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**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON**

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History

Volume 1 of 1

**The Imperial Patriarchal Discourse: British Jewish Culture, Identity and the  
Palestine Mandate**

by

**Sarah Rose Violet Shawyer**

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

October 2017



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

**ABSTRACT**

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

History

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

**THE IMPERIAL PATRIARCHAL DISCOURSE: BRITISH JEWISH CULTURE, IDENTITY AND THE  
PALESTINE MANDATE**

Sarah Rose Violet Shawyer

This thesis explores the interplay between British Jewish culture and identity in relation to contemporary perceptions and collective memories of the Palestine Mandate. It begins with a historical examination of the British Jewish press, *Mass Observers*, and communal and personal correspondence regarding British Jews and the Palestine Mandate from 1944 to 1948. The thesis then devotes a chapter each to discussion of three modern British Jewish texts that provide insight into communal and personal responses to both the end of the Palestine Mandate and the subsequent establishment of the state of Israel: Linda Grant's *When I Lived in Modern Times*; Peter Kosminsky's *The Promise*; and Howard Jacobson's *The Finkler Question*. Throughout all four chapters, issues of age, gender, and the use of specific terminology along with features of recent British Jewish history, such as Zionism, the Holocaust and the Second World War, will be fully explored. The unique socio-political orientation of Grant, Kosminsky and Jacobson as British Jews will be examined, with the differences and similarities noted accordingly.

The subsequent findings of this analysis argue that each of the three texts discussed employ an overarching framework, the imperial patriarchal discourse, in which retrospective perceptions of the Palestine Mandate exist. Furthermore, the origins of this narrative can be evidenced in the historical study of press, communal and individual responses to the Palestine Mandate and British Jews between 1944 and 1948, suggesting the modification of an already existing pattern of understandings among British Jews. This framework is adaptable in nature and inclusive in scope. The use of the imperial patriarchal discourse thus demonstrates that British Jews formed their response to the Palestine Mandate, Zionism and Israel from within the specific socio-cultural milieu in which they operated – and continue to do so.



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# DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, Sarah Rose Violet Shawyer

declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

The Imperial Patriarchal Discourse: British Jewish Culture, Identity and the Palestine Mandate

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. None of this work has been published before submission.

Signed: .....

Date: .....



## Acknowledgements

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction

Towards the end of Linda Grant's novel set in late Mandate Palestine, *When I Lived in Modern Times*, the main character, Evelyn (a British Jew), asks the reader to "Forgive us. The evil we were making was in our circumstances".<sup>1</sup> Such issues of Jewish complicity and responsibility for events in Palestine during the end of the Mandate and the establishment of Israel feature significantly in the historiography, as well as cultural outputs, that deals with both this period of history and its longer-term impact. The influence of these past events upon the fictions and dramatizations produced since 1948 by the British Jewish community demonstrate their continued cultural affect.

Cast as the British Jewish vision of the 'new Jew' who arose from the Holocaust, Grant's portrayal of Evelyn depicts the influences on, and impact of, a uniquely British Jewish perspective of recent history. The particularity of British Jewry's position as the largest Jewish community in western Europe following the Holocaust and its perception as one of the most influential international Jewish communities (given its integral relationship with Britain which held the mandate for Palestine) contrasted with the reality that the influence of Jews in Britain was dwarfed by American Jewry on the world stage. This was combined with British Jewish anxiety over events in Palestine, which it feared would provoke anti-Semitism at home. Furthermore, the impending relegation of British Jewry from its new 'privileged' position within the international community can be seen to reflect the waning global influence of the British Empire during a period of decolonisation.

British Jewry had previously been perceived as an imagined beneficiary of the relationship between Britain and Palestine, as demonstrated by belief in such principles as 'Patriotic Zionism'. In an attempt to project a more united communal image that countered the anti-assimilationist aims of the Zionism present in the years immediately following the Balfour Declaration in 1917, the British Jewish communal leadership promoted its own version of Zionism subsequently labelled as 'Patriotic Zionism'. By emphasizing how the re-population of the Jewish community in Palestine corresponded with both "Anglo-Christian values" and the imperial interests of Britain, British Jewish support for what may otherwise be seen as a separatist movement, Zionism in Palestine, was perceived as part of the community's patriotic duty.<sup>2</sup> As such, British Jewry was often seen as occupying a privileged international position due to their close, and importantly,

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<sup>1</sup> Linda Grant, *When I Lived in Modern Times* (London: Grant Books, 2000), p 212.

<sup>2</sup> Geoffrey Alderman, *Modern British Jewry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 262 – 263.

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'natural' relationship with both the British Government and the *Yishuv* (the Jewish community in Palestine).

In reality, however, the practicalities of the Mandate meant that British Jews encountered heightened anxieties concerning their role and response to both Britain and the *Yishuv*, in spite of 'Patriotic Zionism'. The leadership of the *Yishuv*, the Jewish Agency, and its affiliated armed faction, *Haganah*, had, for the most part, long practiced a policy of self-restraint, *Halvaga*, against provocation.<sup>3</sup> However, the plight of displaced persons following the Holocaust, together with an earlier diversion from this policy when faced with Arab aggression prior to the Second World War meant that *Halvaga* was soon, partially, broken by *Haganah*; in particular, practical support for uncertified immigration increased after 1945 and, eventually, they joined the short-lived United Resistance Movement (URM). Although, *Haganah's* willingness to depart from the policy of *Halvaga* occurred too late to prevent rival splinter groups forming, the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* and *Lehi*, as will be outlined accordingly.<sup>4</sup> Against this backdrop of civil unrest by sections of the *Yishuv* and violent disobedience by the three armed organisations, the British administration began to view the Jews in Palestine as 'nuisances', favouring the easier to rule Arab population. Noting this difference, Cesarani describes how "For the most part the Arabs were bystanders to the struggle between the Jews and British between mid 1945 and November 1947".<sup>5</sup> As illegal immigration, bombings, theft, kidnapping and murder by *Haganah*, *Irgun Zvai Leumi* and *Lehi* increased so did the punitive sanctions issued by the British administration against the *Yishuv*. Curfews became common, as did the condoning of the poor behaviour of British soldiers and, in one infamous episode, anti-Semitic stereotypes formed the basis of the type of retaliation encouraged by the British administration.<sup>6</sup> After the King David Hotel bombing, outlined accordingly, General Barker ordered his troops in Palestine to "punish...the Jews in a way the race dislikes as much as any – by striking at their pockets and showing our contempt for them".<sup>7</sup> This series of developments meant that British Jews found their previously largely successful but delicately positioned policy of 'Patriotic Zionism' even more precariously balanced. Together with the election of Brodetsky in

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<sup>3</sup> *Haganah*: the armed section of the Jewish Agency (the representative organisation of the *Yishuv*, the Jewish community in Palestine), who were mainly committed to a policy of self-restraint and self-defence, except during their time in combined United Resistance Movement (URM) in 1946.

<sup>4</sup> *Irgun Zvai Leumi*: a body of Revisionist Zionist Jews who considered the *Haganah* to be too passive in their actions for a Jewish state, which they believed should contain land on both sides of the River Jordan. *Lehi*: a group that split from the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* over the latter's loyalty to the British government (and thus ceasefire) during the majority of the Second World War and, although complex as an entity, had some right-wing political tendencies.

<sup>5</sup> David Cesarani, *Major Farran's Hat: Murder, Scandal and Britain's War Against Jewish Terrorism, 1945-1948* (London: William Heinemann, 2009), p viii.

<sup>6</sup> Norman Rose, *'A Senseless, Squalid War': Voices From Palestine 1890s – 1948* (London: Pimlico, 2010), pp. 165 – 166.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, p 117.

1940 as President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the crisis of displaced persons wishing to enter British governed Palestine, British Jews were becoming more Zionist and more critical of how the Mandate was enforced.<sup>8</sup> The impact of events in Palestine had a further significant effect on British Jews. Not only were the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* and *Lehi* actively planning and carrying out operations in Britain and mainland Europe, but those sectors of the British public who were upset and angered by the actions of the three armed organisations demonstrated their outrage in anti-Jewish riots in Birkenhead, Derby, Glasgow, Liverpool, London and Manchester in August 1947, following the Sergeants' Affair, as detailed presently.<sup>9</sup> By the time of the British withdrawal in May 1948, Alderman outlines how,

British Jewry was united neither communally, nor politically, nor socially, nor...religiously. The final bloody years of the Palestine Mandate...constituted a great period of anguish for communal leaders and played a major part in the revival of Fascism at this time and in a resurgence of anti-Jewish violence. British Jews proclaimed their loyalty to their country of residence but in general supported the efforts of the *Yishuv* to rid itself of British rule

whilst Cesarani states that "Britain's decision to hand Palestine to the United Nations was a direct result of the failure of its counter-insurgency campaign and the loss of political will to keep up the fight".<sup>10</sup>

The presence of such a complex and interlinked set of national and international dynamics therefore highlights the cultural and historical significance of undertaking a study focusing on the response of British Jewry to events in Palestine, both at the time and subsequently. The place of the activities of the *Irgun Zvai Leumi*, *Lehi* and *Haganah* within the construction of both British Jewish contemporary and modern identities thus provides an opportunity with which to analyse the complexities of the self-image of three British Jews within three particular texts and the role of wider societal relationships in its formulation. By extending the study to include the contemporary reaction of British Jewry to events in Palestine, as well as the place of these within modern British Jewish culture, insight will be provided into the place of Jewish violence in Palestine within the identity of British Jews between the Second World War and the present day. This chronological coverage will allow patterns of continuity and change within Jewish culture during the mid twentieth century to be identified. It will reveal the impact of the Holocaust and

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<sup>8</sup> Howard Cooper and |Paul Morrison, *A Sense of Belonging: Dilemmas of British Jewish Identity* (London: George Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1991), p 94.

<sup>9</sup> Norman Rose, *'A Senseless, Squalid War': Voices From Palestine 1890s – 1948*, pp. 136 – 138; *Ibid*, pp. 166 – 168.

<sup>10</sup> Geoffrey Alderman, *Modern British Jewry*, pp. 318 – 319; David Cesarani, *Major Farran's Hat: Murder, Scandal and Britain's War Against Jewish Terrorism, 1945-1948*, p viii.

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de-colonisation upon this and aid understanding of the current relationship between British Jews and Israel through illuminating perspectives on their shared past. Furthermore, examining the response of the British Jews to events in Palestine will complicate the dominant narrative of British anti-Semitism in the current historiography. In this discourse, anti-Semitism in Britain is part of a teleological history whereby previous instances of prejudice have been swiftly rectified. Any occasion of anti-Semitic violence or wrongdoing is portrayed as an exception to an otherwise progressive account of the past, such as the sequence of events following the internment and subsequent release of large numbers of 'enemy aliens', or refugees, during the Second World War.

Throughout the thesis, the actions of the three groups concerned will be referred to in various terms: namely as comprising part of a larger network of 'terrorism', 'resistance', 'struggle' and 'quest' for an independent Jewish state. The acts covered by these terms range from civil disobedience and destruction of property to kidnap and killing. The nuances of the language employed to describe them will be fully explored, however there are no value-free terms with which to do so. Thus, such terminology will be considered interchangeable in nature and without conscious judgement attached.

Likewise, discussion of 'British Jews' raises issues of representativeness. This thesis employs such a term, as well as those of 'British Jewry' and the 'British Jewish community', to refer to anyone who wishes to define themselves as part of this socio-religious-cultural grouping. The readings of the three texts explored in the thesis demonstrate the various disparities within British Jewry, as they are only three distinct strands of thought on a vast and emotive subject within the community. However, they do possess a shared position: such views are perceived and contained within an overarching discourse, the imperial patriarchal framework – the basis of which shall be explored presently.

According to Steven Cohen and Keith Kahn-Harris, British Jewry can be categorised into three sectors: those who are fully engaged in the community, those who are moderately engaged and those who are disengaged from it.<sup>11</sup> In their report, they state that it is the middle group, the moderately engaged, with whom the established community should be most concerned.<sup>12</sup> It is this cohort who possesses the most risk of becoming distanced from the community by either 'marrying out' or lax involvement in their religious and cultural heritage.<sup>13</sup> The third group, the already disengaged, are of less concern as it is believed efforts to re-engage them with the British

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<sup>11</sup> Steven Cohen and Keith Kahn-Harris, *Beyond Belonging: The Jewish Identities of Moderately Engaged British Jews* (London: Design and Promotions Ltd, 2004), p xi.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, p xii.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, p 14.

Jewish community would have less impact.<sup>14</sup> Although several of the findings of this research are pertinent for the main analytical argument of this thesis, its main significance is due to the fact that it exists at all. Commissioned by the United Jewish Israel Appeal, the report is testament to a concern within the British Jewish communal leadership over fears of Jewish continuity and the future of the community. This is particularly evident due to its focus on those British Jews it fears are in danger of being 'lost' to the community rather than those who it perceives as already having been. Furthermore, the report states that it is the females respondents within the British Jewish community that are more likely to occupy the lowest category of being communally disengaged and also less likely to be in the highest group of fully engaged than males who participated in the study.<sup>15</sup> Thus, appearing to substantiate the basis from which the report preceded due to the linkage between British Jewish women and a belief in a crisis of continuity. This also seems to indicate the presence of a special status for women in the community as responsibility for and efforts to counter the perceived crisis concentrate on the British Jewish female, a development echoed in the evolution of the imperial patriarchal discourse within this thesis.

Another important implication for this thesis concerning the methodology and approach of the report regards the admission that many of those categorised as moderately engaged British Jews would be seen as highly engaged if they were American Jews, highlighting one of several differences between British and American Jews; a theme repeated throughout this thesis. Often perceived as a subsidiary, or at the least of an inferior but similar composition to American Jews, British Jews possess a unique but frequently under acknowledged position within Jewish communities worldwide, especially in relation to the issue of Israel due their unique experience and perspective during the Palestine Mandate, as outlined previously.

## 1.2 Chronology

Under British control since 1917, the Mandate for Palestine was officially granted to Britain in 1922. Alongside the Balfour Declaration in 1917, which declared that "His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people", these two developments could be, and were at times, perceived to indicate the sympathetic support of the British Government towards Zionist ambition for Palestine.<sup>16</sup> However, the ambiguous wording of the Balfour Declaration in particular resulted in several further revisions to the original

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p xii.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p 16 – 17.

<sup>16</sup> Norman Rose, *'A Senseless, Squalid War': Voices From Palestine 1890s – 1948*, p 16.

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terms of both the Balfour Declaration and its effect on the Mandate – namely, the 1922 White Paper, which outlined in greater depth the perception of the British Government towards the Mandate.<sup>17</sup> In this publication of June 1922, the British Government, and Winston Churchill in particular, emphasized how the Balfour Declaration had only committed to fostering a Jewish home as part of Palestine and not as its entirety. Thus “all citizens of Palestine in the eyes of the law shall be Palestinian, and it has never been intended that they, or any section of them, should possess any other juridical status”.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, Jewish immigration to Palestine was limited to the economic absorption capacity of the *Yishuv*. Following the publication of the Shaw Report in 1930, the British Government sought to “adhere to the terms” of the Mandate and Balfour Declaration by suspending Jewish immigration to Palestine.<sup>19</sup> The 1939 White Paper, which further restricted Jewish immigration to Palestine to 75,000 over five years at a crucial time of international need, additionally problematized British commitment to the creation of a Jewish state.<sup>20</sup>

Concurrently, Zionist demands for a Jewish National Home increased during and after this period – both through diplomatic effort and armed struggle. Importantly, and despite a positive reception from British Jewry, the Balfour Declaration cast Britain as at odds with the concept of Zionism. Whilst Zionism called for Jewish determination in an independent Jewish state, Britain’s involvement in Palestine as part of a wider imperial project only supported a Jewish presence there within the confines, and understandings, of the subaltern. Within Palestine itself, diplomatic channels for a Jewish National Home were operated by the Jewish Agency, which was the representative body of the *Yishuv* and was established as part of the provisions of the Mandate.<sup>21</sup> Diplomatic requests for a Jewish National Home heightened in frequency and intensity throughout the Arab Revolt of 1920 and 1921, the Palestine Riots of 1929 and the Arab Rebellion between 1936 and 1939.<sup>22</sup>

Meanwhile, the growing insecurity of the *Yishuv* due to Arab attacks, and declining faith in the ability of the Mandatory authorities to prevent them, immediately resulted in the formation of the *Haganah* in 1920, a Jewish paramilitary organisation, whose aim was to protect Jewish

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<sup>17</sup> David Cesarani, *Major Farran's Hat: Murder, Scandal and Britain's War Against Jewish Terrorism, 1945-1948*, p 12.

<sup>18</sup> Yale Law School, Lillian Goldman Law Library, ‘British White Paper of June 1922’ in *The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy* <[http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/brwh1922.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/brwh1922.asp)>, date last accessed 05/12/2016.

<sup>19</sup> Geoffrey Alderman, *Modern British Jewry*, p 266.

<sup>20</sup> David Cesarani, *Major Farran's Hat: Murder, Scandal and Britain's War Against Jewish Terrorism, 1945-1948*, p 14.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, p 12.

<sup>22</sup> Yehuda Bauer, *From Diplomacy to Resistance: a History of Jewish Palestine, 1939-1945* (New York: Atheneum, 1973), p 3.

settlements from Arab attack.<sup>23</sup> Linked to the Jewish Agency, the primary function of the *Haganah* was a defensive one as it endeavoured to limit the effectiveness of Arab attacks through pre-warning and defending the subject of such violence. This policy of *Halvaga*, self-restraint, was encouraged by the Jewish leadership in Palestine.<sup>24</sup> However, it became increasingly unpopular with certain sectors of the *Haganah*, who, in 1931, formed an independent underground organisation – the *Irgun Zvai Leumi*.<sup>25</sup> This group was more aggressive than the *Haganah* and, most importantly, were Revisionist Zionist in ideology. Situated to the political right, Revisionist Zionism followed the teachings of Ze'ev Jabotinsky, which included the more aggressively nationalist belief that all Jews who wished to enter Palestine had a right to do so.<sup>26</sup>

Despite this difference between the two organisations, both the *Haganah* and the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* put aside their mistrust of the Mandatory authorities and declared their full support for the British following the outbreak of the Second World War.<sup>27</sup> They thus reflected Ben-Gurion's famous statement of diplomatic intent that we shall "fight Hitler as if there were no White Paper, and we shall fight the White Paper as if there were no Hitler".<sup>28</sup> The ceasing of underground activities caused discontent especially within the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* amongst those who believed that your enemy's enemy was therefore your ally, resulting in a further break-away organisation being formed – the *Lehi* or Stern Gang.<sup>29</sup> This body, created by former *Irgun Zvai Leumi* member Avraham Stern, did not honour the aforementioned truce, believing all foreign rule to be a negative entity.<sup>30</sup> Politically, the *Lehi* were not an easily defined homogenous group; they made unsuccessful approaches in hope of co-operation against the British to Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany whilst leaning to the left in other political aspects such as finance.<sup>31</sup> In 1944 the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* also re-commenced their operations against the British in Palestine.<sup>32</sup> Thus, the stage was set for a period of increasing violence and antagonism from both the British military and Jewish underground in the struggle for a Jewish National Home in Palestine.

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<sup>23</sup>David Cesarani, *Major Farran's Hat: Murder, Scandal and Britain's War Against Jewish Terrorism, 1945-1948*, pp. 12 – 13.

<sup>24</sup>Yehuda Bauer, "From Cooperation to Resistance: The Haganah 1938- 1946", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 2/ No. 3 (1966), pp. 182 – 210, p 184.

<sup>25</sup>Ami Pedahzur and Arie Perliger, *Jewish Terrorism in Israel* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), p 11.

<sup>26</sup>David Cesarani, *Major Farran's Hat: Murder, Scandal and Britain's War Against Jewish Terrorism, 1945-1948*, p 14.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid*, p 15.

<sup>28</sup>Thurston Clarke, *By Blood and Fire: The Attack on the King David Hotel* (London: Hutchinson, 1981), p 8.

<sup>29</sup>David Cesarani, *Major Farran's Hat: Murder, Scandal and Britain's War Against Jewish Terrorism, 1945-1948*, p 15.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid*.

<sup>31</sup>Joseph Heller, *The Stern Gang: Ideology, Politics and Terror* (London: Cass, 1994), 1940-1949, p 8.

<sup>32</sup>David Cesarani, *Major Farran's Hat: Murder, Scandal and Britain's War Against Jewish Terrorism, 1945-1948*, p 16.

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The years between 1944 and 1948 were therefore ones of aggression and insecurity for all involved. However, there were a few major incidents of Jewish violence that deserve to be mentioned specifically as they feature heavily within historiography and cultural outputs. The first significant incident was the assassination of Lord Moyne in Cairo by the *Lehi* in November 1944. This incident shocked those in power, especially Winston Churchill who was said to be devastated at the loss of his friend. Indeed, many scholars have suggested this hardened the British Prime Minister's attitude to demands for a Jewish National Home in Palestine.<sup>33</sup> Subsequently, the *Haganah* agreed to co-operate with the Mandatory authorities in cracking down on the *Irgun Zvai Leumi*, but not the *Lehi*, during a period named 'the season'.<sup>34</sup> This 'hunt' resulted in many arrests and only ended due to an increasing loss of faith within the *Haganah* towards the British. Furthermore, the dispirited attitude among the *Haganah* was especially significant as it resulted in the period of the United Resistance Movement (URM), a collaboration movement between the *Haganah*, *Irgun Zvai Leumi* and *Lehi* in their actions against the British in Palestine.<sup>35</sup> However, such unity was short-lived. The URM was disbanded after the *Haganah* pulled out following the King David Hotel bombing in July 1946.<sup>36</sup> The attack on the British Government Headquarters in Palestine killed 91 people and injured 46 more.<sup>37</sup> It was carried out by the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* under the auspices of the URM, though the *Haganah* denied that this was the case whilst the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* maintained that they acted with permission and gave clear warning to the King David Hotel that there was a bomb within it. The whole episode remains a contentious issue and marked the beginning of an escalation in violence and antagonism between those previously involved in the URM and the British authorities. Uncertified immigration increased, as did attacks on military targets, such as railway lines, and kidnappings of military personnel.<sup>38</sup>

Following the end of the Second World War and the Holocaust, whilst violence increased so did the demand for a growth in immigration as the issue of where to send Jews resident in the Displaced Persons camps of Europe became a deep concern. Subsequently, uncertified immigration to Palestine was assisted, or at least not hampered, by all three organisations – *Haganah*, *Irgun Zvai Leumi* and *Lehi*. This practice culminated in the incident of the *Exodus* in 1947. The *SS Exodus* was an old pleasure steamer carrying approximately four thousand

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid, pp. 15 – 16.

<sup>34</sup> Saul Zadka, *Blood in Zion: How the Jewish Guerrillas Drove the British out of Palestine* (London: Brassey's, 1995), p 2.

<sup>35</sup> Naomi Shepherd, *Ploughing Sand: British Rule in Palestine, 1917-1948* (London: John Murray, 1999), p 225.

<sup>36</sup> David Cesarani, *Major Farran's Hat: Murder, Scandal and Britain's War Against Jewish Terrorism, 1945-1948*, p 41.

<sup>37</sup> Ami Pedahzur and Arie Perliger, *Jewish Terrorism in Israel*, p 24.

<sup>38</sup> David A. Charters, *The British Army and Jewish Insurgency in Palestine, 1945- 47* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), p 60.

immigrants who were mainly Holocaust survivors and were travelling (illegally) to Palestine.<sup>39</sup> However, before it arrived the British refused the battered and sub-standard ship permission to dock and eventually boarded it to take control. Two passengers and a member of crew died as a result of the British boarding and many more were injured.<sup>40</sup> Significantly, the incident received wide international press coverage and damaged the reputation of Britain as a just and morally superior power before the ship and its inhabitants were deported back to France and then to Germany.<sup>41</sup>

During this period, kidnappings within Palestine were also frequent, and the most notorious case, the Sergeants' Affair, also occurred in the summer of 1947. After kidnapping two sergeants in July 1947 in the hope of securing the release of several *Irgun Zvai Leumi* members arrested by the Mandatory authorities, the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* hanged Sergeants Martin and Paice.<sup>42</sup> It had become clear that the ransom set by the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* would not be met as the death sentence on their fellow comrades had been commuted. The incident became infamous and shocked world opinion, especially in Britain.<sup>43</sup>

### 1.3 Historiography

Given the notorious nature of this sequence of events, the actions of those involved in armed action against the British in Mandatory Palestine constitutes an interesting and complex topic of investigation for both scholarly and popular secondary literature. Joseph Heller states that literature concerning the *Lehi* can be traditionally divided into two main groups: that written by either former members or their opponents.<sup>44</sup> Heller's observation can be extended to include much of the literature written about the *Haganah* and the *Irgun Zvai Leumi*. Notable examples of this trend include *The Revolt* by Menachem Begin, former *Irgun Zvai Leumi* leader and Prime Minister of Israel, and *Days of Fire* by Samuel Katz, former Irgun member, Israeli politician and advisor to Begin during his premiership.<sup>45</sup> Within recent years a third, more neutral, group can also be added to this – research conducted by professional scholars. *Major Farran's Hat: Murder, Scandal and Britain's War Against Jewish Terrorism, 1945-1948* by David Cesarani is an example of

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<sup>39</sup> Ruth Gruber, *Exodus 1947: The Ship That Launched A Nation* (New York: Sterling, 2007) p 45.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p 53.

<sup>41</sup> David Cesarani, *Major Farran's Hat: Murder, Scandal and Britain's War Against Jewish Terrorism, 1945-1948*, p 151 – 152.

<sup>42</sup> Naomi Shepherd, *Ploughing Sand: British Rule in Palestine, 1917-1948*, p 230.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> Joseph Heller, *The Stern Gang: Ideology, Politics and Terror, 1940-1949*, p vii.

<sup>45</sup> Menachem Begin, *The Revolt* (London: W. H. Allen, 1951); Samuel Katz, *Days of Fire* (London: Allen, 1968).

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this historiographical development.<sup>46</sup> However despite such progress, independent empirical scholarly research still remains sparse. Furthermore, of the literature written by or focusing upon those involved with the violence in Palestine the majority tends to focus upon former male members. This is despite the literature stating that both men and women were involved in these organisations. The only exception appears to be publications focusing on Golda Meir, including her autobiography entitled *My Life*.<sup>47</sup> It could be argued, however, that her background is only of interest due to her subsequent appointment as Israeli Prime Minister and not due to any attempt to self-consciously rectify such gender bias. Therefore, the emphasis within this thesis upon the issue of gender and its place within the imperial patriarchal narrative is a significant development. The readings of the various case studies here suggests that the violent acts that occurred in Palestine against the British were, and continue to be, packaged by those both within and outside of Israel in a highly gendered discourse.

However, this is not to suggest that such categorisation of the literature concerned into the three groups mentioned is a simple task – with regard to definition of subject matter there exist an additional three variables. Firstly, there are several different starting points within the wider ranging literature that does not deal with only one specific episode. *A Senseless, Squalid War: Voices from Palestine, 1945-1948* by Norman Rose possesses the most breadth with regard to the period covered as its exploration of Jewish terrorism in Palestine begins from the 1880s, although the focus is on the later period.<sup>48</sup> Similarly far reaching is *Jewish Terrorism in Israel* by Ami Pedahzur and Arie Perliger which places Zionist nationalist violence within a larger framework of all forms of Jewish terrorism, including its religious manifestation, from the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>49</sup> However, it is the Arab Rebellion between 1936 and 1939 and its perceived origins in the 1928 Yom Kippur debate over the partition screen at the Wailing Wall that serves as a common starting point for much of the literature concerned. *Terror out of Zion: Irgun Zvai Leumi, Lehi, and the Palestine underground, 1929-1949* by J. Bowyer Bell and *Days of Fire* by Samuel Katz are two such examples.<sup>50</sup> Interestingly, both of these authors have been accused of possessing a sympathetic prejudice towards their subject matter – Samuel Katz due to his time in the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* and J. Bowyer Bell through his apparently close identification with the Irish Republican Army (IRA), upon which the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* modelled itself. However, even the seemingly simple chronological definition favoured by the two authors is problematic when compared with other

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<sup>46</sup> David Cesarani, *Major Farran's Hat: Murder, Scandal and Britain's War Against Jewish Terrorism, 1945-1948*.

<sup>47</sup> Golda Meir, *My Life* (New York: Putman, 1975).

<sup>48</sup> Norman Rose, *A Senseless, Squalid War: Voices from Palestine, 1890s – 1948*.

<sup>49</sup> Ami Pedahzur and Arie Perliger, *Jewish Terrorism in Israel*.

<sup>50</sup> J. Bowyer Bell, *Terror out of Zion: Irgun Zvai Leumi, Lehi, and the Palestine underground, 1929-1949* (New York: Avon, 1978); Samuel Katz, *Days of Fire*.

works. In *The Revolt* Menachem Begin declares that the spiritual rebellion actually began in 1920 when the first shot against an Arab rioter in the city of Old Jerusalem was fired by Jabotinsky, whilst the armed revolt is considered to have not begun until 1944.<sup>51</sup> As a whole, though, the majority of the literature that possesses a wide chronological perspective presents the origins of the armed rebellion against British rule as being a deviation of the *Haganah* from the official *Yishuv* policy of *Halvaga* during the Arab rebellion of 1936-1939. Such a choice of starting date allows those who were involved in the later terrorist acts to be cast as innocent victims reacting only to an unprovoked aggressor – firstly the Arabs and then the British.

Secondly, there is variation with regard to which acts the authors consider as constituting rebellion against the British ruling authorities. The most notable divide is over the inclusion of illegal immigration as an act covered by the umbrella term of ‘Jewish terrorism’. *Years of Wrath, Days of Glory: Memoirs from the Irgun* by Yitshaq Ben-Ami, *The ‘Bergson Boys’ and the origins of contemporary Zionist militancy* by Judith Tydor Baumel, “From Cooperation to Resistance: The Haganah 1938- 1946” by Yehuda Bauer, and *A Senseless, Squalid War* by Norman Rose all detail illegal immigration to Palestine as constituting an act of rebellion against the Mandatory authorities.<sup>52</sup> *Major Farran's Hat* by David Cesarani does not include such information, although perhaps this is not surprising as it may be considered as outside the remit of the book’s subject matter.<sup>53</sup>

Thirdly, there exists an issue over the terminology used to describe those who participated in acts of rebellion against the ruling British. Although none of the literature actually cites the popular cliché that ‘one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter’, this notion is present throughout much of it. In particular, Menachem Begin debates the terminology of the word ‘terrorist’ when applied to the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* in *The Revolt* whilst Yehuda Bauer calls the *Haganah* a “security force” and not terrorists in *From Diplomacy to Resistance*.<sup>54</sup> In this thesis an attempt will be made to reconsider the impact of such language, in the sense that there exists an initial divide between use of the term ‘terror’ to denote negativity and that of the word ‘resistance’ to denote a more positive perception of events, as will be explored later, especially in Chapter Two.

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<sup>51</sup> Menachem Begin, *The Revolt*.

<sup>52</sup> Yitshaq Ben-Ami, *Years of Wrath, Days of Glory: Memoirs from the Irgun* (New York: Shengold, 1983); Judith Tydor Baumel, *The ‘Bergson Boys’ and the Origins of Contemporary Zionist Militancy* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2005); Yehuda Bauer, “From Cooperation to Resistance: The Haganah 1938-1946”; Norman Rose, *A Senseless, Squalid War: Voices from Palestine, 1890s-1948*.

<sup>53</sup> David Cesarani, *Major Farran's Hat: Murder, Scandal and Britain's War Against Jewish Terrorism, 1945-1948*.

<sup>54</sup> Menachem Begin, *The Revolt*, pp 59-60; Yehuda Bauer, *From Diplomacy to Resistance: a History of Jewish Palestine, 1939-1945*, p 355.

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Overall, therefore, historiography concerning Jewish violence in Palestine reveals the continued influence of the controversial issue of responsibility, as articulated by Linda Grant's fictitious character, Evelyn (who will be explored further in Chapter Three), upon its direction and perspective. The issue of blame for the armed struggle and its negative international perception is hence central to the core of much of the existing literature. The subtleties that arise from such a nuanced approach are thus best illustrated through a consideration of each of the three main organisations that participated in the violent events in Mandatory Palestine and the responsibility accorded to them for these acts within historiography.

Of noticeable prominence is the role attributed to, and perception of, the *Haganah* both before and during the URM. In *Ploughing Sand: British Rule in Palestine, 1917-1948* by Naomi Shepherd the relevant chapter dealing with the armed struggle against the British focuses largely on the Arab Revolt between 1936 and 1939, thus setting up the Jewish Agency and the eventual subsequent armed struggle against the British as a move born out of communal defence.<sup>55</sup> It focuses mainly on the role of the *Haganah* within the context of placing it in a historiography of evolving into the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) and emphasizes the role of the *Haganah's* interactions with the British army in aiding this. The legitimacy thus attributed to the *Haganah* is furthered by the fact that the author calls the *Haganah* and the *Palmakh* a "militia" and not terrorist organisation.<sup>56</sup> The author details "Jewish terror" as beginning in 1944 and comprising of only bombings and kidnappings.<sup>57</sup> The book furthers its defence of the Jewish Agency and *Haganah* by stating that they and the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* only co-operated for one month as part of the URM.<sup>58</sup> Ultimately, the author supports the view that Britain chose to quit Palestine and was thus not driven out by the armed struggle.

In contrast, Michael J. Cohen gives equal weight to diplomacy and the armed struggle against the British for the emergence of Israel.<sup>59</sup> Once again there appears to be a defensive treatment of the role of the *Haganah* with a clear divide between the Jewish Agency/*Haganah* and the *Irgun Zvai Leumi/Lehi*. The author describes the latter as "terrorists".<sup>60</sup> Although 'the season' is mentioned, the motives for it are defended and it is portrayed as an example of the *Haganah* using means other than terrorism to work towards the establishment of a Jewish

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<sup>55</sup> Naomi Shepherd, *Ploughing Sand: British Rule in Palestine, 1917-1948*.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, p 219.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, p 223.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 224-225.

<sup>59</sup> Michael J. Cohen, "The Zionist Perspective" in William Roger Louis and Robert W. Stookey (Eds), *The End of the Palestine Mandate* (London: Tauris, 1986).

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*, p 83.

National Home.<sup>61</sup> Consequently even the URM period is detailed as possessing a clear *Haganah* and *Irgun Zvai Leumi/Lehi* divide with the former portrayed as a responsible body being forced to act and the latter as reckless organisations that always went one step too far.<sup>62</sup> The context into which the author places “Jewish terror” is a larger one of the armed struggle for Israeli independence that includes civil war and Arab attacks.<sup>63</sup> Similarly, there exists within *The British Army and Jewish Insurgency in Palestine* by David A. Charters a clear division between perceptions of the *Haganah* and the *Irgun Zvai Leumi/Lehi* with the tactics of the former described as “constructive warfare” and those of the latter detailed as “destructive acts”.<sup>64</sup>

The significance of such a division for this thesis is immediately apparent when considering the content of Chapters Three and Four. In choosing to focus upon the actions of the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* both Grant and Kosminsky cast that organisation, rather than *Haganah* or *Lehi*, as representative of the ‘unruly’ violence that was perpetrated against the British. The reasons for this are clear: as the *Haganah* largely transitioned into the IDF following the establishment of the state of Israel it was, and remains, necessary to employ another of the organisations concerned in the armed struggle as an identifiable figurehead for the controversial acts committed. It enables Grant and Kosminsky, specifically, to seemingly confront a difficult past without jeopardising the future. Simultaneously, the exclusion of the *Lehi* from this discourse ensured that any confrontation with the events that led to the establishment of the state of Israel was cast as something of which the British Jewish community could be broadly – if only in terms of aims rather than means – supportive. As this view of the past rested on the view that the creation of a Jewish state was an endnote to the Holocaust, the reasons for the absence of the *Lehi* from this narrative are apparent. Partially situated to the political extreme right, the *Lehi* made overtures to the enemies of Britain during the Second World War in the hope of securing co-operation against their common foe in the struggle for an independent Jewish state. It thus created a legacy of dubious political orientation that British Jews such as Grant and Kosminsky could not incorporate into the more palatable narrative of resistance against anti-Semitism between 1939 and 1945, and which they largely appear to be unable to recognise or acknowledge in retrospect, as demonstrated by the *Lehi’s* absence from this thesis.

The majority of literature therefore perpetuates the view that the *Haganah*, and thus the Jewish Agency were, for the most part innocent of encouraging, assisting or perpetrating acts of terrorism. Both *Major Farran's Hat* by David Cesarani and *A Senseless, Squalid War* by Norman

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, p 91.

