George Eliot’s Daniel Deronda: Apartheid Utopia

Prof. Naser Athamneh and Dr. A. Clare Brandabur, Yarmouk University

Abstract

This paper considers George Eliot’s last novel, *Daniel Deronda*, as a utopian vision for the solution to “The Eastern Question” in its variant form as “The Jewish Question.” Eliot’s novel was an important part of a general political and cultural discourse which occupied the foreground of Victorian English consciousness: it can be variously seen as a reply to Disraeli’s *Tancred and Lothair*, or even as a sequel to Scott’s *Ivanhoe*. Like these other fictional proposals, *Daniel Deronda* is highly ideological and needs to be deconstructed in order that the various elements of its political agenda can be exposed.

*Daniel Deronda*, more clearly than any of the other fictional proposals for a solution to the vexed Jewish Question, offers a Zionist solution: it argues for the removal of European Jews to Palestine, interdicts their intermarriage with non-Jews, and strongly implies that the person best qualified to lead this exodus must be of Jewish “blood,” but should have a thoroughly English education. George Eliot, as the paper demonstrates, subscribed to the now discredited ideas of race and of “blood” intrinsic to the theories of the German higher criticism (in particular Strauss and Feuerbach) by whom she was deeply influenced.

As Edward Said points out in *The Question of Palestine*, *Orientalism*, and *Culture and Imperialism*, this enterprise took no account of the fate of the indigenous Palestinian Arabs, taking the same view as Theodor Herzl that these anonymous people must be got rid of to make space for a Jewish homeland. Thus, the paper exposes a double standard of racism lying under the surface humanism of Eliot’s embracing of the Zionist project in *Daniel Deronda*. On the one hand, there is a deep prejudice against the Jews (viewed as irreducibly different and unassimilable), who must be politely expelled from Europe. On the other hand, there is contempt for the Arab victims and indifference towards their fate as the indigenous people at whose expense the Jewish nation-state was to find realization.

In *Orientalism* (1978), *The Question of Palestine* (1979), and *Culture and Imperialism* (1994), Edward Said places the novels of George Eliot among those nineteenth century Western liberal literary works which facilitated the division of the empire into invisible people who inhabit empty spaces useful for colonization and those powerful people ordained to utilize these empty spaces. Said summarizes the burden of *Daniel Deronda* as a
program for Zionist appropriation of Palestine, pointing out that most contemporary accounts of the establishment of the Jewish state take the point of view of the victor, and ignore the perspective of the victim: in *The Question of Palestine* Said asks,

Yet what did the victim feel as he watched the Zionists arriving in Palestine? What does he think as he watches Zionism described today? Where does he look in Zionism's history to locate its roots, and the origins of its practices toward him? These are the questions that are never asked—and they are precisely the ones that I am trying to raise, as well as answer, here in this examination of the links between Zionism and European imperialism. (72)

This paper intends to pursue one of the important issues raised by Said's ground-breaking work with special reference to the novel *Daniel Deronda*, showing how this narrative contains in embryo the racist apartheid ideology of its matrix in nineteenth century European social Darwinism. We will argue that *Daniel Deronda* is flawed, notwithstanding its greatness, not only because the ideological rhetoric protrudes through the aesthetic fabric of the novel, but because this rhetoric masks a contradiction. On the surface, *Daniel Deronda* promotes a pro-Zionist program which will culminate in a global utopia, the protagonist heading off, at novel's end, to found a Jewish national home in Palestine. Yet this ostensibly pro-Jewish argument has two important corollaries: first it has the implicit side-effect of getting the Jews out of Europe, and secondly it includes the explicit prohibition of intermarriage between Jew and Gentile. It is a utopia, but one which contains within its formal structure an apartheid agenda, both for England which, after strenuous efforts to convert the Jews, finds them unassimilable and expels them, and for the consequent Jewish state to be constructed on what remains of Arab Palestine after destroying the country and disrupting the lives of its indigenous people.

The suggestion that *Daniel Deronda* is to be read as a utopia comes from Eliot herself and is elaborated by Terry Eagleton who provides, in *Criticism and Ideology* (1976) an important analysis of the rhetorical thrust of George Eliot's fiction. The utopian implications of Daniel Deronda are discussed at length in a major study of the impact in England of the German Higher Criticism entitled 'Kubla Khan' and the Fall of Jerusalem by E. S. Shaffer.
From George Eliot herself comes the admission that her work constitutes "aesthetic teaching" which, unlike avowed utopias, must keep their didactic purpose hidden. In a now famous letter to Frederic Harrison, parrying his suggestion that she write a Comtean utopia, Eliot argues that "avowed utopias" are not offensive since they clearly set forth their purpose. But "aesthetic teaching," though it is the highest of all teaching, becomes the most offensive of all teaching "if it ceases to be purely aesthetic—if it lapses anywhere from the picture to the diagram." (Letters 1866)

For Terry Eagleton, though Daniel Deronda is the most explicitly utopian of Eliot's novels, it shares with her earlier work the task of reconciling intrinsically contradictory strands in the social fabric. Eagleton demonstrates that, in all of her novels, the aesthetic form is manipulated to mask or appear to reconcile intrinsic contradictions—between Romantic individualism and certain 'higher' corporate ideological modes. In the earlier novels these contradictions are mediated and apparently reconciled, Eagleton argues, by the forms of "pastoral, historical realism, fable, mythopoetic and didactic discourse", while in Daniel Deronda the author has recourse to "elements of utopian fantasy."(113) What Eliot needs, Eagleton says, is a

'totalising' vision which binds the individual to the laws of a social formation, preserves the 'personal' pieties violated by such visions in Romola and Middlemarch, and romantically liberates the self. The answer to this problem is Daniel Deronda. In that novel Eliot finds a magical solution to her ideological dilemma in Deronda's Jewishness, which provides him with a fulfilling romantic identity while incorporating him into the complex totality of a corporate historical culture. Deronda's early liberalism is fruitlessly Hellenistic, a decentred spreading of sympathies which erodes his capacity for principled action:...

. Hebraism provides the essential corrective. . . (122)
The problem, in other words, can be 'solved' only by the invention of a displaced totality outside the sterile detotalisation of post-Reform Bill England – a totality which is then, as it were, instantly exported, as Deronda leaves to discover his destiny in the Middle East. The difficulty then is to bring this factitious totality into regenerative relation with bourgeois England – a difficulty 'solved' by Deronda's redemptive influence on the broken, dispirited victim of that society, Gwendolen Harleth. But in attempting this solution, the novel splits into self-contradiction – splits, indeed, down the middle. For Daniel can only fulfil his destiny by withdrawing from Gwendolen to the Middle East, abandoning her to a nebulous Arnoldian trust in some ideal goodness. The formal dislocations of Daniel Deronda are the product of its attempt to overcome the ideological contradictions from which it emerges; it is in the silence between its 'Gwendolen' and 'Daniel' episodes that the truth of those contradictions speaks most eloquently. (122) (Emphasis added)

By this 'silence,' Eagleton means the apartheid nature of the novel's utopian fantasy. Daniel Deronda for Eagleton marks a "terminus of nineteenth century realism" since "there could be no Mordecai outside the limits of fictional discourse (as there could indeed be a Bulstrode)..." (123-24) Thus he regards Daniel Deronda as "beyond the bounds of realism", belonging instead to "utopian fantasy." However, the novel was read, not as fantasy but as prophetic realism by those readers who believed literally in the Old Testament with its messianism and tribal exclusivity, and in the cabbala with its esoteric tradition of transmigration of souls.

Eagleton completes his discussion of George Eliot with a pointed reference to Impressions of Theophrastus Such (1879) in which the racist and imperialist rhetoric appears without the graceful tropes of fiction and without benefit of the (perhaps) softening editorial oversight of George Henry Lewes who died in 1878. In the final essay of this collection, George Eliot warns against "a premature fusion with immigrants of alien blood" and celebrates what the Protestant English and the Jews have in common—superior religious principles and the tonnage (i.e. the naval fire-power) to export them around the world. Eagleton concludes:
The corporate society which in *Daniel Deronda* remained a goal to be realised, and so an idealist critique of contemporary England, has now become an effusive celebration of the status quo. The voice of liberal humanism has become the voice of jingoist reaction. (125)

In the event, the separatist agenda of *Daniel Deronda* was appealing to anti-Jewish Europeans as well as to Jewish separatists, the rhetoric of the novel not so subtly arguing prejudices arising from issues of both race and class. In part this racism and class snobbery may have been inherited by George Eliot from her own upbringing, but it seems to have been reinforced by attitudes of her German ideals. Strauss and Feuerbach, as an intrinsic feature of the anti-Hebraism in which these authors couched their influential re-interpretations of the New Testament in the *Life of Jesus* and the *Essence of Christianity* respectively.

The utopian pretensions of *Daniel Deronda* become clear if we look at its structure as an analogue to Shelley’s *Queen Mab* (1813), a work alluded to many times throughout the novel. Comparing the structure of both works with this intertextuality in mind, it appears that George Eliot saw her narrative as a rival synthesis of world intellectual history. Shelley’s fairy protagonist, Queen Mab (after whom George Eliot names Mab Meyrick, an important character in the novel), comes to earth, takes a sleeping girl hostage and makes her witness past, present, and future—the first two characterized by violence, suffering and injustice, while the third, the future, is conceived as the possible Utopia. In *Daniel Deronda*, there are vestiges of such a cosmic over-view: the opening section represents the era Before the Fall, the middle section represents the Christian era to the present, and the finale points toward a future Utopia in which all conflict would be resolved, in Eliot’s utopian vision (as articulated by Mordecai), by the establishment of a Jewish national home from whose benign influence mankind as a whole would be enabled to achieve peace and harmony.

