greater annals of the world” and neither a worshiper of Greek deities nor racially linked to the Jews and Arabs of the east (427). This puts Tancred in a position of knowledge, but also of alienation from these various beliefs, putting him in a middle position that he regards as inferior. The racial hybridity often attributed to Jews as a result of their Diasporic condition is ironically attributed instead to Tancred, the English Christian. Arnold

takes this reversal a step further by demonstrating the benefits of the modern Briton's descent from various racial groups and religious systems.

Arnold's counterargument relies on privileging ideas above race, in contrast to Disraeli who dismisses ideology without race as incomplete. Arnold insists that Hebraism alone cannot achieve perfection and that culture must recognize the limitations of Judaic thought:

Who, that is not manacled and hoodwinked by his Hebraism, can believe that, as to love and marriage, our reason and the necessities of our humanity have their true, sufficient, and divine law expressed for them by the voice of any Oriental and polygamous nation like the Hebrews? Who, I say, will believe, when he really considers the matter, that where the feminine nature, the feminine ideal, and our relations to them, are brought into question, the delicate and apprehensive genius of the Indo-European race, the race which invented the Muses, and chivalry, and the Madonna, is to find its last word on the question in the institutions of a Semitic people, whose wisest king had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines?" (134-135)

Throughout *Culture and Anarchy*, Arnold regards both the Hellenist and the Hebrew as equally distinct beings from the modern Christian who incorporates the ideologies of both, and more. In *Tancred*, Disraeli suggests that moral regeneration is found through rediscovery of a Jewish racial past, but Arnold instead insists that moral development can only be achieved by regarding present culture as having evolved from older traditions and only by combining in variable amounts the influence of both the Hebraic and the Hellenic.

As a part of his rejection of a purely Hebraic England, Arnold distinguishes the racial character of England from that of Jews: "science has now made visible to everybody the great

and pregnant elements of difference which lie in race, and in how signal a manner they make genius and history of an Indo-European people vary from those of a Semitic people” (104-105). Disraeli would respond to this in his later novel *Lothair* (1870), in which “against Arnold’s claim of Hebraism strangling the universal faculties of man he had once more literally presented the Hebrews in their righteous place. And he had amalgamated not only Jews with Greeks, but as well English and Celts into ‘one great race’, the Caucasians” (Borgstede 91). This amalgamation of races is effectively a compromise that puts the modern nations on equal footing because all can be traced back to Hebraic roots. As Borgstede argues, this was a necessary argument for combating Arnold’s favouring of the Hellenic which Disraeli felt led to a worship of the body that runs counter to morality (89-90). Disraeli’s earlier position in *Tancred* renders the Ansari unable to join with Tancred’s crusade because of the insurmountable division between the Hebraic and Hellenic impulses, but amalgamating the Greeks with the Jews racially in *Lothair* renders beauty ancillary to moral righteousness, reversing Arnold’s claim that more sweetness is needed than light in his time: “In Disraeli’s ideal vision of rule the political world needed spiritual illumination The English nation was not only indebted to the Hebrew race for its religion and law. The very being of English people and how they conceived of themselves, their culture, was unthinkable, without acknowledging a shared history and heritage with the Jews. Jews were central to the nation” (Borgstede 95). This is the position that is championed in the “Young England” trilogy that critiques the superficiality of politics and the materialism of England and advocates the need to return to Judaic values.

Jewish Nationalism: George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*

Disraeli intensified debates about Judaism's role both as predecessor to Christianity and as a distinct modern entity. But the local character of Jews, embodied in their deep spiritual and ritualistic connection to their homeland and to their ancestors, necessitated something other than full acceptance into British public life. This apparent need seems all the more pressing in light of the backlash against Disraeli's universalizing of Judaism and of the decline in popularity of cosmopolitan Jewish characters. The repeated claims of the Jews' distinctiveness in fiction and in public discourse after the Romantic period indicated a growing interest in Judaism, but not in the granting of full civic rights to Jews.

In the novels discussed in this chapter, the symbolic union of disparate cultural elements popular in historical fiction fails when a Jew is the love interest. As much as Jewishness had been defended in the Romantic period and beyond, Jews remained a nation whose origins and destiny were seen to lie distant from Britain's. Writers who thought deeply about Jews also recognized the inadequacy of conversion as a way of reconciling Jews and Britons. Jessica, Berenice, and conversion tales are oedipal fantasies in which the superior offspring of Judaism, Christian Britain, reabsorbs its Jewish parent. Scott rejects this arrangement by depicting Jews as too strongly attached to their own religion to abandon it, Lytton exposes conversion as an act of violence, and Disraeli holds that the Jews' racial connection to monotheism makes them uninterested in what Christianity has to offer. George Eliot further reorients the discourse of Jewish integration by making her Jewish heroine entirely untouchable by conversionist ideology and instead making the male hero a retroactive convert to Judaism.