<sup>64</sup> David A. Charters, *The British Army and Jewish Insurgency in Palestine, 1945-47*, p 45.

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Rose subscribe to this viewpoint.<sup>65</sup> Similarly, in *From Diplomacy to Resistance* by Yehuda Bauer the attempts of the Jewish leadership and in particular the *Haganah* to reach agreement with the British authorities regarding the future of Palestine are focused upon. The blame is placed on the actions of the “separatists” for making it impossible to find a suitable compromise.<sup>66</sup> In contrast in “From Cooperation to Resistance” Bauer seems to challenge the majority of existing historiography, including his own, by portraying the *Haganah* as more involved in actively rebelling against the British Mandate than widely believed. Although he does detail ‘the season’ it is done so in a way that presents the *Haganah* as more proactive in assisting the shaping the future of an independent Jewish state than in other literature.<sup>67</sup> The *Haganah’s* involvement in the URM is cast with a redeeming quality that negates the effect of the ‘season’, a technique that appears common within the literature reviewed.<sup>68</sup>

The issue of according responsibility to the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* within the literature discussed also appears to present conclusions that, for the most part, are in agreement with each other. These conclusions, contained within literature such as *Major Farran's Hat* by David Cesarani and *A Senseless, Squalid War* by Norman Rose, are that although the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* were, and continue to be, perceived as worse than the *Haganah*, they were not as ruthless or deviant as the *Lehi*.<sup>69</sup> In fact, J. Bowyer Bell in *Terror out of Zion* reflects on the continued negative perception of the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* by blaming the British for the subsequent difficulty of Begin to become “respectable”.<sup>70</sup> In *The ‘Bergson Boys’ and the Origins of Contemporary Zionist Militancy* Judith Tydor Baumel aims to rectify this negative perception of the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* by giving those involved “the recognition they so richly deserve for their Herculean efforts”.<sup>71</sup> She defends them by challenging the simplistic use of political terminology within Israeli society, such as right-wing and left-wing, that is imported from European political culture and so cannot be transferred into a different context.<sup>72</sup> Such a tactic could be argued to aid a more positive perception of the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* as it serves to delegitimise the casting of the group as being part of the political right and thus helps to minimise its negative associations with the model of European Fascism. With regard to their political effectiveness the majority of the literature casts the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* as

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<sup>65</sup> David Cesarani, *Major Farran's Hat: Murder, Scandal and Britain's War Against Jewish Terrorism, 1945-1948*; Norman Rose, *A Senseless, Squalid War: Voices from Palestine, 1890s -1948*.

<sup>66</sup> Yehuda Bauer, *From Diplomacy to Resistance: a history of Jewish Palestine, 1939-1945*, p 355.

<sup>67</sup> Yehuda Bauer, “From Cooperation to Resistance: the Haganah 1938 – 1946”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 2/ No. 3 (1966), pp. 182 – 210.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> David Cesarani, *Major Farran's Hat: Murder, Scandal and Britain's War Against Jewish Terrorism, 1945-1948*; Norman Rose, *A Senseless, Squalid War: Voices from Palestine, 1890s – 1948*.

<sup>70</sup> J. Bowyer Bell, *Terror out of Zion: Irgun Zvai Leumi, Lehi, and the Palestine underground, 1929-1949*, p 441.

<sup>71</sup> Judith Tydor Baumel, *The ‘Bergson Boys’ and the Origins of Contemporary Zionist Militancy*, p xiii.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 252 – 3.

instrumental in the creation of an independent Jewish state. The only exception to this is *Blood in Zion* by Saul Zadka which, contrary to its title, argues that the British quit Palestine and were not driven out by armed rebellion.<sup>73</sup>

Literature surrounding the *Lehi* dealing with the issue of responsibility is far more contested. The majority of research tends to focus on challenging the established historiographical and popular view that the *Lehi* were deviants with scant regard for human life. Y.S. Brenner contests the aforementioned view by challenging several popular misconceptions and subsequently portraying both the *Haganah* and the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* as equally ruthless.<sup>74</sup> Similarly in *The Stern Gang* Joseph Heller absolves the *Lehi* of both the supposed reasons for their negative reputation and their status as “an ideological offshoot of the *Irgun*”, arguing instead that the *Lehi* were, at different times, more influenced by maximalist Zionist Revisionism and National Bolshevism.<sup>75</sup> He also disparages the myth that the *Lehi* were instrumental in forcing the British to leave Palestine.<sup>76</sup> However Michael J. Cohen’s work and, once again, *Major Farran's Hat* by David Cesarani and *A Senseless, Squalid War* by Norman Rose are exceptions to this trend and continue to consolidate the established historiographical perception of the *Lehi* as reckless criminals unrepresentative of the *Yishuv*.<sup>77</sup>

Despite these differences with regard to the issue of appointing historical responsibility for events in Palestine, there is one similarity throughout the majority of the literature concerned – it tends to blame the British for how they dealt with the situation and allowed it to escalate into an eventual war between Arabs and Jews. *A Senseless, Squalid War* by Norman Rose, *Terror out of Zion* by J. Bowyer Bell, *Days of Fire* by Samuel Katz, and *The Revolt* by Menachem Begin all convey this viewpoint.<sup>78</sup> The only exception to this is “The Moyne Assassination, November 1944” by Michael J. Cohen which appears to be defensive of Lord Moyne through casting him, and thus the British empire of which he was representative, as an innocent victim.<sup>79</sup>

The wider historiographical context into which the majority of literature is placed can be divided into two loosely arranged and interconnecting groups. The first concerns those that deal

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<sup>73</sup> Saul Zadka, *Blood in Zion: How the Jewish Guerrillas Drove the British out of Palestine*.

<sup>74</sup> Y.S. Brenner, “The ‘Stern Gang’ 1940- 48”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 2/ No. 1 (1965).

<sup>75</sup> Joseph Heller, *The Stern Gang: ideology, politics and terror, 1940-1949*, p viii.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, p 285.

<sup>77</sup> Michael J. Cohen, “The Moyne Assassination, November 1944: A Political Analysis”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 15/ No. 3 (1979); David Cesarani, *Major Farran's Hat: Murder, Scandal and Britain's War Against Jewish Terrorism, 1945-1948*; Norman Rose, *A Senseless, Squalid War: Voices from Palestine, 1890s – 1948*.

<sup>78</sup> Norman Rose, *A Senseless, Squalid War: Voices from Palestine, 1890s – 1948*; J. Bowyer Bell, *Terror out of Zion: Irgun Zvai Leumi, Lehi, and the Palestine underground, 1929-1949*; Samuel Katz, *Days of Fire*; Menachem Begin, *The Revolt*.

<sup>79</sup> Michael J. Cohen, “The Moyne Assassination, November 1944: A Political Analysis”.

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with the memory of the Holocaust. Situating such events within the wider scope of the Holocaust, once again, leads to the apportioning of blame; this time with regard to the rescue of European Jewry. The common target of accusations concerning the failure to rescue European Jewry is the British for their unwillingness to allow greater Jewish immigration to Palestine. *From Diplomacy to Resistance* by Yehuda Bauer and *The Revolt* by Menachem Begin are two examples of this.<sup>80</sup> In *Terror out of Zion* J. Bowyer Bell's sights are set slightly wider. He accuses the West of hypocrisy with regard to the difference between how two sets of national collective memory – that of the Second World War and the Holocaust and that of the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* and *Lehi* – are portrayed. It is suggested that this is a difficult area of memory for the Allies, particularly the British.<sup>81</sup> However in *Years of Wrath, Days of Glory* by Yitshaq Ben-Ami the author apportions responsibility for the failure to rescue European Jewry with both Jewish people and the Zionist leadership, accusing them of “utter impotence in the face of catastrophe”.<sup>82</sup>

The second historiographical context is literature that makes (or refutes) comparisons with the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) and the current Israel-Palestine conflict. *Jewish Terrorism in Israel* by Ami Pedahzur and Arie Perliger details comparisons with acts of non-Jewish armed rebellion, most notably with HAMAS and the PLO.<sup>83</sup> However to deny such a comparison is more common amongst the literature concerned. In *Blood in Zion* Saul Zadka states that contemporary Israeli politicians aid the creation of a myth around terrorist groups from that era by portraying such bodies as unique and not similar to the PLO. Interestingly, however, the author does the same thing in the epilogue.<sup>84</sup> In *The 'Bergson Boys' and the Origins of Contemporary Zionist Militancy* by Judith Tydor Baumel, despite the author situating the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* delegation within the wider historical sphere of ethnic rights movements, there is no reference to organisations such as HAMAS and the PLO.<sup>85</sup> Such an omission is significant as to do so would legitimise the claims of those seeking an independent Palestinian state and would thus invalidate the current position of Israeli borders. Subsequently it would cast aspersions on past actions of those who had fought and helped establish those borders, including the *Irgun Zvai Leumi*.

The inter-relationship between these two positions - the destruction of European Jewry and the Israel/ Palestine conflict - is evident through an even wider re-consideration of the historiographical context of the literature discussed. In *Years of Wrath, Days of Glory*, Yitshaq Ben-

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<sup>80</sup> Yehuda Bauer, *From Diplomacy to Resistance: a history of Jewish Palestine, 1939-1945*; Menachem Begin, *The Revolt*.

<sup>81</sup> J. Bowyer Bell, *Terror out of Zion: Irgun Zvai Leumi, Lehi, and the Palestine underground, 1929-1949*, p 440 – 2.

<sup>82</sup> Yitshaq Ben-Ami, *Years of Wrath, Days of Glory: Memoirs from the Irgun*, p 537.

<sup>83</sup> Ami Pedahzur and Arie Perliger, *Jewish Terrorism in Israel*.

<sup>84</sup> Saul Zadka, *Blood in Zion: How the Jewish Guerrillas Drove the British out of Palestine*.

<sup>85</sup> Judith Tydor Baumel, *The 'Bergson Boys' and the Origins of Contemporary Zionist Militancy*.

Ami immediately places the struggle for an independent Jewish state within a 2000 year history in which “Jews [have] fought for national survival” whilst in *The Revolt* Menachem Begin describes how from “out of blood and fire and tears and ashes a new specimen of human being was born, a specimen completely unknown to the world for over eighteen hundred years, ‘the FIGHTING JEW’”.<sup>86</sup> These two quotations illustrate the dichotomy that exists within Jewish history and memory between weakness and strength; or, as it appears in the literature concerned, the weakness of the Diaspora and the re-emerged strength of Israel. Thus to allow concession to the PLO is to admit to a flaw central to the existence of Israel and contrary to the image of the “fighting Jew”, who after both the Holocaust and, according to Samuel Katz, the 1967 war vowed never to be so vulnerable again.<sup>87</sup> This tension is evident in the construction of the imperial patriarch as a version of hegemonic masculinity, as will be explored presently.<sup>88</sup> Furthermore, in such literature the establishment of the state of Israel is placed within a teleological history, meaning that all that went before and after is perceived within a progressive framework. Significantly, this implies that there can be no criticism of the *Haganah* as they became the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) – a dynamic that is reflected in existing scholarship.

Scholarship focusing on the British political perspective of events in Palestine appears to occupy a similar position. The context into which *The British Army and Jewish Insurgency in Palestine, 1945- 47* by David A. Charters is placed is one which situates the armed struggle against the British within a larger historiography of Britain’s post-1945 counter-insurgency experience (as does Cesarani’s *Major Farran’s Hat*).<sup>89</sup> The author concludes in the relevant chapter that it was a combination of armed action and propaganda that undermined British rule to the extent that they chose to leave Palestine. He also states that several external factors, such as Holocaust guilt and moral and political criticism of Britain’s “imperial policing”, aided the struggle for an independent Jewish state.<sup>90</sup>

It becomes apparent that a particular area of research notably absent from the literature previously discussed is the response of the British Jewish community to the violent acts in Palestine. Only *Blood in Zion: How the Jewish Guerrillas Drove the British out of Palestine* by Saul Zadka focuses on the response of British society, concentrating solely on press reaction and

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<sup>86</sup> Yitshaq Ben-Ami, *Years of Wrath, Days of Glory: Memoirs from the Irgun*, 1983 foreword; Menachem Begin, *The Revolt*, p xi.

<sup>87</sup> Menachem Begin, *The Revolt*, p xi; Samuel Katz, *Days of Fire*, p ix – x.

<sup>88</sup> R. W. Connell, “Hegemonic Masculinity” in Stevi Jackson and Sue Scott (eds), *Gender: a Sociological Reader* (London: Routledge, 2002), p 60.

<sup>89</sup> David A. Charters, *The British Army and Jewish Insurgency in Palestine, 1945 – 47*; David Cesarani, *Major Farran’s Hat: Murder, Scandal and Britain’s War Against Jewish Terrorism, 1945-1948*.

<sup>90</sup> David A. Charters, *The British Army and Jewish Insurgency in Palestine, 1945 – 47*, p 82.

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parliamentary debates.<sup>91</sup> However, there is no literature that investigates either the wider response of the British public or that of its minority communities. Nor are there any works focusing upon the impact of the Holocaust and de-colonisation upon the relationship between wider British society and the sub-communities that compose this entity.

As one such community to be neglected in this way, literature focusing on the relationship of British Jewry to Palestine is extremely limited. It is thus necessary to look slightly outside both the time period in which the armed struggle against the British occurred and the remit of the subject matter to gauge an idea of the historical level of support for Zionism amongst British Jewry. In “Anglo-Jewry and the State of Israel: Defining the Relationship, 1948- 1956” by Natan Aridan, although the main focus is on the period 1948- 1956, the author does detail the armed struggle against the British mandatory authorities during 1946-1948 and the response of British Jewry to it.<sup>92</sup> However, Aridan seems to purely concentrate on John Shaftesley’s time as editor of the *Jewish Chronicle* after Ivan Greenberg’s departure in July 1946. He described how the *Jewish Chronicle* “buried” reports of the armed struggle for an independent Jewish state in the inside pages of the newspaper whilst maintaining a front-page emphasis on co-operation between Britain and the Jewish authorities in Palestine.<sup>93</sup> This change in editorial tone following Greenberg’s resignation has been noted by David Cesarani, who stated that “The paper’s stance on the Jewish underground was completely revamped. Ambivalence was replaced by the assertion that terrorism was inimical to the ideals of Zionism”.<sup>94</sup> Aridan also details how the newspaper condemned both the King David Hotel bombing and the Sergeants Affair. As the *Jewish Chronicle* “considered itself the voice of Anglo-Jewry” this analysis of the newspaper’s negative response to the armed struggle against the British in Palestine provides valuable insights into the accepted historiographical position of established British Jewry, a perception this thesis seeks to challenge.<sup>95</sup> The author also extends his observations to note that British Jewry were relieved when the mandate was referred to the United Nations as it no longer meant that they had “walk a tightrope” with regard to the accusation of ‘dual loyalties’.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Saul Zadka, *Blood in Zion: How the Jewish Guerrillas Drove the British out of Palestine*.

<sup>92</sup> Natan Aridan, “Anglo-Jewry and the State of Israel: Defining the Relationship, 1948- 1956”, *Israel Studies*, Vol. 10/ No. 1 (2005).

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid*, p 126.

<sup>94</sup> David Cesarani, *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p 193.

<sup>95</sup> Natan Aridan, “Anglo-Jewry and the State of Israel: Defining the Relationship, 1948- 1956”, p 126.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid*, p 128.

The notion of 'dual loyalties' is a prevalent feature in *Divided Against Zion: Anti-Zionist Opposition in Britain to a Jewish State in Palestine, 1945-1948* by Rory Miller.<sup>97</sup> The book details three London based anti-Zionist movements and of particular interest is the chapter on the relationship between the Jewish Fellowship (a Jewish anti-Zionist organisation) and Anglo-Jewry. It describes how despite the common assertion, frequently by Zionists themselves, that British Jewry was at best lukewarm to Zionism, the Jewish Fellowship failed to mobilise support even from the non-Zionists within the Jewish community.<sup>98</sup> This conclusion is reached through an examination of the relationship of the Jewish Fellowship with the *Jewish Chronicle*, Board of Deputies, non-Jewish anti- and non-Zionists, the Anglo-Jewish Association and Jewish and non-Jewish MPs. Ultimately the author argues that the Jewish Fellowship was fighting a losing battle as already by 1945 Zionism had become equated with self-respect for the majority of British Jewry, whether they were pro- or non- Zionist.<sup>99</sup>

In *The Gentile Zionists* by Rose the issue of Zionism is also key.<sup>100</sup> The focus of the book is on the work of the British Zionists and their interaction with key government and Zionist figures, such as Weizmann, between 1929 and 1939. Although the book is slightly before the time period in which the armed struggle against the British in Palestine occurred, it is useful for providing context for *Divided Against Zion* from the opposite political point of view. Its concluding remarks are also particularly relevant to this thesis as it attributes non-Jewish support for Zionism in the 1930s to a need to right the wrongs of history even before the Holocaust.<sup>101</sup> It also states that the roots of Jewish radicalism in Palestine were in the situation of persecuted Jews in Europe.<sup>102</sup>

It is evident that research into the relationship of British Jewry with Palestine is an underdeveloped field of study. Furthermore such studies tend to possess a London-centric view of events between Britain and Palestine, a perspective widely reflected in more recent fiction, as will be outlined later in the thesis. There are no accounts of regional reactions to Zionism and the armed struggle against the British mandatory authorities amongst British Jewry, nor any which focus on the 'ordinary Jew on the street' who was not part of the established elite. From analysis of the literature discussed it is suggested that British Jewry, in general, did not oppose Zionism, although fear of the possible accusation of 'dual loyalties' meant that the issue of British Jewish support for Zionism was a complex one.

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<sup>97</sup> Rory Miller, *Divided Against Zion: Anti-Zionist Opposition in Britain to a Jewish State in Palestine, 1945-1948* (London: Frank Cass, 2000).

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, p 250.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> N. A. Rose, *The Gentile Zionists: a Study in Anglo-Zionist Diplomacy, 1929-1939* (London: F. Cass, 1973).

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, p225.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid, p 226.

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No less intricate, the relationship between the 1948 War of Independence and Israeli collective memory is the focus of significant research. The main argument is that the war constructed a selective memory that can be explained by considering the political and cultural context in which it was formed. Emmanuel Sivan explores the creation of the collective memory of the 1948 War of Independence through the publication of commemoration books, the majority of which were printed during the 1950s.<sup>103</sup> Sivan argues that this memory is a very selective one that is motivated by the need to remember national morals at a time of corruption and disappointment in the ideology of Zionism.<sup>104</sup> These assertions could, perhaps, explain why those who lost their lives in the struggle against the British mandatory authorities were not remembered in this way, as in the immediate years following their death the values of Zionism for which they, directly or in-directly, gave their lives were realised and shared by all through the creation of the State of Israel. Furthermore the selective collective memory of the 1948 War of Independence can be seen to eclipse that of the struggle against the British mandatory authorities. The selective nature of this memory is additionally highlighted by Sivan's belief that both women and immigrants are misrepresented, with the former being over-represented and the latter forgotten. The prevalence of women within this collective memory draws a sharp contrast with their comparative absence within literature surrounding the armed struggle against the British and its purpose can be explained as providing further evidence of the equality and inclusiveness of the new state for which they fought.<sup>105</sup> The absence of immigrants, many of whom were Holocaust survivors, within this collective memory can be seen as symptomatic of the collective amnesia that Sivan believes surrounded the Holocaust in Israel immediately after the end of the Second World War.<sup>106</sup>

The emphasis within geographer Ghazi Falah's work is not on the construction of collective memory amongst people but amongst the landscape instead.<sup>107</sup> Falah approaches the 1948 War of Independence and the subsequent displacement of the Palestinian Arab population from the field of cultural geography. Key to the argument presented is the notion that the Israeli Jews designified the cultural landscape and turned it into an area of collective amnesia with regard to the previous Arab inhabitants, an issue referred to in Chapter Four. The overall context of the

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<sup>103</sup> Emmanuel Sivan, "To Remember is to Forget: Israel's 1948 War", *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 28/ No.2 (1993).

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid*, p 345- 346.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid*, p 357.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid*, p 353- 354.

<sup>107</sup> Ghazi Falah, "The 1948 Israeli-Palestinian War and Its Aftermath: The Transformation and De-signification of Palestine's Cultural Landscape", *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 86/ No. 2 (1996).

article is a historiography of Western colonization.<sup>108</sup> Of particular interest to this thesis is that Falah attributes some of the responsibility for these acts of “total war” to the “illegal” *Haganah*, *Irgun Zvai Leumi* and *Lehi*.<sup>109</sup> However Falah does not explain why these perpetrators also encounter a degree of collective amnesia, when compared to the selective memory outlined in the previous article, within Israeli history. It is evident that the representation of the 1948 War of Independence is more akin to a case of collective amnesia within Israeli society as opposed to one of collective memory. This is due to the misrepresentation of both the landscape and the people involved in this event and its resultant selective image. However it is also clear that the studies discussed show an awareness of this and seek to rectify it.

It is thus apparent that within the literature discussed in this thesis so far there exist similar issues with regard to misrepresentation, selectivity and mutual prejudice. Within the literature focusing on Britain and Palestine these issues are evident in the treatment accorded to the *Haganah* in comparison to the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* and the *Lehi*, especially concerning the URM. In regard to the literature surrounding the relationship of British Jewry to Palestine it is clear that plenty of scope exists for further research that branches away from the established and London-centric elitist view of events.

Most significantly for this thesis, the notion that the eventual establishment of the state of Israel was, in some way, a product of the Holocaust is implied within much of the literature concerned. It suggests that the origins of Israel stem from Imperial (Christian) anti-Semitism rather than purely Jewish self-determination. In this presentation of the past, the establishment of a Jewish state was a direct consequence of the anti-Semitism of the Second World War, a war that emerged from the conditions following the end of the First World War. Thus, although Britain may now, mistakenly, have been perceived as going to war in 1939 in attempt to save the Jews of Europe from the Nazis, the origins of both conflicts lie in the imperial rivalry between Britain and Germany present at the turn of the century.

If the Second World War is largely perceived as originating from a specific set of political conditions interlinked with the outcome and consequences of the First World War then Britain is partially responsible for these occurrences. In the decade prior to the First World War, Britain deviated from its previous policy of ‘Splendid Isolation’, as illustrated by events such as the arms race in building dreadnoughts with imperial Germany, and thus engaged in a nationalistic rivalry. As calls for a Jewish national home increased following the end of the Second World War and Holocaust, it can be argued that Britain’s role in the imperial rivalry which led to the First and

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid, p 281.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, p 260- 261.

Second World Wars created an environment in which the anti-Semitism publicly present as a result of Nazi policies was able to flourish. Subsequently, this resulted in a perception whereby the desire for a Jewish state was mostly influenced by an increasingly inhospitable environment in which anti-Semitism and imperialism were rife. The previous publication of Herzl's call for an independent Jewish nation served to substantiate this notion, as his brand of Zionism was directly influenced by the anti-Semitism of another imperial (Christian) nation, Tsarist Russia.<sup>110</sup>

Literature detailing the interaction between the Holocaust and Israeli memory can be nuanced, though, by giving a greater consideration to the 'other' within society. Contrastingly research focusing on the 1948 War of Independence and Israeli memory displays an awareness of collective amnesia and seeks to avoid it through the inclusion of the societal 'other'. Thus for the researcher interested in the memory of the armed struggle against the British in Mandatory Palestine within the British Jewish community such issues need to be considered and explored.

## 1.4 Constructed Memory

Simultaneously, it is also necessary to consider the remit of key research within the wider field of memory studies, both Jewish and non-Jewish. All the works analysed henceforth suggest that 'organic' or 'natural' memory no longer exists and has been replaced by a manufactured or constructed memory through monuments, museums, ritual or historiography. The publication of Nora's work in 1989 signified a key moment within memory theory study.<sup>111</sup> In this groundbreaking scholarly endeavour Nora argued that the modern historical age calls out for memory because it has abandoned it; "what we call memory today...is already history". Furthermore, he argued, this memory is a structuralized one as it is present in spaces, gestures, images and objects.<sup>112</sup>

Nora's thesis has influenced, and found support from, many other scholarly works. In a later article that theorizes the difference between individualist and collectivist understandings of collective memory, Olick argues that "History is the remembered past to which we no longer have an 'organic' relation...while collective memory is the active past that forms our identities".<sup>113</sup> Similarly, as early as 1975, Lowenthal argued that we need a tangible past to cope with present

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<sup>110</sup> Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State*, (Filiquarian Publishing, LLC: 2006).

<sup>111</sup> Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire", *Representations*, No. 26 (1989), pp. 7 – 24.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid*, p 12 – 13.

<sup>113</sup> Jeffrey K. Olick, "Collective Memory: The Two Cultures", *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 17/ No. 3 (1999), pp. 333 – 348, p 335.

landscapes and that the past is not only recalled, it is created within the landscape.<sup>114</sup> He concluded that we need constant evidence of the past partly due to a deprivation of a living history.<sup>115</sup>

However, despite the academic prominence of Nora's work on memory, others dispute his central thesis. In particular, the statement detailing how, if we were able to live in memory, we would not need sites of memory as "each gesture...would be experienced as a ritual repetition of a timeless practice in a primordial identification of act and meaning" directly contrasts with Spiegel's argument.<sup>116</sup> Spiegel examines two key periods in Jewish historical thought, asserting that in "liturgical commemoration, the past exists only by means of recitation: the fundamental goal of such recitation is to make it live again in the present, to fuse past and present...into a single, collective entity".<sup>117</sup> Thus for Spiegel such ritual repetition is but an act of memory designed to bring the past into the present whilst for Nora it is an example of the presence of lived memory; or, conversely, Spiegel's acts of ritual memory are the very examples of lived memory described by Nora. This thesis agrees that whilst 'organic' memory may no longer exist, a constructed form of 'lived' memory creates and demonstrates its own relationship with multiple versions of the past. This suggests a less sterile yet equally authentic engagement with history exists than previously implied.

Raising further issue with Nora's public space notion of memory, Rothberg advocates "multidirectional memory, a model based on the productive interplay of disparate acts of remembrance and developed in contrast to an understanding of memory as involved in a competition over scarce public resources".<sup>118</sup> With regard to American difficulties in confronting their own, domestic genocide (that of Native Americans), Rothberg identifies how this may derive from the prevalence of "real estate" as a key issue, and that hence 'multidirectional memory' could help alleviate such tensions.<sup>119</sup> The presence of discussion on both the Palestine Mandate and the current situation in Israel/ Palestine within texts produced by British Jews (not just those examined here) illustrates their unique position, a point referred to throughout the thesis: unlike American Jews, British Jews have been periodically attempting to engage, albeit in a sometimes less than successful manner, with an unsavoury aspect of the history of their homeland with

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<sup>114</sup> David Lowenthal, "Past Time, Present Place: Landscape and Memory", *Geographical Review*, Vol. 65/ No. 1 (1975), pp. 1 – 36, p 5 – 6.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid*, p 9.

<sup>116</sup> Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire", p 8; Gabrielle M. Spiegel, "Memory and History: Liturgical Time and Historical Time", *History and Theory*, Vol. 41/ No. 2. (2002), pp. 149 – 162.

<sup>117</sup> Gabrielle M. Spiegel, "Memory and History: Liturgical Time and Historical Time", p 149.

<sup>118</sup> Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2009), p 309.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid*, p 311.

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which they too are intertwined. Furthermore, Rothberg explains, “how coming to terms with the Nazi genocide of European Jews has always been intertwined with ongoing processes of decolonialization”.<sup>120</sup> Hence, this thesis explores how, as part of the response to the Holocaust, British Jewish perceptions of the struggle for an independent Jewish state, and the resulting establishment of Israel, were and continue to be interlinked with the British experience of decolonisation. This is evident in the modifications to the imperial patriarchal discourse in the years since 1944. With regard to the future possibilities of an amenable outcome for both sides in the Israel/ Palestine situation, Rothberg’s assertion that, “The category of multidirectional memory allows us to begin to approach the simultaneously political and psychic nature of the excess in such discourses because it insists that we take seriously the crosscutting nature of public memories” suggests a way forward.<sup>121</sup> The meshing of a system of understanding and perception – the imperial patriarchal discourse – with the current and historical political concerns of British Jews may offer a solution to the rigid and divisive thinking related to the Palestine Mandate and its modern implications. A key indicator of this process will be “The unspeakable acknowledgement that ‘enemy’ peoples share a common, if unequal, history [as it] is the utopian moment underlying the ideology of competitive victimization”, a point returned to in the thesis conclusion.<sup>122</sup>

With specific regard to the subject of Jewish memory perhaps the most significant, and renowned, piece of scholarly research has been *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* by Yerushalmi.<sup>123</sup> In this publication Yerushalmi attributes modernism and the resulting need to reconstruct the Jewish past as a consequence of a “sharp break” in the continuity of Jewish living and the decay of the group.<sup>124</sup> This has meant that “for the first time history, not a sacred text, becomes the arbiter of Judaism”.<sup>125</sup> Subsequently, Yerushalmi argues, modernism has resulted in Jewish historiography being divorced from Jewish collective memory.<sup>126</sup> Furthermore this collective memory is necessarily selective.<sup>127</sup> However this was not a new sentiment amongst other scholarly works in academia, including those situated outside the field of Jewish studies. For example, in 1975 Lowenthal similarly argued that memory reorganizes and is necessarily selective.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid, p 309.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid, p 313.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982).

<sup>124</sup> Ibid, p 86.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid, p 93.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid, p 95.

<sup>128</sup> David Lowenthal, “Past Time, Present Place: Landscape and Memory”, p 27.

Whilst the issue of collective memory possesses an established history of scholarly research and publishing, work on collective forgetting or collective amnesia developed later. The majority of the material reviewed here has been published in the last decade. Such research aids the understanding of both memory and forgetting through the unveiling of myths regarding their composition. To substantiate, Vinitzky-Seroussi and Teeger state: “Collective memory is generally understood to entail the narration and representation of the past, while collective forgetting is antithetically thought to be a silencing and muting of the past”.<sup>129</sup> Subsequently “What can be heard, seen and touched has become the cornerstone of memory”. Such statements once again reveal the structuralized nature of memory.<sup>130</sup>

If the structuralized nature of memory appears to be apparent from analysis of the literature concerned, whether or not the memory of different socio-religious groups reflects such identification is more problematic, especially in relation to Jewish memory. In his book, Yerushalmi explains how its title, the Hebrew word for memory, *Zakhor*, possesses a double meaning – to remember and to act.<sup>131</sup> Thus it could be suggested that Jewish memory constitutes a more active entity than for other socio-religious groups. Yerushalmi further supports this notion of uniqueness by describing how Jewish historiography stands in “sharp opposition to its own subject matter” which includes the memory and issue of divine providence and belief in the uniqueness of Jewish history.<sup>132</sup>

A distinctly Jewish aspect of Jewish memory appears to be further apparent in Spiegel’s research.<sup>133</sup> In this article the author describes how the Holocaust put to rest a western, modernist, progressive view of history that was instead replaced by a Medieval approach to the past.<sup>134</sup> Spiegel clarifies this argument by explaining how the typical Jewish response to the Holocaust was mythicization, collectivization and ritualization, which, incidentally, was also the collective Israeli response. The importance of such analysis is that it indicates an attempt to normalize the Holocaust within the pre-existing paradigms of Jewish historical consciousness that hold out the possibility of redemption.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi and Chana Teeger, “Unpacking the Unspoken: Silence in Collective Memory and Forgetting”, *Social Forces*, Vol. 88/ No. 3 (2010), pp. 1103 – 1122, p 1103.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, p 5.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, p 89.

<sup>133</sup> Gabrielle M. Spiegel, “Memory and History: Liturgical Time and Historical Time”.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, p 150.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, p 155.

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The impact of the Holocaust on Jewish memory constitutes the focal point of “A Flawed Prophecy? Zakhor, the Memory Boom, and the Holocaust” by Rosenfeld.<sup>136</sup> The author criticizes that in *Zakhor* Yerushalmi failed to foresee the growth of Holocaust memory.<sup>137</sup> However, the key point of the argument is that analysis of the one reference to the Holocaust in *Zakhor* can help identify the specific dimensions of Jewish memory. Rosenfeld declares that

Drawing on Zakhor’s own core thesis, one could possibly argue that, since 1945, many Jews have responded to the Holocaust by fashioning a secularized version of the religiously rooted, archetypal view of history identified by Yerushalmi as so widely embraced by their coreligionists in the premodern era. Just as Medieval Jews interpreted the events that befell them in typological form through the prism of preexisting historical precedents, Jews in the postwar world have repeatedly perceived the unfolding of contemporary history through the traumatic paradigm of the Holocaust.<sup>138</sup>

It again supports the notion that Jewish memory continues to have a specific Jewish theme, one dominated by a Medieval response to the Holocaust.

Further criticism of Yerushalmi’s *Zakhor* is the key point of “Jewish Memory between Exile and History” by Raz-Krakotzkin.<sup>139</sup> However, in contrast to Rosenfeld, Raz-Krakotzkin suggests that Jewish memory is actually *Christian* in nature. The author criticizes Yerushalmi for making distinctions between traditional and modern modes of history and memory and between memory and history as it means he “reproduces the modern perception of history rather than critically examining it from a Jewish point of view”.<sup>140</sup> Put succinctly, “accepting the modern perception of history means, in essence, accepting the Christian one”.<sup>141</sup> In particular Raz-Krakotzkin analyses the very limited discussion of ‘exile’ in *Zakhor* and its relation to a westernised, enlightenment perception of history. The author argues that

On the theological level, and in terms of pre-modern Christian-Jewish polemics, the phrase ‘return to history’ presupposes that there is a ‘history’ from which the Jews alone were excluded, and expresses an acceptance of the Christian view of history, with its domain of grace...means a return to the history of salvation. By contrast, the idea of

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<sup>136</sup> Gavriel David Rosenfeld, “A Flawed Prophecy? Zakhor, the Memory Boom, and the Holocaust”, *Jewish Quarterly Review*, Vol. 97/ No. 4 (2007), pp. 508 – 520.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid*, p 508.

<sup>138</sup> Gavriel David Rosenfeld, “A Flawed Prophecy? Zakhor, the Memory Boom, and the Holocaust”, p 515.

<sup>139</sup> Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, “Jewish Memory between Exile and History”, *Jewish Quarterly Review*, Vol. 97/ No. 4 (2007), pp. 530 – 543.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid*, p 531.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid*.

exile as understood from a Jewish viewpoint, was not deemed to be outside history, but rather was embodied inextricably in the very condition of history.<sup>142</sup>

Thus, to “accept the enlightenment view of history was to accept an attitude that necessarily entailed the negation of Jewish identity”.<sup>143</sup> However in *Zakhor* the notion that Jewish memory is actually akin to a western, enlightenment conception of the past would appear to be supported by Yerushalmi. He describes how the Jewish past seems to the historian to be multiple and relative, and thus it mirrors the defeats as well as the triumphs of western historicism.<sup>144</sup>

Progressing from exploration of the socio-religious identification of Jewish memory to that of its theoretical composition, it must also be asked whether or not such an entity, Jewish or otherwise, can be referred to as ‘collective memory’. Within many of the articles analysed a preference for the use of alternative terminology is expressed and an exploration of the composition of the type of memory discussed is conducted. Assmann and Czaplicka equate their own concept of “communicative memory” with collective memory, especially when that memory is transmitted through oral history.<sup>145</sup> Furthermore they argue that the transition from everyday communication to objectivised culture is so great that doubt is cast on whether or not it can be called memory in the first place.<sup>146</sup> Ultimately the article argues that “no memory can preserve the past”, which substantiates Nora’s belief that “We speak so much of memory because there is so little of it left” despite its continual presence in “lieux de memoire”.<sup>147</sup>

Spiegel also identifies different types of memory, or as referred to in his article, time, that operate under the umbrella term of ‘collective memory’.<sup>148</sup> In particular Spiegel argues that in Langer’s concept of “durational time” the past is not recovered but uncovered as it has always been there; the past is always present.<sup>149</sup> Thus, according to Langer’s influential theory, Holocaust survivors experienced their ordeals not in chronological time but rather in “durational time”.<sup>150</sup> In this concept akin to modern understandings of trauma events, the instance is (re)lived and (re)experienced according to its own rules of time and not conventional understandings. Conversely in “Collective Memory: The Two Cultures” Olick explains how neurological studies have shown that the process of remembering does not involve the reappearance of a particular

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid, p 537.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, p 96.

<sup>145</sup> Jan Assmann and John Czaplicka, “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity”, *New German Critique*, No. 65, *Cultural History/Cultural Studies* (Spring - Summer, 1995), pp. 125-133, p 126.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid, p 128.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid, p 130; Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire”, p 7.