At the center of this global Utopia would be Daniel Deronda, the protagonist designed by George Eliot as a secular Christ figure, containing in himself a blending of cultures and genders, and therefore mediating between East and West, Christian and Jew, male and female, in short as a reconciler of opposites in a grand design of cosmic synthesis. In keeping with this historic
vision, when Gwendolen appears first in the novel, she is presented as free from guilt--Eve before the Fall, and even (especially in the flashback to her life prior to her meeting with Daniel) the pagan Artemis, goddess of the hunt. Her name is Welsh: Gwynn as a first name could refer to any number of characters in the Mabinogion (many of them male, e.g. Gwynn the Splendid), while Harlech is an Anglicized form of a Welsh place name--Harddlech--which was the site of a court of Bran, the Blessed son of Llyr. It is on the Rock of Harddlech that Bran sits looking out to sea when the Irish ships arrive. (Mabinogion 67)² Gwendolen is also called at various times a Nereid and spoken of as demonic, e.g. in contrast to the human goodness of Rex, the cousin whose ardor she so coldly rejects. It is also possible (since George Eliot often uses proper names and place names suggestively) that the family home “Offendene” is an allusion to the story by Fouque, Undine, the mermaid who sought a human soul through suffering. The Gwendolen of this early part of the narrative corresponds to the unfallen Eve of the earthly paradise. It is Deronda’s function to let her taste of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil which has the effect of making her feel guilty.

Whereas, when he confronts her in the culminating scenes of their relationship, we are in the Christian era AD, Anno Domini: she has become Fallen Woman, the penitent Magdalen, and he the suffering Christ. His vocation, i.e. to depart from England with Mirah at the end of the novel to establish a Jewish national home in Palestine, is projected into the future, like the Utopian finale of Shelley’s Queen Mab. He is to become the redemptive savior of his own people as well as of Gwendolen though he cannot marry her: he leaves her weeping and abandoned like the weeping Magdalen at Jesus’ tomb. Daniel must leave not, like Jesus, to be crucified or to return to the Father, but to return to the Holy Land to establish a Jewish state: and, though his relationship with Gwendolen is the passionate heart of the narrative, he cannot marry her but must marry one of his “own kind,” Mirah, the passive little Jewish girl.

Gwendolen Harleth is first seen by Daniel Deronda winning money at a roulette table in an upscale vacation spa called Leubronn near Dover, after which she begins to lose.³ She regards this change of fortune (and refers to it several times later) as an “evil eye”--as though his look itself had some kind of magic negative property which changed her luck. Until this moment,
Gwendolen was so supremely self-assured that she has regarded herself as perfect, never having been held accountable for mistakes by her doting mother, and she often kisses her own beautiful image in the mirror. Thus she experiences in Daniel’s appraising glance for the first time an unpleasant sense of someone looking down at her as though she were inferior, judging her and finding her in the wrong.

This opening scene at the gambling casino strongly suggests the analysis of Matthew Arnold of the conflict between Hellenism and Hebraism: for Arnold, Hellenism stresses “thinking clearly, seeing things in their essence and beauty” while in contrast Hebraism “speaks of becoming conscious of sin, of awakening to a sense of sin”. (Arnold 113) And it is exactly this kind of awakening that Daniel’s scrutiny produces in Gwendolen. In this first encounter, Daniel is a secular Christ, introducing her to the concept of guilt—he becomes her conscience.

This secular Christ at the center of Daniel Deronda is prefigured in the role of Will Ladislaw in Middlemarch. Ladislaw is a dashing cosmopolitan figure. (Lydgate calls him ‘a sort of Daphnis’), (p. 496) who sees through his uncle Casaubon and whose advice to Dorothea parallels that of Daniel to Gwendolen. The sensitive artistic Ladislaw tells Dorothea not to worry about solving the problems of the whole world, assuring her that “that is being taken care of when you feel delight in art or in anything else.” (219) Closely related to this aesthetic counsel is the advice given by Deronda, as we will see later. Even more clearly than Ladislaw, Daniel is a secular Christ, carrying out the mandate of the Feuerbachian religion of humanism. That Ladislaw brings to the narrative a more cosmopolitan frame of reference than Dorothea’s rather provincial meleé is indicated, as Edward Said suggests, by the fact that it is he who explains the inability of his Uncle Casaubon to finish his “Key to All Mythologies” as stemming from his lack of acquaintanceship with German scholarship in a speech which concludes, “he is not an Orientalist, you know.” (Orientalism 18-19)

There are other thematic links between Middlemarch and Daniel Deronda which will prove illuminating for our inquiry. At the outset of Middlemarch, Dorothea is inspired by the heroic example of Saint Teresa of Avila, religious mystic and poet of medieval Spain. Like that of her spiritual director, St. John of the Cross, the mysticism of Teresa was rooted in the
cabbala. George Eliot would have been familiar with the discovery that both of these important Spanish mystics came from families said to have been “conversos,” i.e. Jewish converts to Catholicism. (Américo Castro 223 & 575) Saint Cecelia, patron saint of music, is ironically mimicked by Gwendolen in the early chapters of Daniel Deronda. Cecelia, early medieval virgin and martyr, may foreshadow the fate of the aspiring musician who invokes her name. Though less directly than St. Theresa, Cecelia also fits into the leit-motif of Spanish culture: when she is posing at the organ, Gwendolen invokes the well-known portrait of the saint at the keyboard, eyes looking to the heavens from which roses and angels descend. At this moment the “Spanish” paintings in the wainscoting are noticed, among them the ghastly painting of the dead face and the fleeing figure which will become an objective correlative for Gwendolen’s marriage. (Daniel Deronda 26-28)

After Grandcourt’s death by drowning, Gwendolen is reminded of the painting as she herself flees the dead white face of the reptilian Grandcourt. (674) And the mysterious origins of Will Ladislaw, said to have been “the grandson of a thieving Jew pawnbroker,” (Middlemarch 719) resonate with the mysterious parentage of Daniel Deronda who discovers that his mother and father were Jewish. Parallel to Daniel’s enterprise of settlement in Palestine is Ladislaw’s entertaining the idea of “an intended settlement in the Far West.” (Middlemarch 801)

The primary difference between Middlemarch and Daniel Deronda is that, while Dorothea gives up a fortune to marry Will Ladislaw and finds happiness in the sexual fulfillment of their union and in contributing heart and soul to family life and to Will’s reformist political activity, in Daniel Deronda, the same passionate attachment between the heroine and the dark androgynous stranger is aborted. Daniel must marry a Jewish woman and leave England for Palestine. In order to appreciate the seriousness of his betrayal of their relationship (to which contemporary readers strongly objected), it is necessary to explore the nature of the “I-Thou” relationship as George Eliot herself developed it in both novels along lines of Feuerbachian humanism.

In Leben Jesu, David Strauss, sought to account historically for the ideas of the Christian faith by treating the gospels as folk myths expressing the aspirations of the Jewish people. (Introduction to The Essence of Christianity vi.) But Feuerbach goes beyond Strauss by analyzing the origin of religion
psychologically rather than historically, and asserting that God is the projection of human traits, the antithesis of man, the projected objective nature of intelligence, the intellect conscious of itself and of its perfections. (Feuerbach 19)

Feuerbach’s importance becomes clear in this passage. Shaffer points out, in that it is Daniel’s suffering which enables Gwendolen to grasp the possibility of the impossible. Both the “fraternal imagery of the cabbala and the revolutionary egalitarianism of Feuerbach’s ‘I-Thou’” (Shaffer 281) come into play here. In having Daniel experience this highly charged spiritual I-Thou intimacy with Gwendolen and yet repudiate it for the sake of the infusion of Mordecai’s spirit in a cabbalistic transmigration of souls, the author introduces a serious betrayal. Daniel violently wrenches himself away from Gwendolen who only gradually realizes and painfully accepts that he will not be her permanent guide/lover.

And this is the point at which the ideology of the narrative intervenes, arguing against the fusion of Jew and Gentile. While attracted to Feuerbach’s humanistic rhetoric, Eliot also unconsciously embraced a certain anti-Hebraism intrinsic to his thought. In The Essence of Christianity, Feuerbach states that the dogma of creation, taken over from the Hebrews, is an expression of egotism which is possible only when man feels himself no longer part of nature. (Feuerbach 34)

The theoretical expression of this practical, egotistical point of view, from which Nature has no value in and for itself, is the formula: the world was made, it was created, it is the product of an order. God spoke, “Let the world be,” and the world began to be; God ordered, “Let the world begin to exist,” and it promptly reported for existence.