Although *Daniel Deronda* is not as well-known or influential as *The Merchant of Venice* or *Ivanhoe*, it can be regarded nevertheless as an equally important turning point in the depiction

of Jews. Jews, Scott implied, had an historical place bound up in England, Europe, and Christendom, a note that was intensified in particular by Benjamin Disraeli who made these connections a matter of spiritual and racial fraternity. Eliot moves the Jewish question in a new direction by investigating what Jews themselves may actually think of their place in Europe. Daniel Deronda is a secret Jew, fostered by an English gentleman and not told of his Jewish past so that he can more seamlessly assimilate. Upon discovering as an adult that he is Jewish, Deronda rejects Jewish faith because “the effect of my education can never be done away with. The Christian sympathies in which my mind was reared can never die out of me,” but he also comes to believe that “my first duty is to my own people” (566, 620). Since he identifies as a member of the Jewish people, he rejects the idea that conversion to Christianity in general is the path to Jewish self-betterment, even as he accepts that Jewish religion is not for him.

Daniel’s eager adoption of his Jewish identity, but not religion, despite his upbringing as a gentleman upset many readers, and critics typically regard the Jewish plot as inferior to the other half of the novel or Eliot’s other works more generally. F.R. Leavis, for example, famously recommended excising the Jewish portion of the novel that was unnecessary to Gwendolyn’s story, and even published such a version (Handley, *Daniel Deronda* xiii). But Eliot insisted that all parts of the novel related to each other and that the two plots were linked in an essential way (Handley xiv). The novel addresses both the question of Jewish loyalties and of England’s role in Jewish history through the relationship between the novel’s major plots.

Eliot produces a novelization of the Hebraic-Hellenic conflict between spirit and body that is symbolically enacted as a contrast between the Jewish hero and the English heroine: Daniel is introspective, sensitive, and cares little for external appearances, while Gwendolyn is a self-absorbed materialist who values her own attractiveness and pleasure above all else. Eliot

depicts Gwendolyn's self-love as a bar to sympathetic feeling and this failing culminates in her decision to refrain from rescuing her husband from drowning. She turns to Deronda after this and other crises of conscience for moral guidance. Morality, Eliot suggests, requires the Hebraic and it is Daniel the Jew whom Gwendolyn claims has prevented her from becoming worse than she already is (601).

Although Gwendolyn respects Deronda greatly, she fails to recognize his subjectivity and regards him as her moral guide only. Like critics who could not reconcile the Jewish plot with Gwendolyn's tragedy, Gwendolyn herself cannot imagine how "Deronda's life could be determined by the historical destiny of the Jews (467). She remains patient and tolerant when she learns that Daniel is Jewish and claims that "*you* are just the same as if you were not a Jew", assuming that this enlightened view is complimentary and that Daniel's Judaism makes no difference at all to his role in her moral regeneration (687). In this regard, Gwendolyn imposes a view of Daniel informed by depictions of benevolent cosmopolitan Jews whose inner lives are irrelevant and whose deeds in support of the wider public justify toleration of Jews. But Eliot rejects this kind of universalism as both implausible and undesirable as she holds that individuals are shaped by the conditions of their national past and that resulting inborn sentimental attachments necessarily overpower other inclinations (Semmel 13).

Bernard Semmel, in his study of Eliot's views on nationalism, demonstrates how Jews typify Eliot's belief that "only a nation, a society that she saw as based on filial sentiment, perceived national kinship, and common historical traditions . . . could provide a realistic foundation for communal solidarity. These ties would make it possible for an individual to transcend selfish egoism and to feel a deep sympathetic concern, first toward his kin and then toward the extended family of the nation" (6). This view of the primacy of national attachments

necessitates Deronda's departure from England as his racial and familial link to the Jews holds a stronger emotional appeal to him than do the concerns of his foster nation, England. The Jews' ability to maintain their culture in the Diaspora is a powerful indication to Eliot that her views on nation are correct: "the Jews, for Eliot, as for Disraeli, were a model, not of rootless cosmopolitanism – the role assigned to them by conservatives on the continent – but of a sound regard for the preservation of their inherited tradition" (Semmel 129). Eliot not only contradicts contemporary thinkers but also the kinds of statements about Jews that were meant to exonerate them. Cosmopolitanism was the Jews' saving grace in *Harrington* and other texts in the Romantic period, but amid the nationalist fervour of the later nineteenth century, the exact opposite claim, that Jews are a distinct people, becomes attached to their vindication, and sometimes this leads to contradiction.

Although Eliot believed strongly in the need for each nation to value its culture, she also avoids supporting petty nationalism by not assigning superiority to any cultures, and by celebrating the variety of them (Semmel 13-14), as well as by imagining a distant future when all nations would join together (Semmel 6). Antipathy to Jews, then, is based in part on their homeless status and the solution to their travails is the establishment of a Jewish homeland. For this reason, Deronda and Mordecai's privileging of their Jewish loyalties is not a case of chauvinistic prejudice, but rather an emotional attachment that enables them to practice benevolence on a wider scale and to fulfil their unique purpose in life. Mordecai expresses this viewpoint when he explains to Mirah the role Jews have played in promoting monotheism: "The *Shema*, wherein we briefly confess the divine Unity, is the chief devotional exercise of the Hebrew; and this made our religion the fundamental religion for the whole world; for the divine Unity embraced as its consequence the ultimate unity of mankind. See, then – the nation which

has been scoffed at for its separateness, has given a binding theory to the human race” (628). The Jews may be a distinct group, but their theology tends ultimately toward harmonious relationships of all people and this ennobles the Jews’ particularity.