<sup>148</sup> Gabrielle M. Spiegel, “Memory and History: Liturgical Time and Historical Time”.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid, p 158.

<sup>150</sup> Laurence L. Langer, *Preempting the Holocaust* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

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experience in its original form but instead the production of a new memory altogether.<sup>151</sup> Consequently Olick states that he would prefer to use the term “social memory studies” instead of “collective memory”.<sup>152</sup> Such a term would be particularly appropriate because, according to Olick, there is no individual memory without social experience nor is there collective memory without individual participation in communal life.<sup>153</sup> Rosenfeld also advocates the use of revised terminology, this time in relation to the word ‘myth’. He believes that the phrase “typological historical perspective” should be used instead of ‘myth’ as it adopts a more value-neutral position than the latter.<sup>154</sup> Such a change in academic language would, possibly, possess considerable significance in relation to Jewish memory as Yerushalmi states that many modern Jews base their pasts on myths, an influential concept within this thesis.<sup>155</sup>

The issue of terminology and constitution can also be applied to what is popularly perceived as the opposite to ‘collective memory’, that of ‘collective amnesia’ or ‘collective forgetting’; however several scholars in the articles analysed disagree with making such a distinction. In *Storm from Paradise: the Politics of Jewish Memory* Boyarin details how memory became associated with place but forgetting did not.<sup>156</sup> However he argues that memory and forgetting are not opposites as the relationship is one of direct proportion instead. Nor can forgetting be equated with absence.<sup>157</sup> Furthermore Boyarin describes how forgetting can also be a technique of the dominated that is “used to enable memory”.<sup>158</sup> Similarly Yerushalmi also argues that collective memory and collective forgetting are not, in fact, opposites but should, instead, be seen as autonyms of forgetting and justice.<sup>159</sup>

From the articles analyzed concern over the substantiation of memory, particularly Jewish memory, is apparent. Especially evident are fears regarding the future of such memory and its relationship with representations of itself. Yerushalmi explains how with regard to Jewish memory historians are unable to replace an eroded group memory that never depended on historians to begin with; subsequently Jewish memory cannot be healed unless the group itself finds healing from within.<sup>160</sup> Similarly Boyarin argues that efforts to counter forgetting fail because they are

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<sup>151</sup> Jeffrey K. Olick, “Collective Memory: The Two Cultures”, p 340.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid, p 346.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid, p 338.

<sup>154</sup> Gavriel David Rosenfeld, “A Flawed Prophecy? Zakhor, the Memory Boom, and the Holocaust”, p 517.

<sup>155</sup> Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, p 99.

<sup>156</sup> Jonathon Boyarin, *Storm from Paradise: the Politics of Jewish Memory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, c1992), p 1.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid, p 1 – 2.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid, p 4.

<sup>159</sup> Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, p 117.

<sup>160</sup> Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, p 94.

situated outside the community in question.<sup>161</sup> Notably, then, this thesis will examine modern fictitious cultural outputs that depict the individual dynamics of such notions; Chapters Three, Four and Five all suggest that group healing regarding communal identity only succeed once such a process has occurred on a personal level. Subsequently it is evident that the concept of ‘the past’ must be problematized in order to further understand what is desired from representations of the past and to approach such endeavours with the appropriate level of critical awareness.

## 1.5 Literary Research

The trends and concerns highlighted in the historical scholarship outlined can also be identified within modern cultural outputs focusing on the Palestine Mandate and the establishment of the state of Israel. This period of British Jewish history constitutes a popular choice of location for fictitious novels and drama pieces. The publication of Jonathan Wilson’s *The Hiding Room* (1995) signalled the beginning of a revived interest in the subject among a new generation of British Jewish writers.<sup>162</sup> Linda Grant’s *When I Lived in Modern Times*, published in 2000, Jonathan Wilson’s *A Palestine Affair* and Bernice Rubens’ *The Sergeants’ Tale*, both published in 2003, followed Wilson’s first Mandate based novel.<sup>163</sup> Although not explicably referred to as concentrating on either the Palestine Mandate or Israel, Howard Jacobson’s *The Finkler Question* can also be added to this categorisation of literature.<sup>164</sup> As will be argued more extensively in the final chapter of this thesis, *The Finkler Question* concerns itself with debating not only the relationship between British Jews and Israel but also the impact of the past on the future. Finally, the broadcasting of Peter Kosminsky’s *The Promise* in 2011 cemented this revival in interest in the Palestine Mandate among British Jewish writers producing cultural pieces for a wider, non-Jewish, audience. Gilbert believes that, “in returning to a particularly sensitive period of British Jewish tension, these narratives signal some of the ambiguities that are perhaps still present in contemporary British Jewish life. In these terms, Israel has become an imaginary landscape on to which far more domestic anxieties and fantasies are projected”.<sup>165</sup>

Considered as a whole, these varied cultural outputs can be perceived as constituting part of Bryan Cheyette’s ‘extra-territoriality’, an influential concept within this thesis, thus continuing a

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<sup>161</sup> Jonathon Boyarin, *Storm from Paradise: the Politics of Jewish Memory*, p 7.

<sup>162</sup> Jonathan Wilson, *The Hiding Room* (Nottingham: Five Leaves Publications, 2008).

<sup>163</sup> Linda Grant, *When I Lived in Modern Times*; Jonathan Wilson, *A Palestine Affair* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2003); Bernice Rubens, *The Sergeant’s Tale* (New York: Little, Brown, 2003).

<sup>164</sup> Howard Jacobson, *The Finkler Question*.

<sup>165</sup> Ruth Gilbert, *Writing Jewish: Contemporary British-Jewish Literature since 1990* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p 81.

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custom that includes novels by Bernice Rubens and Louis Golding.<sup>166</sup> That is, British Jewish writers (and this thesis would argue, television directors) have a tradition of locating their work away from a British setting “in an attempt to sidestep the hegemony of English or British constructions of the past”.<sup>167</sup> In a characteristic that marks British Jewish literature as distinct from American Jewish literature, extra-territoriality frequently features Israel or the Diaspora as an alternative location<sup>168</sup>. It would seem that it is only away from the shores of Britain that these British Jews feel able to consider questions of identity and belonging. However, as this thesis will argue, notions of ‘extra-territoriality’ can be expanded to include not only those domestic places which the (provincial) British Jew may feel are ‘foreign’ to them (such as London) but also time as well.

Furthermore, according to Axel Stähler, with the emergence of this new generation of writers focusing on Palestine, British Jewish literature is now being transformed beyond the original understandings of Cheyette’s concept. Focusing on Grant’s *When I Lived in Modern Times*, Stähler explains how,

her choice of British Mandate Palestine as the main setting of her novel engages colonial, and therefore rather essentialist, constructions of British identity and the British past in a space that is extra-territorial from a British perspective too. Historically, as well as in her novel, Mandate Palestine is the space of colonial confrontation in which British and Jewish history converge and, indeed, clash rather violently.<sup>169</sup>

As a result, “Jewish extra-territoriality is thus being ‘trans-territorialized’”.<sup>170</sup> That British Jewish literature centring on the Palestine Mandate has and continues to evolve is reflected throughout this thesis. However, it will also demonstrate a new way in which British Jewry are dealing with this “clash” and convergence of history, by arguing that a merging of pasts actually occurred long before even the beginning of the Second World War through the adoption of an imperial patriarchal narrative.<sup>171</sup> Furthermore, by playing with the notion of time as well as place in their respective works, Grant, Kosminsky and Jacobson all highlight a further transformation in the ways in which British Jews illustrate Cheyette’s extra-territoriality: it is analysis of three texts by these British Jews which will form the basis for Chapters Three, Four and Five.

Each of these three texts are remarkable and groundbreaking on their own terms. Grant’s *When I Lived in Modern Times* won the Orange Prize for Fiction in 2000, similarly Jacobson’s *The*

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<sup>166</sup> Axel Stähler (ed), *Anglophone Jewish Literatures* (London: Routledge, 2014), p 12.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid, p 13.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

*Finkler Question* won the Man Booker Prize in 2010 and Kosminsky's *The Promise* generated a large amount of discussion in the media. As a result of this success within a wider, non-Jewish, audience, the past, present and future consequences of Britain's role in the Palestine Mandate was highlighted in public consciousness. Furthermore, that the pervasive influence identified in Chapter Two is evident in these three very different fictitious works is significant, as each of their creators are distinctive in terms of their religious observance, socio-political orientation and level of identification with the British Jewish community. It is for these reasons, therefore, that much can be gained from a study of the three individual pieces. Together, they are unique yet indicative of a new generation of British Jews in literature and television questioning the past to seek answers for the present and future. This thesis will thus aid understandings of established literary and historical concepts by exploring the impact of new developments, as partially identified by Stahler, upon issues of understanding and history.

According to Efraim Sicher, British Jewish literature has only been in existence as a categorisation since 1945, and thus remains a relatively new and underdeveloped field of study.<sup>172</sup> Although, he does outline a British Jewish literary "tradition that goes back to Mishlei Shu'alim, the 'Fox Fables' of Berekhiah ben Natronai ha-Nakdan, probably identical with Benedict le Pointur, known to be living in Oxford in 1194", Sicher appears to ignore the potential contribution of women to this heritage.<sup>173</sup> Stating that, "One could start the story of Anglo-Jewish literature" with Victorian British Jewish women writers who "composed edifying tales of Jewish heroism and ghetto life for domestic consumption", Sicher continues, "however, the Anglo-Jewish novel of 1881 – 1920 bears little comparison with modern Jewish writing in Britain and modern Jewish authors look back rarely if ever to their Victorian predecessors".<sup>174</sup> Thus, despite the first British Jewish novel being published in 1889 by Amy Levy, Sicher discounts the experiences, reception and contribution of similar female writers to British Jewish literature.<sup>175</sup> The impact of such a lacuna can still be evidenced today. David Brauner explains how for Jewish women writers on both sides of the Atlantic literary recognition and success has lapsed behind that of their male counterparts. Whilst American Jewish women writers have experienced a breakthrough in recent decades, it remains "an elusive goal" for British Jewish female authors.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Efraim Sicher, *Beyond Marginality: Anglo-Jewish Literature after the Holocaust* (Albany: University of New York Press, 1985), p 3.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid*, p 3 – 4.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid*, p 4.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>176</sup> David Brauner, *Post-war Jewish fiction: Ambivalence, Self-Explanation and Transatlantic Connections*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), p 131.

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If the establishment of British Jewish literature remains an evolving process, its categorisation as such is no less uncertain. Stähler advocates a wider categorisation of British Jewish literature so that it becomes part of Anglophone literature, as “Next to Hebrew and the ever-retreating Yiddish, English has thus become the major language of contemporary Jewish literary production”.<sup>177</sup> The reasoning for this change is clear: the English speaking and writing world has, generally, a history “of liberalism, pluralism and democracy; and that neither the countries of the Anglophone diaspora nor their Jewish communities experienced any significant breaks with the past”.<sup>178</sup> This is in contrast to other language groups that have experienced a sharp discontinuity in their tradition, such as German Jewish literature before the Holocaust.<sup>179</sup> Such a concept raises the issue of writing about the Holocaust in English and from a British Jewish perspective – or, the impact of attempting to deal with a break of the past within an apparently continuous history. It could be suggested that British Jews circumnavigate this by viewing the Holocaust as part of wider narrative of imperial patriarchy in which colonial and post-colonial versions of the past are included, as will be explored throughout this thesis. Furthermore it would appear that this presence of nationalism in the hyphenated literatures, such as ‘British Jewish’ literature, has resulted in fertile ground for Cheyette’s ‘extra-territoriality’. Comparing the work of American Jewish author Phillip Roth and British Jewish author Linda Grant, Stähler identifies how both writers cast America as having a fluidity amenable to Jewishness, whilst Britain “fixed” its identity hundreds of years ago and so forces Grant to relocate many of her Jewish characters outside of Britain.<sup>180</sup>

Whether or not the correct terminology should be ‘British Jewish’ or ‘Anglophone’ literature, it is evident that the core issues of this debate surround the relationship to and of the diaspora, or diasporas, with itself, each other and Israel. Key to these concerns are questions over belonging, to each other and wider society, which can be expanded to include the issue of whether Jews ‘belong’ to English literature or not. Stähler recounts how, “The ‘surrender’ of Jewish identity to constructions of Englishness or Britishness initially resulted in the markedly apologetic character of British Jewish literature”.<sup>181</sup> Furthermore, Brauner explains how the popular 1960s argument

that Jewish protagonists in post-war Jewish fiction are Everymen, has been used to explain both their presence and absence: if Philip Roth favoured Jewish protagonists, it

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<sup>177</sup> Axel Stähler (ed), *Anglophone Jewish Literatures*, p 3.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid*, p 4.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid*, p 9.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 11 – 12.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid*, p 13.

was because Jewishness is a metaphor for the human condition; if Norman Mailer heroes were Gentiles, it was because, as Malamud put it, 'Everyman is a Jew'.<sup>182</sup>

The impact of this notion upon the three texts analysed will be discussed fully, and its contemporary relevance explored, throughout this thesis. More recently, and referring to the new generation of British Jewish writers analysed in this thesis, Cheyette believes British Jewish literature "exposes a radically different sense of the past and rewrites an alternative Englishness from the margins".<sup>183</sup> Ruth Gilbert summarises by declaring that, "British Jewish writers today are, then, shaking off a culture of reticence and self-censorship which arguably inhibited previous generations of Anglo-Jewry".<sup>184</sup> This thesis will thus seek to avoid such analytical pitfalls as identified by Brauner whilst remaining conscious of the impact of the new mood highlighted by Cheyette and Gilbert. In particular, the idea articulated by Jabes that "the Jewish writer is not necessarily the one who charts the word 'Jew' in his writings, but the one for whom the word 'Jew' is contained in all the words of the dictionary, a word more absent for being, by itself, every one of them" will be given special significance in the chapter examining Jacobson's *The Finkler Question*.<sup>185</sup>

At the core of all three texts examined herein is the issue of belonging and its effect on communal and personal identities. Focusing on this notion with regard to a sense of tradition and heritage for Jews in Britain in comparison to those in America, Sicher describes how,

In England this process was doubly painful as there was no cosmopolitan safety-net. The sheltered parental home indoctrinated its children in bourgeois materialist aspirations which denied the traditions of immigrant roots (except their sentimental value) and denied the right to be different...The radicalism natural to the grandparents' immigrant experience disappeared with bourgeois prosperity. The demographic move to the comfortable suburbs of North-West London from the poor quarters of East London incited a generational protest that looked back at the East End which was no more and which contrasted with the hypocrisy and philistinism of their parents. The loss of community in the East End and the loss of six million because they were Jews do much to explain the ethnicity of modern Anglo-Jewish writers.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> David Brauner, *Post-war Jewish fiction: Ambivalence, Self-Explanation and Transatlantic Connections*, pp. 187 – 188.

<sup>183</sup> Axel Stähler (ed), *Anglophone Jewish literatures*, p 13.

<sup>184</sup> Ruth Gilbert, *Writing Jewish: Contemporary British-Jewish Literature since 1990*, p 9.

<sup>185</sup> Jonathon Boyarin, *Storm from Paradise: the Politics of Jewish Memory*, p 65.

<sup>186</sup> Efraim Sicher, *Beyond Marginality: Anglo-Jewish Literature after the Holocaust*, p 25.

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Sicher's statement thus suggests a romanticised view of the East End of London, where Jewish identity is 'real' and not diluted by the middle class secularism of the suburbs outside of the city. The impact of this notion on this thesis is significant as the main narrators of each of the three texts analysed are Londoners. Grant's Evelyn is from Soho, a location that teems with the realism of alternative identities whilst in comparison her Uncle Joe lives a wealthy but false life in the suburbs. Grant's placing of Evelyn in Soho alludes to the diminished authority of the imperial patriarch at that stage in her life, as ultimately Evelyn is rescued by a version of hegemonic masculinity, Inspector Bolton as the imperial patriarch. Therefore, the choice of Soho is significant as it signifies the lack of hegemonic masculinity previously present in Evelyn's life, as she does not know her father and Uncle Joe is only present due to her Mother being a courtesan. The environment in which Evelyn is initially at home in is one of alternative gender roles, a setting in which one is true to their inner desires rather than societal pressures, points returned to Chapter Three. Likewise, Kosminsky's Erin attends a London based public school and appears to be the only character in the modern Israel scenario who remains true to their moral self. Furthermore, Jacobson's Treslove resides in the suburbs of London, a choice of location that serves to show how fractured and distant his sense of identity is. However, Gilbert complicates this notion, stating that, "For British Jews today, some of whom question the status of Israel as an imagined home and those too who understand that the old Jewish world of Eastern Europe, or even the Jewish East End of London, no longer fully exists, the diaspora is arguably where we belong. Identities are...increasingly multiple".<sup>187</sup>

Interestingly, only Kosminsky is a Londoner, as Grant is Liverpoolian and Jacobson is Mancunian. Their decision to place the narrators of the texts within London further substantiates the presence of the city as a site where such multiple identities can co-exist, as opposed to the more limited image of the provincial Jew. Grant and Jacobson's re-siting of these British Jewish narratives from the more 'restrained' setting of their hometowns to the 'melting-pot' environment of the capital city demonstrates an additional layer of extraterritoriality within their work. For them (and Jacobson especially), London is also a foreign location where identity is a fluid and not a fixed concept, occupying a similar role to America in wider Jewish fiction as a site for self-discovery and reinvention. Notably, as a Londoner, Kosminsky displays a greater level of 'traditional' extraterritoriality in *The Promise*.

The central concern among these notions, then, appears to focus on issues of purity versus impurity; East End versus suburbs; capital city versus provincial; Israel versus diaspora. Cheyette expands:

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<sup>187</sup> Ruth Gilbert, *Writing Jewish: Contemporary British-Jewish Literature since 1990*, p 77.

At the one end of the spectrum, diaspora is on the side of impurity and hybridity (and points in the direction of emergent or lost cultures) and, at the other end, diaspora is conservative and ‘roots defined’ and has as its end point a return to an autochthonous (pure) space. The celebratory version of diaspora tends to foreground a transgressive imagination and precolonial histories made up of intertwined cultures (and is associated with Postcolonial and Diaspora Studies), whereas a victim-centred version tends to stress particular communities of exile with specific and unique histories of suffering (and is associated with Holocaust and Genocide Studies).<sup>188</sup>

Acknowledging that neither side is correct, Cheyette advocates making “the imaginative leap of seeing ‘similarities in dissimilarities’”.<sup>189</sup> It could thus be suggested that none of the approaches is correct yet all remain true. However, Cheyette warns “that such multiple voices and plural selves (as a means of subverting ‘race’) remain a troubling aspect for...writers”.<sup>190</sup> This thesis will aim, therefore, to bridge the gaps between the different approaches, such as postcolonial, Jewish, Holocaust and diaspora studies, whilst illustrating the reality of the debate between exile and diaspora prevalent in postcolonial studies. It will be argued that the three British Jewish texts analysed demonstrate an attempt to negotiate the middle ground between the two opposing camps, proving that the reality is more hybrid and subtle than mainstream academic understandings at present. However, both Cheyette and Stähler also recognize the current lack of suitable non-binary thinking present, although in different manners. Cheyette thus proposes “similarities in dissimilarities”, as highlighted.<sup>191</sup> Stähler, meanwhile, advocates an

exploration of transnational and transcultural Anglophone Jewish literature as one of the new English literatures. A suggestion concomitant with this is that Anglophone Jewish literature, itself situated within cultural contact zones of a ‘postcolonial’ character, reveals some analogies to postcolonial literature.<sup>192</sup>

Thus, the ‘correct’ path may be the middle one after all.

## 1.6 Terminology

To allow effective analysis of a cultural memory requires comparison to the contemporary perceptions and receptions of events. Thus, as there does not exist any specific scholarship on the

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<sup>188</sup> Bryan Cheyette, *Diasporas of the Mind: Jewish and Postcolonial Writing and the Nightmare of History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, c2013), p 6.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid, p 3.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid, p 6.

<sup>192</sup> Axel Stähler (ed), *Anglophone Jewish literatures*, p 4.

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response of the British Jewish community to events in Palestine between 1944 and 1948, a study of this period must first occur before focusing on retrospective accounts. The presence of two such different areas of analytical focus will necessitate two varied, but complimentary, modes of exploration. Whilst Chapter Two will rely on a more 'traditional' text-based reading of the historical and communal impact of events in Palestine between 1944 and 1948 upon British Jewish perceptions, Chapters Three, Four, and Five will contain a largely metaphorical reading of fictive texts from the year 2000 onwards. This will enable any patterns of continuity and change between the two timeframes to be recognized and their scholarly significance attained. Although this approach does contain the possibility of research challenges, such as ensuring scholarly relevance, historical balance and analytical consistency between two very different modes of exploration, the simultaneous use of key theoretical concepts and scholarship throughout the thesis will underpin an overall coherency and academic integrity. A significant and substantial theory applied to both sections of this thesis, a full understanding of the notion and composition of the imperial patriarch is central to achieving a thorough balance and relevance between the historical and metaphorical readings and will be outlined presently. In fact, it is the image of the imperial patriarch that links the two quite different areas of analysis together. The presence of an imperial patriarchal discourse in the metaphorical readings of the texts focused upon in Chapters Three, Four and Five can be seen as an echo of the original development of the imperial patriarch in the response of the British Jewish community to events in Palestine between 1944 and 1948 as detailed in Chapter Two.

Considered as an entity, such analytical examination will illustrate the extent to which it is necessary to reconsider this area of history in more detail than has previously been done. This thesis will therefore re-address the notion present within British Jewish history that British Jewish support for the establishment of an independent Jewish state can be explained through the simple use of binary terms such as 'anti' and 'pro'. In adopting a largely qualitative approach to analysis, this thesis will facilitate an exploration of the subtleties of the language used to refer to events in Palestine by British Jewry, arguing that it denotes a level of complexity and finesse in the position of British Jewry within both British society and worldwide un-apparent through a simple acceptance of their condemnation of such incidents.

In Chapter Two, as British Jewry, like many social groups, possesses a highly complex identity both individual and communal responses from all social sectors, such as the 'establishment' and the 'average' Jew, will be examined. This combination of an elitist focus with that of 'history from below' will produce a highly sophisticated analysis portraying British Jewry as a whole, extending and challenging the parameters of existing scholarship. This will be facilitated through analysis of the British Jewish press, papers of various communal organisations such as the

Council of Christians and Jews, individual papers of prominent members of the community such as I. M. Greenberg that represent a particular socio-political perspective, institutional archives such as those of the *Jewish Chronicle*, and non-Jewish research bodies such as the Mass Observation Archive.<sup>193</sup> This wide and varied choice of material together with the integration of key secondary theory will result in a comprehensive investigation into the response of the British Jewish community to violence in Palestine between 1944 and 1948.

Chapters Three, Four and Five will alter the mode of analysis from a primarily historical focus to one centring upon metaphorical readings. Dedicating a chapter each to alternative analyses of Linda Grant's *When I Lived in Modern Times*, Peter Kosminsky's *The Promise* and Howard Jacobson's *The Finkler Question*, respectively Chapters Three, Four and Five, the influence upon the three texts of the historical conclusions presented in Chapter Two will be examined. Notably, there exists a further disparity within the thesis concerning the difference between source materials within this more metaphorical analysis. The act of analysing two novels and one television mini-series, whilst all fictitious, requires an awareness of the varied presentation between the two genres. Chapters Three and Five will pay particular attention to notions such as the structure of the novel as a whole and ability of fiction to allow for the reader to interpret certain details or scenes in a particular or varied manner. Chapter Four will consider issues of screenplay and the use of non-verbal and visual props.

However, despite these variants between the source materials (texts), there remains more in common between them than in difference. That such varied texts can contain evidence of an overarching theoretical discourse has been noted by previous scholars; of particular relevance for this thesis, Hunt's research on the French Revolution describes how, "The psychosymbolics of the revolutionary political imagination are also apparent, however, in less conventional sources for historical analysis: in novels, in paintings, and especially in political pornography".<sup>194</sup> Likewise, analysis of two novels and one television mini-series provide evidence of a subconscious discourse into which the Palestine Mandate has been placed. Further justification for the inclusion and comparison of varied modes of texts can be gained from a consideration of the historical role of the novel. Hunt explains how from the eighteenth century onwards, children in novels underwent a transition from being purely metaphors for innocence, emotion and simplicity, whereby the family and not childhood itself was the centre of the action, to the father being replaced with a governess or other form of lessened authority to disappearing altogether and that, "The next step

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<sup>193</sup> Papers of I.M.Greenberg, University of Southampton Archives, MS150; Papers of the *Jewish Chronicle*, University of Southampton Archives, MS 225; Mass Observation, University of Sussex, TC 62.

<sup>194</sup> Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), pp. 13 – 14.

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– taken in the revolutionary novels – is the disappearance of the tutor and the child learning on his or her own”.<sup>195</sup> Consequently, “The novel as a genre is about the foundling and the bastard making a place for themselves in the social world: they do not simply imagine a better place for themselves”.<sup>196</sup> Analysis of the three texts will show that they, too, follow a similar pattern to their cultural predecessors.

Furthermore, this uniqueness of the source material allows all three texts to reflect British Jewish anxieties about their place in the world following both the Holocaust and the establishment of Israel, events which left them as “foundlings”.<sup>197</sup> Firstly, the Holocaust destroyed their links to an older, more traditional sense of Jewish community, resulting in concerns over their roots and Jewish continuity. Secondly, the establishment of the state of Israel relegated British Jewry from their previously privileged position as the Jewish community in the country that held the mandate for Palestine to a member, not even the largest one, of the wider diaspora. This mixture of a specific set of histories and very particular contemporary concerns unique to British Jews means that any response(s) to the Palestine Mandate by British Jewry is distinct from that of other Jewish communities, such as American Jewry, as evident in the analysis in Chapters Three, Four and Five.

Subsequently, such analytical scholarship will demonstrate how a narrative attendant to the Second World War and Holocaust intertwined to create an overarching patriarchal discourse. The use of the term ‘patriarchal’ within this thesis is significant in several ways. Firstly, it refers to the image of a Victorian patriarch who sternly rules his family; if the child or family member misbehaves then any resulting punishment is to encourage the development of a greater moral character and is thus for their own good. Secondly, this image of the imperial patriarch reveals the ancestry and composition of British Jewry. With regard to the socio-economic position of the imperial patriarch, his John Bull patriotism and dedication to the union not only reveals the loyalty of British Jewry but also their mainly middle-class status and outlook.<sup>198</sup> Thirdly, the use of a patriarch as a means of understanding the past and present has a precedent in the Jewish faith due to the significant influence of the patriarchs of Judaism upon the lessons and teachings of God. Finally, but perhaps most significantly, the imperial patriarch is an example of hegemonic masculinity.

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<sup>195</sup> Ibid, pp. 26 – 28.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid, p 29.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid, p 29.

<sup>198</sup> See: Samuel, R (ed), *Patriotism: the Making and Unmaking of British National Identity, Volume One* (London: Routledge, 1989).

According to R. W. Connell,

In the concept of hegemonic masculinity, 'hegemony' means...a social ascendancy achieved in a play into the organization of private life and cultural processes. Ascendancy of one group of men over another achieved at the point of a gun, or by the threat of unemployment, is not hegemony. Ascendancy which is embedded in religious doctrine and practice, mass media content, wage structures, the design of housing, welfare/ taxation policies, and so forth, is.<sup>199</sup>

Furthermore, "Physical or economic violence backs up a dominant cultural pattern (for example, beating up 'perverts'), or ideologies justify the holders of physical power ('law and order'). The connection between hegemonic masculinity and patriarchal violence is close, though not simple".<sup>200</sup> Applied to the contemporary and retrospective perspectives of the situation in Palestine between 1944 and 1948, it would seem that the British Jewish community attempted to subvert the power base of hegemonic masculinity but actually ended up reinforcing it. Thus, the British Jewish press in the 1940s presented details of the ascendancy of the one group (the British imperialists) over another (the *Yishuv*) by means un-associated with hegemonic masculinity, as if the imperial patriarch was a true version of this power base then he would not need to resort to force to control his wayward 'children', as explained fully in Chapter Two. Ultimately, though, the 'bad' behaviour of the imperial patriarch during the 1940s in Palestine served to substantiate his role as a base of hegemonic masculinity, as evidenced, for example, by the 'law and order' narrative in Chapter Two, as it reinforced cultural dominance. However, in the retrospective texts as detailed in Chapters Three, Four and Five, the presence of the imperial patriarch as a power base of hegemonic masculinity is much more traditionally presented – and thus reliant on more subtle behaviours. This later treatment of hegemonic masculinity and its exploration of the variants and its eventual inversion can perhaps be seen as symptomatic of the age and era of the texts themselves as being from the beginning of the twenty-first century. Gender roles were hence becoming less 'fixed' and more fluid than during the 1940s. Subsequently, the power base of hegemonic masculinity could no longer rely on such force to control an increasingly varied quantity of alternative gender behaviours. The mechanics of this process can be substantiated by Connell's statement that "hegemony does not mean total cultural dominance, the obliteration of alternatives...Other patterns and groups are subordinated rather than eliminated".<sup>201</sup> Thus, in fact, the texts analysed in this thesis display how the tension between, and appearance of, a series of alternative masculinities serves to reinforce the cultural dominance of the imperial

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<sup>199</sup> R. W. Connell, "Hegemonic Masculinity", P 60.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

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patriarch. As explained accordingly, in Chapter Three, Evelyn meets a series of different but ultimately unsuccessful alternative romantic males, Erin experiences a sexual tension between Omar and Paul in Chapter Four before gaining inner strength from the influence of Len, whilst in Chapter Five Hephzibah also seems to be acting under the influence of her elderly relative, Libor, and providing guidance to not only Treslove but also Finkler.

Importantly, the hegemonic masculinity of the imperial patriarch can be further illustrated by a consideration of gender within the concept of the body politic. Regarding discussion of Foucault's 'internalization' theory, Judith Butler explains how:

The figure of the interior soul understood as 'within' the body is signified through its inscription *on* the body, even though its primary mode of signification is through its very absence, its potent invisibility. The effect of a structuring inner space is produced through the signification of a body as a vital and scared enclosure. The soul is precisely what the body lacks; hence, the body presents itself as a signifying lack. That lack which *is* the body signifies the soul is a surface signification that contests and displaces the inner/ outer distinction itself, a figure of interior psychic space inscribed *on* the body as a social signification that perpetually renounces itself as such. In Foucault's terms, the soul is not imprisoned by or within the body, as some Christian imagery would suggest, but 'the soul is the prison of the body'.<sup>202</sup>

Put more succinctly, there exists a body politic in which "a corally redescription of gender as the disciplinary production of the figures of fantasy through the play of presence and absence on the body's surface, the construction of the gendered body through a series of exclusions and denials, signifying absences".<sup>203</sup> The implications of these observations for not only the casting of the imperial patriarch as an example of hegemonic masculinity but also the thesis as a whole are significant.

A key component of the hegemonic masculinity of the imperial patriarch concerns his sexuality. Connell states that, "The most important feature of contemporary hegemonic masculinity is that it is heterosexual, being closely connected to the institution of marriage; and a key form of subordinated masculinity is homosexual".<sup>204</sup> This heterosexual composition of the imperial patriarch as part of hegemonic masculinity serves to further enforce his power base. Butler describes how,

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<sup>202</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 1990), p 135.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

<sup>204</sup> R. W. Connell, "Hegemonic Masculinity", p 60.

That disciplinary production of gender effects a false stabilization of gender in the interests of the heterosexual construction and regulation of sexuality within the reproductive domain. The construction of coherence conceals the gender discontinuities that run rampant within heterosexual, bisexual and gay and lesbian contexts in which gender does not necessarily follow from sex, desire, or sexuality generally, does not seem to follow from gender – indeed, where none of these dimensions of significant corporeality express or reflect one another.<sup>205</sup>

Subsequently, as there are no gay, lesbian or bisexual characters in the three texts analysed in the later chapters of the thesis, the only gender performatives are heterosexual men (and women), resulting in an overriding power base of hegemonic masculinity (and emphasized femininity). This overriding power base of the hegemonic heterosexual masculinity of the imperial patriarch is reinforced by a series of denials and exclusions in all three texts, which as part of the body politic signify absences.

Despite the complexity of this particular depiction of maleness, by the end of the three texts the role of male Jewish characters is less developed and less significant than their female counterparts. Daniel Boyarin has explored how the development of a “soft Jewish masculinity in the Talmud and the succeeding culture of rabbinic Judaism” can be seen as being a form of post-colonial discourse responsive to the presence of “‘hard’ martial Roman-ness”.<sup>206</sup> However, Herzl’s promotion of the image of the “muscle Jew” made this alternative version of Jewish masculinity increasingly harder to sustain.<sup>207</sup> Additionally, from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, the figure of the Jewish male signified the racial difference of all Jews.<sup>208</sup> The implications of historically complex presentations of Jewish male identities can be evidenced in this thesis. All three texts seem to have trouble defining realistic and sophisticated versions of male Jewishness in comparison to the emphasis on more positive and complicated female characters, even the more male dominated text in Chapter Five charts a progression to a final emphasis on a positive depiction of female Jewishness. Thus, as the Jewish male is historically, and currently, a difficult and overtly politicised figure, any emphasis on male Jewish characters would mean either resisting or imposing a hegemonic masculinity similar to the “‘hard’ martial Roman-ness” mentioned by Boyarin by developing a ‘softer’ Jew masculinity in response to this postcolonial discourse and thus contradicting the founding blocks of Zionism, Herzl’s ‘muscle Jews’. Furthermore, it would also seem to substantiate anti-Semitic stereotypes of the ‘effeminate’

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<sup>205</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, pp. 135 – 136.

<sup>206</sup> Daniel Boyarin, Daniel Itzkovitz, and Ann Pellegrini (eds), *Queer Theory and the Jewish Question* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), pp. 9 – 10.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid*, p 10.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid*.

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Jewish male or, conversely, would mean creating a rival male power base to challenge the hegemonic masculinity of the imperial patriarch which would suggest that such characters were representative of a new imperial order. In this context, the emphasis on female characters is an attempt to depoliticise and progress from the historic implications of current political issues.

Contradictorily, though, there also exists an alternative reading of the female characters in the three texts. Tracing the passage of the Jewess and female sexual invert through nineteenth and early twentieth century literature, Boyarin describes how what they “both shared was alleged excess; both types went beyond the bounds of female virtue and sexual propriety; they were too active in their desires. That said, the female sexual invert was yet characterised less by her desire for other women than by her transgression of womanliness”.<sup>209</sup> In this alternative ‘queer theory’ reading of the role of women in the three texts, they all appear to go “beyond the bounds” of traditional femininity; they are independent, opinionated, confident women.<sup>210</sup> Their heterosexual orientation is less of an issue too in this reading as the female sexual invert was characterised less by desire for other women and so this aspect did not need to be present for a diagnosis. Ultimately, however, all three lead women seem to embody different stages in a cautionary tale about submitting to the influence and power of male hegemony. Evelyn in Chapter Three and Erin in Chapter Four both seem at complimentary stages in this tale, with Evelyn faring the worst, and later on Hephzibah is spared such a portrayal, perhaps as she symbolizes the stage of the story in which the female character is finally free of the imperial patriarch.

Thus, the portrayal of and emphasis on women within the texts reveals their continued role as key signifiers of the hegemonic masculinity of the imperial patriarch. Connell states that, “It does not imply that hegemonic masculinity means being particularly nasty to women. Women may feel oppressed by non-hegemonic masculinities, may even find the hegemonic pattern more familiar and more manageable. There is likely to be a kind of ‘fit’ between hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity”.<sup>211</sup> Furthermore, “Hegemonic masculinity is constructed in relation to women and to subordinated masculinities. These other masculinities need not be as clearly defined – indeed, achieving hegemony may consist precisely in preventing alternatives gaining cultural definition and recognition as alternatives, confining them to ghettos, to privacy, to unconsciousness”.<sup>212</sup> Hence, the key narrative role of the women in the texts and their eventual significance over that of the men demonstrates the very presence of the imperial patriarch as an example of hegemonic masculinity. This is due to the use of women as versions of emphasized

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<sup>209</sup> Ibid, p 12.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid, p 12.

<sup>211</sup> R. W. Connell, “Hegemonic Masculinity”, p 61.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid, p 62.

femininity, they are markers against which to define or “fit” the hegemonic masculine power base.<sup>213</sup> It could therefore be suggested that the fact that the female characters in the texts become even more key in the narration as it progresses demonstrates a conscious or subconscious attempt by their creators to overcome this hegemonic masculinity. Whilst the very fact that the original imperial patriarch in the 1940s was a male rather than a female supports the actuality of his role as a power base; hegemonic masculinity relegates women to the private sphere, thus they are absent from the public sphere of the 1940s British Jewish community, except as signifiers without agency of their own. Therefore, it would have been near impossible for the imperial patriarch to have been an imperial matriarch.