The Greeks cultivated the humanities, the fine arts, and philosophy. The Hebrews never outgrew theology, the study of how to keep oneself well fed: “At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God.” (Exodus 16, 12) (Feuerbach 35) (Emphasis added)
This disparagement of Jewish theology coincides historically with a growing hostility to Jews in Europe during the mid to late nineteenth century which seems to have reached a climax in precisely the decade during which Daniel Deronda was written and published. That the views of the early George Eliot, then Mary Ann Evans, were consistent with this anti-Jewish feeling before her association with George Henry Lewes is apparent from a letter which she wrote to John Sibree in 1848:

As to his [D’Israeli’s] theory of ‘races’ it has not a leg to stand on... Extermination up to a certain point seems to be the law for the inferior races--for the rest, fusion both for physical and moral ends. It appears to me that the law by which privileged classes degenerate from continuous intermarriage must act on a larger scale in deteriorating whole races. . . .

. . . . The fellowship of race, to which D’Israeli exultingly refers the munificence of Sidonia, is so evidently an inferior impulse which must be ultimately superseded that I wonder even he, Jew as he is, dares to boast of it. My gentile nature kicks most resolutely against any assumption of superiority in the Jews, and is almost ready to echo Voltaire’s vituperation. I bow to the supremacy of Hebrew poetry, but much of their early mythology and almost all their history is utterly revolting. Their stock has produced a Moses and a Jesus, but Moses was impregnated with Egyptian philosophy and Jesus 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.”(Letters 45) (Except for the emphasis on “specifically” which is Eliot’s, other emphasis added)

This letter makes it fairly obvious that George Eliot, at this stage in her life, was guilty of both racism and of social-Darwinist ideas. By hindsight, it is obvious that the concept of the inevitable “extermination” of certain “races” prevalent in the nineteenth century had as its practical outcome the euthanasia and eugenics programs of the German National Socialists. However, it is important to notice that these early attitudes on the part of
George Eliot seem to have changed by the time she wrote *Daniel Deronda*. In a letter to Harriet Beecher Stowe on October 29, 1876, shortly after the publication of *Daniel Deronda*, George Eliot expresses disapproval of her critics who could be said to hold racial attitudes very similar to those expressed by a young Mary Ann Evans in 1848:

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Dear Friend . . .

As to the Jewish element in 'Deronda.' I expected from first to last in writing it that it would create much stronger resistance and even repulsion than it has actually met with. ... [N]ot only towards the Jews, but toward all oriental peoples with whom we English come in contact, a spirit of arrogance and contemptuous dictatorialness is observable which has become a national disgrace to us. . . . But towards the Hebrews we western people who have been reared in Christianity, have a peculiar debt and, whether we acknowledge it or not, a peculiar thoroughness of fellowship in religious and moral sentiment. . . . [T]hey hardly know that Christ was a Jew. . . . The best that can be said of it is, that it is a sign of the intellectual narrowness—in plain English, the stupidity, which is still the average mark of our culture. (Letters 476) (Emphasis added.)
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In fairness it must be remembered that forty-three years had elapsed between these two letters, that meanwhile Mary Ann Evans had moved to London from the provinces, had taken her place in the intellectual life of the city, had met and virtually married an important intellectual. George Henry Lewes. She had traveled with him to Germany where he was completing research on his biography of Goethe, and that she herself had become a scholar and a major novelist. In 1854, in response to seeing Lesing's *Nathan the Wise* in Berlin, George Eliot wrote to her friend Charles Bray:

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. . . [T]his play is a sort of dramatic apologue the moral of which is religious tolerance. It thrilled me to think that Lessing dared nearly a hundred years ago to write the grand sentiments and profound thoughts which this play contains. . . . In England the words which call down applause here would make the pit rise in horror. (Letters 185, 12 November 1854, cited by Baker 32)
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Prominent among personal acquaintances which helped to interest George Eliot in the plight of the Jews was her close friendship with Emmanuel Deutsch. In 1866 George Eliot and George Henry Lewes met Deutsch and apparently developed a close relationship with him. She took Hebrew lessons from him and Gordon Haight believes it is possible that she may have assisted him in the stylistic revision of his famous article "The Talmud," published in the Quarterly Review for October 1867, which pointed out the parallels between Judaism, Christianity, and other religions. (Letters 344) Deutsch was born in Silesia, the son of a Rabbi, and his longing to travel again to the East may in part have inspired George Eliot’s depiction of Mordecai. That his devotion to Zionist ideas played an important part in the author’s conception of Daniel Deronda is obvious from George Eliot’s letters to him. A letter of May 1869 (Letters, 364) shows that he had returned from Cyprus and the Holy Land on May 10, and was coming to visit them; her Journal for May 25-28, 1870, records her first visit to Oxford where the Leweses attended a meeting at the Sheldonian Theatre concerning Palestine Exploration at which Captain Charles Warren read a paper on the Exploration at Jerusalem and Deutsch showed rubbings of and lectured on the Moabite Stone, from al-Karak in Jordan.

Through Deutsch, George Eliot would have been keenly aware of the crisis of Jewish identity in Europe during the 1870s. In a recent scholarly study of anti-Jewish sentiment, The Jew Accused: Three Anti-Semitic Affairs: Dreyfus, Beilis, Frank 1894-1915, Albert S. Lindemann surveys the situation in Europe in the period leading up to the events central to his study. "The very word anti-Semitism, was coined in the 1870s, when racial-nationalistic antipathy to Jews (the "-Semitic" race) began to find a new political expression in Europe." (16) Lindemann traces the reaction of public opinion to the "Damascus Affair" in which, in 1840, Jews in Damascus were accused of the ritual murder of an Italian priest who had disappeared without trace, the net result of which was a growing fear caused by "the spreading belief that wealthy and prominent Jews like the Rothschilds, Cremieux, or Montefiore were part of a covert international network with steadily growing power in the highest councils of Europe’s states. It was a natural step from such beliefs to the panicked conviction in the later part of the century that Jews were surreptitiously taking over in Europe, that a secret Jewish power was everywhere and nearly omnipotent." (Lindemann 39)
Lindemann says that the first anti-Semitic best-seller entitled *The Victory of Jewry Over Germany* by Wilhelm Marr was published in 1879, and that around the same time Eugen Dühring “offered his readers a somewhat more sophisticated if also virulently racist, pagan anti-Semitism, rejecting Christianity because of its roots in Judaism and offering in its stead an anti-Marxist ‘German socialism.’” (Lindemann 21) In April 1875 in Hungary, a lawyer with Catholic background named Istoczy, who had earlier accepted Jewish emancipation and believed Jews could be useful citizens, entered a debate in Parliament to argue vehemently that Jews should be encouraged to move to Palestine “where they would find kindred Semitic peoples in the Arabs and might . . . even be welcomed by the Sultan.” (Lindemann 49-50) Not surprisingly, Lindemann notes, it was only a few years later that, when in a Hungarian village of Tiszaeszlar a 14 year old girl disappeared, the charge of ritual murder by Jews came to the surface. (Lindemann 50-51)

It is within this atmosphere of crisis for Jewish identity that the issues of ideology in *Daniel Deronda* must be understood. The solution for the suffering of the Jews in Europe offered by the novel is Zionism: Daniel Deronda will lead his persecuted people back to the Holy Land, and because he has had the advantage of the most impeccable English aristocratic education, he will be able to educate them to cultural equality with the civilized Europeans. But again the contradictions begin to appear in the rhetoric of the novel taken as a whole. George Eliot wishes to appear sympathetic to the Jewish people and argues for a solution to their problem that is benevolent: she expresses in her letters following the publication of *Daniel Deronda* a great deal of satisfaction at the high praise won by the book from Jewish readers and scholars like David Kaufmann (*Letters* 487) whose book about the novel pleased her enormously. But a close reading of the text reveals the bias towards separation as opposed to assimilation which weights the rhetorical force of the novel towards the exclusion of the Jews as unassimilable.

The novel embodies Jews who argue for the integration of Jews into a multi-cultural society, and others who argue that the preservation of Jewish identity requires segregation. This argument reflected disagreement within the Jewish intellectual community and even within the Zionist movement.
itself, some arguing for assimilation while others argued for "separateness" as well as "communication." Among the Jewish leaders and thinkers represented by Eliot in the novel, both those from Medieval Spain and more contemporary periods, there are advocates of different solutions for the Jews: Jehuda ha-Levi, Judah Halevi (c. 1085-1149) is, according to Barbara Hardy (see note 5, p. 896), the thinker whose ideas lie behind Mordecai's insistence on 'separateness with communication' and behind Mordecai's poetry, ideals and oracular language. David Friedlander was the originator of the Reform Movement to which George Eliot has Daniel refer approvingly -- "the fine new buildings of the Reformed" (Ch. 32, p. 415). Friedlander seems to have favored partial assimilation with the separation of religious from national elements, but Frankfort, where Daniel first visits a synagogue, was the centre of Samson Raphael Hirsch's vigorous attack on Reform. Hirsch founded the Neo-orthodoxy which revived the Judaism of the Arabic-Spanish era, and his ideas provide the model for Mordecai's insistence on 'separateness' as well as 'communication.' (Hardy's note 4, Chapter 29, p. 893) Leopold Zunz (1794-1886) (a quotation from whose Die Synagogale Poesie des Mittelalters forms the epigraph to Chapter 42) and which Daniel reads, was the founder of 'the Science of Judaism' who feared the assimilative tendencies of Reform. (Note 1, Ch 42, p. 897)