As Eliot held that nationalism is a force of universal good, Deronda also recognizes the enabling power of his heritage when criticizing his mother for hiding it from him:

The effects prepared by generations are likely to triumph over a contrivance which would bend them all to the satisfaction of self. Your will was strong, but my grandfather’s trust which you accepted and did not fulfil – what you call his yoke – is the expression of something stronger, with deeper, farther-spreading roots, knit into the foundations of sacredness for all men. . . . The stronger Something has determined that I shall be all the more the grandson whom also you willed to annihilate. (568)

Deronda admits that he had a growing suspicion that he might be Jewish, and we may also interpret his Jewishness as influencing his peculiar sensibility that also affects his relationship to Gwendolyn as her confessor. Willing to take advantage of Daniel’s generosity of spirit, Gwendolyn nevertheless fails to recognize the impact of Jewishness in her life, nor can she grasp the wider importance of national destinies to individual will, which shapes Daniel’s decision to abandon her in favor of fulfilling Mordecai’s Zionist mission.⁸¹ For this reason, Deronda contradicts Gwendolyn and draws attention to the “great difference it makes” to know that he is a Jew, but he finds it increasingly difficult to explain himself to her, finding that “the difference between her ideas and his acted like a difference of native language, making him uncertain what force his words would carry” (687). As he continues to explain how his destiny will be absorbed

⁸¹ There is an argument about gender to be made here about Deronda’s mother’s objection to Judaism lying in how restricting the religion is to her as a woman. Similarly, Gwendolyn’s passionate and ambitious nature is doomed to strike up against the limited opportunities for women. There is an implied criticism of gender inequalities associated with Judaism, but the novel does not dwell on this idea.

in learning more about the condition of the Jews around the world and restoring to them a “political existence” and a “national centre”, Gwendolyn for the first time recognizes her own insignificance: “the world seemed getting larger round poor Gwendolyn, and she more solitary and helpless in the midst. The thought that he might come back after going to the East, sank before the bewildering vision of these wide-stretching purposes in which she felt herself reduced to a mere speck” (689). The gulf between Jew and Englishwoman is startlingly revealed because Gwendolyn has no role to play in Daniel’s Jewish future, and she can barely even begin to understand its significance to him. And, despite his previous commitment to Gwendolyn, Daniel feels that his people to whom he is tied by blood are more important to him than is the society in which he was raised.

Daniel cannot stay and be Gwendolyn’s moral guide because he owes something to his own people. Fostered in England, he must act upon his upbringing and bring its influence to Palestine. The symbolic logic of the novel casts Deronda and Jews as foreigners, albeit welcome ones, in England, but they are in no way assimilable. Even Deronda’s mother, who has carefully hidden her Jewish identity, is haunted by her father’s friend who insists that she tell Daniel the truth. Daniel appreciates his upbringing as an Englishman, but the idea of remaining an ordinary English gentleman holds no appeal for Deronda. It’s not surprising that this decision enraged some readers as Eliot here implies that the price of toleration proposed to Jews, namely full assimilation into English culture and religion, is too high for any self-respecting Jew.

By rejecting such conditions of integration, *Daniel Deronda* stands apart from its predecessors because it is more heavily informed by authentic Jewish concerns gleaned through Eliot’s research. As a result, the novel is at odds with other pro-Jewish novels since its idea of Jewishness does not draw solely on what non-Jewish authors thought might be flattering to Jews.

The immense gulf between Jewish desire and the desire of Christian readers for Jews is powerfully demonstrated by the Meyrick women's response to Mirah's plight. Their sympathetic approach to Mirah is circumscribed by their reading of other philo-Semitic texts. Daniel chooses the Meyrick family as Mirah's guardians because he knows that they "would at once associate a lovely Jewess with Rebecca in 'Ivanhoe'" (165). But, when Amy and Mab accompany Mirah on a visit to a synagogue, they find "the Jewish faith less reconcilable with their wishes in her case than in that of Scott's Rebecca" (305).

Mrs. Meyrick in particular has faint hopes that her kindness will inspire Mirah to convert, but Deronda recognizes the absurdity of such a romantic notion, based as it is on the conversionist fantasies that run through even a novel like *Ivanhoe*:

How could he be Mirah's guardian and claim to unite with Mrs. Meyrick, to whose charge he had committed her, if he showed himself as a lover – whom she did not love – whom she would not marry? And if he encouraged any germ of lover's feeling it would lead up to that issue. Mirah's was not a nature that would bear dividing against itself; and even if love won her consent to marry a man who was not of her race and religion, she would never be happy in acting against that strong native bias which would still reign in her conscience as remorse. (319)

Given the importance of romance to the trope of conversion, with its roots in Shakespeare's Jessica, Deronda's recognition that Mirah could not bear to have her loyalties divided shuts down the entire logic of interfaith conciliatory marriage. Deronda can save Mirah in a physical sense, but she has no interest in the spiritual salvation that Christianity offers. Conversion is a fruitless effort because it holds little appeal to committed Jews. Daniel therefore rejects the possibility of a romance with Mirah until he learns that he is Jewish as well. In this way, the

novel plays with the combination marriage-conversion that is the culmination of *Merchant* and its followers and exposes it as a fantasy that disregards Jewish interests.