Extending the significance of women within the structure of the imperial patriarch further, it can also be suggested that the female characters are, in fact, masculine women – or even men. According to Carole Pateman, during the French Revolution, “La Nation was, in effect, a masculine mother, or a father capable of giving birth”.<sup>214</sup> Examining the impact of such gender theories on perceptions of the French Revolution, Lynn Hunt describes how satirical prints of the republic being born “can be taken as almost inadvertent representations of the unconscious supposition that men will give birth to the new order themselves under the new regime of fraternity. Marie-Antionette’s body stood in the way, quite literally, of the version of the social contract, since under the Old Regime she had given birth to the child who would be the next sovereign”.<sup>215</sup> The prominent place of women in the three texts analysed in Chapters Three, Four and Five supports this theory. Whilst the British Imperialist is patriarchal instead of matriarchal, as a response to being consciously or unconsciously aware of internalizing male anti-Semitic stereotypes, in a process similar to emphasis on Marie-Antionette’s body – both private and public – at her trial, Hunt’s notion of ‘the bad mother’ seems absent.<sup>216</sup> However, the emphasis on the role of women in both the 1940s in Chapter Two and the three texts shows how revolutionary British Jews may have perceived the situation in Palestine to be. Firstly, it rejected the idea present in the French Revolution that virtue would only be restored if women returned to the private sphere.<sup>217</sup> Secondly, the emphasis on women as symbols of hope for the future shows an attempt to subvert, consciously or unconsciously, the power of the fraternity from remaking the same mistakes. The actions of women will literally force a break with a male dominated past to insert a new hope for the future, as, by the end of the three texts respectively, Evelyn is pregnant, Erin is possibly returning and Hephzibah is the guardian of a British Jewish legacy.

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<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

<sup>214</sup> Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution*, p 99.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid, pp. 89 – 123.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid, p 9.

Evidence of a specifically Jewish aspect of this line of thought can be provided by the application of analysis of Pellegrini and Boyarin to the thesis. Whilst Ann Pellegrini has stated that, “all Jews are womanly but no women are Jews”, Boyarin has described how, if a Jewish woman can pass as a male then it is because “she is already something of a man” or, conversely, “a Jewish girl can be a Jewish boy, because Jewish boys are already girls”.<sup>218</sup> Whether or not, the lead female characters in the texts are gay Jewesses or actually Jewish men is insignificant to the wider implication of this point regarding the construction of gender within the hegemonic masculinity of the imperial patriarch. The portrayal of such rigid and ‘traditional’ versions of male and female identities can be seen as a response to counter the fluidity of (anti-Semitic) Jewish gender models as perceived by wider society. Rather than the Jewess being a purely negative stereotype, it could be an internalized response and subconsciously embraced way of being Jewish and female. Within this line of thought the influence of Zionist perceptions of gender is also apparent. For Herzl’s “muscle Jews” to be promoted successfully required the support of an equally rigidly defined version of femininity. Thus, the construction of such defined gender roles within the imperial patriarchal discourse, and comparative absence of sophisticated Jewish males, can be seen as influenced by Zionist gender identities, a reaction itself to the anti-Semitism present during the nineteenth century, as also evidenced by the vanishing of a ‘softer’ form of Jewish masculinity in response to anti-Semitic stereotypes.

The use of broader concepts such as hegemonic masculinity within a thesis concerned with Jewish history and culture reveals another dimension to the power base of the imperial patriarch. Based upon cultural and historical case studies featuring the Palestine Mandate, the overriding influence of the imperial patriarch as a version of hegemonic masculinity limits the extent to which a more paternal, family orientated structure would be applicable. Despite Cohen and Kahn-Harris’ statement that,

In short, Israel, like other key elements in the British Jewish consciousness, is treated with a high degree of familism. Like members of the family, Israel is approached with genuine and immutable love. It is seen with familiarity, often appreciated for its strengths and accepted for its shortcomings. If it is to be criticized or reproached, it is to be reprovved in the confines of the family, out of earshot of outsiders, let alone antagonists,

emphasis within the discourse put forward in this thesis on the power relationship between women and men indicates that the dynamic is a patriarchal one rather than a paternal one.<sup>219</sup> This is evident through the lack (either through absence, illness or death) of a Jewish elder female or

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<sup>218</sup> Daniel Boyarin, Daniel Itzkovitz, and Ann Pellegrini (eds), *Queer Theory and the Jewish Question*, p 10; Ibid, p 14.

<sup>219</sup> Steven Cohen and Keith Kahn-Harris, *Beyond Belonging: The Jewish Identities of Moderately Engaged British Jews*, p 50.

mother figure within the narrative structures of the three texts analysed in Chapters Three, Four and Five who symbolizes the loss of an older, more traditional Jewish community, such as that which was lost in the Holocaust. As Jewish women are perceived to represent communal continuity, as previously outlined, their lack of narrative influence in terms of older female characters represents a break with the past, as well as their current absence. So, it is significant that whilst there is no Jewish female elder to influence the actions of the younger generation then the emphasis is on (re)negotiating a (new) relationship with the patriarchal figure responsible for the absence of female Jewish figure, as the Imperial Patriarch failed to save the Jews of Europe and thus prevent this loss of communal continuity. It is only once the past has been worked through and the patriarch admits at least partial responsibility for their previous actions that the re-emergence of the communally influential female Jewish figure can re-emerge, as the younger female character is transformed into a symbol of hope for the future. This responsibility ranges from admitting weakness to saving the female Jew to enable future (re)birth. Thus, the female Jewish figure symbolizes revival in the Jewish community as an actual and metaphorical symbol of Jewish continuity. Due to the key role of hegemonic masculinity within this discourse, the imperial power is a patriarch rather than a paternal figure. The (re)emergence of female Jewish communal influence depends on the ability of the imperial male to purposefully relinquish a degree of power in the process of taking responsibility for past actions. Ultimately, the imperial patriarch remains an example of hegemonic masculinity as he continues to possess a powerful but slightly modified place in society; recognizing weakness allows stronger regrowth. It is only prior to this that alternative versions of masculinity are permitted to be present, or at least hinted at, such as in the use of Soho, as previously mentioned.

The term, imperial patriarch, also possesses further relevance. The retrospective perspective of events in Palestine is male dominated, as it is the men who are assigned key importance whilst the women appear to be written out of the story. This is in contrast to contemporary accounts of the same events whereby women are assigned a more equal role. In fact, this closer gender equality can be seen as a continuation of the place of women in the national psyche during the Second World War, as “Whilst the family symbolised the nation, it was wives and mothers who most frequently symbolised the family”.<sup>220</sup> Following on from the interwar notion that the nation was, in fact, a family and that one’s family was therefore representative of the nation, the wartime ‘family’ was perceived as successfully recuperating its unity and strength from the previous class and economic divisions.<sup>221</sup> The on-going influence of

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<sup>220</sup> Brian Foss, *War Paint: Art, War, State and Identity in Britain, 1939-1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press: 2007), p 82.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid*, p 80.

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this concept upon not only Britain as a whole but British Jewry within it can thus be demonstrated by the tactics of the British Jewish press in presenting the situation between Britain and Palestine as that of a family in which “all the members had a common history as well as specific characteristics, beliefs and attitudes”.<sup>222</sup>

However, the use of ‘British’ by the British Jewish press rather than ‘English’ adds further complexity to the issue of gender within both contemporary reporting and this thesis. Despite the emphasis on women within ideas about the national family during the Second World War, the preference of ‘British’ over ‘English’ within the British Jewish press in relation to events in Palestine suggests that the imperial patriarch retained – or rediscovered – his key place within the ‘family’, both literally and nationally, following the end of the Second World War. This alteration to the intertwining of national identity and gender could be seen as reflective of practical changes to the family dynamic following the return home of those soldiers demobbed after the end of hostilities and the, albeit brief, return to international dominance of Britain as the imperial patriarch after victory against Nazi Germany. It could be suggested that, according to definitions of gender roles, use of the term ‘Britishness’ symbolises the political and often abstract sphere of the male whilst ‘Englishness’ can be equated more with the practical and personal world of the female. It has been noted that despite a blurring of these terms during the Second World War, such usage was “not broadly seen over the preceding decades” – and, considering their presence in the British Jewish press, afterwards; a development which correlates with the rise and fall in the stature of the woman in the national family.<sup>223</sup> This equating of Britishness with maleness can be further substantiated by Mass Observation research in which men and women operated in different spheres. Male respondents were more concerned with the political, business, and public arenas whilst women detailed the personal and domestic side of life. This notion has further significance when referred to in a specifically Jewish context as women are perceived as the holders of the Jewish faith and associated with communal continuity, especially when considered in conjunction with the historical idea that British Jews should be “an Englishman in public and a Jew in private”.<sup>224</sup>

Furthermore, according to Raphael Samuel,

‘English’ is smaller and gentler than ‘British’, and it has the charm...of the antiquated and out of date. ‘British’ was an altogether more uncomfortable term to work with, hard rather than soft, and belonging to specific historical epochs rather than the timelessness of

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<sup>222</sup> Ibid, p 5.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid, p 5.

<sup>224</sup> Cooper, H and Morrison, P, *A Sense of Belonging: Dilemmas of British Jewish Identity*, p 73.

‘tradition’. It is a political identity which derives its legitimacy from the expansion of the nation-state. Its associations are diplomatic and military rather than literary, imperial rather than – or as well as – domestic. Compared with ‘English’ it is formal, abstract and remote. But it allows for a more pluralistic understanding of the nation, one which sees it as a citizenry rather than a folk. It does not presuppose a common culture and it is therefore more hospitable both to newcomers and outsiders.<sup>225</sup>

Hence, for a thesis concerned with demonstrating the presence of an “abstract” framework – the imperial patriarchal discourse – through which “diplomatic”, “military” and “imperial” actions were perceived and understood on a “domestic” level by a socio-religious grouping which, at various times, have been considered both “newcomers and outsiders”, the use of the term ‘British’ instead of ‘English’ seems appropriate.<sup>226</sup> The employment of ‘British’ by both the British Jewish press, as outlined in Chapter Two, and the three British Jewish texts of Chapters Three, Four and Five thus allows, in theory, for the creation of society in which differences can be accommodated and belonging found irrespective of religion, race, or class due to its “pluralistic” nature.<sup>227</sup>

This thesis will therefore demonstrate the legacy of the Second World War upon British Jewish notions of the national family and the place of the imperial patriarch within it. The adoption of an imperial patriarchal discourse by British Jewry immediately following the end of the Second World War modified an existing national narrative of triumph over adversity. Expanding on the impact of the Holocaust upon British Jewry, Gilbert explains how,

Despite knowledge to the contrary, there was, in the aftermath of war, an implicit refusal to acknowledge that Jews had been the victims of Nazi policy. In Britain the war was represented primarily in terms of British heroic triumph in a mythologized narrative that elided the reality of Nazi genocide ... This period of history is not just a Jewish issue. It touches on a raw nerve in the construction of British national identity. World War II, which is still in living memory in Britain today, is a key component in the self-definition of British identity. Values of fair play, pluckiness and liberal tolerance have created a compelling national narrative but, as historians such as Tony Kushner and David Cesarani have demonstrated, Britain’s role was far more equivocal than this mythology suggests.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> Samuel, R (ed), *Patriotism: the Making and Unmaking of British National Identity, Volume One*, pp. xii – viii.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>228</sup> Ruth Gilbert, *Writing Jewish: Contemporary British-Jewish Literature since 1990*, p 41 – 42.

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Thus, this thesis will highlight the presence of a previously unidentified narrative that re-packaged elements of an existing national discourse, as evident in both the contemporary and retrospective material. As such, issues of gender, Jewish continuity, anti-Semitism, colonialism and identity will be focused upon. In doing so, it will negotiate an exploration of British Jewish understandings and perceptions of imperialism, decolonisation and post-modernism.

It will begin by an examination of contemporary British Jewish responses between 1944 and 1948 to the violent acts in Palestine conducted by the *Haganah*, *Irgun Zvai Leumi* and *Lehi*. Chapter Two will thus outline the perceptions and presentations of the imperial patriarchal discourse in the mid to late 1940s. Using a diverse range of sources to highlight trends within the British Jewish press, inter-faith organisations and those circles of notable individuals, the interplay of themes such as gender, age, madness, the Second World War and Holocaust with notions of an imperial patriarch will be demonstrated. Moving forward to the present, the rest of the thesis will reveal the continued presence of an imperial patriarchal narrative upon three modern British Jewish understandings of the colonial past. Focusing on patterns of continuity and change from the previous chapter's 1940s imperial patriarch, Chapter Three will use Linda Grant's *When I Lived in Modern Times* as a case study. Presenting several interlinked yet different readings of a 'traditional' love story set mainly in 1940s Palestine, a version of the imperial patriarch outlined in Chapter Two and as perceived by a left-liberal member of the British Jewish community will be explored. Looking to both the past and present, Chapter Four will use Peter Kosminsky's *The Promise* as a focal point for charting the evolution of notions of the imperial patriarch from a purely 1940s setting. A self-styled 'outsider' to the British Jewish community, analysis of Kosminsky's work will demonstrate the continued impact of certain British Jewish perceptions of recent history and cultural influences upon visions of not only the past but also the present. Its portrayal of gender roles suggests more equality than in Grant's work, with the model of the 'traditional' imperial patriarchal relationship, as outlined previously, present in the 1940s sections and the beginning of an inversion evident in the modern scenes. Situated in the present, Chapter Five will illustrate the modern presentation of the imperial patriarchal discourse through analysis of Howard Jacobson's *The Finkler Question*. In a manner suggestive of looking towards the future, however, it explores the end of the 'traditional' imperial patriarchal relationship and its inversion with regard gender roles. Chapter Five will constitute an investigation into a modern perception of the Palestine Mandate and establishment of Israel upon British Jewish identities and their future composition. Thus, considered in its entirety, this thesis will highlight the continued presence and development of the imperial patriarchal discourse from 1940s Palestine to modern Britain. It will explore the pervasive influence of such an original concept through the examination

of three texts from different British Jews, ranging from a 'left-liberal' on the edges of the community to a now established communal 'elder' via a total 'outsider'.



## Chapter 2: The Imperial Patriarchal Discourse

### 2.1 Introduction

Prior to an exploration of the modern manifestations of the imperial patriarchal discourse, it is necessary to first outline its historical origin and development within contemporary responses to the end of the Palestine Mandate. That the British Jewish community was particularly wary of provoking and thus wished to avoid accusations of 'dual loyalty' and 'Jewish complicity' in connection with events in Palestine during the 1940s has already been firmly established in the existing historiography. However that it utilized an imperial patriarchal discourse to refute such complicity is an innovative and original argument, and forms the basis for this chapter. The use of this imperial patriarchal framework also enabled British Jewry to subtly denote more sympathy than might initially be perceived with the actions of the *Irgun Zvai Leumi*, *Lehi*, and *Haganah*. This discourse relied heavily upon placing events in Palestine within the context of the Holocaust. At times, this discourse was polemical in nature, especially through a controversial and suggestive portrayal where the British could be compared to Nazis. It usually, however, relied upon the reader to make the connection between how the British were acting now and how they had, in the past, fought against the same behaviour that they were now exhibiting. Thus, such a discourse served to delegitimise the moral competency of the British in ruling Palestine. It is within this context of decolonisation that the (implied) presence of an imperial patriarchal narrative possessed its greatest significance.

To that end, this chapter will constitute a comprehensive investigation into the multi-layered response of British Jewry during the mid to late 1940s. It will focus on the language employed within the community, arguing that it represented an attempt to both partially condemn but also condone the actions of the *Haganah*, *Irgun Zvai Leumi* and *Lehi* through their positioning within a non-threatening, internal discourse. This narrative presented such violence as occurring within the domestic, internal sphere rather than an international, external one. This chapter will begin by considering the various processes through which the British Jewish community, as a whole, sought to undermine the moral authority of the imperial patriarch, Britain. The impact of using narratives associated with Nazi persecution, communal unity, 'illegal' immigration, the Holocaust, imperial heritage and age and gender will all be explored. This chapter will then examine the packaging of events in Palestine within an 'internal' framework. It will analyse the specific terminology present: 'terrorism', 'murder', 'madness', and 'resistance'. Finally, the interplay between these elements will be considered through their presentation

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within an epic narrative that supported the imperial patriarchal discourse. Before this, an introduction to the material employed within the chapter will be undertaken.

The British Jewish press during the 1940s was a popular and effective way of maintaining communal identities – secular, political or religious. It was also a primary means of conveying items of news and various different viewpoints. As such, it was an important mediator between events in Palestine and the wider British Jewish, and also the non-Jewish, communities. Publications such as the *Zionist Review*, *The Jewish Standard*, *Jewish Chronicle* and *Jewish Monthly* thus form a substantial proportion of the material analysed herein.

The *Zionist Review* was the newspaper of the English Zionist Federation, published weekly between 1917 and 1952. Campaigning for a Jewish national home in Palestine, it opposed the terrorist actions of those groups involved in the armed struggle to this end. A front-page article published in November 1944, which detailed the “demand for a Jewish commonwealth or state”, illustrated the emphasis that the *Zionist Review* placed on attaining this goal through political legislation rather than through force.<sup>1</sup>

However this chapter will argue that the *Zionist Review* was actually more sympathetic to the actions of those involved in the armed struggle for an independent Jewish state than it initially appeared. Subsequently, such examination demonstrates the continued impact of anti-colonialism and the Second World War on the framework through which British Jews perceived events in Palestine. The adoption of narratives focused on ‘internal’ language by the *Zionist Review* revealed the presence of an overarching imperial patriarchal discourse into which events were packaged.

The weekly national newspaper of the Zionist Revisionist Party in Britain, *The Jewish Standard* was published between 1940 and 1949; after which it became a non-affiliated publication. Consequently, *The Jewish Standard* took a keen interest in events leading to the establishment of the state of Israel in May 1948, particularly from 1945 onwards. However, that did not mean that the newspaper displayed continued open support for the activities of those involved in the armed struggle against the British in Mandatory Palestine, particularly the *Irgun Zvai Leumi*. Instead, such support possessed more subtle characteristics through the presentation of the activities concerned in a wider narrative of the Second World War. This chapter will examine coverage of the situation in Palestine within *The Jewish Standard* due to the fact that it was the published mouthpiece of the Revisionist Party in Britain (rather than its limited circulation); and, thus may have been more sympathetic to such events than other British Jewish

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<sup>1</sup> *Zionist Review*, 03/11/1944.

newspapers at this time. The contribution of *The Jewish Standard* to this thesis is further substantiated by the fact it was closely monitored by British security services due to its political orientation. Additionally, *The Jewish Standard* provides insight into those prominent members of British Jewry associated with both the media and the Revisionist Party in Britain, such as the former *Jewish Chronicle* editor Ivan Greenberg.

In contrast to *The Jewish Standard*, the *Jewish Chronicle* possessed an established tradition of being the self-proclaimed ‘organ of Anglo-Jewry’.<sup>2</sup> Established in 1841 and continuing to the present day, Cesarani describes the weekly newspaper as having “played a fundamental role in shaping Anglo-Jewish identity....[being] both a part of Anglo-Jewish history and a medium through which it was refracted”.<sup>3</sup> Subsequently, analysis of the *Jewish Chronicle* reveals the realities that concern British Jewry during a particular period, including, but not limited to, the struggle against the British in Mandatory Palestine – a time during which Cesarani stated “while Britain dominated the fate of Palestine, the *Jewish Chronicle* was a vital intermediary between Jewish opinion and the British Government”.<sup>4</sup>

In circulation for a far shorter period than the *Jewish Chronicle*, the Anglo-Jewish Association published the *Jewish Monthly* between 1947 and 1952. Established in 1871, the Anglo-Jewish Association was committed to the *Yishuv* under the auspices of Britain and thus did not necessarily support political Zionism. Although the Anglo-Jewish Association intended its publication, the *Jewish Monthly*, to present a balanced and non-prejudiced view of the world, it did, ultimately, tend to reflect the position of the Anglo-Jewish Association. The *Jewish Monthly* was thus non-Zionist, whilst concurrently catering to members of the Anglo-Jewish Association who were either pro- or anti-Zionist in their personal view. In its inaugural issue, it stated that:

Month by month is to be one of the regular features of this magazine, a factual review of all those events and happening which directly or indirectly affect Jewish interests, either in the international sphere or in some particular country. It will seek to avoid expressing its own opinion to the desirability or otherwise of the events it reports, and to confine itself to recording facts ungarished by editorial comments, though necessarily including significant expressions of opinion uttered during the period under review.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> *Jewish Chronicle*.

<sup>3</sup> David Cesarani, *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry 1841 to 1991*, p ix.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p x.

<sup>5</sup> *Jewish Monthly*, Vol 1, No 1, April 1947.

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However, this chapter will show that analysis of the language employed within the 'Month by Month' sections detailing events in Palestine reveal the complex position of the Anglo-Jewish Association within both British society and World Jewry at that time.

Here also the papers of several individuals prominent within or linked to the British Jewish community during this period and influential within relations with the non-Jewish community, namely I. M. Greenberg and Rev. J. Parkes, will be explored. By examining the papers of Parkes and Greenberg, not only will their individual reactions be revealed but the response of the people around them will also be detailed. Thus, these collections can also be employed to illustrate the corresponding and oppositional views of a certain circle of both British Jewry and wider society. They have been intentionally chosen for their ability to reflect the viewpoints of a socio-political cross-section of not only British Jews but those who worked closely with them and the British public. Analysis of both the individual and organisational papers of Greenberg and the *Jewish Chronicle*, respectively, therefore provides insight into the complexities of British Jewish communal politics at this time.

Editor of the *Jewish Chronicle* between 1937 and 1946, I. M. Greenberg was assistant editor of the weekly newspaper for ten years prior to that.<sup>6</sup> Greenberg's already sympathetic perspective regarding the situation in Palestine was "radicalised" by the Holocaust.<sup>7</sup> As a consequence of concern over the issue of 'dual loyalty', some British Jews perceived coverage of the armed struggle against the British in Mandatory Palestine in the *Jewish Chronicle* as too sympathetic. It was an argument frequently debated by those on the Board of Directors who attributed such an occurrence to the editorship of Greenberg. After much discussion and a special meeting of the Board of Directors held in May 1946, which debated concern that "the policy at present advocated by the paper in regard to Palestine tended too far in the direction of Revisionism", official policy guidelines were agreed upon.<sup>8</sup> Minutes of the meeting describe how "The main lines of the paper's policy were then defined as follows:- moderate Zionist in respect to Palestine, Orthodox as regards the Jewish religion, Strictly loyal in relation to H. M. G".<sup>9</sup>

Despite the issuing of such guidelines, the seemingly sympathetic response of the *Jewish Chronicle* to the kidnapping of British military personnel was also a contemporary topic of disagreement amongst the board of the newspaper. A typed document detailed how

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<sup>6</sup> Papers of I.M.Greenberg, University of Southampton Archives, MS150.

<sup>7</sup> David Cesarani, *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry 1841 to 1991*, p 183.

<sup>8</sup> Papers of the *Jewish Chronicle*, MS 225/ 7/ 1.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

The Jewish telegraphic agency is informed by Mr. Leonard Stein that in view of his strong disapproval of the treatment by 'The JC' of recent events in Palestine, inc. (for example) its failure to give due prominence to the Jewish Agency's expression of horror and grief at the treacherous kidnapping of British officers, he has resigned his seat on the Board of 'The JC' Ltd.<sup>10</sup>

Similarly a letter dated 21 June 1946 written by Mr. A. Gumb, another of the Board of Directors of the *Jewish Chronicle*, expressed his discontent with the reporting of the newspaper on the same subject.<sup>11</sup>

A clergyman, James Parkes was particularly interested in fostering positive Judeo-Christian relations. He was an active social campaigner, writing several publications and involved in national and international committees. Due to Parkes' interest in Judaism and Jewish culture, particularly with regard its relationship with other religions and wider society, Zionism and the situation in Palestine were frequently discussed within his socio-political circle. Regarding the Mandate that allowed Britain to govern Palestine and also the Balfour Declaration of 1917, Parkes described his viewpoint as one in which both entities form part of an internationally binding law. He stated that, "The rights of Jews are of a different kind. They rest on a perfectly valid international decision made by an international authority having an unquestionable right to make such a decision".<sup>12</sup> The subsequent issuing of the 1939 White Paper was thus perceived as an attempt by the British Government to relinquish any such duty as bound by international law.

Parkes was also a member of the Council of Christians and Jews, an organisation of both Jews and Christians that was formed in 1942.<sup>13</sup> Many of the documents relating to the Council of Christians and Jews demonstrated the continued construction of a discourse that expressed concern over perceived and actual anti-Semitism within British society. This characteristic is most evident through the issuing of resolutions made on behalf of the Council of Christians and Jews by the Executive Committee every time a significant incident occurred in Palestine.

A further comparative angle regarding the British Jewish response to events in Palestine is available through analysis of material collated at the Mass Observation Archive. Tom Harrisson, Humphrey Jennings and Charles Madge founded Mass Observation in 1937. Active in its initial form until the early 1950s, the Mass Observation Archive focused on collecting research on a

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Papers of Reverend James William Parkes, University of Southampton Archives, MS 60, "The Problem of Palestine", MS 60/ 9/ 6.

<sup>13</sup> Papers of the Council of Christians and Jews, University of Southampton, MS 65.

range of topics that delved into the psyche of the British public; one key area of such interest was anti-Semitism and Jews.<sup>14</sup> Investigations were conducted either through carrying out a street sample interview, analysis of diaries written by respondents or by regular directives sent out to the Mass Observation Panel of Volunteer Observers. Results of the data collected were then presented in various forms including file reports. That a key area of interest for the organisation during 1946 and 1947 were the events in Palestine with regard to the perception and position of Jews in Britain substantiates the inclusion of Mass Observation material in this chapter.

Considered together, the documents analysed herein support the presence of an imperial patriarchal framework through which events in Palestine were perceived, both by British Jews and wider society. As an essential component of this discourse, the confrontation with the Holocaust revealed a multi-layered utilisation of recent history which could be adapted depending on the socio-political orientation of the chosen audience. It allowed certain segments of British Jewry to undermine the moral authority of Britain by emphasizing the distinction between denying Jews a national home in Palestine and the actions of the ideal imperial patriarch. In this presentation of the past, such model behaviour had been demonstrated most recently through Britain's eventual success in ensuring European Jewish survival as a result of victory against the Nazis. Britain's role in the Second World War was thus recast as an imperial battle to protect the Jews of Europe from an evil power. That this evil originated from imperial rivalry and a subsequent struggle for increased colonial power, and therefore some of the responsibility for its occurrence could be attributed to Britain, only served to amplify notions of a British imperial patriarchal duty to those Jews who had survived. In reshaping the recent past in this manner, the focus on the Holocaust within the imperial patriarchal narrative emphasized a shared family history between Britain and the Jews. Thus, British Jews frequently referred to this common heritage to enable it to negotiate potentially difficult responses to events in Palestine.

## 2.2 Nazi Persecution

Essential to this creation of a narrative that utilised references to the Holocaust was a suggestive portrayal of the British as behaving in a similar manner to their recent national enemy, the Nazis. The aim of such a discourse was to undermine the ability and moral right of Britain to administer Mandatory Palestine through the adoption of an imperial patriarchal narrative, placing the actions of the *Irgun Zvai Leumi*, *Haganah*, and *Lehi* within the significant spheres of colonialism and decolonisation. In his study of the *Jewish Chronicle* Cesarani noted how under the editorship of I.

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<sup>14</sup> Nick Hubble, *Mass Observation and Everyday Life: Culture, History, Theory* (Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke: 2006), p 4.

M. Greenberg the newspaper accused the British forces in Palestine of perpetrating “terrorism of their own”.<sup>15</sup> This suggests that such a tactic was common among those who possessed varying degrees of sympathy with the armed struggle for Jewish independence. However, this dynamic was not only apparent in the *Jewish Chronicle* – it was also evident in the wider confines of the British Jewish press in general.

An essential component of portraying the British as being akin to the Nazis was their depiction as excessively aggressive towards the (usually) unarmed population of the *Yishuv*. As a consequence of this narrative evolving between 1944 and 1946 the Mandatory Government was increasingly portrayed by the *Zionist Review* as acting in a fashion similar to the Nazis. Although during 1944 the Palestinian authorities were presented as efficient and competent in legislative matters, by 1946 the journal of the English Zionist Federation was subtly comparing them to the Nazis.<sup>16</sup> An article entitled “PALESTINE PERSPECTIVE: No Confidence in the Administration” described how “Life itself is threatened. British soldiers, often, armed with those extremely volatile automatic weapons, sometimes drunk, sometimes sober, molest passers-by and even fire at them”.<sup>17</sup> Although it did not openly draw a comparison between the Nazis and the British Mandatory authorities, it could be argued that, coming so soon after the end of the Second World War, such statements had provocative connotations. The use of deliberate phrases such as “Life itself is threatened” implied that the British authorities were acting in a similarly murderous manner to the Nazis, as news about the Nazi death and concentration camps was, at this stage, fresh in the memory of British Jewry.

However, the portrayal of the British military as being deliberately and overly aggressive towards the Jewish population can be further evidenced through more general coverage of the situation in Palestine. Although these articles tended to detail acts of resistance against the Mandatory authorities by the *Haganah*, *Irgun Zvai Leumi* or *Lehi*, the reprisals against the unarmed *Yishuv* were emphasized as being disproportionately severe. An article dated 23 November 1945 detailed how “Two rows of police wearing steel helmets and armed with sticks and shields [and who] were backed up by several rows of paratroopers with tommy guns” confronted a group of children who were throwing stones at them.<sup>18</sup> This article ends by detailing how “In the barbed-wire area rocks still fell and a paratrooper muttered: ‘I am ashamed I fought

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<sup>15</sup> David Cesarani, *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry 1841 to 1991*, p 189.

<sup>16</sup> *Zionist Review*, 13/10/1944; *Ibid*, 30/08/1946.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 27/09/1946.

<sup>18</sup> *The Jewish Standard*, 23/ 11/ 1945.

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the Germans for these people'. His mate with the itchy finger remarked: 'Couldn't you just pop them off'.<sup>19</sup>

By 1946 the situation in Palestine was described by the *Zionist Review* as a "police state" which employed the same psychological tactics as the Nazis.<sup>20</sup> During the 1930s the Nazis initially began the persecution of the Jews via legislative means, such as through the Nuremberg Laws of 1935 and in the early stages of the Second World War embarked on a policy of ghettoization. A direct reference to such a portrayal is made in a "REVIEW OF THE YEAR 5707 – 8" dated 12 September 1947 in *The Jewish Standard* which described how British forces "retreated behind so-called security zones, protected by barbed wire, and flanked by a growing Gestapo, assisted by a machinery of legislative and administrative terror".<sup>21</sup>

This provocative tactic of linking the British to the Nazis is evident from 1945 to 1947 particularly with regard to the searching of Jewish communities for arms. An article dated 10 January 1947 in *The Jewish Standard* contained the sub-headline "MANY JEWS BEATEN UP DURING SEARCHES". It describes how "Military detachments, supported by tanks, carried out a rigorous house-to-house search. The entire male population was taken to barbed wire cages...Many were cruelly beaten up, and several cases of looting were reported".<sup>22</sup> The emphasis within the article on the rounding up of men into barbed wire cages could encourage readers to cast their minds back to when they had last heard reports of entire un-armed sections of the Jewish population being detained and physically abused during the years of Nazi persecution. Once again the reader is left to make the inference, as the issue of context, in this case the immediacy of the Second World War, is key. Furthermore, use of the term Nazi does not automatically equal genocide and therefore in this part of the chapter the reference to Nazi behaviour means both the earlier and later years of persecution. Contrastingly, as the invention of the concentration camp is part of British imperial history it could be argued that, in this instance, the British were simply behaving within their imperial context. However, the imagery of Jews and barbed wire, coming so soon after British press reports of the 'discovery' of the Nazi concentration camps in Europe, invited a strong association between the current behaviour of the British and the past actions of the Nazis, if only implicitly.

This portrayal of the British culminated in *The Jewish Standard* following the King David Hotel bombing in an editorial dated 2 August 1946 in which General Barker is called "GENERAL

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 07/06/1946; Ibid, 30/08/1946.

<sup>21</sup> *The Jewish Standard*, 12/ 09/ 1947.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 10/ 01/ 1947.

GOEBBELS".<sup>23</sup> Following the King David Hotel bombing, Barker issued an anti-Semitic order banning British troops from frequenting Jewish businesses in an attempt to "punish...the Jews in a way the race dislikes as much as any", as outlined in Chapter One.<sup>24</sup> In his research on the situation in Palestine at this time, Charters describes how a key theme of the propaganda issued by the *Haganah* and URM was the portrayal of the British as Nazis.<sup>25</sup> By adopting a similar approach in their coverage of events in Palestine the British Jewish press revealed a more supportive stance than initially is apparent.

Furthermore, it was frequently implied within the British Jewish press that the legal system and entire government of the Mandatory authorities was dishonest. This tactic increased during 1946 and 1947 in *The Jewish Standard*. An article dated 23 August 1946 emphasized the corrupt nature of the legal system by describing how amendments to existing laws were hurriedly made in order to convict the defendants. It stated that "In view of the fact that the military code does not provide for the trial of accused in absentia, Palestine legislators had rushed an amendment to the Emergency Regulations whereby a military court can try accused in their absence if they disturb the procedure and the conduct of the trial".<sup>26</sup> Similarly, the *Jewish Monthly* also described how

Tension has grown considerably since the execution of Dov Gruner and three other Irgun terrorists. The fight for the life of Dov Gruner with...[an unspecified number of] appeals by relatives and finally by the Mayor of Tel Aviv to Palestine Courts and to the Privy Council had been going on for months. At the time of the execution another appeal was pending. In order to prevent in future a similar legal battle a new ordinance was promulgated on the day before the execution abolishing the right of appeal once a sentence by a military court had been confirmed by the Commander in Chief.<sup>27</sup>

These statements sought to draw an ironic parallel between the concept of Britain as a traditional beacon of justice and fairness and the present situation in Mandatory Palestine. It could be further argued that this reporting aimed to create resonance with the notion, previously mentioned, that Britain had betrayed the patriarchal relationship between itself, the parent, and Palestine, the child. As a result, Britain did not deserve to be able to maintain such a relationship. Additionally, the unjust nature of the British military legal system was particularly emphasized through coverage of the case of Major Farran, particularly once again in *The Jewish Standard*.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 02/ 08/ 1946.

<sup>24</sup> David Cesarani, *Major Farran's Hat: Murder, Scandal and Britain's War Against Jewish Terrorism, 1945-1948*, p 42.

<sup>25</sup> David A. Charters, *The British Army and Jewish Insurgency in Palestine, 1945- 47*, pp. 68 – 69.

<sup>26</sup> *The Jewish Standard*, 23/ 08/ 1946.

<sup>27</sup> *Jewish Monthly*, Vol 1, No 2, May 1947, p 54.

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Following this alleged abduction and murder of a Jewish teenager in Palestine by an ex-SAS officer, the newspaper employed the events of the case as an example of the similarities between British and Nazi authorities.<sup>28</sup>

Considered as a whole, the British Jewish press thus implied that the British in Palestine were as great a threat to the *Yishuv* as the Nazis were to European Jewry. These were sentiments that, again, served to diminish the status of Britain as the morally righteous imperial patriarch deserving of the position of guardian of Palestine. However, not all of the material analysed consistently presented the British as Nazis. This is particularly apparent in the *Jewish Monthly*, whose coverage of the situation followed a more complex pattern than much of the British Jewish press. It initially presented all sides in Palestine – the British, Arabs and *Yishuv* – as equally to blame for the current animosity, particularly with regard to immigration.<sup>29</sup> The *Jewish Monthly* then very briefly implied that the British were akin to Nazis before declaring that it was the Jews in Palestine who harboured nationalist ambitions and who were therefore actually the Nazis in the present situation.<sup>30</sup> This led to the newspaper stating in the same issue that both the British and extremist organisations in the *Yishuv* were behaving like “terrorists”.<sup>31</sup> Finally, the *Jewish Monthly* emphasized the ‘positive’ characteristics of British rule in Palestine before suggesting that it was the British who were the victims of current events and insisting that Britain was not an anti-Semitic nation. It stated:

There is anti-Semitism in Britain...But compared with what we know of anti-Semitism in Czarist Russia, the rightlessness and pogroms, the Jewish insecurity in Roumania, the violence of anti-Jewish feelings in the France of the Dreyfus Affair, the degradation of the Jews in Hitler’s Germany, their removal from every position, the burning of books by Jewish authors, the destruction of paintings by Jewish artists, the dismissal of Jewish professors, the concentration camps, the spreading of anti-Semitism throughout Nazi-occupied Europe, the cold-blooded murder of six million Jews, what is there in England today to justify a comparison with that?.<sup>32</sup>

The *Jewish Monthly* clearly undermined the claim that British rule in Mandatory Palestine could be equated with that of Nazi Germany. In this instance the presence of an imperial patriarchal framework ensured a positive presentation of British actions. Britain and the *Yishuv* were still placed within an imperial parent-child dialectic. References to past instances of anti-Semitism

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<sup>28</sup> *The Jewish Standard*, 10/ 10/ 1947.