A very detailed analysis of these discordant voices is provided by William Baker in his book, George Eliot and Judaism (1975). Noting the historical sources of the various Jewish opinions about the destiny of the Jewish people, Baker comments on George Eliot's use of these sources. Two examples will be especially relevant to our purpose: Having noted Eliot's use of Leopold Zunz, founder of the Science of Judaism, Baker points out the emphasis she makes when she adds the idea of Jewish nationalism to Zunz's words about the sufferings of the Jewish people: (Baker 146) he also notes that she "presented his [Zunz's] views unsympathetically" embodying them in the character of Gideon, who was "a Jew of the red-haired, generous featured type easily passing for Englishmen of unusually cordial manners," and who argued that Jewish "exclusiveness" should disappear. (Baker 146) Thus, Baker supports the idea that George Eliot was weighting her ideological message towards separateness rather than co-existence.6

These dissonant voices, arguing for separateness rather than assimilation, are further pushed towards the rhetoric of apartheid in Daniel
Deronda by the choice of two books from the Old Testament which argue vehemently for the separation of the Jews from the Gentiles: the Book of Daniel and the Book of Ezra. It is impossible to determine whether Eliot’s choice of Daniel as a name for her protagonist had any connection with Disraeli’s use of the Book of Daniel in The Wondrous Tale of Alroy (1833). According to Daniel Schwartz, Alroy features a Jewish hero living in Medieval Kurdistan who feels called to lead his people back to Palestine. Amid the Nubian slaves, precious gems, and exotic feasts of the Babylonian exile, Disraeli’s protagonist falls in love with and marries the daughter of the Caliph of Baghdad, thus betraying his Jewish vocation. He is rebuked by Jabaster, his companion, for not following his mission: “you may be King of Baghdad, but you cannot at the same time, be a Jew),” says Jabaster.

When Jabaster rebukes [Alroy] for not following his mission . . . a spirit shrieks ‘Mene, Mene, Tekel Upharsin’, the words that Daniel interprets upon the wall to mean that God had weighed Belshazzar and his kingdom and found them wanting (VIII, vi, pp. 156-7). Singificantly, Alroy regains the Jewish title, Prince of Captivity, after he is overthrown as Caliph. In his final suffering and humility, he has achieved the stature that the Jewish exiled Prince, Disraeli’s metaphor for himself, deserves. (Schwartz 50)

Both the Book of Daniel and the Book of Ezra are permeated by the ideas of Jewish exclusiveness. The Book of Daniel has strong affiliations to the Book of Revelations or Apocalypse of the New Testament. Set in Babylon just before and just after the Persian conquest, Daniel performs feats in which supernatural manifestations convince pagan kings of divine favor, in consequence of which they set him, richly garbed, in positions of honor and authority. George Eliot says she chose this book because its author was “first to grasp the history of the world as a whole and see it ‘as a drama which moves onward at the will of the Eternal One.’ (Quoted by F. B. Pinion, p. 218) The Book of Ezra centers on the cruel separation of Jewish men, at the time of the return from Babylonian exile, from the non-Jewish wives and children they had acquired among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians and the Amorites. (Ezra 9:1) The Jewish prophet Ezra, designated (as Daniel Deronda will be
in George Eliot's narrative) to lead the Jews out of exile back to Jerusalem, is commanded to purify the people from the uncleanness they have incurred from their association with the surrounding tribes. Jewish exclusiveness is enforced in this book with great cruelty. Yahweh's contempt for non-Jews and his aversion to inter-marriage with them is evidenced by the animosity in the divine command: "The land which you are entering to take possession of it, is a land unclean with the pollution of the peoples of the lands... Therefore give not your daughters to their sons, neither take their daughters for your sons, seek their peace or prosperity, that you may be strong, and eat the good of the land, and leave it for an inheritance to your children forever." (Ezra 9:10-12) After long lists of families in which Jewish men had taken foreign wives and were forcibly required to part with them, the book concludes, "All these had married foreign women, and they put them away with their children." (Ezra 18:44)

It is important to notice that Yahweh is here commanding the Jews to take possession of the land of these non-Jewish people, among whom the Jews had been living and with whom they had inter-married. The Book of Ezra argues for separation and repudiates inter-marriage. Of course Jewish exclusiveness is claimed all through the Jewish Old Testament, not merely in Ezra and Daniel—it is prominent also in the Books of Samuel in which the Lord commands Saul "Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have; do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." (1 Samuel 15:3) George Eliot avoids these rather bloodier genocidal instances of divine inspiration, but she implicitly endorses the sentiment which finds expression in the Diaries of Theodor Herzl only a few years after the publication of Daniel Deronda, recommending that the "penniless population" of Palestine be expelled. Mordecai's oracular vision, echoing his Old Testament models, rapturously predicts the expulsion of the indigenous population of Palestine in terms which (as Edward Said has pointed out in The Question of Palestine, p. 64) indicate the contempt in which these Arabs were held. To Mordecai, the Jewish people are the ones who

have wealth enough to redeem the soil from debauched and paupered conquerors; they have the skill of the statesman to devise, the tongue of the orator to persuade. And is there no prophet or poet among us to make the ears of Christian Europe
tingle with shame at the hideous obloquy of Christian strife which the Turk gazes at as at the fighting of beasts to which he has lent an arena? (535)

In this plea by Mordecai, redeeming the soil at the hands of the European Jews could only mean colonizing, tilling, and taking possession of it. Thus, his “debauched and paupered conquerors” can only refer to its Arab population and Turkish rulers both. Indeed, the phrase refers primarily to the population rather than to the rulers, sense the European Jews are envisioned as returning to their “promised land”, of which they claim to be the rightful owners, rather than mere rulers. One can hardly imagine Mordecai as calling upon his fellow European Jews to wage a war to liberate the Arab population of Palestine from the yoke of Turkish rule and then return to Europe.

Clearly for George Eliot, however much she may have wished to exploit the color and romance of The Arabian Nights to provide a cultural decor for her Jewish characters (in keeping with her view that everything specifically Jewish was of a low order), it is only the Arabs of Medieval Spain or of the magical legends of ancient Persia who had value. The real contemporary Arabs who had the misfortune to be in the way of her utopian fantasy were perceived as expendable. And though Daniel Deronda’s mother, the Princess Charisi, expressed in the strongest possible terms her hatred of the confining and retrograde position of women in Jewish culture, a critique which is never undercut or adequately responded to anywhere in the novel, Daniel marries, not the glamorous Gwendolen to whom he is obviously intensely attracted, but the passive tiny little Jewish Mirah who will presumably accept her place as wife, mother, and silent servant to her husband. Thus the novelistic discourse dismisses an eloquent protest against traditional Jewish treatment of women. As Suzanne Graver says (1984), “George Eliot would like to make Judaism emblematic of ‘equality’ and of the ‘unity of mankind.’ But its doctrines assign to women a role that makes for subjection.” (240) Graver reminds us that Ezra Cohen, the pawnbroker says, “A man is bound to thank God, as we do every Sabbath, that he was not made a woman” and notes that “Actually a Jewish man is supposed to thank God every day, not once a week, for not having been made a woman.” (Ibid, note 65.) Graver also raises the issue of organicism to which George Eliot was committed in theory, pointing out that
Just as the portrait of the Princess undermines the primary pillar of community—the family—so Deronda’s setting out for Jerusalem uproots the pillar of place. His mission, furthermore, raises but does not resolve, the question of nationalism. For all the talk of Jewish separateness leading ultimately to world community, Deronda’s task is the forging of an individual nation. The inevitable result is nationalism—analagous in the public realm to self-serving individualism in private life. . . . .

Affirming growth through transplantation, the closing action of George Eliot’s last novel nullifies the social whole. (242)

The implications of Graver’s last point—that the Zionist solution undermines the organicism of the human community—are connected to the nature of modern nation-building and will be discussed later. However, the implications of her point about the role of Daniel’s mother, The Princess, as undermining the primary pillar of community, i.e., the family, deserve further analysis. Daniel maintains the pillar of family by marrying a Jew, whereas the Princess would have been for his marrying Gwendolen to whom he was passionately attracted. The rhetorical force of the novel fails to undercut or adequately respond to the stance of the Princess. Instead, by endorsing Daniel’s choice of the docile little Jewish Mirah, the novel advocates the “Jewish family” in the traditional separatist sense: a Jew, according to this principle, should never mix blood, an argument reinforced by the doctrines of the Biblical books of Ezra and Daniel embodied in the principal Jewish male characters and permeating the atmosphere of the novel.

In spite of the surface dialogism of the novel in which many points of view are presented with the apparent disinterest of the omniscient narrator, deep down, perhaps even unconsciously, Eliot comes down on the side of the exclusion of the Jews from Europe despite her conscious commitment to “organicism” in theory. In the novel itself the paradoxicality, hypocrisy, and ambiguity of “growth” through transplantation of the Jews from Europe and of the Palestinian Arabs from Palestine through apartheid, is duplicated in the treatment of the issue of human brotherhood in terms of gender, i.e., between man and woman, as well as between ethnic groups, nations, and communities. Thus the notion that only a submissive “Jewish” model of a woman (Mirah) can form an appropriate partner for the Jewish mission-bearer of the future becomes understandable, though still racist, ambiguous,
and exclusivist. The image of the passive ‘angel in the house’ represented by Mirah is endorsed by the trajectory of the novel, while the strong individualistic and assertive women, like the Princess and Gwendolen, are perceived as subversive.