Here, the Jewess's reticence to marry a non-Jew is an heroic trait that is in turn rewarded through the marriage that later becomes possible *because* of that religious conviction. Eliot in fact invokes a much older text about conversion in the closing chapter to reinforce this point. Mordecai tells Daniel "Where thou goest, Daniel, I shall go" in mimicry of the *Book of Ruth* when Ruth proclaims to Naomi that she will convert to Judaism and follow her way of life (695). Eliot thereby reorients the conversion trope, making conversion to Judaism both narratologically appropriate and theologically sound. At the same time, the allusion to *Ruth* supplements philo-Semitic conventions with a separate Jewish literature that once again affirms the Jews' distinctiveness from their English hosts.

Daniel Deronda is unique for its sensitivity to the Jewish perspective on the questions raised by earlier works about Jews. The novel reverses earlier discussion of Jews by thinking in terms of what England means to Jews instead of the other way around. Eliot's success as a non-Jewish writer depicting Jewish concerns is evident in the way "Eliot has been credited by historians and eulogized by Jews, as the prophetic inspirer of Zionism and of the state of Israel" (Himmelfarb 10). Among early readers, James Picciotto in particular praises *Daniel Deronda's* sensitivity, regarding it as going "a considerable way towards filling an intellectual void – faithful pictures of modern Anglo-Jewish domestic life" (408). Picciotto also recognized a link between the Jewish and English plots that speaks to the question of the Jews relationship to European nations: "The reassembling of the Jews into a separate State, if such an event ever happen, must obviously affect more or less all Europe in addition to the provinces occupied"

(416). Picciotto concludes by suggesting that such a future may be a long way off because Jews have become “too firmly attached to the countries of western Europe” (416).

Eliot, however, notes the inequality of such attachment in *Impressions of Theophrastus Such* (1879): “the European world has long been used to consider the Jews as altogether exceptional, and it has followed naturally enough that they have been excepted from the rules of justice and mercy” (148). Given this perception of Jewish difference, Eliot proposes in more concrete terms than in *Deronda* that the time for Jewish return has come:

If we are to consider the future of the Jews at all, it seems reasonable to take as a preliminary question: Are they destined to complete fusion with the peoples among whom they are dispersed, losing every remnant of a distinctive consciousness as Jews; or, are there in the breadth and intensity with which the feeling of separateness, or what we may call the organised memory of a national consciousness, actually exists in the world-wide Jewish communities – the seven millions scattered from east to west – and again, are there in the political relations of the world, the conditions present or approaching for the restoration of a Jewish state planted on the old ground as a centre of national feeling, a source of dignifying protection, a special channel for special energies which may contribute some added form of national genius, and an added voice in the councils of the world? . . . Some of us consider this question dismissed when they have said that the wealthiest Jews have no desire to forsake their European palaces, and go to live in Jerusalem. But in a return from exile, in the restoration of a people, the question is not whether certain rich men will choose to remain behind, but whether there will be found worthy men who will choose to lead the return. (162-163).

Eliot's nearly messianic call for an end to the Jewish exile made her and *Daniel Deronda* an inspiration for Zionist thought as she articulates so clearly the dilemma of Jews living in the Diaspora. As a popular novel by a non-Jewish author, *Daniel Deronda* indicates that support outside of Jewish communities for a return existed. But Eliot's vision of a Jewish homeland is not based on her political theories alone: *Daniel Deronda* resolves the problem of indebtedness introduced in *Ivanhoe* by recommending that England at least morally support such endeavours because of Judaism's influence on Christianity and English culture. The novel thus culminates a process of rethinking Jewish characters and Jewishness ongoing since the middle of the eighteenth century, if not earlier.

Two strains of positive Jewish portrayals characterize nineteenth-century ideas about Jews. Eliot defends Jewish distinctiveness as a positive trait, and this runs counter to the more common strategy of making Jewish experience universal. The Romantic novelists attempted to conflate Judaism with Christianity, while Scott and Disraeli demonstrated a shared history between Jews and the English that cannot be disentangled. These trends propose an essential link between Jews and Europe that paves the way for more complete integration. And yet, *Deronda* rejects his chance to complete the link and instead leaves for Palestine. Eliot tells us that Jewish entrenchment in Europe is circumstantial only, a point that lies under the surface in *Ivanhoe* and is more overtly developed in *Leila* because of Almamen's total war against all non-Jews. *Deronda* is grateful, certainly, to his foster father Sir Hugo, but at the end of the novel, Daniel insists that his place as a Jew can no longer be in England, and that he must instead take up Mordecai's mission of re-establishing a Jewish homeland.