<sup>29</sup> *Jewish Monthly*, Vol 1, No 1, April 1947, p 4.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, Vol 1, No 5, Aug 1947, p 22.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, Vol 1, No 5, Aug 1947, p 47.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, Vol 2, No 2, May 1948, p 70.

outside of Britain, such as pogroms in Eastern Europe, the Pale of Settlement and Nazi-occupied Europe, formed a narrative in which Britain served as the imperial patriarch who had rescued the Jews. Such a concept had both literal and figurative connotations: that readers, their parents and grandparents may have sought refuge in Britain from these events aided the construction of a national identity based on such myths.

### 2.3 A United Community

Against this dominant portrayal of the British authorities as having features in common with those in Nazi Germany is the depiction of the *Yishuv* united in resistance. This portrayal serves to present the *Yishuv* as innocent bystanders undeserving of such treatment, further delegitimising the position of Britain as the imperial patriarch who is supposed to protect and enable the development of its ward of care.

This transformation in the depiction of the Mandatory authorities within the *Zionist Review* began in 1945. Reports of the *Yishuv* as united against both those involved in the armed resistance against the British and military officials who conducted searches among the Jewish communities in Palestine were frequent. An article entitled “United we stand” suggested that such searches were perpetrated in an underhand manner. Focusing on searching part of Tel Aviv named after the prominent British Jewish family, the Montefiores, and thus illustrating the ‘natural’ bond between the modern Palestinian city and Britain, it stated that “The fact is that the people of Montefiore were unable to believe that on this occasion the object of the police was to look for terrorists...There were also signs that one of the objects of the search was to look for ‘illegal’ immigrants. It was this that led to the spontaneous resistance against the police”.<sup>33</sup> The article enhanced the portrayal of the Mandatory Government as Nazis by proudly emphasizing the unarmed “mass resistance” of the *Yishuv* against the armed soldiers.<sup>34</sup> Once again, although it is left to the reader to make the connection, the inference that the British were targeting the *Yishuv* in a similar manner to how and why the Nazis had targeted the Jewish population of Europe is evident. Given the extremely close chronological proximity of the Second World War, readers of this article would have been given the possibility of sub-consciously remembering recent accounts of those European communities who experienced similar events when subjugated to a foreign power. This context is particularly relevant when viewed from the implied perspective of creating a comparison between the searching of Occupied Europe for those Jews in hiding and the, similarly ‘innocent’ and actually the same, ‘illegal’ immigrants of the *Yishuv*. How

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<sup>33</sup> *Zionist Review*, 26/10/1945.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

much this perspective was realised at the time, however, cannot be quantified. The significance of this analysis is that by making such a comparison the *Zionist Review* was attempting to assert the innocence of the *Yishuv* in the current situation through its deliberate choice of context. It encouraged sympathy for the Jewish position through building upon popular anti-Nazi feeling within post-war Britain.

Similarly, throughout such coverage in *The Jewish Standard*, the *Yishuv* was presented as united against the British authorities that were oppressing the Jews. An article published in November 1945 emphasized the aggressive manner of the British soldiers dealing with the *Yishuv* and newly arrived 'illegal' immigrants. It stated that

THIS week has been one of the most important in the life of the *Yishuv*...a week which raised and exalted the *Yishuv*...united and prepared for the struggle to continue Jewish immigration...Unarmed they marched in orderly formation from Petah Tiqwah, Hedera, Netanya, and Kfar Vitkin in the face of thousands of armed troops.<sup>35</sup>

Likewise, an article published in February 1946 possessed the sub-headline "ARMOURED CARS, BREN GUN CARRIERS, MOBILE PATROLS, AND INFANTRY UNITS ON THE STREETS".<sup>36</sup> It described how "THE entire *Yishuv* participated in last Friday's impressive demonstration for the opening of the gates of Palestine", concluding that "Perfect order was maintained throughout and there was no necessity for police intervention".<sup>37</sup> Thus, the *Yishuv* was presented as passively resisting an armed enemy, sentiments which resonated with the Indian national movement that was also conducting a successful campaign during this period, again placing of events in Palestine within a context of decolonisation. This suggests that the British Jewish perception of events in Palestine was not uniquely, and exclusively, British Jewish but was instead similar to the understandings of decolonisation and struggles for independence experienced by colonies such as India and Ireland.<sup>38</sup>

Even the more reserved *Jewish Monthly* emphasized the unity of the *Yishuv*, although it, like the *Zionist Review*, served to do this in opposition to the actions of the *Irgun Zvai Leumi*, *Lehi*, and at times the *Haganah*. An article published in May 1947 stated: "Before attention was diverted by the executions, tension had increased between the terrorist minority and the majority

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<sup>35</sup> *The Jewish Standard*, 30/ 11/ 1945.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, 08/02/1946.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>38</sup> For example, see: Roy Foster, *Paddy and Mr Punch: Connections in Irish and English History* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Press, 1993); Sujali Singh, "Postcolonial Children: Representing the Nation in Arundhati Roy, Bapsi Sidhwa and Shyaaa Selvadurai", *Wasafiri*, Vol. 19, No. 41 (2004), pp. 18 – 18.

of the Jewish population which, while asking with equal insistence for increased immigration, realises more and more the damage done by terrorist acts to Jewish interests".<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, the *Jewish Monthly* extended the notion of a united *Yishuv* to include not only Palestinian Jewry but also the wider international Jewish community. Following the incident of the *Exodus 1947* an article dated September 1947 declared that "All Jewish organisations, no matter what their views on Zionism and illegal immigration, protested strongly".<sup>40</sup> This statement implies that the whole Jewish world, and not just the *Yishuv*, was united against the actions of the British authorities in Palestine. Such a statement also suggested a contradiction between how the rest of the international community expected Britain to behave and how it was actually behaving. Thus, such coverage served to undermine the moral authority of Britain in governing Palestine: Britain was betraying itself by no longer acting in the expected manner of an imperial patriarch.

## 2.4 'Illegal' Immigration

The presence of a narrative in which the British were cast as Nazis is further apparent through coverage of 'illegal' immigration into Palestine. Interestingly this manifestation also directly referenced the Holocaust – a tactic that served to emphasize both the brutality of British troops and the right of displaced persons to enter Palestine. Within *The Jewish Standard* this was apparent from 1945 through to 1948. An article published in October 1945 asked: "Does the Government really envisage the possibility that British destroyers should continue the work of European Jewry so well performed hitherto by Hitler's thugs?".<sup>41</sup> Similarly an article from November 1946 described how

Reporters were not allowed near enough to witness what is described in the official communiqué as the necessity to 'use some force to induce several persons to transshipment' but they heard the cries of people being beaten up...the joyful shouts of troops on the pier, encouraging their comrades...While women were being dragged along the soldiers shouted 'That's the way to do it' and 'Beat those bastards'.<sup>42</sup>

Such articles were intended to emphasise the inhumanity of the British Government, which employed deliberately aggressive military personnel to continue the practices perpetrated by Nazi Germany. The use of references to the Holocaust served to portray Jews who wished to enter Palestine from Europe as even more deserving than other migrants and displaced persons.

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<sup>39</sup> *Jewish Monthly*, Vol 1, No 2, May 1947, p 54.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, Vol 1, No 6, Sept 1947, p 46.

<sup>41</sup> *The Jewish Standard*, 05/ 10/ 1945.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*, 08/ 11/ 1946.

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As the situation in Palestine escalated from 1945 to 1948 *The Jewish Standard* continued at all times to present 'illegal' immigration as part of a wider narrative of the Second World War. To substantiate, an article dated 29 November 1946 under the headline "PALESTINE TERRORISM" describes how "TWO Jews were killed and two were wounded by Sten-gun fire from British troops in Palestine in the course of the forcible transshipment of 3,800 refugees".<sup>43</sup> The deliberate use of terminology such as 'terrorism' and 'forcible transshipment' created a sense of irony present within many similar articles that the British authorities were acting in a similar manner to both those who they were presently labelling as terrorists, such as the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* and *Lehi*, and those who had been their previous enemies, such as the Nazis. This further delegitimized the moral righteousness of Britain as the imperial patriarch in maintaining the Mandate for Palestine.

It is evident that on the subject of 'illegal' immigration even those organisations that, on the whole, were usually more reserved felt confident enough about the moral righteousness of the issue to speak out against British policy. This was particularly apparent within the *Jewish Monthly*, although, as ever, the newspaper did not maintain a consistent response to events but instead reflected the variability of the contemporary political situation. The *Jewish Monthly* began by presenting a critical view of the Mandatory authorities by stating that the latter were responsible for any problems in Palestine due to their position regarding immigration.<sup>44</sup> The decisive nature of 'illegal' immigration as a catalyst for tension between the British authorities and the *Yishuv* was clearly highlighted in an article dated June 1947. It described how "Attempts by the Agency on one side and by British authorities on the other to create a better atmosphere are always frustrated when ships with illegal immigrants are intercepted and the immigrants transhipped to Cyprus".<sup>45</sup> Such restrained criticism of the Mandatory authorities in relation to 'illegal' immigration also extends within the *Jewish Monthly* to include the suggestion that Britain was betraying its past by undermining the very values of humanity that it fought for in the Second World War. Once again, this narrative is implied and it is left for the reader to make such a connection. This tactic could be seen as reflecting the perceived precarious position of British Jewry at the time; they did not yet possess the self-confidence to condemn British policy in Palestine outright.

However, it is through coverage of the *Exodus 1947* that the self-confidence of the *Jewish Monthly*, and thus, by default, certain segments of British Jewry, can be seen to have increased. An article dated September 1947 described how

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 29/ 11/ 1946.

<sup>44</sup> *Jewish Monthly*, Vol 1, No 1, April 1947, pp. 4 – 5.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, Vol 1, No 3, June 1947, p 55.

Each ship that is intercepted by the navy causes some kind of disturbance in Palestine and tends to increase the enmity between the Yishuv and the administration. Up to the arrival of the *Exodus* the intending immigrants were brought to Cyprus, there to await their turn for immigration with certificates. In the case of the *Exodus* the British authorities decided to adopt a new policy. On July 18 the ship was boarded by the Navy after heavy fighting in which three Jews were killed and 28 wounded. The 4,500 passengers were forcibly transhipped in Haifa and thence brought back to France from where the *Exodus* had sailed.<sup>46</sup>

This statement represents the strongest and most confident condemnation of British policy in Palestine by the *Jewish Monthly*, albeit still in a more constrained manner than organisations such as the Council of Christians and Jews.<sup>47</sup> By presenting France and not Germany as the end point of this journey, the *Jewish Monthly* continued to limit their criticism of British policy. However, in presenting the Jewish immigrants as victims of an unfair bureaucratic system, and through the use of language such as “forcibly transhipped” and “intercepted”, the article presents the possibility of parallels with the treatment of Jews in Nazi Germany. The deliberate use of this language could be argued to, once again, have encouraged readers to make comparisons between this event and those within very recent history where Jews had been compulsory transported when official policy had interrupted the autonomy of their daily lives. As a result of this implication, it was once again suggested that the British were akin to the Nazis; an idea only made fleetingly in previous coverage of the situation in Palestine in the *Jewish Monthly*. The publication of such language represents an increase in hostility of the usually placid tone of the *Jewish Monthly*. Therefore, the impact of ‘illegal’ immigration and the international response to it, in particular that concerning the *Exodus 1947*, upon the *Jewish Monthly*’s sense of self-confidence within the imperial patriarchal discourse is apparent.

This tactic of criticizing the British authorities with regard to ‘illegal’ immigration was not only present within the British Jewish press. Organisations such as the Council of Christians and Jews also placed such events within a similar framework. As a matter of common practice, the Council of Christians and Jews routinely made resolutions following pivotal events in Palestine. By developing public awareness of the issues surrounding Jews, Zionism and Palestine, the Council of Christians and Jews hoped to counteract the spread of misinformation and engage positively with their audience. The issuing of resolutions can be seen as being part of this aim.

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid, Vol 1, No 6, Sept 1947, p 45.

<sup>47</sup> For example: Papers of the Council of Christians and Jews, minutes of the fifty-eighth meeting of the Executive Committee of the Council of Christians and Jews, MS 65/A755/2/2.

These resolutions were generally cautious in scope and character. It would appear that they refused to engage more fully with the issue of Palestine for fear of provoking anti-Semitism amongst the wider British public. However, there does appear to be one exception to the otherwise restrained approach of the Council of Christians and Jews to such events. The plight of Jewish displaced persons aboard the *Exodus 1947*, which acted as a flash point, resulted in the following resolution being unanimously adopted:

This Executive Committee for the Council of Christians and Jews expresses its profound dismay that a situation was allowed to develop in which His Majesty's Government should have deemed it necessary to send 4,500 Jews from the 'Exodus 1947' to Germany...The Committee does not believe that if the Government could not allow them to land in Palestine, it was impossible to detain them in Cyprus or some other place within British control less charged with bitter memories than the soil of Germany...In this situation, the Executive Committee expresses its concern for a speedy and constructive solution both of the Palestine problem and of the problem of Displaced Persons.<sup>48</sup>

Such a statement constituted the strongest condemnation of British policy in Palestine issued by the Council of Christians and Jews. Its existence may be due to the fact that the key issue was a humanitarian one with universal sympathy and not nationalistic violence of which the rest of the western world was particularly wary following the end of the Second World War. Ultimately, though, the significance of the statement lies in the fact that it linked the situation in Palestine with not only the issue of displaced persons but with the Holocaust.

## 2.5 The Holocaust

References to the Holocaust in conjunction with events in Palestine were also common within material that did not mention 'illegal' immigration. This is evident within the British Jewish press, 'Parkes' circle' and the Mass Observers, suggesting that such an approach was not unique to British Jews alone. The portrayal of British military authorities as being similar to those of Nazi Germany further escalated throughout 1946 and 1947 within the British Jewish press. Terminology with direct links to the Holocaust such as "liquidate", "herded", "concentration camp", and "mass torture" appear within the newspapers concerned more frequently than

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

previous years, especially within the outlier *The Jewish Standard*.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, in its inaugural issue of April 1947 the *Jewish Monthly* reflected:

The festival of Passover, which Jews all over the globe celebrate annually at this season, recalls one of the most decisive battles in the human struggle for liberty...The second Passover to be celebrated after the War finds the world torn, distracted and bewildered, and the splendour and the ideals for which mankind was bled white already becoming dimmed, derided and denied. And the Jews, with their numbers cruelly decimated and their spiritual and physical resources greatly diminished, are among the greatest sufferers from this faithlessness.<sup>50</sup>

Such a statement implicated the situation in Palestine as being placed within a larger Second World War and Holocaust narrative. Furthermore, it created a subtle irony that the British authorities in Palestine were now going against the very same values that they fought for during the Second World War. A more direct reference to such a portrayal is made in *The Jewish Standard* in a “REVIEW OF THE YEAR 5707 – 8” dated 12 September 1947, and outlined earlier in the chapter, which describes how British forces were behaving in a manner recently associated with the Nazis, in particular the Gestapo.<sup>51</sup>

However, it is through the use of references to the Holocaust within an imperial patriarchal framework as a means of attempting to provide some justification, or excuse, for the actions of the *Irgun Zvai Leumi*, *Lehi* and *Haganah* that provides the most significant indication of sympathy for the situation in Palestine thus far. In a tactic designed to undermine the moral authority of the Mandatory authorities, the *Zionist Review* employed parallels with the Holocaust to emphasize the danger of the current behaviour of the British authorities and the betrayal to the ideals of the imperial patriarch that they represented. An article published in October 1944 attempted to explain armed attacks by the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* or *Lehi* by stating that the perpetrators were motivated “by suffering of their people”.<sup>52</sup> Similarly, when discussing the 1939 White Paper in reference to the assassination of Lord Moyne, an article published in November 1944 explained that the destruction of European Jewry had radicalized a “small” proportion of the population due to sheer desperation.<sup>53</sup> Such a statement is significant due to the fact that it attempted to excuse the actions of (in this case) the *Lehi* through attributing their cause as being the consequence of imperial rivalry. The use of a narrative of the Holocaust as reasoning for the actions of those

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<sup>49</sup> For example: *The Jewish Standard*, 20/ 12/ 1946; *Ibid*, 05/ 07/ 1946; *Ibid*.

<sup>50</sup> *Jewish Monthly*, Vol 1, No 1, April 1947, p 3.

<sup>51</sup> *The Jewish Standard*, 12/ 09/ 1947.

<sup>52</sup> *Zionist Review*, 06/10/1944.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*, 10/11/1944.

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engaged in the armed struggle for an independent Jewish state was further evident in articles printed during 1945 and 1946. An article published in November 1945 stated: “The outstanding fact is that the might of the British empire is being used to prevent the wretched survivors of Bergen-Belsen, Dachau and Auschwitz to enter their National Home”.<sup>54</sup>

The placing of events in Palestine within the same context as the Holocaust served to additionally emphasize the brutality of the Mandatory Authorities. It helped to expand sympathy for the Jews in Palestine whilst increasingly delegitimizing British rule of Palestine. This tactic subsequently reinforced a patriarchal narrative, as Britain was seen as an unfit parent who was betraying the universal code of parenthood in which one nurtures one’s offspring and encourages their independence rather than killing, maiming or imprisoning them.

However, the presence of this discourse did not always indicate a sympathetic response to events in Palestine. Amongst a war weary British public, references to a traumatic recent past in which all had suffered to some degree frequently engendered hostility rather than support. A Mass Observation report from July 1946 concluded that references to the suffering of Jews during the Second World War did not aid the Zionist cause; it attributed this to the fact that people were, generally, tired of hearing about not only this but all war stories.<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, the report contained instances of the use of references to the Holocaust by anti-Semites.<sup>56</sup> The report analysis argued that it was the plight of displaced persons who were suffering now that elicited sympathy instead of those who had suffered in the past.

Thus, knowledge of the Holocaust did not reduce anti-Semitism in British society. In fact, a more sympathetic reference to the Second World War and Holocaust in relation to Jewish violence in Mandatory Palestine from Mass Observation participants in July 1946 substantiates this. Attempting to excuse aggressive actions by Jews in Palestine as being a reaction to the violence suffered by the Jews in Europe, the female respondent concerned believed that

The British government should control the activities of the army much more directly and strictly, giving a definite lead against anti-Semitism, and showing the world that it realises the relative unimportance and inevitability of these acts of terrorists after the terrible provocation of the Jews during recent years.<sup>57</sup>

Similarly, a typed letter addressed to Greenberg at the *Evening News* from an “intensely patriotic” Englishwoman provides evidence of the type of the criticism the *Jewish Chronicle*

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 30/11/1945.

<sup>55</sup> Mass Observation, University of Sussex, TC62, *Report on Attitudes to Palestine and the Jews*, p 54.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, p 54.

<sup>57</sup> Mass Observation, Anti-Semitism survey 1939 – 1951, directive replies July 1946.

wished to avoid. Dated May 1949 it described how after violence began to be committed in the struggle for an independent Jewish state her “regard for the Jews received a terrible shock...I remembered that not only were Englishmen largely instrumental in getting Jews a footing in the Holy Land, but England and her colonies had been almost the only place in which Jews, fleeing from the Hitler regime, could find sanctuary”.<sup>58</sup> Britain is thus cast in the role of a conscientious parent of the Christian faith protective of its Jewish offspring; a concept similar to that insinuated through cartoons published in the British press at the end of the nineteenth century detailing the persecution of Jews in Russia.<sup>59</sup> Similarly, in discussing the public reaction to the riotous response to the Sergeants’ Affair, the *Jewish Monthly* described how “The National Press together with both Houses of Parliament spontaneously reflected the public revulsion and were quick to condemn the deplorable and un-British anti-Semitic demonstrations which ensued”.<sup>60</sup> Such a statement further illustrates the presence of a perception of Britain as traditional beacon of tolerance and democratic justice within wider society.

There are more frequent mentions of sympathetic feeling for Jews after their treatment during the Holocaust amongst Mass Observation responses that did not refer to the violence in Palestine. Whilst discussing aspirations for a Jewish National Home in Palestine one respondent stated that

I do not think that a Jewish National home other than in Palestine, would be any solution to the problem...the war has caused a large number of Jews to be homeless, and to regard their previous homes with horror because of the treatment that they received. But if they could be assured of just treatment, I think that most of these refugees would be quite happy to settle in Europe.<sup>61</sup>

Considering the Mass Observers as a whole, the influence of the Second World War and Holocaust upon how respondents viewed the violence in Palestine was the single most influential framework through which issues relating to Palestine were perceived. Significantly, these categorisations existed within an overarching discourse of imperial patriarchy. Events in the recent past, such as the Second World War and Holocaust, became episodes in a larger family history. Key to this dynamic was a gender element based on ‘traditional’ perceptions of male and female ideals. The imperial patriarch was, above all else, an example of hegemonic masculinity

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<sup>58</sup> Papers of I. M. Greenberg, MS 150/ AJ 110/ 8 (Folder 2 of 3).

<sup>59</sup> For example: “A Cry from Christendom”, *Punch*, 28/01/1882.

<sup>60</sup> *Jewish Monthly*, Vol 1, No 6, Sept 1947, p 20.

<sup>61</sup> Mass Observation, Anti-Semitism survey 1939 – 1951, directive replies July 1946.

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and a relic of Victorian visions of patriarchy and chivalry together with ‘John Bull’ inspired perceptions of national identity, as detailed in Chapter One.<sup>62</sup>

To substantiate the importance of gender upon the Mass Observers’ responses, all four women respondents mentioned the Second World War and Holocaust at some point in their reply whilst six out of thirteen men also did so. Of particular interest is the following table that categorises the main context in which those who mention the armed resistance against the British in Mandatory Palestine do so.

Table 1: Mass Observation Context by Gender

	Anti-Semitic	Patriarchal	WW2	Jewish Complicity	Arab Revolt	Other
Men	1	2	3	2	2	3
Women	1	0	3	0	0	0
Total	2	2	6	2	2	3

As is evident from the above table the most popular context into which the armed resistance against the British in Mandatory Palestine was placed was that of the Second World War and Holocaust. In total eleven per cent of Mass Observation sample respondents, which equates to one third of those who mentioned violence in Palestine, did so whilst employing references to the Second World War and Holocaust. The following table illustrates whether or not respondents used this context positively or negatively according to gender.

Table 2: Mass Observation Response by Gender

	Positive	Negative
Men	0	3
Women	1	2
Total	1	5

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<sup>62</sup> See: R. W. Connell, “Hegemonic Masculinity”, p 60; Raphael Samuel (ed), *Patriotism: the Making and Unmaking of British National Identity* (London: Routledge, 1989).

The table above shows that for the majority of respondents' references to the Second World War and Holocaust were employed negatively. Comments such as "Jewish leaders should be more appreciative of British efforts in the war" and

although we didn't fight for six years and invade only to liberate the Jews in the concentration camps the fact remains that if it wasn't for our efforts many of the illegal emigrants into the Holy Land wouldn't be alive today

illustrate the presence of a feeling that Jews should be grateful to Britain for the victory over Nazi Germany.<sup>63</sup> It suggests a sense of perceived Jewish ingratitude amongst the British public, a feeling expressed by Len in Kosminsky's *The Promise* and detailed in Chapter Four. Furthermore, this sentiment seems to further escalate with the expression of comments such as:

A very difficult question to answer today. I would have done better last week but feel, in common with nearly everyone I have met, in a very bad temper and thoroughly exasperated with the whole wretched race since this latest G.H.Q affair. Before that I was trying hard to be patient with them and see their point of view – Now I feel like adopting the 'shoot the whole lot' attitude which is at once ridiculous and impractical...A friend of mine stationed for 3 ½ years in the M.E during the war wrote once that although he didn't think Hitler was a very type [sic] on the whole, he had done one good piece of work for the world, that was his 'killing off a million or so Jews'. At the time I considered it rather a silly thing to say, but I have never felt more like agreeing with him than I do now.<sup>64</sup>

This comment, whilst demonstrating an inherent anti-Semitism amongst such respondents, also indicates that violence in Palestine had a negative impact upon attitudes towards Jews. This is particularly evident given that several of the responses that were sympathetic to Hitler specifically mentioned the effect of the King David Hotel bombing upon the author's view.

Utilising a reference to the Holocaust to aid the presence of an imperial patriarchal framework, one respondent expressed his similar view that

I feel very strongly about Jewish terrorism directed against British conscripts in Palestine, [and] feel that if this sort of thing is supported and condoned by the Jewish Agency and the Jewish community in this country, then they'd better look out: anti-Semitism will rise sharply in this country and would eventually find expression in legal

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<sup>63</sup> Mass Observation, Anti-Semitism survey 1939 – 1951, directive replies July 1946.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

restraints on their activities. I am anti-Zionist – let us do what is right in Palestine not what only the Jews think is right...The immediate answer to the blowing up of the King David Hotel, is by God Hitler was right, and what's to chose between Nazi violence and Jewish violence...The tongue in cheek condemnation of this by all Jewish organisations goes for nothing. World Jewry could stop terrorism at once if they really wanted to: I would have the Jewish Agency made to pay the pensions of the dependents of all the dead and injured British soldiers, for all time: the answer to violence in Palestine can only be violence and I hope they get it.<sup>65</sup>

Considered in its entirety, analysis of the Mass Observers indicates that the relationship between sympathy for the treatment of Jews during the Holocaust and feelings towards events in Palestine was a complex and multifaceted one. Additionally, it could be suggested that the decision of the British Jewish press to present the armed struggle for an independent Jewish state within a Holocaust and Second World War resistance narrative was both the result of an awareness that these were the contexts into which such events were placed by the general population and an attempt to alter its seemingly negative perception when employed in this context.

## 2.6 Imperial Heritage

In making such references to the Second World War and Holocaust within their replies, the directive respondents were sustaining the notion of an imperial patriarchal relationship between Britain and the Jewish population currently resident in Palestine. As part of this narrative Britain went to war to protect the Jews, who were now acting either in a spoilt and immature manner or as justifiably hurt and angry offspring, depending on the point of view of the person or organisation making such a claim. Furthermore, if the perspective of the person or organisation concerned was sympathetic to events in Palestine then the legacy of the failure of patriarchal duty was extended before the Second World War and Holocaust to include the 1939 White Paper and even further back to the Balfour Declaration itself in 1917. Within the British Jewish press it was common to find the 1939 White Paper and the Holocaust intertwined as one narrative, thus creating further justification for the attacks on the British authorities, as they were perceived as being to blame for the destruction of European Jewry.<sup>66</sup> Within Anglo-Jewry it was also usual to find the imperial patriarchal narrative extended beyond the 1939 White Paper to the granting of the Mandate in 1922. This was particularly evident in the correspondence of Parkes. In a typed

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> For example: *Zionist Review*, 01/09/1944.

letter received by Parkes from the General Secretary of the Palestine House committee dated June 1947 it is stated:

Dear James...I have had a word with Rosette about Brodetsky's statement that Britain had an inescapable responsibility toward Palestine. Rosette says that what Brodetsky was trying to get across was the fact that the policy of a Jewish National Home in Palestine had been initiated by Britain in the Balfour Declaration and that, as we have 'held the baby' for 25 years, we cannot let the other nations of the world settle the future of Palestine without putting forward a solution ourselves.<sup>67</sup>

Similarly, the *Jewish Monthly* also supported the notion that Britain was responsible for the creation of the *Yishuv* through, amongst other factors, the facilitation of immigration. It was common to find statements reminding readers of this fact, despite the simultaneous publication of very subtle criticism directed towards British immigration policy in Palestine within the newspaper. In such instances these two seemingly different viewpoints would work together to undermine the present position of the Mandatory authorities through an emphasis on the ideal behaviour of the imperial patriarch as exhibited in the past. Acknowledging current criticism of the British authorities, an article dated April 1947 described how

Some Palestinian Jews – together with many ill-informed American Jews and even British Jews – seemed to forget that the basic position and the fundamental task of the British regime in Palestine was the protection of Jewish life and property and of the rapidly developing national activities of the growing community. It is a triviality to say that without this protection 500,000 Jews would never have settled in Palestine in the last 20 years.<sup>68</sup>

This statement clearly cast the British authorities as enablers and protectors of Jewish immigration to Palestine for the "last 20 years", thus erasing the negative impact of the 1939 White Paper as a break in the history of the relationship between the imperial patriarch (Britain) and its offspring (Palestine). That the *Jewish Monthly* supported this stance is evident from its beginning. An article published in its inaugural issue implied that the 1939 White Paper broke the spirit of the Mandate.<sup>69</sup>

Although both of the aforementioned statements initially appear contradictory, they can be linked through a consideration of the wider political context at the time. In an article dated April

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<sup>67</sup> Papers of Reverend James William Parkes, typed letter dated 20/06/1947, MS 60/15/12.

<sup>68</sup> *Jewish Monthly*, Vol 1, No 10, Jan 1948, p 10.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid*, Vol 1, No 1, April 1947, p 5.

1948 the *Jewish Monthly* stated that “Whatever the outcome, the fact cannot be wiped out that Jewish achievements in Palestine were the results not only of admirable Jewish efforts and human devotion, but also of a unique historical opportunity provided by the inclusion of Palestine in the Pax Britannia during a period of thirty years”.<sup>70</sup> It continued by describing how

The active sympathy of English monarchs and of English Governments with the Jews as individuals and as groups has an almost unbroken record back to a time before Jews were supposed to be resident in this country...It ranges from the establishment of the first foreign consulate in Jerusalem in 1838...to the acceptance of the Mandate for Palestine in 1922 and the subsequent quarter of a century endeavour to fulfil its terms.<sup>71</sup>

Such a statement not only presented Palestine as having clearly benefitted from the Mandate but also extended the imperial patriarchal relationship between the two entities back to the first half of the nineteenth century. It is interesting to note that an organisation such as the Anglo-Jewish Association, which was the proprietor of the *Jewish Monthly* and were generally non-Zionist, employed the imperial patriarchal narrative to an extent not evident in the rest of the British Jewish press suggesting a possible correlation between its usage and levels of Zionist sympathy.

The deliberate employment of certain language thus portrayed Britain as responsible for the conception of the Jewish population in Palestine, suggesting a parental relationship between the two. Therefore, casting the relationship between Britain and the *Yishuv* as part of an imperial patriarchal narrative in which the 1917 Mandate, 1939 White Paper, Second World War and Holocaust were perceived as part of the same genealogy. Interestingly, this family history can be further traced back to the ‘emancipation contract’, and beyond in the case of the *Jewish Monthly*. In this scenario, the actions of the *Irgun Zvai Leumi*, *Lehi*, and at times *Haganah* were perceived negatively as a breach of the covenant between Britain and the Jews whereby the latter agree to behave as loyal, gracious citizens of the empire in return for civic parity. This continued belief in the ‘emancipation contract’ indicates reasoning for the portrayal of the *Yishuv* as defenceless against the might of the British Empire, particularly within the British Jewish press. The employment of references to the Holocaust, the portrayal of the British as being similar to the Nazis and the presentation of the *Yishuv* as united all serve to emphasize the innocence and vulnerability of the Jews in Palestine. The portrayal of such a narrative therefore deflected the blame and attention away from the wrongdoing of certain Jews in Palestine towards the Mandatory authorities instead. It enabled Anglo-Jewry to negotiate its way through a potentially

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid, Vol 2, No 1, April 1948, p 6; Ibid, p 23 – 24.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, p 6; Ibid, p 23 – 24.

tricky socio-political situation with regard the issue of 'dual loyalty' by presenting events as part of an internal, 'family' affair.

## 2.7 Age and Gender

The presence of an imperial patriarchal framework can be further substantiated through the use of terminology associated with both age and gender to describe those involved in the armed resistance against the British in Mandatory Palestine. This emphasis on age is apparent within the *Zionist Review* from 1944 to 1946, particularly with regard the sentencing of those concerned to the death penalty. An article published in October 1944 stated that "young men" were responsible for violent attacks on the Mandatory Government, whilst those accountable for the assassination of Lord Moyne were described as "youngsters".<sup>72</sup> In March 1945 an article described members of the *Haganah* as "youths" whilst a 'letter to the editor' published in August 1946 used the terms "lads" and "boys" to refer to those condemned to death by the Mandatory Government for their role in the struggle for an independent Jewish state.<sup>73</sup>

A similar dynamic also operated within *The Jewish Standard*. The use of references to age and gender in the construction of sympathetic coverage of the situation in Palestine was achieved through suggestions that the legal system and whole regime were unjust. It was accomplished through mentions of the young age of the majority of those convicted of offences against the Mandatory authorities and who were subsequently sentenced to death. Frequent use of the words "youth", "boy" or "girl" to describes those involved, even when their age is that of a legal adult, serves to cast them as young innocents who, it is suggested, are not capable of representing themselves in the adult legal system; a point substantiated by the fact that all of the articles reported that the accused did not recognize the right of the military court to try them as they believed themselves to be prisoners of war.<sup>74</sup>

Such coverage emphasized the unequal and unjust nature of the confrontation between the British authorities and those involved in 'resistance operations'. Additionally, it also served to portray the British as having betrayed their parental role of protecting the *Yishuv*. By emphasizing the young age of those involved in the armed struggle for Jewish independence *The Jewish Standard* further implied the youthful status of the Jewish community in Palestine; a tactic that served to emphasize how Britain appeared to have betrayed itself by failing to fulfil the role of the imperial patriarch.

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<sup>72</sup> *Zionist Review*, 06/10/1944; *Ibid*, 10/11/1944.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid*, 23/03/1945; *Ibid*, 30/08/1946.

<sup>74</sup> For example: *The Jewish Standard*, 21/ 09/ 1945; *Ibid*, 28/ 06/ 1946; *Ibid*, 07/ 03/ 1947.

In his research on French resistance to the Algerian War between 1954 and 1962, Evans has noted how during the conflict militant anti-colonialists appropriated the word 'youth' from its recent history of belonging to the extreme right.<sup>75</sup> Key to the central position of this term within the language of the anti-colonialists was the fact that "it denoted the idea of generational conflict" in which the "insurgent generation" were attempting "to create a new way of looking at the world".<sup>76</sup> Furthermore, Evans explains, "Military service placed young people at the heart of the anti-war movement because without them the war could not go on".<sup>77</sup> If Evans' scholarship is applied to the situation in Palestine in the 1940s, it is evident that similar dynamics were present in coverage of events in the *Zionist Review* and *The Jewish Standard*; they too appeared to place the younger generation at the centre of the situation in Palestine, suggesting an element of sympathetic political awareness within the newspapers.

Such a position also served to denote the continued presence of an imperial patriarchal narrative within the journalism of the *Zionist Review* and *The Jewish Standard*. By emphasizing the young age of those involved in the struggle in Palestine the newspapers were once again casting the *Yishuv* as the child and the British Government as the parent who had failed in its family duty: it should have been protecting its offspring, not harming them. Furthermore, by placing the younger generation at the heart of debates over Palestine British Jewry revealed the extent to which they were affected by the Holocaust. A focus on the notion of creating a new generation of Jews who would not meet the same fate as their elders demonstrated the influence of concerns over 'Jewish continuity'. In this scenario, the older British Jewish generation were inept and useless; it was up to the young of the community to ensure the continuity of Jewish lineage.

This imperial patriarchal narrative is further apparent through an emphasis on the female gender of those involved in the armed struggle for an independent Jewish state. It was particularly evident within the *Zionist Review* during 1945. An article published in October 1945 identified that those sentenced included two girls.<sup>78</sup> By emphasizing the femaleness of participants in events in Palestine, the *Zionist Review* dismantled the imperial patriarchal narrative of Britain as *chivalrous* protector of the Jews in Palestine. According to Evans' research on the Algerian War, the focus on women in conjunction with use of the word 'revolution' was employed to show how, through the fight against colonialism, Algerian society was completely

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<sup>75</sup> Martin Evans, *The Memory of Resistance: French opposition to the Algerian War (1954-1962)* (Oxford: Berg, 1997), p 196.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, p 196.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid*, p 197.