Given all these conflicting interests and ideas, then—given the perceived urgency of a solution for the Jews, and given the anti-Jewish feeling of her audience—the problem confronting the author was complex. She had to appeal to the feeling of her readers by granting what she herself felt—i.e., that the Jews as a group were unacceptable socially, but then to argue persuasively that, given the right education, some of them at least could be rehabilitated sufficiently to serve in the Middle East as the enlightened outpost of European humanism. Some Jews, however, are superior to ethnic limitations, no doubt like those cosmopolitan poets and musicians Eliot encountered on her travels on the Continent with George Henry Lewes. Such an exceptional figure is Herr Klesmer. Klesmer (whose name is Yiddish for musician) is looked up to as belonging to a “higher caste” than Catherine Arrowpoint because, in spite of his Jewishness, he is an artist, (when Klesmer tells Catherine that she cannot understand the wrath of the artist, she replies, “That is true... He is of a caste to which I look up... a caste above mine”) and, furthermore, he “Looks forward to a fusion of races.” (242-43) Klesmer represents, in the dialectic of the novel, that faction within the Jewish community which favored assimilation.

But since Eliot wished to weight the argument of the book in favor of “separateness with communication,” the new Jewish leader, Daniel Deronda, must be a perfectly educated, polite, sensitive and cultured British gentleman. As Edward Said comments in The Question of Palestine, Eliot counts on Zionism to make the East become as “English as England,” as Daniel is. (65) So having chosen a quintessentially English gentleman as their leader, Eliot introduces a wide variety of Jewish characters, some who fulfill the negative stereotypes of the Shylockian Jew, others redeemed by wealth, genius, or ‘exquisite sensibility’. To these Jewish characters, the novel’s English characters express prejudice, bigotry, and revulsion, attitudes with which Eliot seems not to concur in the case of these assimilable figures like Mirah.
Mirah disarms the reader by her extreme humility, her delicacy, and her petite size. A perfect Victorian image of the “angel in the house”, docile and obedient, Mirah is concerned only with the nurturing and care of others, like Dickens’ Lucy in A Tale of Two Cities and Jane Austen’s Fanny in Mansfield Park. She is literally too good to be true, or to be realistic: Barbara Hardy has observed on the ‘simplification’ of the Jewish characters:

The psychology and style of the Jewish characters, notably Mirah, Daniel, and Mordecai, is simplified and idealized, the language of Mordecai is inflated and visionary, and the style of Mirah is every way sentimental. (Hardy, Introduction, p. 15)

This demure paragon is shown off to advantage in contrast with the headstrong demonic Gwendolen, as Gwendolen herself realizes in a scene we will examine more closely. And with respect to Mirah’s brother, as we have said above, there are two Ezras: one of them is beyond the pale: had the pawnbroker Ezra turned out to be Mirah’s brother, Daniel was determined not to let her know he had found him rather than bring home this déclassé type who is the stereotypical usurer. As Herr Klesmer’s accent becomes more pronounced under the stress of strong emotion, Ezra Cohen’s Yiddish accent becomes more pronounced when he gets excited about money. Furthermore Ezra the pawnbroker has the indecency to refer to Deronda as “the young swell” which sounds like Eliza Doolittle’s father in Shaw’s Pygmalion. Like Klesmer, this Ezra is “impudent,” having the nerve to comment on Deronda’s upper class pretensions, unapologetic for his own lowness, insufficiently grateful for Deronda’s condescension. Unlike Klesmer, Ezra Cohen also lacks both financial independence, genius, and ‘delicacy’.

George Eliot has created an incredibly intricate web of class relationships which reflect each other like a series of mirrors, blinding us to the ideological purposes they serve as to the strings which operate them behind the authorial screen, and at times emerging from behind the screen like a puppet-master to comment and direct. The sleight-of-hand with which the entire narrative is orchestrated to create its rhetorical effect is hard to miss in the opening of Chapter 45 Book VI, (pp. 556-560) in which Mirah is presented to fashionable English society in Daniel’s home at Sir Hugo and Lady Mallinger’s estate. Many of the threads which have developed through
the early chapters of the novel here come together to produce an admirably intricate texture of prose which conceals under its surface grace and naturalness complexities which are truly awesome when the passage is looked at closely. This is precisely what Barbara Hardy means when she speaks of the kind of ideological novel exemplified in Daniel Deronda—that in which "simplification and fantasy are imbedded in a richly and in some ways realistically psychological novel." (Introduction, p. 10)

Now one strategy of George Eliot is to disarm her readers' anti-Jewish feeling by having English characters express typical anti-Jewish remarks. Another is to place English characters in a position to be compared unfavorably with Jewish characters. Looking at their relative merits through Daniel's eyes, Gwendolen compares herself unfavorably with Mirah as less worthy than she with respect to the idea of "duty" which was an essential ingredient in the Victorian "angel in the house" image of woman: and she sees Mirah as a better musician than she through the judgment of Herr Klesmer, the recognized authority. She also sees herself as devious in pumping Mirah for information about the girl's relationship with Daniel, a quality which she recognizes as reprehensible.

Gwendolen is "preoccupied with the certainty that she was going to speak to Deronda again, and also to see the Miss Lapidoth who had gone through so much, and was 'capable of submitting to anything in the form of duty.'" (557) These had been Daniel's words to Gwendolen about Mirah, and she compares herself "bitterly" as being submissive "to a yoke drawn on her by an action she was ashamed of, and worn with a strength of selfish motives that left no weight for duty to carry." (556) In the next paragraph she sees Klesmer and smiles at him a smile which seems "to each a lightning-flash back on that morning when it had been her ambition to stand as the 'little Jewess' was standing." (557) The logical effect of this is to persuade the reader that Mirah is both more truly a talented musician and more the "angel in the house" than Gwendolen.

Thus the fair Nordic heroine appears in two relationships in each of which she has been perceived or perceives herself as inferior to the Jewish girl Mirah, though she is "magnificent in pale green velvet and poisoned diamonds," and is shown to a "seat of honour." (Here the poisoned diamonds remind the reader of Gwendolen's moral compromise: she has married
Grandcourt for financial security, a compromise to avoid which Mirah has risked death.) When her eyes guardedly survey the room to find Deronda, she first sees Mr. Lush, a man she loathes and with whom she associates all her misery, but whom “Sir Hugo continued to find useful as a half-caste among gentlemen.” (p. 557) The sight of him produces an unpleasant sensation and reminds her of her own guilt.

Then the narrator recounts Daniel’s interior monologue: he views the entire scene not only through his own eyes, but first he shares the scene with Hans. (“They were both a little more anxious than was comfortable lest Mirah should not be heard to advantage,”) (558) and even more keenly with the absent Mordecai under whose spell Daniel has already partially fallen. Notice here that Daniel, impeccable British gentleman though he is, finds himself so emotionally stirred as to almost, but not quite, betray emotion—his underlying Jewishness links him to the more emotional Eastern nature which gives way to public emotion, sometimes by a change of accent, whereas the ‘stiff upper lip’ of the British gentleman is superior:

Deronda even felt himself on the brink of betraying emotion. Mirah’s presence now being linked with crowding images of what had gone before and was to come after—all centering on the brother whom he was soon to reveal to her; and he had escaped as soon as he could from the side of Lady Pentreath, who had said in her violincello voice,

“Well, your Jewess is pretty—there’s no denying that. But where is her Jewish impudence? She looks as demure as a nun. I suppose she learned that on the stage.” (558)

There is hardly a better way to disarm the reader’s anti-Jewish feeling than to have this catty socialite express the assumption that since Jews are all impudent, this one must have learned to disguise her impudence on the stage. Since no one argues that Mirah is not impudent, this appears to take for granted an important feature of the Jewish stereotype, that “they” are impudent, and Lady Pentreath is almost disappointed to find that Mirah is an exception: she is not impudent.

Because no one answers this remark, we as readers are left to see Mirah for ourselves, and we see her through Daniel’s eyes:
He was beginning to feel on Mirah’s behalf something of what he had felt for himself in his seraphic boyish time—an indignant dislike to her being remarked on in a free and easy way, as if she were an imported commodity disdainfully paid for by the fashionable public; and he winced the more because Mordecai, he knew, would feel that the name ‘Jewess’ was taken as a sort of stamp like the lettering of Chinese silk. (558)

Throughout this scene, it must be remembered, Daniel is seeing everything through his own eyes and those of Mordecai—as though the spirit of this new mentor had already entered him. His stream of consciousness continues: “In this susceptible mood he saw the Grandcourts enter, and was immediately appealed to by Hans about ‘that VanDyke duchess of a beauty.’” (p.558)

Before Daniel replies to Hans, George Eliot intervenes with an authorial intrusion, the narrative voice saying:

Pray excuse Deronda that in this moment he felt a transient renewal of his first repulsion from Gwendolen, as if she and her beauty and her failings were to blame for the under valuing of Mirah as a woman—a feeling something like class animosity, which affection for what is not fully recognized by others, whether in persons or in poetry, rarely allows us to escape. (558)

Daniel’s protectiveness toward Mirah in contrast to the bigotry of Lady Pentreath acts as a strategy for disarming the anti-Jewish feeling of the reader; no one yells at Lady Pentreath or calls her a bigot, but immediately following this outburst of hers, we see Mirah and Gwendolen through Daniel’s eyes (and those of Mordecai), and are asked to sympathize with a “class animosity” directed towards Gwendolen in favor of Mirah, as though the beauty of this blond socially acceptable woman somehow stood in the way of Mirah’s being socially accepted. At this point in the narrative, both the reader and Daniel himself are still unaware of his Jewish identity.