Conclusion

The other day I was what you would call *floored* by a Jew. He passed me several times crying out for old clothes in the most nasal and extraordinary tone I ever heard. At last I was so provoked, that I said to him, "Pray, why can't you say 'old clothes' in a plain way as I do now?" The Jew stopped, and looking very gravely at me, said in a clear and even fine accent, "Sir, I can say 'old clothes' as well as you can; but if you had to say so ten times a minute, for an hour together, you would say *Ogh Clo* as I do now;" and so he marched off. I was so confounded with the justice of his retort, that I followed and gave him a shilling, the only one I had.

* * * * *

Once I sat in a coach opposite a Jew—a symbol of old clothes' bags—an Isaiah of Holywell Street. He would close the window; I opened it. He closed it again; upon which, in a very solemn tone, I said to him, "Son of Abraham! thou smellest; son of Isaac! thou art offensive; son of Jacob! thou stinkest foully. See the man in the moon! he is holding his nose at thee at that distance; dost thou think that I, sitting here, can endure it any longer?" My Jew was astounded, opened the window forthwith himself, and said, "he was sorry he did not know before I was so great a gentleman." (Coleridge, *Table Talk*, July 8, 1830)

The Shifting Ground of Jewish Representation

Jews were subject to a variety of re-imaginings during the Romantic period and Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Table Talk* anecdotes about Jews provide perhaps the most striking dramatization of these changes. Under the subheading, "Jews", the *Table Talk* recounts two encounters with Jews that reveal Coleridge's previously unquestioned attitudes about Jews and his subsequent recognition of their subjectivity. In both instances, Coleridge draws attention to the injustice of his attitudes through his self-effacing diction, as if to suggest that the things he finds offensive about the Jews, their accent and their smell, actually reflect more upon his own insensitivity and prejudice. The Jews' responses also draw attention to Coleridge's role as a Christian interlocutor who shapes the character of the Jew by bringing his supposed understanding of Jews to bear on his conversations. Coleridge begins with a preconception that is then challenged by the Jew who presents himself as a thinking and feeling human being; the pedlar asks Coleridge to imagine himself as a poor rag dealer and the passenger retorts by

indicating that Coleridge, as an oversensitive snob, is the truly offensive person. Both demonstrate to Coleridge that the Jew will not allow himself to be reduced to a stereotype.

Judith Page argues that these Jews invite sympathy by making themselves equals to Coleridge, by standing up to him and forcing him to recognize their similarities (2). Despite the change of heart he experiences, Coleridge demonstrates ambivalence: “at the same time that he defends the Jewish people and shows respect for Jewish history and culture, he returns to the unsavory image of real Jews on the street” (33). Yet, Coleridge’s attitude toward Jews demonstrates a noticeable shift after the July 8 entry. His interest in the Old Testament and his strong Christian belief lead him to share numerous musings on the Bible, and by association, Jews. Several earlier entries from 1830 record less ambiguously anti-Jewish sentiment in relation to sacred history. His description of the Biblical Jacob reveals how Jewishness is naturalized in Coleridge’s mind before the encounter with the pedlar and passenger: “Jacob is a regular Jew, and practises all sorts of tricks and wiles, which, according to our modern notions of honour, we cannot approve He is the exact compound of the timidity and gentleness of Isaac, and of the underhand craftiness of his mother Rebecca” (May 16, 1830).

In a discussion of attempts to convert Jews, Coleridge demonstrates the need for better treatment of Jews and better education. In so doing, he implies that the only reason Jews remain Jewish is ignorance and a reasonable antipathy to Christians: “if they were addressed kindly, and were not required to abandon their distinctive customs and national type, but were invited to become Christians *as of the seed of Abraham*—I believe there would be a Christian synagogue in a year’s time”. In the same entry, Coleridge describes poor Jews as the worst kind of people: “as it is, the Jews of the lower orders are the very lowest of mankind; they have not a principle of honesty in them; to grasp and be getting money for ever is their single and exclusive

occupation”. Nevertheless, Coleridge hints at the imprudence of improving Jewish conditions through the example of Polish Jewish landholders who are “the worst of tyrants” and “have no kind of sympathy with their labourers and dependants” (April 14, 1830).

In these comments, Coleridge repeatedly invokes a fixed Jewish identity, a national character of greed, obstinacy, criminality, and inalienable difference. These are the attitudes with which he approaches the two Jews in the anecdotes of July 8, and these are the attitudes which those Jews challenge, perhaps with more success than Page suggests. Later entries on Jews in the *Table Talk* tend not to essentialize Jews to the same degree as the earlier entries: Coleridge allows for individual variation among Jews and he appears to have a keener interest in understanding how the modern Jew is influenced by historical conditions. To that end, he describes the economic origins of anti-Jewish feeling: “land was the only species of property which, in the old time, carried any respectability with it. Money alone, apart from some tenure of land, not only did not make the possessor great and respectable, but actually made him at once the object of plunder and hatred. Witness the history of the Jews in this country in the early reigns after the Conquest” (April 11, 1833). A later entry compares the ancient and modern Jew: “The two images farthest removed from each other which can be comprehended under one term, are, I think, Isaiah [1]—‘Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth!’—and Levi of Holywell Street—‘Old clothes!’—both of them Jews, you’ll observe. *Immane quantum discrepant*” (August 14, 1833).⁸² Far from being unable to “reconcile this discrepancy” (Page 33), the reveals Coleridge’s gradual coming to terms with the difference between modern and ancient Jews. Coleridge’s religious views of course rely on Judaism as a supplanted religion whose former greatness has faded, but the development of the Jews’ commercial character reveals itself in their history in Europe. He implies this in the April 11 anecdote; Jews could only be