<sup>78</sup> *Zionist Review*, 29/10/1945.

reinventing itself; women were breaking free from their traditional confines.<sup>79</sup> Considered in this context it could also be suggested that the emphasis on pro-active women within the *Zionist Review*, a decade prior to Evans' case study on French resistance, denoted a need to reinvent the perceived passivity within Judaism following the impact of the Holocaust. Interestingly, coverage of the armed resistance against the British in Mandatory Palestine within the *Jewish Monthly* ignored the role of women completely. This suggests a less 'revolutionary' perspective of events within a more 'traditional' gender understanding of the imperial patriarch, the role of whom was to discipline wayward males to mould them into servants of the empire. Women were absent from this narrative as they occupied the domestic sphere and, in this case, only served to denote the presence of the hegemonic masculinity of the imperial patriarch as versions of emphasized femininity, as outlined by in Chapter One.<sup>80</sup> Overall though, the presentation of events in Palestine within British Jewry were cast in an, at times, ironic framework of imperial patriarchy through the use of age and gender, which, once again, referred to the Holocaust.

## 2.8 'Terrorism'

That British Jews perceived of the situation in Palestine through an imperial patriarchal discourse is further substantiated through the presence of 'internal' language that placed events within the domestic sphere familiar to the readership. Using traditional patriarchal dynamics to depict both the violence in Palestine and the reaction of the Mandatory Authorities, British Jewry portrayed disapproval and disagreement as a natural part of the parent and child relationship. Language such as 'terrorism', 'murder', 'madness' and 'resistance' placed such events within the confines of family affair due to its presentation within a 'law and order' narrative; such systems operate within an imperial nation rather than as part of the external sphere of foreign policy. The term 'terrorist' commonly appeared to describe events in Palestine. Although such usage initially appears to denote a negative perception of the actions of the *Haganah*, *Irgun Zvai Leumi* and *Lehi*, further analysis suggests that it actually indicates various degrees of sympathy, dependent on its socio-political environment, and an awareness of the complexities of the situation for British Jews.

In the British Jewish press use of the term 'terrorist' to describe those involved in the armed organisations was apparent throughout the period. Within the *Zionist Review* the use of the word 'terrorist' to describe those engaged in the armed struggle for an independent Jewish state is evident from 1944 to 1946. Usage of the term was most frequent during 1944. An article

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<sup>79</sup> Martin Evans, *The Memory of Resistance: French opposition to the Algerian War (1954-1962)*, p 191.

<sup>80</sup> R. W. Connell, "Hegemonic Masculinity", p 61.

published in October 1944 stated that there existed a “small gang of Jewish terrorists”.<sup>81</sup> Likewise, *The Jewish Standard* also began its coverage in 1945 of such incidents as constituting “terrorist acts”.<sup>82</sup> However this use of terminology did not necessarily signify hostility towards those involved in the struggle for a Jewish state and their aims. In fact, there appeared to be several attempts within *The Jewish Standard* at excusing or justifying such actions.<sup>83</sup> Alternatively it could be suggested that the word ‘terrorist’ was employed by *The Jewish Standard* in the strictest sense of the terminology as that of a word describing the use of terror to gain an objective.

Contrastingly, the use of the words ‘terrorist’ or ‘terrorism’ within both private correspondence and those designed for public consumption within the circle of Parkes seem to indicate a negative perception of events in Palestine. The 1947 Report for the British Association for the Jewish National Home described those involved in the armed struggle against the British as belonging to “terrorist groups”.<sup>84</sup> In contrast, the *Jewish Chronicle*, which for the majority of the period concerned was under the editorship of Greenberg, refrained from use of the term ‘terrorist’ to describe those engaged in the armed struggle against the British in Mandatory Palestine.

Although the negative connotations of such a term are immediately evident, its use within the British Jewish press evolved to denote disapproval of certain events or organisations. During 1945 within the *Zionist Review* usage of the word ‘terrorist’ was gradually phased out as such acts were increasingly termed those of ‘resistance’. It was only employed to denote disagreement with the actions of those concerned; an article published in October 1945 detailed how “terrorist groups” stole arms from a military base used by the Jewish Brigade.<sup>85</sup> Similar sentiments were also evident throughout coverage of the armed struggle against the Mandatory Government during 1946. By then the *Haganah*, *Irgun Zvai Leumi*, and *Lehi* were frequently referred to as part of the “Jewish Resistance” (terminology which will, itself, be discussed presently), however following the King David Hotel explosion those responsible were once again termed “terrorists”.<sup>86</sup> This suggests that the *Zionist Review* was aware of the negative connotations of such terminology and that it was deliberately chosen for maximum journalistic impact.

It has already been noted that in his study of the *Jewish Chronicle*, Cesarani identified how under the editorship of I. M. Greenberg the newspaper accused the British forces in Palestine of

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<sup>81</sup> *Zionist Review*, 13/10/1944.

<sup>82</sup> *The Jewish Standard*, 29/06/1945.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> Papers of Reverend James William Parkes, ‘British Association for the Jewish National Home in Palestine’, MS 60/15/12.

<sup>85</sup> *Zionist Review*, 26/10/1945.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 28/06/1946; *Ibid.*, 26/07/1946.

perpetrating “terrorism of their own”.<sup>87</sup> This suggests that such a tactic was common among those who sympathized with the armed struggle for Jewish independence. To substantiate, a *Jewish Standard* article from November 1946 under the headline “PALESTINE TERRORISM” describes how “TWO Jews were killed and two were wounded by Sten-gun fire from British troops in Palestine in the course of the forcible transshipment of 3,800 refugees”.<sup>88</sup>

The negative connotations of such widely held perspectives, both within and outside of the British Jewish community, were also the subject of correspondence between I. M. Greenberg and the editor of *The Observer*. In this letter, which Greenberg requested to be printed in the newspaper, the negative connotations surrounding journalism of the subject are discussed. Greenberg complains that “it is surely to be regretted that not a single British newspaper, periodical or magazine, will allow the case to be put of those whom you describe as ‘Jewish murder-gangs in Palestine’. Nothing like so complete a voluntary ban was imposed upon the case of the militant Irish nationalists in the days of the Irish rebellion”.<sup>89</sup> Such a statement is significant in illustrating Greenberg’s position with regard events in Palestine. By drawing a parallel with a movement with overtly nationalist, anti-imperialist aims, it is clear that Greenberg perceived the situation in Palestine as existing in a framework of minority nationalism and decolonisation within the British sphere.

Likewise, other segments of the British Jewish press and the social circles of Parkes and Greenberg demonstrated an awareness of the contemporary concerns of both British Jews and wider society over the possible perceived complicity of the former in events in Palestine. Such concern is evident through the use of the term ‘terrorist’ to denote difference between the *Haganah* and the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* and *Lehi* and disapproval of the actions of the latter two organisations.

From the very beginning of coverage of the armed struggle against the British in Mandatory Palestine within the *Jewish Monthly*, there is an attempt to make a distinction between the actions and role of the *Haganah* and those of the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* and *Lehi*. An article from July 1947 stated

There exists in Palestine a voluntary defence force known as the Haganah, with an estimated strength of between sixty and one hundred thousand. It has existed for many years primarily as a force to defend Jewish settlements against recurring attacks by

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<sup>87</sup> David Cesarani, *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry 1841 to 1991*, p 189.

<sup>88</sup> *The Jewish Standard*, 29/ 11/ 1946.

<sup>89</sup> Papers of I. M. Greenberg, MS 150/ AJ 110/ 3 (Folder 2 of 2).

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marauding bands and brigands, particularly in times of riot. The Government, always aware of its existence tolerated it.<sup>90</sup>

This tactic continued throughout such early coverage, with the period of the United Resistance Movement (URM), and the *Haganah's* involvement within it, ignored by the publication. Furthermore, the use of the term 'terrorist' was increasingly employed to denote particular disapproval of the actions of the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* and *Lehi*. Following the Sergeants' Affair, an article published in September 1947 described it as the "Terrorists' Vilest Act".<sup>91</sup> However, the use of language within the *Jewish Monthly* evolved and eventually reduced the use of the term 'terrorist'. Instead, the language employed became, if only occasionally, more war-like. In such coverage, however, the distinction between the *Haganah* and the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* and *Lehi* became ever more pronounced. An article dated May 1948 described how there was "a renewal of terrorist actions by the Stern Gang, in one of which 6 British soldiers were murdered" before discussing "the Jewish forces" that included the *Haganah* in further detail.<sup>92</sup>

Similarly, there existed a clear division between perceptions of the *Haganah*, *Irgun Zvai Leumi* and *Lehi* within 'Parkes' circle'; thus pre-empting such categorisation within autobiographical, biographical and, to a certain extent, scholarly literature on the subject published in the decades following the establishment of the state of Israel. In this discourse the *Haganah* are portrayed positively, the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* negatively and *Lehi* even more so. Such a dynamic is clearly evident in a statement made by Parkes for the *Christian News Letter* in July 1946 that

The Stern gang came into prominence, and later the Irgun Zvai Leumi...But side by side with their foolish and tragic crimes, there was a change in the activity of the Haganah which was more serious. This force, at bottom, corresponds to the territorials in England, not to the private armies of Hitler and Mosley.<sup>93</sup>

This perceived respectability of the *Haganah* in comparison to the believed recklessness of the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* and the *Lehi* is further evident in an undated, handwritten letter that describes the *Haganah* as "the Jewish Home Guard".<sup>94</sup>

By presenting the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* and *Lehi* as irresponsible groups unrepresentative of both the *Yishuv* and the wider Jewish community, the *Jewish Monthly* and the socio-political circle

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<sup>90</sup> *Jewish Monthly*, Vol 1, No 4, July 1947, p 20.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid*, Vol 1, No 6, Sept 1947, p 46.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid*, Vol 2, No 2, May 1948, p 10.

<sup>93</sup> Papers of Reverend James William Parkes, "The Issue in Palestine", MS 60/ 9/ 6.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid*, handwritten letter undated, MS 60/15/12.

of Parkes were, by default, assigning the *Haganah* a level of respectability and authority not given to the other organisations. This was particularly important for British Jewry as it allowed them to support the *Yishuv* and the *Haganah* – the latter being the defensive body of the Jewish Agency, which, in itself, was the communal representative of the *Yishuv*. This therefore permitted the *Jewish Monthly* to refute any possible accusation regarding Jewish complicity in ‘terrorist’ acts as the *Haganah* was presented as a separate, more respectable, body than the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* and *Lehi*. Such a tactic also had further positive repercussions on the casting of British Jewry to support the eventual independent Jewish State. The Jewish Agency, and thus *Haganah*, were portrayed as the only organisation possessing the necessary traits required for statehood. It therefore allowed British Jewry to support the emergence of a newly created state without being vulnerable to accusations that it supported its ‘terrorist’ origins.

Debate surrounding the motivation for and perception of the employment of the word ‘terrorist’ within the British Jewish community reveals the complexity behind negative and positive applications of the term. For example, the position of the Council of Christians and Jews is immediately evident to anyone glancing at the minute book of the executive committee: such events are indexed under the heading “Terrorist outrages”.<sup>95</sup> The use of such terminology as ‘outrages’ echoes that of the mainstream British press and implies an invested authority to speak on behalf of the community that they claimed to represent. Alternatively it could be considered that the use of the terms ‘terrorist’ and ‘terrorism’ within both this collection, and its wider application by British Jews, actually denoted an element of sympathy towards the situation in Palestine. It served to cast those involved in the armed resistance against the British in Mandatory Palestine as heroic insurgents struggling against a much larger oppressive force. Such a reading would serve to consolidate the presence of a resistance narrative based on the experiences of partisans in the Second World War within the framework through which events in Palestine were perceived by both British Jews and the wider British public alike.

Returning to Evans’ research on the Algerian War, he notes how the use of the word ‘terrorist’ by the French Government to describe their opponents was an attempt to criminalize and thus place beyond the pale the political actions of Algerian nationalism.<sup>96</sup> Applying Evans’ work within the context of this thesis, use of the word ‘terrorist’ by British Jewry might actually represent an attempt to present events in Palestine in a more favourable light. By marginalizing the political actions of the *Haganah*, *Irgun Zvai Leumi* and *Lehi*, British Jewry sought to extinguish any possible fears with regard to the potential political ramifications of the situation. That is, to

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<sup>95</sup> Papers of the Council of Christians and Jews, Executive Committee Minutes March 1943 – April 1947, MS 65/A755/2/2.

<sup>96</sup> Martin Evans, *The Memory of Resistance: French opposition to the Algerian War (1954-1962)*, p 181.

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alleviate any possible sense of alarm within wider British society it was essential that the organizations concerned were not portrayed as presenting a valid threat to the political security of the British Empire. Subsequently, this usage placed such 'terrorism' within a law and order framework. The presence of these concerns revealed a fear of the accusation of 'dual loyalty' levelled at British Jewry. By ensuring that events in Palestine were not presented as constituting a 'them or us' situation, the British Jewish press, its readership, and the communal representatives of British Jewry would not be presented as opposing the British Government. Furthermore, if there still remained any doubt as to the political loyalty of British Jews, the negative connotations of the term 'terrorist' could be used to denote the position of the community beyond doubt.

That British Jewry was justified in fearing the public response to events in Palestine, and thus presented them in a subtly sympathetic light, can be further substantiated by analysis of a Mass Observation survey on "Attitudes to Palestine and the Jews" at the heart of the crisis in 1946. Of particular interest is a table indicating the statistical relationship between Zionism, the idea of a National Home for the Jews, and terrorism, as shown below.<sup>97</sup>

Table 3: Attitudes Towards Zionism and a Jewish National Home.

Opinion	Zionism %	National Home for the Jews %
Approval	18	49
Qualified Approval	6	10
Mixed Opinion	9	9
Disapproval	24	11
Disapproval of Terrorist Methods	11	0
An Impossible Idea	3	3
Don't Know	29	18

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<sup>97</sup> Mass Observation, *Report on Attitudes to Palestine and the Jews*, p 12.

Analysis of the material published in the report shows that more respondents were in favour of a National Home for the Jews than they were in favour of Zionism. One possible explanation for this discrepancy might be the latter's association with terrorism. When asked if he knew what Zionism was one respondent replied "It's a murderous organization, allied to the Stern Gang for getting the Jews back to Palestine".<sup>98</sup> However the report suggests that such beliefs had little impact and the difference between opinion concerning the two concepts "may be the more remote and theoretical nature of a National Home in comparison with the very much existing Zionism (other Mass Observation Investigations have indicated that people are prepared to agree to a theoretical concept much more readily than when it is presented in more concrete, realistic form)".<sup>99</sup> Ultimately, however, the report concluded that anti-Semitism might cause such difference in opinion.<sup>100</sup> That events in Palestine possessed minimal long-term impact on public opinion concerning the idea of a National Home for the Jews is supported by the fact that approval and disapproval ratings for the concept did not alter from 1944 to 1947.<sup>101</sup> However, analysis of the Mass Observation material suggests that public opinion did rise and then fall again following notorious publicised incidents in Palestine, such as the Sergeants' Affair. Events such as the August Bank Holiday riots of 1947 served to re-affirm the fear of British Jews that actions in Palestine could provoke an anti-Semitic backlash in Britain.<sup>102</sup>

Key to this fear felt by British Jewry regarding the reaction of the British public to the armed resistance against the British in Mandatory Palestine was a desire to refute the popular and political accusation of Jewish complicity in such events. To substantiate, the *Jewish Chronicle's* awareness of the concern within the British Jewish community over wider perceptions of events in Palestine was evident in an article published in August 1947. It described how "In a sense, went on Lord Justice Cohen, the Jewish community was on trial before the non-Jewish community because of events over which British Jewry had little control".<sup>103</sup> The importance of efforts within the British Jewish community, such as the concern afforded to the use of language by the *Jewish Chronicle*, to avoid any accusation of 'dual loyalty' and a negative communal reputation are thus clear.

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid, p 11.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, pp. 12 – 13.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid, p 13.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, p 15.

<sup>102</sup> See Tony Kushner, "Remembering to Forget: Racism and Anti-Racism in Postwar Britain," in Bryan Cheyette and Laura Marcus (ed), *Modernity, Culture and 'the Jew'* (Cambridge: Polity, 1998), 235.

<sup>103</sup> *Jewish Chronicle*, 15/ 08/ 1947.

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A further common tactic within British Jewry used to assert their innocence in events in Palestine was the issuing of resolutions by communal organisations that stressed the common bonds shared with Britain. This apparent ability to speak with an authorised voice that was both representative of, and in sympathy with, the rest of the community can be seen to extend to include not only British Jews but also the wider British community. By issuing resolutions after pivotal events in which it may be suspected that the *Yishuv* might have colluded with the *Haganah*, *Irgun Zvai Leumi* or *Lehi*, the Council of Christians and Jews clearly wished to avoid any provocation of anti-Semitism. This desire was evident through emphasizing the common bond that British Jewry shared with the rest of British society, namely loyalty to the King and a desire for a peaceful outcome to the situation. A resolution issued after the Sergeants' Affair stated:

The Council of Christians and Jews associates itself with all right-minded people in absolute condemnation of the most recent instances of terrorist outrages in Palestine, and in particular, the shameful murder of the two British Sergeants...At the same time, the Council appeals to the British people not to allow their natural horror and anger to be turned against those who have neither sympathy with the terrorists nor any power to prevent their activities. It is convinced that the majority of British people will not allow themselves to be led astray by irresponsible agitators into any form of reprisals against the Jewish community in this country, who fully share their fellow countrymen's condemnation of terrorist outrages.<sup>104</sup>

By praising the anticipated restraint of the British public in not reacting to events in Palestine, the Council of Christians and Jews was recognizing the potential for such a negative response amongst the British public. Despite urging "the British people not to allow their natural horror and anger to be turned against those who have neither sympathy with the terrorists nor any power to prevent their activities", the Council of Christians and Jews acknowledged the belief within British society that any attack on the British Jewish community would be understandable as it would be the result of the "natural horror and anger" caused by such events.<sup>105</sup> It is here that a favoured tactic of the Council of Christians and Jews was particularly problematic. Many of the resolutions adopted emphasize a shared humanity between all religions resident in Britain. However, in doing so, the Council of Christians and Jews seem to harm their cause with regard the prevention of anti-Semitism. By appearing to condone the feelings of frustration felt by "their fellow countrymen", such resolutions ultimately end up validating potentially hostile responses.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Papers of the Council of Christians and Jews, minutes of the fifty-eighth meeting of the Executive Committee of the council of Christians and Jews, MS 65/A755/2/2.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

They provide a platform of understanding for the annoyance felt by the wider British public towards the British Jewish population, rather than disputing its validity. Thus, through its use of resolutions the Council of Christians and Jews to an extent legitimised the reasoning behind any desire to attack the British Jewish community. Furthermore, it appealed to the better nature of the British public, and not the injustice of these possible actions, to prevent such occurrences happening. This tactic is also evident in appeals to both the British public and the British press. At a meeting of national and local councils held on 17 June 1947 it was noted how “Mr Leonard Stein agreed with what Captain Bulkeley-Johnson had said about the restraint shown by the British people in face of the provocation of events in Palestine, and he paid a particular tribute to the press in this regard”.<sup>107</sup>

Such statements indicated not only an implied level of gratitude within the Council of Christians and Jews but also an ultimate lack of confidence within wider British Jewry for the generosity of the British people in allowing Jews to be an equal part of their democratic society. When considered in conjunction with the other characteristics of the resolutions made, they overall seemed to illustrate a continued belief in the ‘emancipation contract’ whereby British Jewry is granted civic parity – but only in return for their national loyalty and good citizenship. Once again, British Jews and their Christian counterparts were displaying evidence of a belief in an imperial patriarchal relationship between Britain and not only Palestine but, to a lesser extent, the British Jewish community. In this particular scenario, the imperial patriarch (Britain) permitted a degree of freedom on the basis of good behaviour. However, one Mass Observation respondent exclaimed, “Present policy in Palestine...As usual, we carry the baby and get all the kicks!”, indicating that some form of parental discipline in response to negative actions would seem to be favoured by the wider British public.<sup>108</sup> However, the frequent statements issued by the Council of Christians and Jews urging restraint by a father provoked by the bad behaviour of their child also denotes the beginning of a perceived breakdown in the righteousness of this parental relationship. This sequence of events suggests the beginnings of imperial/colonial breakdown and the inversion of the patriarchal relationship between Britain and Palestine, a point expanded upon throughout the remaining chapters of this thesis.

In hoping to refute the notion of Jewish complicity, British Jews had to place their responses within the framework through which events in Palestine were already perceived. The use of carefully chosen language reflected the wider sphere in which they were operating. It is evident that use of the terms ‘terrorist’ and ‘terrorism’ to describe the perpetrators of and the

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid, minutes of a meeting of national and local councils held on 17<sup>th</sup> June 1947, MS 65/A755/2/2.

<sup>108</sup> Mass Observation, TC 62 Anti-Semitism survey 1939 – 1951, directive replies July 1946.

actual events in Palestine did not automatically signify such a negative response as one might initially have perceived within British Jewry. By using these terms those concerned were placing events in Palestine into a wider 'law and order' framework, which, in itself, presented them as a natural part of family life. By portraying the actions of the *Haganah*, *Irgun Zvai Leumi* and *Lehi* as an internal affair such occurrences were depicted as part of a natural period of rebellion by the offspring against its imperial parent. They were thus not perceived of as a threat in terms of decolonisation. Therefore, at all times, the response of the British Jewish community to accusations of complicity in events in Palestine with regard the use of the term 'terrorist' reflected an awareness of the realities of the wider socio-political sphere in which they existed.

## 2.9 'Murder' and 'Madness'

The presence of a damage limitation strategy employed by British Jews is further evident through analysis of the additional use of a law and order framework used to describe those involved in the armed resistance against the British in Mandatory Palestine between 1944 and 1948. This use of language with criminal associations is evident within the *Zionist Review* through its descriptions of the *Irgun Zvai Leumi*, *Lehi*, and even *Haganah* from 1944 to 1946. During 1944 and 1945 the presence of such a discourse was particularly apparent within coverage detailing the assassination of Lord Moyne in 1944 and the subsequent trial of those responsible. Articles frequently described the act as "murder" rather than assassination, the latter possessing more political connotations.<sup>109</sup> Significantly, in 1946 the King David Hotel bombing was described as a "crime".<sup>110</sup>

Likewise, the placing of events within a criminal discourse, whereby perpetrators and their acts are assigned the associated characteristics of cowardice, feebleness, dishonesty and anarchy, is also apparent in coverage of the situation in Palestine within the *Jewish Monthly*. From the beginning of its publication, the *Jewish Monthly* frequently employed language with criminal connotations to describe actions of the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* and the *Lehi*. An article published in August 1947 stated that "Most of these acts were committed by members of the Stern Gang, the worst of them were committed on June 28 when they murdered three British soldiers in Tel Aviv by shooting them in the back and fired into a café filled with officers in Haifa, killing one and wounding two others".<sup>111</sup> Similarly, in an article covering the Sergeants' Affair the monthly publication described how "The murder of the two sergeants by terrorists led in its turn to a number of serious anti-Jewish riots in many towns in Great Britain". Interestingly, the use of such

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<sup>109</sup> *Zionist Review*, 10/11/1944.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid*, 26/07/1946.

<sup>111</sup> *Jewish Monthly*, Vol 1, No 5, Aug 1947, p 47.

language is never applied to the actions of the *Haganah*, suggesting that, significantly, the period of the United Resistance Movement, and *Haganah's* role within it, were ignored. This, once again, served to present the *Haganah* as more respectable than the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* and *Lehi*. It thus allowed the *Jewish Monthly* to remain supportive of the *Yishuv* without damaging their belief in patriotic Zionism, as explained in Chapter One. However, such a tactic also seemed to subtly demonstrate the suitability of the Jewish Agency, and thus *Haganah* rather than the *Irgun Zvai Leumi*, *Lehi*, or the British, for ruling a bureaucratic democracy. Hence, coverage of the situation in Palestine within the *Jewish Monthly* appeared more supportive of the struggle for an independent Jewish state than might initially be perceived.

A further mutation of a 'criminality' discourse present within the British Jewish press concerns a role reversal with regard to 'illegal' immigration: it was no longer the uncertified immigrants who were 'illegal' but the 1939 White Paper. This narrative is particularly evident within the *Zionist Review* from 1946 onwards. An article published in July 1946 described how "By pursuing the illegal policy of the White Paper, the Administration has provoked the anger and resistance of sections of the population and made a restoration of normal order...impossible under present conditions".<sup>112</sup> Once again, the placing of events in Palestine within a legal framework is evident.

The presence of a 'law and order' discourse is additionally apparent through the existence of a narrative linked to madness. In an era when mental health issues were viewed primarily within a legislative framework, this narrative was manifested through the use of language with connotations of madness within the British Jewish press from 1944 to 1948. In his research on madness, Roy Porter has outlined the development of psychiatric models of suffering from medieval demonization to a modern perception whereby "the idioms of the psychological and the psychiatric replace Christianity and humanism as the ways of making sense of self – to oneself, one's peers, and the authorities".<sup>113</sup> A notable, and relevant, development in the Twentieth Century centred on the creation of alternative historiographies disputing a 'Whiggish' and traditionally progressive narrative of mental illness. According to Szasz, mental illness "is rather a myth, fabricated by psychiatrists...and endorsed by society because it sanctions easy solutions for problem people".<sup>114</sup> Contesting this 'anti-psychiatry' viewpoint, those defending the profession cite the longevity of symptoms as evidence against periodic "scapegoating".<sup>115</sup> Tracing the origins of the development of psychiatry as a scientific discipline to late Nineteenth Century influences of

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<sup>112</sup> *Zionist Review*, 12/07/1946.

<sup>113</sup> Roy Porter, *Madness: a Brief History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 217 – 218.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 2 – 4.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid*, p 4.

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Darwinism and Eugenics, Porter states that this dubious approach can be seen to have culminated in the extermination of 70,723 mental patients by the Nazis between 1940 and 1942.<sup>116</sup> The implications of such thoughts for this thesis are clear. A climate in which psychiatric theories of mental illness were based on models of Darwinism and Eugenics can be perceived as providing further rationale for not only the moral but also the biological righteousness of the imperial patriarch in governing those people under its care who were deemed too 'mad' to determine their own fate. Whether or not Foucault was correct in declaring that, "The history of madness properly written would thus be an account not of disease and its treatment but of questions of freedom and control, knowledge and power", the use of a narrative of madness in the British Jewish press to describe the actions of those campaigning for an independent Jewish state would seem to aid the perception of the authority of Britain to administer the Mandate in Palestine.<sup>117</sup> However as the British Jewish press at times used this portrayal to suggest that Britain was betraying its imperial duty of care by punishing rather than looking after those who had "gone mad", additional complexity to an initially simple use of language is evident.

To elaborate, an article published in the *Zionist Review* in October 1944 described those involved in the armed struggle for an independent Jewish state as "fanatics crazed by the suffering of their people", whilst an article published in November 1944 attributed the assassination of Lord Moyne to "A small number of desperate youngsters [who] have gone mad".<sup>118</sup> This trend continued throughout coverage of the trial of those accused of his murder, as an article published in January 1945 described the incident as a "crazy deed".<sup>119</sup> The King David Hotel bombing was also explained in these terms. An article published in July 1946 called it "An act of lunacy".<sup>120</sup>

The employment of language with connotations of insanity within the *Zionist Review* served to increase the portrayal of the *Yishuv* as vulnerable, which emphasized the contrast between the 'defenceless' Jewish community in Palestine and the 'overtly aggressive' Mandatory authorities. Such a situation was in direct opposition to the ideal of the patriarchal relationship in which the parent should occupy a protective role with regards to the welfare of the child. Thus the *Zionist Review* presented the British Government, in their role as parent, as betraying their patriarchal duty of care to the Jewish community in Palestine, in its status as the child. This portrayal was

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid, p 186.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid, p 2.

<sup>118</sup> *Zionist Review*, 06/10/1944; Ibid, 10/11/1944.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid, 12/01/1945.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid, 26/07/1946.

further enhanced by the use of the word “tragic” to describe events in Palestine in June 1946.<sup>121</sup> Such language epitomizes the presentation of the situation as heartrending and wretched.

The presence of a framework of madness is also apparent within the *Jewish Monthly*. However, it displayed some differences to similar usage in the *Zionist Review*, in particular when references to insanity were applied to more general comments about the overall situation in Palestine with regards communal safety and accusations of complicity. An article published in the *Jewish Monthly* in September 1947 stated that, “All sane elements of Jewry in Palestine and outside were horrified and the chances that the majority would take active steps to root out terrorism seemed great”.<sup>122</sup> It was especially common to find terms associated with insanity employed in connection with the popular notion that British Jewry and/or the *Yishuv* could exert some influence over the armed organisations in Palestine to make them cease their campaigns of terror. In an article dated January 1947 the *Jewish Monthly* similarly described how “The Jewish Agency and all responsible Jewish bodies should combine to make an end of terrorism and to stop the madness of shooting British soldiers”.<sup>123</sup> By using terms associated with ‘madness’ to refute claims of Jewish complicity in events in Palestine, the *Jewish Monthly* was, in fact, supporting the notion that such actions were perceived within a discourse in which the ‘sane’ world was appalled by the actions of a ‘mad’ few – a tactic common within press reportage of the liberation of the Nazi concentration and death camps several years earlier. Furthermore, the presence of this insanity narrative within coverage of events in Palestine also additionally revealed the existence of an imperial patriarchal narrative. In this scenario, those who are ‘mad’ or exhibit behaviour unfit for the civilised world can be cured through treatment and ‘tough love’ provided by the imperial patriarch. Although the *Jewish Monthly* rebuffed any suggestion that British Jewry possessed influence over the actions of the armed organisations, the fact that they do so within an insanity narrative which, in itself, is placed within a ‘law and order’ framework, demonstrates the presence of an imperial patriarchal discourse.

According to Evans’ research on the Algerian War, its presentation as a ‘law and order’ problem by the French Government served to minimize the conflict and make it more acceptable to the general public.<sup>124</sup> If this argument is applied to the coverage of the situation in Palestine within the British Jewish press, it could be suggested that they also wished to minimize the potential (negative) impact of the conflict upon British society through sympathetic reporting. Such dynamics additionally illustrated the presence of a fear of the accusation of ‘dual loyalty’

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid, 28/06/1946.

<sup>122</sup> *Jewish Monthly*, Vol 1, No 6, Sept 1947, pp. 46 – 47.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid, Vol 1, No 10, Jan 1948, p 13.

<sup>124</sup> Martin Evans, *The Memory of Resistance: French opposition to the Algerian War (1954-1962)*, p 181.

within British Jewry, as the British Jewish press was keen to avoid provoking a negative reaction, including that of anti-Semitism, amongst wider society. Furthermore, the adoption of a 'law and order' narrative presented the 'problem' of Palestine as an internal, natural one. Such a portrayal further reveals the presence of an imperial patriarchal narrative, as it is suggested that these occurrences and differences of opinion were a natural, even inevitable, part of family life. Once again, this portrayal also served to ease the possible fear of the readership over the potential accusation of 'dual loyalty' as the relationship between Britain and Palestine is presented as a parental one. Subsequently, the position of British Jewry as patriotic Jews supportive of both members of its 'family' was maintained as natural.

That the main examples of usage of a criminal narrative derive from coverage of the situation in Palestine within the *Zionist Review* and *Jewish Monthly* is especially interesting and significant. It suggests that these two publications were particularly aware of the sensitivities of the situation in Palestine for the British Jewish community. With regard to the *Zionist Review* such coverage suggests that it was uniquely aware of the peculiarities of its position as a minority newspaper supporting Zionism. This, in itself, suggests that the *Zionist Review* might have therefore possessed a greater awareness of the need to present such events as part of an internal 'family' affair; a 'natural', non-threatening context into which they could be placed and which thus limited the public and governmental panic over decolonisation. It would seem that the *Jewish Monthly* also possessed similar concerns over its wider reputation. As a non-Zionist organisation, the parent body of the *Jewish Monthly*, the Anglo-Jewish Association, stressed assimilation and Britishness to its members. These concerns were evident in the newspaper through the deliberate use of 'internal' language which served to minimize the alarm and distress caused by events in Palestine to the wider British public; which, in turn, limited the alternative depiction of Jewishness and Britishness as opposing characteristics and which could, therefore, lead to accusations of 'dual loyalty'.

### 2.10 'Resistance'

A further way in which the British Jewish press sought to minimise any negativity was the description of the actions of the *Irgun Zvai Leumi*, *Lehi*, the *Haganah*, and even the *Yishuv* as being part of a 'resistance' organization. Absent from articles during 1944, the term 'resistance' first appeared in the *Zionist Review* in 1945 and by 1946 the *Irgun Zvai Leumi*, *Lehi* and *Haganah* were regularly described as part of the "Jewish Resistance Movement".<sup>125</sup> Such usage of the term illustrates the evolving position of the *Zionist Review*, and consequently the English Zionist

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<sup>125</sup> *Zionist Review*, 26/10/1945; For example: *Ibid*, 21/06/1946.

Federation, with regard the stance of the British Government over Palestine, in addition to its growing sympathy with those involved in the armed struggle against the British. Coverage of events in Palestine within *The Jewish Standard* illustrated a similar process of evolution. Less frequent during 1944 and 1945, from 1946 onwards the use of terms such as “Jewish Resistance Movement”, “fighters” and “partisans” to describe the actions of those involved in the struggle for an independent Jewish state was evident, creating further references to the presentation of the British as Nazis.<sup>126</sup> Parallel usage was also evident in such coverage within the *Jewish Chronicle*.<sup>127</sup> Alternatively, it could also be argued that the continued creation of such a discourse once again reflected concern over the issue of ‘dual loyalty’. It served to alleviate any possible tension as both the armed struggle for Jewish independence and the fight against the Nazis were portrayed as part of the same narrative with the British and the Jews of Palestine on the same side.

However, although Evans also believes that the French used the term resistance during the Algerian War in such a way as to denote similar sympathy, application of his theory to this chapter suggests that British Jewry held a more nuanced position than previously suggested. Evans believes that use of ‘Resistance’ as a term serves to legitimize those involved: the Resistance is presented as being akin to a regular army. With regards Palestine, it suggests that by 1946 the official position of the British Jewish press was one of a more positive perception of the *Haganah*, *Irgun Zvai Leumi* and *Lehi* than outright opposition to terrorism.<sup>128</sup> Furthermore according to Evans, use of the word “Resistance” to describe those opposing France in Algeria did not denote a uniquely French experience that lasted only between 1940 and 1944 as the concept of ‘resistance’ was presented as a quality which had always been present and which could always be called upon in times of need.<sup>129</sup> Thus, the presence of an epic narrative of triumph over adversity could exist within the *Zionist Review*.

## 2.11 An Epic Narrative

In his research on resistance narratives Bracher details how the post-Holocaust sensibility has made suspect the idea of the superhuman national hero that is traditionally celebrated by the epic narrative.<sup>130</sup> As a consequence an anti-heroic narrative has developed that recognizes

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<sup>126</sup> For example: *The Jewish Standard*, 01/ 02/ 1946; *Ibid*, 01/ 03/ 1946 *Ibid*, 22/ 11/ 1946.

<sup>127</sup> David Cesarani, *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry 1841 to 1991*, p 189.

<sup>128</sup> Martin Evans, *The Memory of Resistance: French opposition to the Algerian War (1954-1962)* (Oxford: Berg, 1997), p 186.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>130</sup> Nathan Bracher, “Remembering the French Resistance: Ethics and Poetics of the Epic”, *History and Memory*, Vol. 19/ No. 1 (2007), pp. 39 – 67, p 53.

common humanity and vulnerability.<sup>131</sup> Thus, through presenting events within an anti-heroic narrative which emphasized the vulnerability of those Jews in Palestine, whether directly involved in the armed struggle or not, the British Jewish press created a more sympathetic portrayal than their initial condemnation of such actions may denote. Furthermore, by presenting these events in such a manner the British Jewish press continued to frame its perception of the situation in Palestine within a Resistance narrative similar to that operational in France in the years following the Liberation.

The impact of the Holocaust is particularly evident in the focus within the *Zionist Review* during 1944 on the Jewish Brigade. An article published in September 1944 with the headline “AS JEWS WE FIGHT” detailed the formation of the Jewish Brigade.<sup>132</sup> This emphasis served to intertwine Zionism and fighting the Nazis into one narrative, combining the idea of a Jewish army with Zionism.<sup>133</sup> This subsequently furthered the idea of a Jewish nation state, since an army is a key component of any such country.<sup>134</sup> Bolchover has described how such a focus on the Jewish fighting model constitutes the ‘politics of defiance’. In this system the Jewish fighting model serves as a refuge from the powerlessness derived from a fear and internalization of anti-Semitism within Britain, in addition to the ambivalent stance of Judaism in Britain, during this period.<sup>135</sup> That the journalism of the British Jewish press, especially within the *Zionist Review*, partially represented an example of the ‘politics of defiance’ can be further supported through its attempts to differentiate between Zionism and the actions of those involved in the armed struggle for Jewish independence, particularly the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* and *Lehi*. An article published in October 1944 in the *Zionist Review* stated that Zionism was moral and religiously based in Judaism whilst the “terrorist acts” were derived from modern and totalitarian ideologies.<sup>136</sup> The article served to remind its readership that Judaism was not a passive, ambivalent religion; yet, equally it did not condone acts of terrorism.