Next Daniel hears Mirah sing “O patria mia,” a patriotic song about Italy, the words of which are taken from Leopardi’s *Ode to Italy* with which Daniel is familiar.
Without ever mentioning Israel or a Jewish homeland, Eliot makes the reader hear this song, as Daniel does, as a passionate plea for the Zionist cause. She does this by associating Mordecai with Mirah, and then by having Daniel hear the song as a call to him requiring unselfish love. It is worth quoting this passage at length:

Deronda had never before heard Mirah sing 'O patria mia.' He knew well Leopardi's fine Ode to Italy (when Italy sat like a disconsolate mother in chains, hiding her face on her knees and weeping), and the few selected words were filled for him with the grandeur of the whole, which seemed to breathe as inspiration through the music. Mirah singing this, made Mordecai more than ever one presence with her. Certain words not included in the song nevertheless rang within Deronda as harmonies from one invisible —

'Do none of thy children defend thee?

Arms! Bring me arms! alone I will fight.

Alone I will fall' ---

they seemed the very voice of that heroic passion which is falsely said to devote itself in vain when it achieves the godlike end of manifesting unselfish love. And that passion was present to Deronda now as the vivid image of a man dying helplessly away from the possibility of battle.'(558-59)

Rhetorically this is an intensely affecting scene: the weeping mother, the dying son far from battle, the noble lover ready to take up the cause to defend the "patria mia"! Eliot avoids the sentimentality of, say, Dickens' notoriously tear-jerking death of Little Nell scene by carefully modulating the tone and distancing, even disguising, the real object of emotion: the lyric is in Italian, the country being praised is Italy, not Israel, and the passionate vision of the dying Mordecai is visible to no one else in the room except Daniel. But notice the narrative voice telling the reader how to interpret the song: the heroic passion of which its words seemed to be the voice "is falsely said to devote itself in vain" because Daniel was filled with the passion of unselfish love--George Eliot wants to make sure we see how Deronda converts this song into a powerful motive for action.
It should be pointed out that Eliot is here collapsing the attempt in 1867 by Garibaldi to liberate Italy, an event which had been celebrated in Disraeli’s novel *Lothair* (1870). In that novel, the hero Lothair takes part in the battle and is wounded nearly fatally, and in it there is also a scene in which the revolutionary woman Theodora sings what is perhaps the same patriotic Italian song. The liberation of Italy in *Daniel Deronda* becomes, seen at this moment, equal to the liberation of Israel.

Following this moving musical performance, the subordination of the English girl to the Jewish girl is carried even further: the proud Gwendolen praises Mirah’s singing and begs to take lessons from her, but then is tempted by her desire to learn more about the girl’s relation to Deronda into “some lapse from the good taste of her first address” (561) and pumps the “humble” Jewess about her relationship with him. Since she is so admirably not “impudent,” it does not occur to Mirah to say this is really none of your business (as she would have had a perfect right to do), so she says naively only that she was poor and needed help and that she owed everything to Deronda. Gwendolen cannot escape “the impression that a mode of inquiry which would have been rather rude towards herself was an amiable condescension to this Jewess who was ready to give her lessons.” (561) In other words, Mirah has been so humble as to put herself in the position of agreeing to perform a service for Gwendolen which will involve accepting payment in money, which shows she has no pretensions to “quality” and which echoes the mercenary element in the stereotype of the Jew which arose when Klesmer proposal of marriage to Catherine and is rejected by her parents: “a man who has been paid to come to the house . . . a gypsy, a Jew, a mere bubble of the earth . . . .” (246) The same mercenary motive makes Ezra Cohen’s eyes light up like “a miraculous guinea pig” when he is “cheapening” Daniel’s watch. (399)

Presumably, a Jewess would be “impudent” if she had any pretensions to being accepted among established English society on any grounds except those of commercial interests—hiring her services out to teach music is acceptable, whereas the claim to be valued by Daniel “as a woman” in her own right would not be.

Again, Eliot brings a different point of view to bear on this scene (like a skilled movie director moving camera angles about) when she has Daniel and
Hans looking at this *tete-a-tete* from a distance and saying they would have been

rather indignant if they had known that the conversation had led up to Mirah’s representation of herself in this light of neediness. In the movement that prompted her, however, there was an exquisite delicacy, which perhaps she could not have stated explicitly -- the feeling that she ought not to allow any one to assume in Deronda a relation of more equality or less generous interest towards her than actually existed. (561)

This “exquisite delicacy” is the instinct Mirah has that her behavior should be humble, the opposite of impudence, if she is to curry the favor of these aristocratic ladies. Thus George Eliot mediates between attitudes of race and class, educating her audience to the awareness that some Jews are socially acceptable in that they know their place.

As for Klesmer, Mr. Bult is astonished at Klesmer’s “command of English idiom” and Catherine (though she is an heiress with a title) has followed his statement about the artist “ruling the nations and making the age” by declaring that the artist “is in a caste above mine.” (243) When Mrs. Arrowpoint tells Catherine that, if she marries Klesmer she will be a “public fable” since Klesmer was “a man who has been paid to come to the house--who is nobody knows what-- a gypsy, a Jew, a mere bubble of the earth.” Catherine answers, “Never mind, mamma, ... We all know he is a genius--as Tasso was.” (p246)

Klesmer represents the assimilationist side of the argument while both Ezras, the pawnbroker Ezra Cohen and the ardent Zionist Mordecai Ezra, represent the Jew as “Other” and carry the ideological burden of “separateness with communication” in Eliot’s highly polemical novel. Klesmer could be the exception that proves the rule: he is exceptional as a genius, in his financial independence, and presumably in the unlikelihood that he will produce children. In any case, Eliot makes us believe that the leader, a thoroughly civilized Englishman, will gradually anglicize the Jews and enforce the expulsion of the Palestinian Arabs, thus avoiding that undesirable miscegenation against which the author warned in *Impressions of Theophrastus Such*, “a premature fusion with immigrants of alien blood.” (quoted by Terry Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology*, p. 125)
In opting for an apartheid solution as her contribution to the discourse on the Eastern Question, one important strand of which was the Jewish question, Eliot stood in opposition to many other possibilities offered by other novelists, theologians, and politicians. Ironically, though he was so blatantly an apostle of race, the novels of Benjamin Disraeli argue for the solution to the Eastern Question and the Jewish Question at once by some grand dynastic marriage between royal representatives of Orientals and Englishmen. Though his Jewish father had had his children baptized into the Anglican Church, Benjamin Disraeli claimed his Jewish heritage proudly and affirmed the superiority and originality of Judaic religion. Married to a Christian woman, Disraeli envisioned, in novel after novel, the happy resolution of cultural difference through harmonious liaisons. Ironically, the Jewish Prime Minister demonstrated, at least in his fiction, less racism than George Eliot who had so early found his Tancred unacceptable because of its insistence on the superiority of the Jewish “race.”

In addition to Disraeli’s *The Wondrous Tale of Alroy* (1833), *Coningsby* (1844), *Tancred* (1847), and *Lothair* (1870), there were a host of novelists attempting the “Oriental romance” in which exotic and sometimes tragic conclusions were envisioned—like the French author Eugene Sue whose *The Wandering Jew* (1845) saw the possibility of a Jewish leadership as a panacea to global problems dashed by the machinations of evil Jesuits. Sir Walter Scott’s historical novels introduce the fate of the Jews as an essential element in the definition of English nationalism, based on the question of conversion (or assimilation) as opposed to expulsion, as a fascinating recent study by Michael Ragussis entitled *Figures of Conversion* demonstrates.

For many years starting early in the nineteenth century, strenuous efforts were devoted to the conversion of the Jews to Christianity. Michael Ragussis points out in *Figures of Conversion, “The Jewish Question” and English National Identity* (1995). Ragussis traces a long line of “conversionist” novels in which more or less successful efforts were made to convert Jews to Christianity, in response to which there developed, as he shows, “a revisionist tradition of the novel” which “attempted to reinvent the representation of Jewish identity by calling into question the ideology of conversion.”(7) Ragussis sees *Daniel Deronda*, together with James Joyce’s
Ulysses, as the culmination of this tradition, the entire enterprise in his view intimately connected with the "profound crisis in nineteenth-century English national identity." (8) From this perspective, Ragussis offers a re-thinking of the work of Walter Scott, Anthony Trollope, Benjamin Disraeli, Maria Edgeworth, Washington Irving, and particularly George Eliot.