⁸² “They differ greatly”

merchants and moneylenders according to European laws, and thus their collective identity became bound up in money. The pedlar is perfectly capable of speaking proper English but is reduced to the Jewish accent (“ogh clo”) as a result of present circumstances, and not because Jews are naturally inferior speakers. The descent from Isaiah’s poetic prophesies (idealized by Coleridge) to the mangled monosyllables of the street pedlar is to Coleridge a tragedy that seems rather to implicate European history rather than Jews themselves in the degradation of Jewish character. Furthermore, the use of individually named Jews distances this musing from the earlier generalizations about whole classes of Jews, suggesting that each Jew can occupy a varying range of respectability. It should also be remembered that the earlier anecdote about the Jewish pedlar referred to him as “an Isaiah of Holywell Street” suggesting that the culture of the prophet Isaiah yet lingers among contemporary Jews.

Coleridge’s shifting attitudes toward Jews follows a pattern that recurs on both the individual level and in the larger scope of British literature. This example is especially rich in its ambivalence and also revealing in terms of its occurrence more than a decade after Maria Edgeworth and Walter Scott had apparently resolved the same conflict regarding the unfair prejudices against Jews. *Harrington* and *Ivanhoe* showed how history shaped Jewish character and began to supplant the idea of an essentially corrupt Jew, revealing the possibility that living Jews still retained the dignity of their ancestors. More fundamentally, Scott and Edgeworth attempted to demonstrate a mutual dependence of Jewishness and Britishness. Coleridge’s anecdotes parallel a key feature of these novels in terms of their pointed responsiveness to the question of Jewish representation itself, a feature that is largely absent from earlier experiments in Jewish character. The rhetorically constructed Jews discussed above more clearly reflect the authors’ interests than Jewish ones. Even Cumberland’s *The Jew*, as we have seen, had more to

do with self-aggrandizement, while Smollett's benevolent Jew was politically motivated. By contrast, in *Harrington*, Edgeworth directly responds to a complaint against her earlier depictions of Jews, while Scott's intertextually rich *Ivanhoe* draws on and challenges many popular works depicting Jews, confronting them through the novel's historical consciousness and its satire.

Page observes that Coleridge required Jews to stand up for themselves, assert their unique identity, and enforce a "greater symmetry in their relationship" with Christians (2), and this also describes how the literary tradition escaped from the trap of Jewish stereotyping. Jews in the Romantic period acted in unprecedented ways to voice dissatisfaction with how they were portrayed: the rioters who protested Jewish stereotyping during the performance of *Family Quarrels*, Rachel Mordecai's letter to Edgeworth, D'Israeli's Jewish philosopher, and later Grace Aguilar's anti-conversionist tracts and stories all exemplify the role marginalized groups can, did, and must perform in order to change the stories told about them.

The movement among Jews to voice their dissatisfaction may have been, however, a symptom rather than the cause of increasingly earnest attempts to discover the truth about Jews in the Romantic period. Certainly, literature regarding Jews had become more thoughtful and inquisitive during the late eighteenth century. The rhetorically useful Jews of the polemical and Gothic novels and Romantic poetry failed to capture the reality of Jewish life, but they dramatically increased the variety and complexity of Jewish characterization. These in turn inspired later novels that considered more carefully what really constituted Jewishness. Indeed, the failure of earlier fictional Jews to inspire a sense of authenticity, combined with their success in making Judaism topical, enabled the more carefully constructed and critical depictions of Jews in historical and realist fiction. Maria Edgeworth and Walter Scott attempted to present more lifelike nuanced representations of Jews that would also satisfy reader expectations, and they

drew on the newly available category of the historical novel that they had popularized. Edgeworth and Scott also took advantage of the generic innovations of the 1790s and the increasingly muddled versions of Jewishness that these innovations generated in order to make sense of Jewishness and to redeem it from persistent stereotypes.

Edgeworth and Scott established a trend of renegotiating Jews in light of history and with a sense of the ways in which fiction constructed the Jew for Christian audiences. Following from their examples, nineteenth-century writers including Lytton and Disraeli continued the process by building upon Scott's descriptions of a rich and valid Jewish culture. It is as if the concerted efforts to re-imagine Judaism and Jews, ongoing since the early eighteenth century, had culminated in the recognition that, after all, Jews are very different from Christians. This development returned Jews, albeit in an altered form, to a position they previously occupied in Shakespeare's play. Like Shylock, Deronda sets himself apart from his host culture, though, unlike Shylock, he is changed for the better through his interaction with non-Jews, and vice-versa.