That Jewishness in Britain was feared to be a fractured and passive grouping following the destruction of European Jewry is further evident through consideration of the wider discourse in which events in Palestine were perceived. By placing the actions of *the Irgun Zvai Leumi*, *Lehi*, and even *Haganah* in a broader narrative of Resistance, in which the Jewish Brigade offered a refuge from the powerlessness of the Holocaust, the *Zionist Review* created an epic narrative. In his

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid, p 53.

<sup>132</sup> *Zionist Review*, 22/09/1944.

<sup>133</sup> Richard Bolchover, *British Jewry and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p 127.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid, p 127.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> *Zionist Review*, 06/10/1944.

research on the memory of the French Resistance, Bracher describes how heroic epics are grounded in an overarching cosmic order or historical tradition that confers moral substance and consequently brings different people or factions together; it unites vertically as well as horizontally.<sup>137</sup> Such dynamics also appear evident in the coverage of events in Palestine in the *Zionist Review*. In placing the armed struggle against the Mandatory Government within a longer history of pogroms, the Holocaust and the Blitz, the *Zionist Review* created an epic narrative of triumph over adversity that served to unite British, European and Palestinian Jewry within a shared tradition.<sup>138</sup>

In his analysis of de Gaulle's Flag Day speech in 1945, Rousso described the concept of the "thirty years war". He stated that "Combining the two world wars in a single unit made it possible to focus on military matters and thus divert attention from unique aspects of World War II: the role of irregular partisans, ideological conflict, and the genocide".<sup>139</sup> Similarly, it could be suggested that by presenting the events in Palestine and the Holocaust within a longer history of anti-Semitism the *Zionist Review* was actually attempting to deflect attention away from the specificities of the destruction of European Jewry. An article published in November 1945 disputed the popular notion that Hitler was the first anti-Semite. It stated that "The idea that Hitler is solely responsible for the existence of a Jewish question shows complete ignorance of the age-long problem of Jewish homelessness, the nature of anti-Jewish persecution...the long history of Anti-Semitism and Jewish wandering from one country to another".<sup>140</sup>

Rousso expanded upon his concept of the "thirty years war" by describing how "it anticipated ultimate victory, echoing the victory of 1918 when joy was unalloyed, without any hint of discomfort or shame".<sup>141</sup> Through the adoption of a similarly epic narrative the *Zionist Review* was also anticipating "ultimate victory" with regards the situation in Palestine. That the *Zionist Review* could simultaneously condemn the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* and *Lehi* whilst adopting the sympathetic narratives of Resistance outlined above initially appears contradictory. However, with regard to the "Gaullist Resistancialist myth", Rousso explained how "This myth did not so much glorify the Resistance (and certainly not the resisters) as it celebrated a people *in resistance*".<sup>142</sup> Similarly the *Zionist Review* through their presentation of events in Palestine as part of an epic narrative was also celebrating the notion of the Jewish people in resistance

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<sup>137</sup> Nathan Bracher, "Remembering the French Resistance: Ethics and Poetics of the Epic", p 48 – 50.

<sup>138</sup> *Zionist Review*, 16/11/1945; *Ibid*, 29/11/1946.

<sup>139</sup> Henry Rousso, *The Vichy syndrome: history and memory in France since 1944* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991), p 17.

<sup>140</sup> *Zionist Review*, 16/11/1945.

<sup>141</sup> Henry Rousso, *The Vichy syndrome: history and memory in France since 1944*, p 17.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid*, p 18.

throughout history and not glorifying the resisters of the *Irgun Zvai Leumi*, *Lehi*, and *Haganah*. This enabled the newspaper and its British Jewish readership to successfully negotiate its way through a difficult socio-political situation.

## 2.12 Conclusion: The Imperial Patriarchal Discourse

That the placing of events in Palestine within an imperial patriarchal framework which utilised references to the Holocaust, the portrayal of the British as Nazis and the *Yishuv* as united served to alleviate the socio-political concerns of British Jews is thus apparent and reflects the wider viewpoints of the organisations or people concerned. This is especially evident within the British Jewish press, particularly in *The Jewish Standard* and *Zionist Review*. The portrayal of the Mandatory Government as Nazis through the implication that they were aggressive, corrupt and incompetent was motivated by the need of *The Jewish Standard* to make the activities of the *Haganah*, *Irgun Zvai Leumi* and *Lehi* respectable in comparison; this also applies to the increased use of language with connotations of war between 1945 and 1948. As the likelihood of achieving statehood increased it was necessary to present these organisations as positively as possible due to the fact that it was assumed that, hopefully, their members would form the basis of any subsequent national military and political system. Such a process was evident throughout coverage of the armed resistance against the British in Mandatory Palestine in *The Jewish Standard* during 1947 and 1948. Essential to the successful presentation of this narrative was the portrayal of the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* as becoming part of international democracy through their interaction with United Nations Palestine Committee. The headline of the 18 July 1947 edition proudly declared: "U.N. COMMISSION MEETS IRGUN LEADER".<sup>143</sup>

The activities of the *Lehi* were also subject to a programme of legitimization, particularly in 1948. This is evident through a change in the terminology used to describe the organization; they were no longer informally referred to as 'the Stern gang' but rather their official title, "Fighters for the Freedom of Israel", was utilised.<sup>144</sup> The employment of such language could be seen as an attempt to prepare the 'illegal' organization for entry into the more legitimate world of statehood.

This discourse is further strengthened by the presentation of the British as losing their political and military authority. British integrity was increasingly and regularly attacked via their portrayal as incompetent. An article dated 28 March 1947 describes how "TWENTY-TWO-YEAR-

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<sup>143</sup> *The Jewish Standard*, 18/ 07/ 1947.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid*, 05/ 03/ 1948.

OLD Itzhak Mizrahi...was asked where he was working. He replied: 'Etzel haganan Stern' (With the gardener Stern). The 'Hebrew expert' of the police was startled...Here was a man confessing to belong to all three underground organisations".<sup>145</sup> Such articles possessed a comical view of the situation, enabling *The Jewish Standard* to delegitimize the authority of the Mandatory Government by suggesting that the only use of the British was as a source of amusement.

The portrayal of internal (the Jewish Agency and, at times, the *Haganah*) and external (the British and later the Arabs) opposition to the creation of a non-partitioned independent Jewish state as traitors and Nazis, respectively, created a complex narrative which ultimately presented the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* as the only viable option to secure this aim whilst still enabling the defence of the *Yishuv*. However this is not to declare *The Jewish Standard* as having unreservedly supported the actions of the *Irgun Zvai Leumi*. That *The Jewish Standard* demonstrated such support through the presence of a complex narrative rather than through the issuing of statements of support suggests that the newspaper wished to maintain a distinction between itself and events in Palestine. An awareness of the potentially precarious situation of *The Jewish Standard* is particularly evident in coverage following the King David Hotel bombing in 1946 and the Sergeants' Affair in 1947.<sup>146</sup>

Furthermore, such reservation applied not only to the actions of the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* but also to those of the *Haganah* and *Lehi*. The manner in which the actions of the *Haganah* were reported was dependent on the political stance of the organization and their relationship with both the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* and the Jewish Agency at the time of press. Such politics only seemed to effect coverage of *Lehi* once the establishment of an independent Jewish state was likely, with *The Jewish Standard* making a concerted effort to legitimize the efforts of the *Irgun Zvai Leumi*. Despite these nuances, it is evident that coverage of events in Palestine within *The Jewish Standard* between 1945 and 1948 demonstrated sympathetic support for all three organisations involved in the armed struggle for an independent Jewish state.

Similarly, although the *Zionist Review* and the *Jewish Chronicle* both categorically denounced terrorism, analysis of their coverage of the armed struggle against the British in Mandatory Palestine indicated a more sympathetic position to the actions of the *Lehi*, *Irgun Zvai Leumi*, and, at times, *Haganah* than one might initially expect. This was achieved through the adoption of an imperial patriarchal discourse that included a Resistance and Holocaust narrative. By presenting the situation in Palestine within the framework of resistance to the Second World

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid, 28/ 03/ 1947.

<sup>146</sup> For example: *The Jewish Standard*, 26/ 07/ 1946; Ibid, 05/ 07/ 1946; Ibid, 02/ 08/ 1946; Ibid, 01/ 08/ 1947; Ibid, 08/ 08/ 1947.

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War both newspapers were anticipating the dynamics of the packaging of French opposition to the Algerian War between 1954 and 1962. However, rather than purely demonstrating support for those involved in the armed struggle for a Jewish state, the presence of these discourses reveal an anxiety over provoking, and the wish to avoid, anti-Semitism and the accusation of 'dual loyalty'. Fear of the former was emphasized by the presentation of events within a longer history of pogroms and the Holocaust.

As such a discourse suggests an ultimate triumph over adversity, the presence of an epic narrative is apparent. That the presentation of the situation in Palestine within the *Zionist Review* and the *Jewish Chronicle* was perceived as part of an epic narrative is further supported by consideration of the language employed in this thesis. In his analysis of Douzou's research Bracher explains that as resisters primarily wrote the first version of their own story, both their deeds and their writings can be understood as epic. He argues that consequently "we today can neither understand nor narrate their history without implementing these same notions".<sup>147</sup> Use of the terms 'struggle' and 'resistance' within this thesis to describe events in Palestine concerning the *Haganah*, *Irgun Zvai Leumi* and *Lehi* supports this analysis.

That the presence of a framework of the Holocaust is also apparent within the Mass Observers, 'Parkes' circle' and the Council of Christians and Jews indicates that it was not a uniquely British Jewish phenomenon. Thus, such analysis reveals the complex anxieties of British Jews during the mid to late 1940s. Furthermore, it illustrates the range of viewpoints that were encompassed within this framework. If the outlook was sympathetic to the actions of the *Irgun Zvai Leumi*, *Lehi*, and *Haganah* then these events were presented within a discourse in which the parent (Britain) had betrayed their parental duty by failing to protect their child (Jews in Palestine). However, if the viewpoint was more of a hostile one then the child (Jews in Palestine) was portrayed as a selfish, ungrateful offspring that was acting out towards their parent (Britain). This therefore demonstrates the presence of imperial patriarchal discourse in which events in Palestine were perceived through the framework of the Holocaust and Second World War, both by British Jews and wider society.

However, there does remain one exception to the rule. The *Jewish Monthly* contained fewer references to the Holocaust than the other material analysed, particularly that within the British Jewish press. However, the presence of an imperial patriarchal narrative is more apparent within the *Jewish Monthly* than the other newspapers analysed. It suggests a correlation between the portrayal of events in this manner and the patriotic Zionism of the AJA, whereby the

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<sup>147</sup> Nathan Bracher, "Remembering the French Resistance: Ethics and Poetics of the Epic", p 41.

organisation was very supportive of the *Yishuv* but not the political ambitions of Zionism *per se*. Analysis of the newspaper between April 1947 and May 1948 indicated the extent to which it portrayed events in Palestine within the sphere of an imperial patriarchal relationship. Phrases such as “If the occupation of Palestine in 1918 after the defeat of Turkey is to be regarded as ‘British Imperialism’ then the Jewish National Home is its legitimate child...but for British policy there would have been no Jewish National Home” and which present Britain as responsible for the conception of the *Yishuv* are commonplace throughout this period.<sup>148</sup> Interestingly, as Palestine progressively neared independence, references to this occasion as comprising of its “birth” also increased in frequency.<sup>149</sup> It would seem that the *Jewish Monthly* viewed independence as the start of ‘real’ life for the *Yishuv*, whereas previously it was just a child waiting to be born.

Similarly frequent are statements that portrayed the ‘young’ and ‘immature’ position of the *Yishuv* in comparison to the established one of Britain. An article dated August 1947 describes how “This younger generation in Palestine is intensely self-centred. It knows little about Europe and cares less; it regards Palestine Jewry as the only part of the Jewish people that really matters, and is not likely therefore to be greatly interested in the fate of European Jewry as such”.<sup>150</sup> Such a declaration clearly attributes the characteristics of selfishness and immaturity to those in the *Yishuv* who were involved in the campaign for an independent Jewish state, thus casting them in the role of the child who has not yet fully matured and still requires parental guidance.

As a consequence of the *Jewish Monthly* presenting events in Palestine within an imperial patriarchal narrative, Britain was increasingly portrayed as having betrayed itself and the *Yishuv* by abandoning these parental responsibilities. An article published in November 1947 asserted that

Without British protection and British administration, the present Yishuv, with all its political, moral and economic strength could never have been brought into existence. Will the two other Great Powers, which in 1947 succeeded Britain as sponsors of a Jewish State, render that practical assistance without which a Jewish State cannot be safely established?...The announcement of the British Government that it has resolved to

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<sup>148</sup> *Jewish Monthly*, Vol 1, No 9, Dec 1947, p 5; *Ibid*, Vol 1, No 10, Jan 1948, p 9.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid*, p 12.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid*, Vol 1, No 5, Aug 1947, p 20.

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withdraw its troops and administration from Palestine, threatens to create a vacuum which would be an invitation to the interested parties to set up a *fait accompli*.<sup>151</sup>

This statement clearly cast Britain as responsible for the conception of the *Yishuv*, which was dependent on outside assistance and therefore not ready for full independence, before portraying Britain as abandoning its responsibilities.

Whilst Britain was increasingly presented as having failed in its parental responsibilities, the *Jewish Monthly* also began to portray an inversion of the imperial patriarchal relationship between Britain and Palestine. As a consequence of Britain deciding to withdraw completely from Palestine and not be involved with any of the decision making process for the future of the territory, Britain was often described as having “refused” to co-operate with the implementation of the U.N. decision as if it was a sulky child, rather than a mature parent.<sup>152</sup> This marked the beginning of an inversion of the imperial patriarchal relationship whereby the aging parent needed the support of its now matured offspring, a point discussed in the next chapters.

The concept of the imperial patriarchal discourse thus drew on contemporary understandings of family relationships, gender, criminality, madness, imperial heritage, Nazi persecution and the Holocaust. It enabled the British Jewish community to present potentially damaging events in Palestine within a safer, more ‘internal’ framework, which was of benefit to both British Jewry and wider society. Use of terms such as ‘terrorism’, ‘murder’, ‘madness’ and ‘resistance’ served to place violent acts that could be seen as a challenge to British sovereignty within a more natural narrative, as disagreements were portrayed an inevitable part of the national ‘family’ life. Key to these portrayals was the decision to present actions in Palestine as undermining the moral authority of the imperial patriarch. An emphasis on the shared collective memory of the Second World War between British Jews and wider society counteracted any claims of negative Jewish specificity which narratives of the Holocaust, Nazi persecution and ‘illegal’ immigration may have prompted. Ultimately, all of these elements combined in an overarching epic narrative in which the imperial patriarch would, eventually, triumph over adversity. That was not to suggest that victory would mean the quashing of Zionist ambition in Palestine, but rather that the imperial patriarch would ‘see sense’ and revert to his previously high standard of moral behaviour and allow the ‘deserving’ displaced Jews of Europe to settle in Palestine.

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid, Vol 1, No 8, November 1947, p 4.

<sup>152</sup> For example: Ibid, Vol 1, No 10, Jan 1948, p 53.

The longer-term implications of these British Jewish perceptions of the situation in Palestine form the basis of the remainder of this thesis. In the next chapter, analysis of Linda Grant's *When I Lived in Modern Times*, reveals the presence of a 'traditional' conception of the imperial patriarchal relationship in terms of gender roles, providing justification for it being the first cultural text explored in depth.<sup>153</sup> Set mainly in the late 1940s, the presentation of the imperial patriarch is similar to that introduced here. Illustrating the literary presence of many of the historical themes outlined in this chapter, Grant's novel reveals the interplay of gender, understandings of family relationships, imperial heritage and the Holocaust upon a left-liberal presentation of the imperial patriarchal narrative.

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<sup>153</sup> Linda Grant, *When I Lived in Modern Times*.



## Chapter 3: Linda Grant's, *When I Lived in Modern Times*

### 3.1 Introduction

Images of late Mandate Palestine and Israel have significantly influenced the field of British Jewish literary identities from the end of the Twentieth Century onwards.<sup>1</sup> According to Cheyette, and as previously outlined, this focus on perceptions of Israel and Mandate Palestine, as well as the Diaspora, is a fundamental characteristic evident in works published by British Jewish authors since the 1970s, a concept that he terms “extraterritoriality”.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, in his work, Stahler has identified several developments present in the decades following the emergence of Israel, and earlier Mandate Palestine, as a key literary device. He cites the mid-1980s as the period from which notions of Israel particularly began to “decisively shape...literary negotiations of British Jewish identities”.<sup>3</sup> Stahler then states that, “Since the mid-1990s, a ‘postcolonial’ and highly (self)critical paradigm for Jewish identities both in Britain and in Israel has been developed from the historical encounter of Britons and Jews in Mandate Palestine” and that, as a consequence, “since the mid-2000s, a number of mostly younger British Jewish writers have turned their attention to Britain, away from Israel or the diaspora”.<sup>4</sup> This most recent development can be read in two ways. Firstly, it may indicate a desire for “detachment” from increasing international criticism of the Israeli government.<sup>5</sup> Or, secondly, it might demonstrate “a process of normalisation” whereby events regarding Israel in the Middle East are “an Israeli concern and not a Jewish one”.<sup>6</sup> Both readings suggest that the age of “extraterritoriality” is nearing an end.<sup>7</sup>

However, Stahler identifies a further development that challenges this viewpoint. The publication of *The Finkler Question* by Howard Jacobson in 2010 and the direction of the television mini-series *The Promise* by Peter Kominsky in 2011 “quite decisively run counter to an emerging trend”.<sup>8</sup> Focusing on perceptions of Israel and what it means to be Jewish, both of these texts by a British Jewish author and director, respectively, once again encouraged communal debate,

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<sup>1</sup> Axel Stähler, “Antisemitism and Israel in British Jewish fiction: perspectives on Clive Sinclair’s *Blood Libels* (1985) and Howard Jacobson’s *The Finkler Question* (2010)”, *Jewish Culture And History* Vol. 14 , Iss. 2 – 3, 2013 <<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1462169X.2013.805899>>, last accessed 05/ 01/ 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Axel Stähler (ed), *Anglophone Jewish literatures*, p 12.

<sup>3</sup> Axel Stähler, “Antisemitism and Israel in British Jewish fiction: perspectives on Clive Sinclair’s *Blood Libels* (1985) and Howard Jacobson’s *The Finkler Question* (2010)”.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Axel Stähler (ed), *Anglophone Jewish literatures*, p 12.

<sup>8</sup> Axel Stähler, “Antisemitism and Israel in British Jewish fiction: perspectives on Clive Sinclair’s *Blood Libels* (1985) and Howard Jacobson’s *The Finkler Question* (2010)”.

controversy and negotiation within a public arena. Furthermore, the publication of *When I Lived in Modern Times* by Linda Grant in 2000 pre-empted the beginnings of this counter trend, demonstrating that the issue of Mandate Palestine and Israel remained close to the surface of British Jewish communal identity and collective memory prior to this most recent development.<sup>9</sup> An interesting and complex account of the end of the Mandate in Palestine and the subsequent legacy of the establishment of the state of Israel, *When I Lived in Modern Times* contains many of the characteristics of “traditional and frequently ossified markers of Jewishness, especially ‘the Holocaust’ and ‘Judaism’”, thus ensuring the novel is more akin to those other works termed “extraterritoriality” than the “emerging trend” present during its time of publication and reception.<sup>10</sup>

*When I Lived in Modern Times* was the second piece of fiction by the British Jewish author Linda Grant, who was born in Liverpool in 1951 to Russian and Polish Jewish immigrants. As a left-leaning liberal British Jew, Gilbert explains how, “For the post-war generation, such as Grant, who had been born and brought up in Britain, feelings about Israel were...complex. For this generation, rejecting Zionism was often bound up with familial tension as well as political conviction”.<sup>11</sup> Gilbert expands: “Grant, for example, relates how her parents’ joy in relation to Israel’s creation was undercut by a sense that the British, who had abstained in the UN vote, had once again failed to fully endorse support for Jews”.<sup>12</sup> The impact of this sense of disappointment in the British Government, together with perceiving Zionism within a family framework, upon a metaphorical reading of the text will be explored throughout this chapter.

Considered as a whole, both of Grant’s first two fiction novels, *The Cast Iron Shore* and *When I Lived in Modern Times*, demonstrated features of the “extraterritoriality” identified by Cheyette.<sup>13</sup> They each feature young, female, Jewish protagonists, who, after experiencing key moments in British Jewish life, such as the Second World War and Holocaust, leave the shores of their birthplace to discover their true character and thus develop the relationship with their ethno-religious identity. *The Cast Iron Shore* features the United States of America as the environment in which this unfolding takes place, whilst *When I Lived in Modern Times* is set in Mandate Palestine.<sup>14</sup> The similarities between the two novels with regard to the genre of British Jewish fiction are further evident through echoes in their individual descriptions. *The Cast Iron*

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<sup>9</sup> Linda Grant, *When I Lived in Modern Times*.

<sup>10</sup> Axel Stähler, “Antisemitism and Israel in British Jewish fiction: perspectives on Clive Sinclair’s *Blood Libels* (1985) and Howard Jacobson’s *The Finkler Question* (2010)”.

<sup>11</sup> Ruth Gilbert, *Writing Jewish: Contemporary British-Jewish Literature since 1990*, p 83.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Axel Stähler (ed), *Anglophone Jewish literatures*, p 12.

<sup>14</sup> Linda Grant, *The Cast Iron Shore* (London: Picador, 1996)

*Shore* is described on Grant's own website as "a beautiful evocation of one woman's journey from the 1930s to the 1990s, combining personal and political".<sup>15</sup> Likewise, Matthew Reisz in *The Independent on Sunday* declared *When I Lived in Modern Times* to be a "coming of age novel" whilst its main character, Evelyn, states that "History was no theme park. It was where you lived".<sup>16</sup>

Grant's fourth novel, *The Clothes on Their Backs*, has received similar reviews that applaud her successful interweaving of fictive characters with a grand narrative of modern history. The *Evening Standard* declared it to be "a domestic coming of age story even as it takes in the tumultuous sweep of the 20<sup>th</sup> century", whilst *The Observer* claimed it was a "tightly written novel that charts one woman's emotional life while weaving in politics, history and morality".<sup>17</sup> Considered in conjunction with Grant's previous novels there are some striking similarities between them. Notably, the main narrative voice is female and all four novels (the third novel is entitled *Still Here*) examine the reality of idealism and the legacy of such history on 'ordinary' people.<sup>18</sup> In doing so, Grant explores the post-war Jewish experience from a British Jewish perspective. With regard to this final point, Grant's second and fourth novels, *When I Lived in Modern Times* and *The Clothes on Their Backs*, appear to form a complementary sequence of the same story, one that has been essential to individual and communal narratives of post-war British Jewry.<sup>19</sup> As a key plot device in the formation of British Jewish identity since the Second World War, the Holocaust and British Jewry's engagement with it features heavily in these two books. *When I Lived in Modern Times* charts the contemporary and retrospective response of British Jewry, and the wider international community, from the immediate post-war era and the idealism for a new Jewish state that accompanied this to a more critical view of modern Israel. *The Clothes on Their Backs* details the watershed moment of the 1970s when British Jewry was beginning to engage with the Holocaust beyond the Palestine-focused response of the immediate post-war years. The idealistic image of Israel was thus challenged, in some sectors of British Jewry, as a result of its perceived increase in aggression as signified by the 1973 Yom Kippur War.

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<sup>15</sup> Linda Grant, 'Books: The Cast Iron Shore' in *Linda Grant* <<http://www.lindagrants.co.uk/books/the-cast-iron-shore/>> [last accessed 07/ 01/ 2017].

<sup>16</sup> Linda Grant, 'Books: When I Lived in Modern Times' in *Linda Grant* <<http://www.lindagrants.co.uk/books/when-i-lived-in-modern-times/>> [date last accessed 07/01/2017]; Linda Grant, *When I Lived in Modern Times*, p 3.

<sup>17</sup> Linda Grant, 'Books: The Clothes on Their Backs' in *Linda Grant* <<http://www.lindagrants.co.uk/books/the-clothes-on-their-backs/>> [date last accessed 07/01/2017]

<sup>18</sup> Linda Grant, *Still Here* (London: Little, Brown, 2002).

<sup>19</sup> Linda Grant, *When I Lived in Modern Times*; Linda Grant, *The Clothes on Their Backs* (London: Virago, 2008).

These interpretations of Grant's fiction work demonstrate an extension of Cheyette's extraterritoriality from a geographical focus to a chronological one.<sup>20</sup> Instead of Grant's characters relocating to different shores, primarily Mandate Palestine, Israel or the United States of America, to enable them to process their pasts and (re)discover their Jewish identity, they are transported to a different era. Situated in the 1970s with a keen interest in the past experiences of an elder generation, *The Clothes on Their Backs* does not comment on the modern phenomena of British Jewish identities in the late 2000s. On a first glance it may appear that *Still Here* is, in fact, partially located within modern Britain. However, as a key 'character' in the novel, the "dying port facing the Atlantic" of Liverpool appears to be rooted in another, past, time and place – its derelict streets facing out to sea focus the reader's attention on more favourable times gone by – in addition to serving as a reminder that this was the location where many potential migrants to the United States of America saw their dreams either materialise or shatter.<sup>21</sup> Considered in conjunction with the novel's key male character being an American haunted by the past, *Still Here* seems to be located in a place other than modern Britain. Furthermore, the central character, Alix Rebick, emigrates to France, demonstrating a level of traditional extraterritoriality.<sup>22</sup>

Therefore, it can be argued that, in her earlier fiction work, Grant belongs to the older tradition of British Jewish writing (such as Louis Golding) defined by extraterritoriality as each of the four books fail to discuss notion of British Jewish identity within the landscape of contemporary Britain.<sup>23</sup> Yet Grant would dispute that her work belongs to *any* literary tradition. In an interview published in 2009, Grant describes how she believes that the field of British Jewish fiction did not exist in a form in which she could contribute to authentically and meaningfully when she started writing. After pondering the state of British Jewish writing and also Jewish female authors more widely, Grant declares that, "There wasn't any tradition in British literature that I could be part of".<sup>24</sup> This perceived lack of a sense of belonging is essential to understanding Grant's work, both in terms of content and style, as she states that, "It was only when I started writing about people who are marginal, who have problematic identities and problems with belonging, that I found my voice".<sup>25</sup> Grant was a newspaper columnist for *The Guardian* and *The Jewish Chronicle*. She was brought up in Liverpool's Jewish community, an experience Grant says

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<sup>20</sup> Axel Stähler (ed), *Anglophone Jewish literatures*, p 12.

<sup>21</sup> Linda Grant, *Still Here*, Rear Cover.

<sup>22</sup> Linda Grant, *Still Here*.

<sup>23</sup> For example: Louis Golding, *To the Quayside* (Watford: William Brendon and Son, 1954).

<sup>24</sup> Emma Parker, "Linda Grant", *Wasafiri*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (2009), pp. 27 – 32, p 28.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, p 27.

made her “marginal to the Liverpool voice” due to the contrast between her own middle class upbringing and the working class identity of the port.<sup>26</sup>

Identifying another contradictory influence from her background Grant describes how, as a young woman,

Feminism was there for us already, it was what we learned as we were growing up. But, at the same time, you're programmed and socialized into this idea of male protection, and I think it's difficult to let go of...I wanted to capture what it felt like, that need for a man. We all want to have daddies. We all grow up with our daddies, we grow up with this idea that we are going to marry our daddy and, although we might thrust out into the world with a sense of sisterhood, of other women supporting and protecting us, secretly we still want our daddy.<sup>27</sup>

However, despite this interest in gender relationships, Grant believes that,

I wouldn't call what I write feminist fiction because as soon as you put ‘-ist’ at the end of the word – you know, socialist fiction, that kind of thing – then you're implying that there's some ideological framework to it. But, my books are completely saturated with a feminist consciousness and are written out of a life that has been shaped by feminism.<sup>28</sup>

Furthermore, although Grant's fiction writing can be argued to possess traits associated with post-modernism and post-colonialism, she has declared that she is “not very interested in postmodernism” whilst “postcolonial theory has no relevance to anything” she writes about.<sup>29</sup> The impact of these comments regarding ideological theory in addition to those concerning Grant's family heritage will be explored throughout the chapter as it explores a presentation of the imperial patriarchal narrative.

Despite the praise for her ability to combine character portrayals with key historical events, Grant's work has also received plenty of negative feedback. In particular, it is her second novel, and the focus of this chapter, *When I Lived in Modern Times*, which has attracted the most criticism and controversy. Awarded the Orange Prize for Fiction in 2000, Grant's accolade was lessened due to three factors. Firstly, the novel was immediately the focus of claims of plagiarism. Following the announcement that Grant had won the prestigious prize, a series of anonymous

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<sup>26</sup> Emma Parker, “Linda Grant”, p 27.

<sup>27</sup> Emma Parker, ‘On Fiction, Femininity, and Fashion: an Interview with Linda Grant’, *Feminist Review*, Vol. 96, No. 1, (2010) <<http://link.springer.com/article/10.1057%2Ffr.2009.20>>, last accessed 06/02/2017.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Emma Parker, “Linda Grant”, p 31 – 32.

faxes accused her of plagiarising A.J. Sherman's, *Mandate Days, British Lives in Palestine, 1918–1948*. The allegations were refuted and the award remained.<sup>30</sup> Secondly, doubt was also cast on the worthiness of Grant as a winner after another contender for the prize was said to have “effectively removed herself from the running” after insulting the husband of one of the judges (Zadie Smith, the author of *White Teeth*, made comments about Conservative MP William Hague, who was known for his tough immigration stance).<sup>31</sup> Thirdly, the prize itself has been subjected to hostility and its merits questioned. Launched in 1996, the prize is a women's only award for the best English language novel, as judged by a female panel, published in the United Kingdom in the previous year. These factors, combined with the £30,000 prize fund, making it the largest literary award in the United Kingdom, have ensured that the Orange Prize has generated controversy since its inception. However, rather than being a purely negative occurrence, literary scholar Britta Zangen has stated that “one might argue that the controversy about the Orange Prize is the final sign of women authors' break-through”.<sup>32</sup>

Further criticism of *When I Lived in Modern Times* has been derived from attacks on the character portrayals in the novel. Ruth Gorb in *The Guardian* describes how in Grant's depiction of Evelyn as she searches for self-discovery “it is hard not to read the quest of Grant herself to understand who she is – something she did so movingly in her book about her mother's descent into dementia”.<sup>33</sup> Evelyn is deemed, at times, to be hollow and empty as she searches for an identity to complete her. Suzanne Ruta in the *New York Times* asks if Evelyn is “Jewish or British?” before concluding that, “She doesn't know – and neither do we, because she's a character who never quite comes into focus”.<sup>34</sup> Other characters in the novel fare even less well, according to the critical literary reviews. Once again, Gorb declares that, “In her eagerness to express her ideas Grant puts them into the mouths of people who simply would not talk like that: these are not conversations but polemic or prolix storytelling”.<sup>35</sup> This is an interesting point as the plagiarism row centred upon Grant's perceived unauthorised use of material previously published from an authentic diary of a British official in Palestine. However, criticism of the character portrayals in *When I Lived in Modern Times* extended beyond this one review, with Ruta describing the fault with

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<sup>30</sup> Maev Kennedy, ‘Orange Prize Winner Rejects Claims of Plagiarism’, *The Guardian*, 08/06/2000 <<http://theguardian.com/uk/2000/jun/08/books.booksnews1>>, last accessed 22/07/2014.

<sup>31</sup> Suzanne Ruta, ‘The Newest Place in the World’, *The New York Times*, 28/01/2001 <<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/01/28/books/the-newest-place-in-the-world.html>>, last accessed 06/02/2017.

<sup>32</sup> Britta Zangen, “Women as Readers, Writers, and Judges The Controversy about the Orange Prize for Fiction”, *Women's Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (2003), pp. 281-299, p 286.

<sup>33</sup> Ruth Gorb, ‘Review: When I Lived in Modern Times’, *The Guardian*, 18/03/2000.

<sup>34</sup> Suzanne Ruta, ‘The Newest Place in the World’.

<sup>35</sup> Ruth Gorb, ‘Review: When I Lived in Modern Times’.

another journalistic shortcut: the wholesale traffic in stock characters. ‘The girls on the kibbutz were matter-of-fact types’. Members of the Irgun military faction are ‘tough, stocky little Jews’. British soldiers are ‘boisterous and confident, pink, sandy-haired men’. The nameless, faceless group of camp survivors rejects Hebrew as ‘the gabbling mutter of the old men who prayed as they were led to the gas chamber’.<sup>36</sup>

Regardless of the literary merits of the novel, it remains significant for studying British Jewish retrospective responses to the end of the Palestine mandate. In addition it provides an insight into the relationship between the Holocaust and the establishment of the state of Israel, from the viewpoint of a left-liberal British Jewish author. Whilst criticism of the character portrayals will be addressed further in the chapter, each character and the framework into which Grant places them possesses a noteworthy metaphorical importance indicative of an overarching imperial patriarchal discourse.

*When I Lived in Modern Times* can thus be read in several different ways. On the surface, it is a novel which draws on the traditional template of a girl who leaves the security of the parental environment, meets a succession of boys – all of whom are unsuitable on different levels – and is then rescued from the situation by someone of the approximate social status and generation of the original parental figure. This saviour offers her the chance to return home, which she does not, or cannot, take as her reality has changed forever. However, it is also much more complex than this simplistic reading; each character metaphorically represents a different strand of the Jewish community as comprised in the mid- to late-1940s. Together these components result in the novel reinforcing the presence of an imperial patriarchal framework through which late Mandate Palestine and the establishment of the state of Israel is viewed.

### 3.2 Evelyn and her Family

The narrator of the story, the British-born Evelyn, is a self-proclaimed ‘new Jew’ who is living in the shadow of the Holocaust, both culturally and personally. Her status as a revolutionary possibility is alluded to early on in the novel by Grant’s casting of Evelyn as the daughter of a hairdresser and her ability to earn her own wage by this trade. Sicher explains how for British Jews after 1945, “The dream was independence – hence the popularity of hairdressing and taxi driving after the war – and middle-class prosperity”.<sup>37</sup> The choice of hairdressing as a career signals the transition of the British Jewish community regarding religious observance, as well as

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<sup>36</sup> Suzanne Ruta, ‘The Newest Place in the World’.

<sup>37</sup> Efraim Sicher, *Beyond Marginality: Anglo-Jewish Literature after the Holocaust*, p 19.

### Chapter 3

class ambition. Hairdressing can be identified as a secular symbol as it contrasts with the Orthodox requirement that women cover their hair. Evelyn is thus immediately portrayed as representative of the hopes and dreams of an entire new generation of British Jews. However, she experiences her own trauma when her Mother suddenly dies at a young age shortly after the end of the Second World War, stating that she “felt numb with the pain of her abrupt removal from my life”.<sup>38</sup> The devastating loss of her family centre and heritage prompts Evelyn to journey to Palestine.

Her transformation in status to being the ‘new Jew’ in not only mind-set but also action is implicitly alluded to when Uncle Joe gives Evelyn a parting gift of a book on modern art – she is not interested in archaeology or ancient history which both have imperial connotations. Evelyn articulates these feelings as she describes her trip to the Foreign Office to gain the permission necessary to enter Palestine as a Christian tourist, a plan devised by Uncle Joe.

The might of the British Empire was burnished in the frail sunshine of this morning in February 1946, when London had never looked lovelier. The grandeur and majesty of England bore down on me... Inside my head the kings and queens of England were stacked like pancakes in chronological order going back to the Wars of the Roses but no-one I was related to had ever set foot on English soil until forty-five years ago... I was told, enthusiastically, of the sights I would find: of the Dome of the Rock and the Church of the Nativity and other Christian and Muslim landmarks that did not interest me. Neither archaeology nor ancient history moved me in the slightest. All the madonnas of the Renaissance were, for me, studies in perspective and pigment and skin tone... Uncle Joe gave me a book of modern art as a going-away present. I looked forward to spending the voyage reading about Picasso, and Matisse, Miro and Chagall.<sup>39</sup>

Despite this casting as the ‘new Jew,’ Evelyn’s fractured parentage as the child of British imperialism is thus clearly, yet discreetly, depicted.