Conversion is seen in this fascinating study as a concerted and costly attempt, lasting for many years, to assimilate the Jews of England. The failure of this attempt proved the Jews unassimilable and therefore liable to massacre or expulsion. Ragussis notes that the history of Spain with "the forced conversion of masses of Jews, the famous edict expelling them in 1492, and the Inquisition's persecution of crypto-Jews made fifteenth-century Spain an object of fascination for nineteenth-century England, where the Evangelical drive to convert the Jews and the parliamentary debates over Jewish Emancipation had put 'the Jewish Question' at the center of England's national agenda." (127) According to Ragussis, by depicting the persecution of the Jews "at a critical moment in history—the founding of the English nation-state—Ivanhoe located "the Jewish question" at the heart of English national identity." (128) Ragussis points out the anachronism by which Scott has Rebecca (in late twelfth-century England) plan her protection "under a king (Boabdil of Granada) who reigns in late-fifteenth-century Spain . . . " (128) Other authors who wrote sequels to Scott's book, Ragussis says, could then "undercut Scott's contrast between intolerant England and tolerant Spain, for by the late fifteenth century the relative peace and prosperity that the Jews had enjoyed under the Moors was about to end" and the expulsion of the Jews from England in 1290 was to be repeated in 1492 in Spain. (128)

Ragussis studies three historical romances as instances of his theory, including George Eliot's long narrative poem The Spanish Gypsy. Like his other examples, this poem is set in late fifteenth century Spain "in the midst of extraordinary political upheavals out of which the modern nation-state would develop." (129) This observation is extremely thought provoking, as the recent examples of modern India, modern Turkey, and modern Israel come immediately to mind: with independence from England, India underwent a splitting of territory with population transfers and wholesale inter-communal slaughter, residues of which (like the embattled situation of Cashmere) remain unresolved at the present moment. Turkey under Kemal
Ataturk consolidated its territory by driving out Italian, Greek, and British military forces, and then instituted a series of drastic changes like the adoption of the Latin alphabet in preference to Arabic script, and then tried to exclude its minorities, as Kevin Robins points out in Questions of Cultural Identity (1996), through the massacres of 1915, the exchange of populations with Greece (1923), and the attempt to assimilate and integrate the Circassians, Lazes, Georgians, and Kurds:

The Kurdish people were described as 'mountain Turks' who had forgotten their true language. The monochrome vision of a Turkish culture in common was layed over the heterogeneity of lived identifications. Local and particular attachments could no longer be admitted. It was not just that these real identifications were suppressed; the point is that their very reality actually came to be disavowed. (69)

Of course the question of Palestine follows the same pattern. The Zionist state has systematically destroyed villages, changed place names, driven out or massacred the indigenous Palestinian Arab population.

It is instructive to look at the fascinating comparison which Ragussis makes between the ending of Uncle Tom's Cabin by Harriet Beecher Stowe and the ending of Daniel Deronda. We have seen toward the beginning of this paper that Eliot was in correspondence with Stowe, and the possibility of a correspondence in their fiction is entirely within reason. Ragussis points out that "Stowe's novel ends with George Harris, the African American who can pass as a white man, deciding to leave the United States to dedicate himself to the work of his oppressed race, especially in the cause of bestowing on them a national identity." (266-67) Likewise, he continues, "Daniel Deronda ends with Eliot's Jewish hero, who can pass as a Christian, leaving England to dedicate himself to the work of his oppressed race, especially in the cause of establishing its national identity." And he quotes the letter we have quoted above to Stowe in which Eliot speaks piously of the national disgrace of the English occasioned "not only towards the Jews, but towards all oriental peoples with whom we English come in contact...." (267)
Ironically and curiously, in view of this discussion, both George Eliot and Ragussis in his comparison between Eliot’s Deronda and Stowe’s George Harris in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* fail to account for the lot of the indigenous people of Palestine, at whose expense the national identity, home and state of Deronda’s people, i.e. the Jews, would be realized. For Eliot in nineteenth-century England, the Palestinian Arabs, Muslims and Christians alike, may have been forgotten in her fervor for the brotherhood of all humanity. Or else she might have been under the false impression that Palestine was inhabited by Jews only or at least mainly. Unlike Disraeli who actually traveled to Palestine, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon (still all called Palestine in mid-nineteenth century), George Eliot never traveled to the Middle East and therefore could have been genuinely ignorant, though Mordecai’s words about expelling the “debauched and paupered conquerors” suggest that she must have had some vague idea of a native population. Disraeli, on the other hand, disposes of the Arabs by telescoping them with the Jews, calling them “just Jews on horseback,” so he managed to ignore the Palestinians in a different fashion.

Perhaps Eliot still subscribed to the Medieval European conception according to which the world was divided into the Christian and the non-Christian, in which case the non-Christian—the ‘Other’—for Eliot had to be the Jew. In any case, it is deplorable for a citizen of the British Empire in nineteenth-century England, an enlightened and very liberal thinker, a woman of letters, to either ignore or be ignorant of the existence of a whole population whose dislodging and victimization would seem inevitable if the heroic quest of her protagonist was to be successful. That she was trying to exercise humanism and revise the conversionist novel, as Ragussis shows, by identifying with the “Jew” as the “other” hardly explains, let alone justifies, her disregard for another “other” or her reductionist perception of the Jew as an epitome of, or as exclusively entitled to the role of, the “other.”

Like other less enlightened, less innocent, and less liberal European Orientalists, Eliot views the universe from the inside of her nutshell. For her and her contemporary Europeans, the “other” was the non-European whose presence and difference from them was felt strongly, both physically and spiritually, in Europe itself; and that was by definition the Jew. In trying to be fair to the oppressed victim, the Jew, she wronged not only the Palestinian Arab, who was the inevitable victim of her prospective solution to the Jewish
question, but also the Jew himself as she makes of him an oppressor and victimizer by necessity.

As for Ragussis, it is even harder to devise an apology for his failure to see or admit, nearly one hundred and fifty years later, that Eliot's solution to the Jewish question has created the Palestinian Question, a far more complicated question morally and otherwise. As he compares the ending of Daniel Deronda to that of Uncle Tom's Cabin, Ragussis overlooks a serious and very significant discrepancy between the two: George Harris was returning to his people in Africa to dedicate himself "to the work of bestowing on them a national identity." (267) True. But that work and that cause involved the Africans in Africa: it neither required the wholesale migration of exiled Africans nor the dislodging of the indigenous people of Africa.

Not so in Deronda's case. Deronda's mission of establishing a national Jewish home and a national Jewish state had as its prerequisite a massive dislodging of Jews from their homes in both Eastern and Western hemispheres and a similar dislodging (or annihilating) of the Muslim and Christian Palestinian Arabs. When an insightful critic writing in 1995 fails to allude to this difference, it strikes his reader as very curious. If the actual historical conflicts and human suffering issuing from the Zionist project in Palestine were part of a hard-to-predict future for George Eliot, they cannot conceivably be so for Ragussis in 1995.

Even in his reference to the Inquisition and the Crusades as historical instances of the persecution of the Jews, Ragussis assumes that the Jews are the only victims, though he has said (as we quoted above) that the Jews of Spain were about to lose the relative peace they had enjoyed under the Moors. What about the Moors who also suffered forced conversions, massacres, and banishment?

In fact, Ragussis does not include Edward Said's many books in his bibliography, though his very thesis, i.e. that novels played a role in the discourse of the Jewish Question and in the direction of the debate on the definition of national character, must surely owe some debt, however tangential, to Edward Said's Culture and Imperialism, a book which could hardly have escaped the notice of a scholar working and teaching in
Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. It seems an odd omission for anyone writing in this field.

_Daniel Deronda_, then, though it presents in its many brilliant facets, the appearance of a dialogic or open text in Bakhtin's sense of the word, in fact argues for the expulsion (voluntary it is hoped) of the Jews. They are not to inter-marry with the English, and they in their turn, will expel from Palestine those "debauched and paupered conquerors" (p. 535) in Mordecai's words, echoing those of Theodor Herzl's Diary only a few decades later: "We shall have to spirit the penniless population across the border by procuring employment for it in the transit countries, while denying it any employment in our own country." (quoted in _The Question of Palestine_, p. 13)

A perceptive analysis of the function of ideology in an analogous text appears in _Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire_ by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick.

We have suggested that the whole point of ideology is to negotiate invisibly between contradictory elements in the status quo, concealing their very existence of contradictions in the present by, for instance, recasting their diachronic terms as a historical narrative of origins. (119)

Though Kosofsky-Sedgwick offers this analysis to unpack the metaphors in Tennyson's _The Princess_, it may be appropriated to describe the function of ideology in _Daniel Deronda_ as well: the contradictions in the present between compassion for the Jews on the one hand and the deeply rooted anti-Jewish feeling on the other, hidden under the oracular language of Mordecai's "historic narrative of origins." Though Patrick Brantlinger sees through this rhetorical screen, he throws up his hands and refuses to believe in effect that George Eliot, humanist, meliorist, and English lady, could harbor such negative racist sentiments. A more pragmatic Terry Eagleton has looked squarely at the texts, both _Daniel Deronda_ and Impressions of Theophrastus Such, and does not hesitate to speak of 'jingoism.' (Eagleton, 125) How pervasive in nineteenth century thinking this idea of culture being carried through "blood" was is discussed insightfully by Edward Said in _Orientalism_. The whole idea of race theory as it came to inform the entire spectrum of science and political theory was based on a concept extrapolated from the study of families of related languages, and, as Said says,
it was assumed that if languages were as distinct from each other as the linguists said they were, then too the language users—their minds, cultures, potentials, and even their bodies—were different in similar ways. (233)

Thus the term “Semites” came to be extrapolated from linguistic discourse to the discussion of people.