The Merchant of Venice and *Daniel Deronda* can be imagined as bookends to a long period of serious thought about Jewishness that played out in a constantly evolving discourse in fiction, plays, and poetry. New iterations of Jewish character draw directly on their predecessors, grappling with the statements made about Jews there and weighing them against contemporary experiences and those of the authors. Shylock is filtered through each of these works, emerging in new forms that result just as much from general developments in fiction and poetry as from shifting cultural attitudes. The most important of these texts are those that in turn inspire a broader variety of characters or that radically question the portrayal of Jews itself. The most powerful of these are of course *Harrington*, *Ivanhoe*, and *Daniel Deronda*, since each responds

to Jewish portrayals in uniquely personal ways that result in Jewish characters who transcend Shylockian tropes, typically by first directly invoking them. We may also add the various reinterpretations of Shylock himself that occurred on stage throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as exemplifying how the idea of Jews, once understood as static and unquestionable, was in fact highly malleable in the act of representation.

It is almost a truism to say that Shylock lies behind every Jewish character in modern fiction. Less obvious is the influence of each subsequent revision of the quintessential Jewish miser. The shift in the way Jews were imagined during the period 1701-1876 indicates more than a change in attitude or taste; it represents the cumulative effect of the stereotype's repeated exposure to criticism. Edgeworth's method of deliberately invoking stereotype as a means of confronting it seems especially productive in this regard. Likewise, Scott's efforts to historicize seemingly accurate ideas about Jews exposes not just the logical flaws necessary to stereotyping, but also the advantage an accurate sense of history can bring to combating such prejudice.

The propositions about the constructive potential of investigating stereotypes over time demonstrated in this study need not be applied to Jewish portrayals only. Such ideas seem equally applicable to understanding racial and religious prejudice in our own time. Surely, the endurance of stereotyping even in post-racial societies is at least partially explained by the necessity of drawing on the literary past in order to generate new and more fully realized characters. Arguments to this effect have been proposed in relation to depictions of Arabs and Muslims after 9/11. Evelyn Alsultany discusses how filmic portrayals of Muslims have a tendency to reduce the vast and diverse population of Muslims to a single and clearly recognized type: the Arab-Muslim terrorist. Alsultany discusses the counter-terrorism themed television program *24* (2001-2010/2014) as emblematic of this mode of Muslim portrayals (other popular

shows she flags include *NCIS*, and *Sleeper Cell*). 24 and similar programs cast actors of a variety of ethnic backgrounds who fit into the “visual construction of an Arab/Muslim race that supports the conflation of Arab and Muslim identities” (10). Further entrenchment of stereotypes occurs when programs provide examples of “good” Muslims: “What makes a Muslim ‘good’ or ‘bad’ in this paradigm is not his or her relationship to Islam but rather to the United States. Though rare in U.S. history, after 9/11 this mode of representing ‘the enemy’ became standard” (Alsultany 15). Recent portrayals of “good” Muslims thus parallel the 1790s benevolent Jew whose goodness derives from his ability to adopt English Christian values and makes him distinct from the average Jew.

A similar parallel between English Jews and American Muslims involves the way singular historical events seem to inspire sudden representational developments that are actually part of longer trends. Media portrayals of Muslims had only occasionally been a focus of serious thought before 2001, but “the attacks of 9/11 . . . do not mark the first or single event that fomented the reductive perception of Arab Americans in the US. They are in fact a recent installment in a long history of national and international crises and conflicts that have repeatedly and consistently underlined the provisional nature of US belonging for Arab Americans” (Fadda-Conrey 5). Despite initial intensification of anti-Muslim stereotypes after 9/11, some attempts have been made more recently to turn the sudden interest in Islam to more positive ends. Carol Fadda-Conrey for example argues that “9/11 has generated a formative moment in the production of urgent self-iterations (literary and otherwise) that insist on portraying Arab Americans through an antihomogenous lens. In other words, this formative moment has mobilized poignantly vocal, assertive, and unapologetic claims to complex types of Arab

American identities that articulate cohesive yet antiessentialist responses to the assimilative pressures of US belonging” (7).

But, just as *The Jew* and *Harrington* were met by scepticism amongst reviewers who claimed to know the true character of Jews, so too discussions of Muslims, including those written by Muslim authors, are circumscribed by centuries of amassed “knowledge” about the antithesis of East and West situated in Orientalist terms and more recently imagined as a conflict between secular liberalism and religious fundamentalism. This challenge is evident in Yasser Fouad Salim’s commentary on the playwright Betty Shamieh: “the idea of staging Arab America is very problematic, especially for emerging Arab American playwrights such as Shamieh. In post-9/11 America, Arab Americans are understood to be segments of a distant enemy. To turn such an enemy into a partner on stage is to challenge and reshape a popular culture that has historically swallowed misconceptions about Arab culture and has an interest in reading and viewing the Arab as an Oriental” (295). The continued insistence on the validity of such totalizing views of cultures and religions is familiar in light of the issues discussed in the pages above regarding the supposed Jewish enmity to Christendom.