In *The Decline of the West* (1991), Oswald Spengler speaks of the “silly catchwords “Aryan” and “Semitic” that have been borrowed from philology.” (350) He asserts that culture is transmitted spiritually, not through ‘blood,’ and explaining that the hatred directed towards a given group (Persians, Romans, or Jews at particular times and places) arises not from “race-distinction,” but from “difference of phase.” (349) by which he means the coming-into-juxtaposition of peoples who are in different cycles of cultural development, especially the still land and barter-based peasantry in relation to the urban money-based merchant class. When the Christian era was in its springtime (Spengler here assumes the cyclic concept of history from Vico and Goethe), the Jews were peasants, artisans, dwellers in little town, and “big business” was in the hands of Egyptians, Greeks and Romans.(348-49) By about 500, Spengler continues, the Jewish Consensus advanced to an urban and intellectual awareness, and became master of the forms of city-economics. But after 1000, the Western portion of this Jewish consensus found itself among the Germans and Anglo-Saxons who settled in England and France, who were almost peasants, and whose towns were still rudimentary.

There was mutual hate and contempt, due not to race-distinction, but to difference of phase. Into all the hamlets and country towns the Jewish Consensus built its essentially megalopolitan—proletarian—ghettos. The Judengasse is a thousand years in advance of the Gothic town. Just so, in Jesus’ day, the Roman towns stood in the midst of the villages on the Lake of Genesareth. (349)
Writing in the early twentieth century, 1911-18, Spengler repudiated the opinions of Comte and Spencer and predicted that these ideas would soon become extinct: “the Materialism and the Monism and the Darwinism which stirred the best minds of the nineteenth century to such passion, have become the world-view proper to country cousins.” (348) Nevertheless, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, we witness the ethnic conflicts including genocide which logically follow from the old long-discredited idea of ‘race’ as something carried in the ‘blood’, the legacy of Nazi Germany and of the highly educated novelists of the nineteenth century like George Eliot.

In *Daniel Deronda* George Eliot creates a paradox that is impossible to solve. The solution she proposes for the Jewish question in Europe involves two basic ideological contradictions. The first lurks in the ambiguous attitude towards the European Jew as “the other”. The second appears in the implicit neglect of the fate of another “other”, namely, the indigenous Palestinian Arab. Under the surface humanism of the project of founding a Jewish homeland in Palestine for the European Jews lurks the racist notion of conceiving of them as the irreducibly different, unassimilable, and unwanted aliens to be expelled from Europe. The attitude towards the other “other”, i.e., the indigenous Palestinian Arab is even more racist: he is completely ignored and his fate as the inevitable victim of the Zionist enterprise projected in the novel is hardly a matter of concern for any of the novel’s personae.
Endnotes

1 Eliot’s letter to Frederic Harrison is quoted and discussed in great detail by E. S. Shaffer in Chapter 6 of ‘Kubla Khan’ and The Fall of Jerusalem: The Mythological School in Biblical Criticism and Secular Literature 1770-1880, which analyzes the impact of German Higher Biblical Criticism on English literary criticism and theology. Chapter 6 entitled “Daniel Deronda and the conventions of fiction” explicates the utopian nature of Daniel Deronda within the discourse of Feuerbachian humanism and that of Matthew Arnold’s influential distinction between the Hellenistic and Hebraic strands of Western culture. The present paper is greatly indebted to Shaffer’s scholarly study, though Shaffer does not make any comment on the apartheid nature of Eliot’s utopian vision.

2 The Celtic associations of Gwendolen in the novel may stem from the author’s reading of Renan’s Vie de Jesus (1863) which, according to E. S. Shaffer, George Eliot had read with interest. Shaffer says: “The sensuous grace of Renan’s Jesus stands behind Deronda, and, behind the Jesus, Renan’s celebrated conception of Celtic poetry, whose character he identified with that of early Christianity. Renan had no sympathy with Jewish mythology – as a Catholic, he found monotheism arid, unimaginative, forced to resort to ‘miracle’, the harsh intervention in and suspension of, natural process; and as we have seen, he considered Jewish mythology in any case unable to account for the character of early Christianity. In the Celts, on the contrary, he found the true spirit of the poetry of primitive races, legendary, marvellous, the spirit of all religions at their birth…” (p. 273)

3 The trope of gambling to suggest fate or chance in nineteenth century fiction was not original with George Eliot. Disraeli used as a climax to The Young Duke (1831) a very colorful scene in which the hero finds himself in a gambling den. George Henry Lewes was proud of “some gaming house scenes” in his novel Rose, Blanche, and Violet (1847).

In spite of these literary models with which she was certainly familiar, the experience of George Eliot herself is usually cited as the original inspiration for the gambling scene, as Terence Cave recounts in his Introduction to the 1995 Penguin Classics Edition:
The genesis of *Daniel Deronda* is often traced back to an episode that occurred in the autumn of 1872, when Lewes and Eliot were again travelling in Europe. At the casino in Homburg, she witnessed 'the play of Miss Leigh, Byron's grand niece, who is only 26 years old, and is completely in the grasp of this mean, money-raking demon. It made me cry to see her young fresh face among the hags and brutally stupid men around her'. (Letter of 4 October 1872) (Cave, p. xi)


*5*George Henry Lewes played a major role in the writing of all of George Eliot's fiction. According to a recent biography of Lewes, Mr *George Eliot: A Biography of George Henry Lewes* by David Williams, Lewes encouraged her to write fiction to begin with. His collaboration made him virtually a co-author (p. 206), Williams says, adding that George Eliot certainly regarded him as such.

*6*Baker also traces Eliot's source for the doctrine of the transmigration of souls to her use of David Ginsburg's *The Kabbalah, its Doctrines, Development, and Literature*. (1863) According to this teaching, Baker, explains, souls are re-incarnated and chosen souls look for kindred spirits in whom they can be re-born, and he gives a lengthy recapitulation of this doctrine as a paradigm for the relationship between Mordecai and Daniel. (Baker, pp. 160-165)

رواية جورج إليوت دانيال ديروندا بين الطوباوية والتمييز العنصري

ملخص

تعالج هذه الدراسة رواية جورج إليوت الأخيرة دانيال ديروندا على أنها تقدم رؤيا طوباوية (مثالية) لحل المسألة اليهودية التي برزت في أوروبا في القرن التاسع عشر كأحد تجليات المسألة الشرقية. كانت رواية إليوت جزءا هاماً من النقاش الذي دار حول هذه المسألة في العهد الفلكي في إنجلترا. ويمكن أن تعد ردا على روائيين ديزرائيلي وثوار وكتب رواية سكوت إيفانهو. فهي مثل هذه الروايات من حيث أنها رواية إيديولوجية لا بد من إعادة تفكيكها حتى يتضح مضمونها السياسي بشكل جلي.

تتتبع الدراسة علاقة دانيال ديروندا بفكرة المشروع الصهيوني لإقامة وطن قومي لليهود في فلسطين من ناحيتين: أولاً علاقة الإيديولوجيا بالبناء الفني للرواية وثانياً علاقة المضمون الإيديولوجي للرواية بالفكر الاستعماري العنصري الغربي الذي شاع في أوروبا خلال القرن التاسع عشر وشكل موضوعاً وسياقاً لسجلات عقيدة وعلمية كانت هذه الرواية إحدى حلقاتها.

يرى كاتب الدراسة أن دانيال ديروندا تفقد الكثير من عناصر فوتها ووحدتها على صعيد البناء الفني والمضمون الفكري نتيجة تركزها حول هدفها الإيديولوجي في تسويق الفكرة الصهيونية في إنجلترا والغرب الأوروبي بشكل عام.

من ناحية بنائها الفني تكاد الرواية تتقسم إلى نصين منفصلين: النصف الانجليزي بمضمونه وأحداثه وشخوصه الإنجليزية البحتة، والنصف اليهودي الذي يختلف في مضمونه وأحداثه وشخوصه وحبيتنها عن النصف الأول.

أما من ناحية مضمونها الفكري، فإن الرواية تروج لحل للمسألة اليهودية ينسجم مع الطردهات الاستعمارية الغربية ولا يخلو من العنصرية رغم ما في ظاهره
من مثالية تبدو قائمة على النظرية الإنسانية والتحرر الفكري. فرغم طوباوايته الظاهرية، ينطوي هذا الحلم على تناقض جوهري يفرز معضلين لا تقدم الرواية حلا لأي منهما. المعضلة الأولى تتعلق باليهود أنفسهم من حيث إن هذا الحلم يقتلعهم من أوطانهم ومجتمعاتهم الأوروبية حلا لمشكلة أوروبا العنصرية معهم، والثانية تتعلق بالعرب الفلسطينيين الذي يتجاهلهم مشروع الحلم كليا كما لو كانوا غير موجودين أو كما لو إن حل المسألة اليهودية على حسابهم لا يتناقض مع الطوباواية المثالية التي تدعي الرواية - ومن ورائها كاتبتها - تبنيها، وفي الحالين كليهما تشتم رأحة العنصرية قوية.

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