Pluralism demands the rejection of stereotypes in general, and enables groups frequently marginalized in literature and other media to more effectively voice their dissatisfaction with traditions of reductive portrayals. Following from the arguments in this dissertation, we may wish to consider how contemporary attitudes develop from the kinds of thinking done by authors like Richard Cumberland, Maria Edgeworth, and George Eliot who challenged existing ideas about Jews by attempting to imagine genuine Jewish perspectives. At the same time, we ought to consider how recent portrayals of ethnic and religious others are at the root reconfigurations of existing types. This means that efforts to correct prejudice must take into account the limitations

that fiction imposes on conceptions of otherness and accept that changes toward more complex portrayals may proceed at a gradual rate.

Appendix A: Hogarth's Prints



The Harlot's Progress, Plate 2 (wikipedia.org)



Election, plate 4 (victorianweb.org)

Appendix B: Percy Shelley's Transcription of Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart's *Der Ewige Jude*.

Ahasuerus the Wandering Jew: a Fragment

'Ahasuerus the Jew crept forth from the dark cave of Mount Carmel. Near two thousand years have elapsed since he was first goaded by never-ending restlessness to rove the globe from pole to pole. When our Lord was wearied with the burthen of His ponderous cross, and wanted to rest before the door of Ahasuerus, the unfeeling wretch drove Him away with brutality. The Saviour of mankind staggered, sinking under the heavy load, but uttered no complaint. An angel of death appeared before Ahasuerus, and exclaimed indignantly, "Barbarian! thou hast denied rest to the Son of man: be it denied thee also, until He comes to judge the world."

'A black demon, let loose from hell upon Ahasuerus, goads him now from country to country; he is denied the consolation which death affords, and precluded from the rest of the peaceful grave.

'Ahasuerus crept forth from the dark cave of Mount Carmel--he shook the dust from his beard--and taking up one of the skulls heaped there, hurled it down the eminence: it rebounded from the earth in shivered atoms. "This was my father!" roared Ahasuerus. Seven more skulls rolled down from rock to rock; while the infuriate Jew, following them with ghastly looks, exclaimed--"And these were my wives!" He still continued to hurl down skull after skull, roaring in dreadful accents--"And these,

and these, and these were my children! They COULD DIE; but I! reprobate wretch! alas! I cannot die! Dreadful beyond conception is the judgement that hangs over me. Jerusalem fell--I crushed the sucking babe, and precipitated myself into the destructive flames. I cursed the Romans--but, alas! alas! the restless curse held me by the hair,--and I could not die!

"Rome the giantess fell--I placed myself before the falling statue--she fell and did not crush me. Nations sprang up and disappeared before me;--but I remained and did not die. From cloud-encircled cliffs did I precipitate myself into the ocean; but the foaming billows cast me upon the shore, and the burning arrow of existence pierced my cold heart again. I leaped into Etna's flaming abyss, and roared with the giants for ten long months, polluting with my groans the Mount's sulphureous mouth--ah! ten long months. The volcano fermented, and in a fiery stream of lava cast me up. I lay torn by the torture-snakes of hell amid the glowing cinders, and yet continued to exist.--A forest was on fire: I darted on wings of fury and despair into the crackling wood. Fire dropped upon me from the trees, but the flames only singed my limbs; alas! it could not consume them.--I now mixed with the butchers of mankind, and plunged in the tempest of the raging battle. I roared defiance to the infuriate Gaul, defiance to the victorious German; but arrows and spears rebounded in shivers from my body. The Saracen's

flaming sword broke upon my skull: balls in vain hissed upon me: the lightnings of battle glared harmless around my loins: in vain did the elephant trample on me, in vain the iron hoof of the wrathful steed! The mine, big with destructive power, burst upon me, and hurled me high in the air--I fell on heaps of smoking limbs, but was only singed. The giant's steel club rebounded from my body; the executioner's hand could not strangle me, the tiger's tooth could not pierce me, nor would the hungry lion in the circus devour me. I cohabited with poisonous snakes, and pinched the red crest of the dragon.--The serpent stung, but could not destroy me. The dragon tormented, but dared not to devour me.--I now provoked the fury of tyrants: I said to Nero, 'Thou art a bloodhound!' I said to Christiern, 'Thou art a bloodhound!', I said to Muley Ismail, 'Thou art a bloodhound!--The tyrants invented cruel torments, but did not kill me. Ha! not to be able to die--not to be able to die--not to be permitted to rest after the toils of life--to be doomed to be imprisoned for ever in the clay-formed dungeon--to be for ever clogged with this worthless body, its load of diseases and infirmities--to be condemned to [be]hold for millenniums that yawning monster Sameness, and Time, that hungry hyaena, ever bearing children, and ever devouring again her offspring!--Ha! not to be permitted to die! Awful Avenger in Heaven, hast Thou in Thine armoury of wrath a punishment more dreadful? then let it thunder upon me, command a hurricane to sweep me down to the foot of

Carmel, that I there may lie extended; may pant, and writhe, and die.!" (*Queen Mab*
316-318)

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