Evelyn’s Mother is representative of the vast majority of European Jewry who died in the Holocaust. She is a poor, working class Jew, of Eastern European immigrant parentage. Her death acts as a catalyst for her daughter to go to Palestine. Evelyn’s Mother is the mistress of Uncle Joe. She remains nameless for the majority of the novel, which substantiates her portrayal as a figure symbolic of the nameless, faceless six million Jews who died in the Holocaust. That this depiction is how Grant – and popular culture – perceives victims of the Holocaust is alluded to by Ruta’s

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<sup>38</sup> Linda Grant, *When I Lived in Modern Times*, p 23.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 26 – 27.

analysis of the novel and in her description of the “nameless, faceless group of camp survivors” who enter the Kibbutz.

Representative of established Anglo-Jewry, Uncle Joe is a wealthy, middle class, liberal Jew. However, he too is not British by nationality, having come “as a young man from Russia”, reflecting the complexity of British Jewish communal identity at the time.<sup>40</sup> Despite not being born in Britain, Uncle Joe is accepted by the communal establishment, as his class status and level of religious observance is more palatable than that of later, poorer, more Orthodox arrivals. He is a patriotic Zionist, attached to a national British Jewish identity built on imperialism and colonialism. He gives material support to Palestine by each year placing half a crown in their family’s Jewish National Fund box on Evelyn’s birthday.<sup>41</sup> Hence, Uncle Joe is the (acting) imperial patriarch attempting to look after the financial needs of the imperial child, both literally and metaphorically, by being patriotically Zionist. However, he is radicalised into giving Evelyn to Palestine by the death of her Mother, their own, personal, trauma. Despite this, Uncle Joe will not go himself. This evolution of Zionist attitudes represents the radicalisation of the established British Jewish community who, by 1946, were becoming more Zionist, as evidenced by the composition of the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the official editorial guidelines for the position of the *Jewish Chronicle* with regards its socio-political outlook, as outlined in the previous chapter.

Furthermore, established British Jewry was now beginning a process of transforming material support into practical support. Cooper and Morrison have detailed how following the Holocaust and the emergence of the state of Israel,

Despite the Zionist Federation’s numerous aliyah campaigns, British Jews failed to translate their Zionist inclinations into actual emigration...After all...[they] could always give money. And British Jews did give their money: either through what was then known as...the Joint Palestine Appeal; or through the omnipresent blue-and-white collection boxes of the Jewish National Fund.<sup>42</sup>

Moreover, as post-war British Jews themselves, Cooper and Morrison also describe how “When our children made *Aliyah* we were so proud – they had done what we could not do”, highlighting the sense of communal feeling present with regard to the migration of subsequent generations to Israel, or Palestine.<sup>43</sup> Thus, Uncle Joe’s financial donations and then his ‘giving’ of Evelyn to

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid, p 8.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, p 15.

<sup>42</sup> Howard Cooper and Paul Morrison, *A Sense of Belonging: Dilemmas of British Jewish Identity*, p 114.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, p 116.

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Palestine are indicative of wider developments within the British Jewish community as in the years following the Holocaust “support for Israel became a way of being Jewish”.<sup>44</sup>

The relationship between Evelyn and Uncle Joe is one of the stern imperial patriarch encouraging the growth of his ward of care. This is demonstrated through the provision of books, educational material and private schooling. Uncle Joe believes he knows what is right for Evelyn and refuses to let her go to art school, even after her Mother’s death, instead wanting her to work within the *commercial* art sector. Evelyn refuses and they both settle on the idea of Palestine as an acceptable alternative. In this adaptation of the ideal parent-child dynamic in the imperial patriarchal relationship from a minority point of view, the father figure (Evelyn’s ‘uncle’) guides her interests and believes he knows what is right for her, she rebels a little and they compromise and agree on her next steps on the path to independence. That Uncle Joe encourages Evelyn to go to Palestine further reflects a British Jewish belief in patriotic Zionism and the presence of an imperial patriarchal relationship that forms the framework upon which this operates.

Within his relationship with Evelyn’s Mother, Uncle Joe, as the imperial patriarch representative of established Anglo-Jewry, ultimately possesses a lesser influence upon the destiny of the family member for whom he is also supposed to care and protect. Uncle Joe fails to prevent Evelyn’s mother’s death, caring for her financially but unable to do so physically and emotionally, due to the impact of her having had a stroke. In this situation, Uncle Joe’s influence in society is redundant. This metaphorically reflects the position of established Anglo-Jewry in the 1930s and 1940s when faced with Nazi Germany’s increasing anti-Semitism and attacks on the Jews of Europe; despite their attempts at securing the safety of European Jewry, Anglo-Jewry failed to make a considerable impact through diplomatic and charitable appeals. The admission of the *Kindertransport* refugees can be seen as an exception to the otherwise ‘closed door’ of British immigration policy at this time.

The communal ructions caused by and symptomatic of this failure to act more quickly and decisively are evident in the character casting of Uncle Joe and Evelyn’s Mother. It substantiates the presence of a socio-ethno-religious divide between established Anglo-Jewry, as represented by Uncle Joe, and newer waves of immigrants from both before the 1930s, as symbolized by Evelyn’s Mother whose own parents settled in London’s East End from Latvia and “spoke no English”, and post-war Displaced Persons.<sup>45</sup> In an especially symbolic scene, Evelyn and her Mother visit the cinema, where they sit at the back of the auditorium and observe Uncle Joe sat at the front with his official family. Uncle Joe ignores Evelyn and her Mother, as always in similar

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid, p 96.

<sup>45</sup> Linda Grant, *When I Lived in Modern Times*, p 5.

public situations, choosing to only acknowledge their common bond in private, as signified by Evelyn's Mother and Uncle Joe speaking Yiddish, "their private language", to each other.<sup>46</sup> This scenario is representative of the wider unwillingness of established Anglo-Jewry in the 1930s and 1940s to acknowledge the newer waves of immigrants and recognize the common bond they shared. It illustrates the differences in class, ethnicity and religious observance that had a divisive effect on the British Jewish community during this troubled period.

### 3.3 The Kibbutz

Upon arrival in Palestine, Evelyn experiences for herself the possible differentiation in class, ethnicity and political orientation among Jews when she joins a Kibbutz whose founders had "the dream of Bolshevism on Jewish soil".<sup>47</sup> However she learns that initially there was a time when life was so hard on the Kibbutz that "there was mass emigration from Palestine, a fatal tide of people ebbing back to Europe later to be eliminated from the earth".<sup>48</sup> The relevance of the shared family ancestry of both Evelyn, as the British Jewish interpretation of the 'new Jew', and her Mother, representative of European Jewry who died in the Holocaust, is thus quickly established. The British Jewish perception of the 'new Jew' is therefore one of Eastern European family heritage, who emerged as both a result of and antidote to the increasing persecution of European Jewry in the years prior to and during the Second World War. This key linkage is achieved by the descriptions of the experience of those in the kibbutz as being similar to that of those in the camps of Europe in the Holocaust:

This was existence for them. Hardship. Endurance. In danger of one's life at every turn. Remote from the cities and remoter still from the centres of European civilisation, from art and culture and refinement and fashion and hairdressing. Only a ruthless simplicity and an elemental engagement with survival, on top of which they built their hopes for the future: for themselves, but also for the Jewish race the world over, the age-old image of which was being dismantled on the spot, destroyed so that something entirely new could be created. The new Jew, but more than that – the new human being. A renewed human race out of the ashes of a catastrophically close-run thing with total extinction.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid, p 10.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, P 39.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, p 41 – 42.

Significantly, Evelyn is also placed as being within this narrative as, in the Kibbutz, she too is “Remote from the cities and remoter still from the centres of European civilisation, from art and culture and refinement and fashion and hairdressing”.<sup>50</sup> This statement situates both Evelyn and her Mother as being part of “the age-old image” of Jewishness “which was being dismantled” as both of them were hairdressers, a trade deemed symptomatic of the doomed Jewish engagement with “European civilisation”. But, whereas for Evelyn’s Mother the creation of “something entirely new” was too late to ensure her survival, Evelyn has made it to Palestine. Interestingly, however, it is on arrival at the Jewish Agency office in Palestine that Evelyn first declares that she has the trade of a hairdresser, suggesting that she identifies more with the “European civilisation” from which the Holocaust emerged than the traditional British Jewish vision of Zionist Palestine as represented by the Kibbutz, thus creating a connection between Anglo-Jewry with the socio-political context of European fascism. Subsequently, the perspective that the British Jewish community partially contributed to the emergence of the Holocaust by supporting the imperial project of the nation state from which it arose is, to an extent, recognized.

That the Kibbutz is perceived as a remedial response to the past mistakes of previous generations of Jews is articulated in a conversation between Evelyn and the Kibbutz leader, Meier:

And now Meier was asking *me*...if I wanted to enlist in the enterprise of the new humanity they were building from the ground up, the Jew that Meier was himself, untainted by the contamination of Europe and its neuroses and abandoning the dark superstitions of religion.<sup>51</sup>

Evelyn then passionately asks the reader,

Who in my situation, would not be seduced by the romance of what he had told me? Who could not fall in love with that age-old dream of equality and the collective life? Not me. I’ll tell you who I was then: I was a girl without a past: my mother had dwelt in a twilight land between the tenses; my grandparents were unknown to me and where they had come from, apart from the name of the place (Latvia! two syllables, that’s all), was also unknown; all of English history just a storybook. And so how could I not tell him – with all my heart and soul – that yes, a new Jew, indeed a new kind of human being, was *exactly* what I had always wanted to be.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, p 42.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

By positioning Evelyn at the beginning of a new dawn for humanity, as “a girl without a past”, similarities between Grant’s presentation of the past and that expressed in Martin Amis’ novel, *Time’s Arrow: or the Nature of the Offence*, are apparent. In Amis’ fictitious account of a German doctor who helped perpetrate the Holocaust, events are told chronologically backward. Essentially, wounds heal and Auschwitz creates a new human race – by giving life rather than taking it. Similar to in *When I Lived in Modern Times*, the narrator of *Time’s Arrow* asks,

What tells me that this is right? What tells me that all the rest was wrong? Certainly not my aesthetic sense. I would never claim that Auschwitz-Birkenau-Monowitz was good to look at. Or to listen to, or to smell, or to taste, or to touch. There was, among my colleagues there, a general though desultory quest for greater elegance. I can understand that word, and all its yearning: *elegant*. Not for its elegance did I come to love the evening sky above the Vistula, hellish red with the gathering souls. Creation is easy. Also ugly. *Hier ist kein warum*. Here there is no why. Here there is no when, no how, no where. Our preternatural purpose? To dream a race. To make a people from the weather. From thunder and from lightning. With gas, with electricity, with shit, with fire.<sup>53</sup>

Hence, Amis appears to create a parallel discourse whereby, despite being rooted in another reality, the Holocaust results in the emergence of a new human race – or, as suggested in Grant’s novel, a ‘new Jew’.

Within *When I Lived in Modern Times* it is this ‘new Jew’ who will transform Palestine from being subjected to the binds of the past to enjoying the freedom of modernity. However, Grant suggests through the deliberate past tense of the novel’s title that this particular time and place has ceased to exist. In the Chilean novelist Roberto Bolano’s fictitious account of the artistic movement known as Stridentism, *The Savage Detectives*, one of the narrators describes an interaction with an acquaintance:

You’re a stridentist, body and soul. You’ll help us build Stridentopolis, Cesarea, I said. And then she smiled, as if I was telling her a good joke but one she already knew, and she said that she had quit her job a week ago and that anyway she’d always been a visceral realist, not a stridentist. And so am I, I said or shouted, all of us Mexicans are more visceral realists than stridentists, but what does it matter? Stridentism and visceral

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<sup>53</sup> Martin Amis, *Time’s Arrow: or the Nature of the Offence* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1991), pp. 119 – 120.

realism are just two masks to get us to where we really want to go. And where is that?  
she said. To modernity, Cesarea, I said, to goddammed modernity.<sup>54</sup>

If the emphasis on “modern times” within the title of Grant’s novel is considered within the context of Bolano’s work then the influence of Stridentist notions of modernity appear significant. A Mexican avant-garde movement founded in 1921, Stridentism was a manifesto for “utopianism and a sprinkling of social revolution”. Stridentist statements such as “Truth never occurs outside our own selves” and “No more retrospection” demonstrate a belief in the present moment of one’s personal truth.<sup>55</sup> Thus, applied to Grant’s choice of title for her novel it would seem that such a reference could not only refer to the positioning of the main narrative in the modern city of Tel Aviv but also to a time and place when just being a Jew there was enough to help build a shared utopia regardless of personal or political difference. However, according to Grant’s novel, it would appear that the Jews of Palestine never reached this “goddammed modernity”.<sup>56</sup>

It is through the relationship between Evelyn and Meier, an early version of the ‘new Jew’, that the notion of an imperial patriarchal narrative becomes evident once again. Meier is a Kibbutz Jew, the personification of a British Jewish vision of Zionism. He represents the traditional ideal, from a British Jewish perspective, of a Jew living in Palestine; the ‘new Jew’ would be formed through hard, honest work on the land and not through the violence and corruption associated with city living. However, the use of language associated with the past and aging descriptions of Meier casts this vision of a Zionist utopia as out-dated and old-fashioned despite its aim of creating a ‘new Jew’. The influence of Meier over Evelyn and the mixture of sexual and patriarchal descriptions of him positions Meier as a new, alternative figure of male authority to Uncle Joe, whom she has just left. She then describes how:

And all this time I was noticing Meier. He was tough and thickset and he had little hair. The top of his head was brown, like his body. He wore old khaki shorts and a white singlet and leather sandals on his bare feet. The nails were like horn. Though he was just old enough to be my father I was sexually excited when I looked at him. He seemed powered, to me, by some internal electricity.<sup>57</sup>

In an attempt to arouse the romantic interest of Meier, Evelyn has a series of sexual encounters with boys who also live on the Kibbutz. They are notable not for their personal

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<sup>54</sup> Alex Danchev (ed), *100 Artists’ Manifestos: From the Futurists to the Stuckists* (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 2011), p 202.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 202 -208.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, p 202.

<sup>57</sup> Linda Grant, *When I Lived in Modern Times*, p 42.

significance but for what they represent. In particular, Gadi, to whom Evelyn, now known as Eve, loses her virginity, translates as Adam in Hebrew. This suggests an alternative extension of the imperial patriarchal narrative to one in which the 'new Jew' has reclaimed his rightful power over both Palestine and the Diaspora. Furthermore, this depiction of an alternative Garden of Eden suggests a recasting of the colonial family discourse. The Jews of the Kibbutz are reasserting their dominance over both the land and the history of exile from which they have returned as, at this point, Evelyn is representative of the diaspora Jew. In the Kibbutz, Evelyn is clearly distinct from the other girls resident there whilst simultaneously occupying the British Jewish imagined ideal of a Jew in Palestine, tending to the land and living in communal harmony. The encounter with Gadi is both a beginning and an end; as Evelyn enters womanhood, she leaves behind her status as the diaspora imagining of the 'new Jew' and instead embarks on a journey to help in the creation of an independent Jewish state. She reflects how "We stood up and I noticed that a little of my blood was spilled upon the ground of Palestine and had fertilised the earth of the Jewish national home. And that was it".

### 3.4 National Personifications

However, it through her meeting with Johnny that Evelyn's journey to assist in building a new Jewish state gains momentum. Nicknamed 'Johnny the Jew' by his former comrades in the British Army, Johnny is a Palestinian Jew who fought with the British against Nazism and is now a member of the *Irgun Zvai Leumi*. This reference to a shared past between Britain and the Jews of Palestine is significant as it acknowledges the presence of a British Jewish relationship within a colonial context, demonstrating a continued packaging of the situation in Palestine within an imperial patriarchal narrative, as previously outlined in Chapter Two. This is in contrast to the residents of the Kibbutz as their story of origin begins in Russia and Eastern Europe before moving straight onto Palestine, eliminating the role of Britain in helping to ensure Jewish survival, both in terms of providing refuge to immigrants and the Balfour Declaration of 1917. If the Kibbutz symbolized the out-dated British Jewish ideal of Zionism then Johnny represents the modern reality of the 'new Jew' and what it means to be Jewish in the Jewish homeland.

In contrast to this depiction of a capable, active young Jewish man, Inspector Bolton is the personification of Britain as the world's ageing imperial policeman. He is middle-aged and married, qualities which contribute to his particular role in the imperial patriarchal narrative of the novel. Inspector Bolton labels the Jews in Palestine as "troublemakers", suggesting they are

behaving like small, naughty children who require a stern approach.<sup>58</sup> Criticism of Grant's use of "wholesale traffic in stock characters" with regard to depictions of the British figures in Palestine has already been noted. However, these portrayals remain relevant to this thesis as they reinforce the presence of Britain as the imperial patriarch who is situated out of his time (metaphorically) and place (literally), thus seeming increasingly irrelevant to the contemporary world.

Depictions of German Jews, most notably through the character of Mr Blum, Evelyn's landlord and neighbour, appear to draw on some of the same themes as portrayals of the British ones. Mr Blum, Mrs Linz and the other German Jews with whom she comes into contact are presented as out-of-date, cold, un-genuine, old-fashioned and irrelevant to modern life. Even the interior decoration of Mrs Linz's apartment is lined in the style fashionable in previous decades, with "ugly German furniture".<sup>59</sup> Mr Blum in particular is almost portrayed as a caricature of the *Haskalah*, with humanity and emotion absent. In depicting German Jews in this manner, Grant furthers the implied presence of an imperial patriarchal narrative. Germany represents the extremes of imperialism and colonial envy, which led to the Holocaust, as well as those of the Jewish engagement with assimilation and enlightenment. By depicting the German Jews as old-fashioned and irrelevant to modern life, Grant ensures they are presented as out of place and time in the new world of Palestine, especially in Tel Aviv and despite their link with the origins of the city's Bauhaus architecture. Key to this portrayal is the suggestion that the German Jews (known as *Yekkes*), through their fierce rivalry with the Eastern Jews (known as *Ostjuden*), are defined only by their past experiences and thus they have little to offer the new Jewish state. In her review of the novel, Ruta expands on this observation, detailing how, "the reiterated barbs do serve to stress Grant's point that these German and Russian Jews are too mired in old feuds to recognize a new one".<sup>60</sup>

In contrast to these depictions of a past way of life, the portrayal of American characters serves as a metaphor for the ideal of American national identity based on the 'melting pot' myth of it being 'a land of dreams', a further demonstration of extraterritoriality extending from London to Palestine to America, as discussed in Chapter One. In this image, America serves as a land where identity is not fixed but open to possibility. Furthermore, this depiction serves to reflect the role of America, particularly the influence of American Jewry, in determining the future of Palestine and establishment of the State of Israel at this time. This is achieved by portraying an American Jewish couple as the embodiment of modern ideals, principles and revolution. They are

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid, p 191.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, p 116.

<sup>60</sup> Suzanne Ruta, 'The Newest Place in the World'.

against the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* as they are idealists. Reflecting on this sense of American idealism compared to the moral positions of the other nationalities she has met, Evelyn rhetorically asks,

To which camp did I belong? Not to theirs, though God knows I wanted to badly enough – the people-with-big-souls party who thought with their hearts and morals. I did not believe that the laws of Moses brought down from Mount Sinai were going to win us a country and even if they did I somehow doubted that we would be a light unto the nations. Not with Blum and Mrs Kulp and Mrs Linz in it, people who were there because they had no choice and if you asked them would rather be somewhere else. Nor was I enamoured of Mrs Bolton's lot, who were all shadow and no soul, who believed in nothing and for whom nothing was at stake, certainly not their own future and their children's future, if they ever had any...This left the Johnny scheme of things, those who had never entered as a diver into the unconscious world, the pragmatists...I chose Johnny's way in the end, the way of the bombs, the kidnapping and murder because I decided to throw my lot in with the tough Jews. We had our thinkers and now what we needed were fighters, Jews who scared the living daylights out of people.<sup>61</sup>

Significantly, both of the American Jewish couple are equal in terms of gender – although the woman is pregnant, this can be perceived as representing the future influence of America on the situation in Israel/Palestine.<sup>62</sup> That the couple are equal in terms of gender is emphasized by the fact that she married beneath her social station for love, rectifying the privileged position of hegemonic masculinity in a male dominated society. In contrast, at this juncture in the novel, Evelyn appears more pragmatic than previously, a development that alludes to the continual maturing of British Jews away from idealism at this time.

### 3.5 The Imperial Patriarchal Discourse

Considered as a whole, the interplay between these characters and the position at which they enter the novel symbolizes their role in the imperial patriarchal framework. Evelyn's time at the Kibbutz offers an alternative version of this imperial patriarchal narrative as Britain, in the history of the Kibbutz, as the protective parent is redundant, although the shared family past is once again established as Evelyn's grandparents were originally from the same areas as the founders.<sup>63</sup> However, without this protective parental influence, the Jews of the Kibbutz and the British Jewish Zionist imaginings of rural Jewish Palestine are presented as out-dated and unable to

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<sup>61</sup> Linda Grant, *When I Lived in Modern Times*, pp 165 – 166.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, p 165.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*, p 33.

thrive in the new world. These depictions of the Zionist ideal of rural Jewish Palestine as being welded to a past time and place are enhanced through the use of descriptive terms associated with the Holocaust. One reading of this technique is that the author is suggesting that the battle to survive in Palestine was of similar importance and magnitude as the Holocaust. However, a more complex interpretation is that it simultaneously signifies an attempt to break with the past whilst acknowledging a common history. The Holocaust is used as a symbol of the out-dated imperialism that allowed such events to happen in the first place and which, subsequently, it was believed would not permit their repetition. In this reading, trauma is essential for growth and new beginnings, a notion that is present throughout the novel.

However, it is through the various relationships between Evelyn and the main characters depicted that the personification of the colonial parent-child discourse is particularly evident. It has been noted by David Brauner that the contradictory protagonist in Grant's first novel, *The Cast Iron Shore*, "seems alarmingly subservient to, and dependent on, the men in her life, from her father, to her bisexual lover Stan...to her black lover Julius".<sup>64</sup> Subsequently, Grant's second novel, *When I Lived in Modern Times*, also appears to contain a female lead character whose interactions with a series of male figures serves as a vehicle against which she seeks to define herself. That Grant uses the male characters within her first two novels in this way suggests that she, at least partially, views the quest of (female) British Jews for a substantial communal identity to be one of seeking freedom from an overarching socio-political influence dominated by (male) ideologies. Grant has spoken of feeling a need "to escape the dire trap of Jewish daughterdom and womanhood" and that, as a result, it is only her that "represent[s] break with the past...there are no frustrated female scholars in my family; no women chafing against the restraints of Jewish womanhood, motherhood and family life, no maiden aunts".<sup>65</sup> Interestingly, it has been noted that, "Philip Roth has often been vilified for his portrait of the suffocating, infantilizing, emasculating oedipal Jewish Mother".<sup>66</sup>

Given Grant's personal views on feminism, and although she refutes the suggestion that she writes feminist fiction, it could be suggested that the presence of a domineering imperial patriarch is an attempt, at least subconsciously, to re-write the genre of Jewish writing by eliminating the stereotype of the overbearing Jewish mother often portrayed by her male contemporaries in a male dominant field. Instead, Grant creates a counterpart to Roth's 'Jewish

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<sup>64</sup> David Brauner, "Bellow at Your Elbow, Roth Breathing Down Your Neck: Gender and Ethnicity in Linda Grant and Bernice Rubens" in C. M. Tylee (ed.), *"In the Open": Jewish Women Writers and British Culture*. (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2006), pp. 96-109, p 105.

<sup>65</sup> Emma Parker, 'On Fiction, Femininity, and Fashion: an Interview with Linda Grant', p 128.

<sup>66</sup> David Brauner, "Bellow at Your Elbow, Roth Breathing Down Your Neck: Gender and Ethnicity in Linda Grant and Bernice Rubens", p 98.

Mother'; Evelyn is never free of the suffocating and infantilizing influence of the imperial patriarch throughout the majority of her life. It is only once she stops seeking fulfilment through men (and only once Israel has 'matured' past its early years of statehood) that she finds a (disillusioned) peace within herself. Evelyn finally finds evidence of her Jewish heritage once she stops seeking a patriarchal figure in her life.

However, that Grant uses Evelyn's relationships to portray the development of the imperial patriarchal through the personification of various religious and political allegiances reveals the British, as opposed to American, dimension of the literary environment in which she is writing. Britain is, after all, the original imperial patriarch; in this reading, Britain is cast as a hegemonic male in a similar manner to the image of John Bull as opposed to the female depiction of Britannia, portrayals which possess their own class, as well as gender, connotations, as outlined in Chapter One.<sup>67</sup> Hence, in *When I Lived in Modern Times* the original imperial patriarchal relationship between Uncle Joe and Evelyn is extended to include a series of romantic liaisons, with British Jewish ideals of Palestine and Patriotic Zionism replaced by a succession of male representations.

Maier signifies Evelyn's first romantic attachment; he is an unobtainable object of unrealistic and unsuitable affection. Evelyn, as the British Jewish ideal of the 'new Jew' is infatuated with the 'old', traditional idea of Zionism in Palestine and out-dated ideas of what it meant to be a Jew in the Jewish homeland. This is represented by Evelyn's infatuation with Maier on the Kibbutz and by her inability to make him respond to her as she would like. This symbolizes the British Jewish frustration with the, by 1946 increasingly seemingly unobtainable, ideal of Jews living peacefully, rurally and communally in Palestine; and, the impact this had on the British Jewish community's sense of identity. It also signals a disconnect between British Jews and Palestine, the later impact of which can be illustrated by Cooper and Morrison's observations on the unwillingness of this generation of British Jews to make *Aliyah*.<sup>68</sup>

Evelyn's sexual and romantic encounters with six Jewish boys in the Kibbutz in an attempt to get Maier to notice her symbolize attempts at compromise on the ideal of what it meant to be a Jew in the Jewish homeland and a slow, gradual awakening of identity based on a new reality. They represent a rite of passage and a growing self-awareness, correlating with both Evelyn's personal journey and the wider international situation at this time. Each sexual encounter brings Evelyn further away from the ideal of Patriotic Zionism and closer towards direct action to

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<sup>67</sup> See: Raphael Samuel (ed), *Patriotism: the Making and Unmaking of British National Identity* (London: Routledge, 1989).

<sup>68</sup> Howard Cooper and Paul Morrison, *A Sense of Belonging: Dilemmas of British Jewish Identity*, p 114.

securing an independent Jewish state. This process is reflective of the radicalising impact of the Holocaust upon British Jewish visions of Zionism and attitudes towards Palestine. Johnny's entrance into Evelyn's life after she had given up on the Kibbutz signifies the provision of an alternative to the Zionist ideal of the 'new Jew' who tends the land and the international political implications of this.

Johnny is Evelyn's first love, a 'bad romance' who 'gets her into trouble'. He represents a reality of the situation in late Mandate Palestine and is used by the author to suggest that the flirtation of certain segments of the British Jewish community, such as the Revisionist Zionists in British Jewry as represented by Greenberg and *The Jewish Standard*, outlined in Chapter Two, with those groups using violence to attain an independent Jewish state was misguided. As with all 'bad romances', the unimportance of the subordinate, usually female, character to the fate of the dominant, usually male, character is alluded to throughout the novel. In a direct reference to the presence of an imperial patriarchal narrative Evelyn states that, "The two-thousand-year-old exile had its beloved child, our city, Tel Aviv, and I was going to stay here and watch it grow up".<sup>69</sup> The use of language here suggests a distancing of Evelyn from the conception and birth of the child of Jewish culture, Tel Aviv. In this recasting of the colonial parent-child discourse, Britain as the facilitator of Jewish civilisation in Palestine is replaced by the Jews resident there prior to the destruction of the Second Temple, as they are the ancestors to the modern city. This transformation of the original dynamic reflects the impotence of British Jewry in the birth and conception of modern Israel as despite their belief in a version of history in which they were key in helping to achieve this, the reality is somewhat different.

Furthermore, Grant's portrayal of Tel Aviv alludes to a complex perception of the status of the city within both British and British Jewish histories. The situating of Tel Aviv as a key location within the novel illustrates its place within both sets of interlinked pasts. In his exploration of Tel Aviv, Joachim Schlör explains how, "The story of the British in Palestine is a strange one. It runs alongside the story in which Tel Aviv, the unexpected city, became the centre of a society on its way to becoming a state, and represents, as it were, the international, foreign-policy aspect of the narrative of Tel Aviv".<sup>70</sup> Importantly Grant uses the placing of Evelyn in Tel Aviv to demonstrate a belief in this narrative. The modern, white, Bauhaus architecture amongst which Evelyn finds herself is employed by Grant as a metaphor for the creation of a new state, untainted by the past. According to Schlör, Tel Aviv was, after all, "ahead of the country, an apt image for the actual political situation in Palestine. It was not just that Tel Aviv was more highly developed than other

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<sup>69</sup> Linda Grant, *When I Lived in Modern Times*, p 167.

<sup>70</sup> Joachim Schlör, *Tel Aviv: from Dream to City* (London: Reaktion, 1999), p 278.

places, not just that it had a dynamic of its own and a way peculiar to itself, which could not be the British way but was instead the way of the future; Tel Aviv was already Israel, before Israel existed".<sup>71</sup> Furthermore, Grant's depiction of Evelyn in Tel Aviv substantiates Gilbert's observation that the "idea of Jews as an innately cosmopolitan people who can only belong in the shifting and impermanent environs of a city...is central to a number of Linda Grant's journalistic essays and her novels".<sup>72</sup> Thus, Grant deliberately employs the cityscape of Tel Aviv to reflect Evelyn's own "shifting" sense of self.<sup>73</sup> Ruta believes that the descriptive passages of Tel Aviv within the novel "inspire... Grant's most vital, original writing, the pages where she transcends reportage and approaches myth".<sup>74</sup>

However, this portrayal is not without complications, particularly in relation to the tension between Grant's depiction of *Ostjuden*, old-fashioned Eastern European Jews, and the modern Bauhaus city of Tel Aviv. Evelyn describes how during an afternoon walk with Johnny,

he showed me the teeming life of the white city, the garment district where he worked and where the earliest examples of Bauhaus buildings could be found, before the architects had figured out a way of adapting them to the climate... Walking beside Johnny I noticed how gradually the architecture changed and stopped being quite so modern and the style and idioms of the construction became completely unrecognisable to someone like me who had only ever seen the Georgian terraces of London, or the red-brick rows of Victorian villas at Hammersmith or, at the outer limits of my childhood world, the pre-war red-roofed semi-detached houses that frayed the edges of London, each with its own garden, front and back. Because I was English and not American, came from a past with a continuous past, I did not understand then that when immigrants settle, they try to rebuild the land of their origins. These buildings, some of the earliest in the city, before the big population explosion of the 1930s, grew out of a yearning to construct Odessa and Moscow and Warsaw, and once inside them to try and forget the perpetual blue skies and the yellow, implacable sun.<sup>75</sup>

Thus, as a subsequence of casting Tel Aviv as the modern future, those Jews who came before (and after) and who do not share this Bauhaus vision of the *Yekkes*, notably the *Ostjuden*, are relegated to the past. Evelyn's description of seeing the older style buildings shortly before her first encounter with Manshieh, the Arab quarter at the boundary of Tel Aviv and Jaffa, only serves

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid, p 301.

<sup>72</sup> Ruth Gilbert, *Writing Jewish: Contemporary British-Jewish Literature since 1990*, p 65.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, p 65.

<sup>74</sup> Suzanne Ruta, 'The Newest Place in the World'.

<sup>75</sup> Linda Grant, *When I Lived in Modern Times*, pp 179 – 180.

to increase this perception. She states how, “it frightened me. It was full of disease and squalor and it was like a small cancerous sore on the free and healthy body of the Jewish city”.<sup>76</sup> Grant’s correlation between a tainted past and diseased present, as symbolized by both the architecture and attitudes of the *Ostjuden*, is hence evident. Significantly, it appears that this statement can also be applied to Grant’s portrayal of the Arabs in her novel. The contrast between descriptions of “the white city” of Tel Aviv and the “dangerous and dirty” Manshieh, create a presentation of the Arab population as backward and out of place in such close proximity to a modern city.<sup>77</sup> The focus of Manshieh as a “slum” and as the only Arab area of residence detailed in comparison the frequent emphasis on the endeavours of Tel Aviv suggests that Grant has a judgmental perception of who ‘deserves’ the land according to who makes the ‘best’ use of it, a theme which will be explored further in Peter Kominsky’s *The Promise* in the next chapter.

These depictions of the various symbolic relationships between the main characters raise the question of how the British in Palestine are portrayed within the novel. They are, on the whole, presented as irrelevant nuisances whose days are numbered and who are ill-suited to not only Palestine in the present but also in the future. The British soldiers and administration are described as unsuited to the climate as they get sunburnt easily and as adhering to a set of social rules of conduct that Evelyn now finds out-dated and irrelevant in the modern city of Tel Aviv. The British administration staff and their families serve only as a way for Evelyn to idly pass lazy afternoons on the beach, outings that remind her of holidays with her Mother in Brighton. This further enhances the portrayal of the British as belonging to a past time and place, suggesting that Palestine is not truly theirs whilst reinforcing the notion of a shared past. Whilst this is a point that has been mentioned by reviewers of the novel, it has yet to be fully explored.

Crucially, the British soldiers and administration present on these afternoons at the beach are not portrayed as significant due to their absence from the main imperial patriarchal narrative. If the father figure of the imperial patriarch has been replaced by a series of male suitors, then none of the British soldiers and administration possess any chance of a dominant influence over Evelyn as they are all married, some with their wives present. They are omitted from the competition for dominant male and are thus not part of a hegemonic masculinity. This absence is alluded to by suggestions that these British soldiers and administration staff did not contribute to the war effort in any combative roles; they gave out parking tickets, completed paperwork and filed burglary reports. In contrast to the descriptions of Johnny as fighting for Jewish survival, first against the Nazis and then against the British in Palestine, depictions of the British male

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid, p 180.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

characters seem to suggest effeminacy. Such a technique signifies the impotence of the British in the international political decisions being made on Palestine at this time.

However, the exception to this rule regarding the portrayal of the British male in Palestine is Inspector Bolton. Cast in a final heroic role, through ensuring Evelyn is able to leave Palestine safely, Inspector Bolton becomes the embodiment of the imperial patriarch. Prior to this, Evelyn prefers the virility of youth (Johnny) to the frailty of old age. She welcomes the change(s) in patriarchs that results in an emasculation of the previous dominant male figure necessary to generate a new masculinity. Similarly to Kosminsky's Erin, to be explored in the next chapter, Evelyn has not yet learnt to see beyond the wrinkles and fragility of old age. She perceives Britain as outdated and in the past whilst Palestine is young and the future, similarly to the image presented earlier in this thesis. However, Johnny too is rendered impotent to help Evelyn as he is in prison and so the older generation patriarch uses his experience to assist her instead. Once again revealing Grant's tendency to create women unduly influenced by father figures, Evelyn's life stages are thus bounded by the actions of the influential male in her life - despite her quest for independence.

### 3.6 Gender

The presence of gendered descriptions of those characters who influence Evelyn's behaviour to enhance a subconscious imperial patriarchal discourse are particularly significant when considered in conjunction with Evans' theory, as previously explored in Chapter Two, that the use of gender can be deliberately employed as a signifier for revolution. According to his research on the Algerian War, Evans believes that by focusing on the role of women in conjunction with use of the word 'revolution', the fight against colonialism was depicted as the creation of a new, completely reinvented society, as demonstrated by its gender equality.<sup>78</sup> Initially, depictions of Evelyn within *When I Lived in Modern Times* do not exhibit the use of gender in this way. That this technique does not initially appear essential to the development of the novel is, perhaps, a result of Grant's own writing style. Although she does not consider her work to be feminist fiction, Grant admits that her "books are completely saturated with a feminist consciousness and are written out of a life that has been shaped by feminism".<sup>79</sup> Furthermore, the majority of Grant's fiction work tends to contain a female narrator based, at least partially, on her own experiences as a woman. The exception to this rule is Joseph, the dual narrator in *Still Here*. Reflecting on the experience of writing in a male voice, Grant has stated that "I don't see myself switching to a male

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<sup>78</sup> Martin Evans, *The Memory of Resistance: French opposition to the Algerian War (1954-1962)*, p 191.

<sup>79</sup> Emma Parker, 'On Fiction, Femininity, and Fashion: an Interview with Linda Grant', p 131.

narrator again, although I don't rule it out...I find the first person feminine the natural default narrative voice for telling a story...because it's a way of writing from inside myself. My novels are autobiographical in the sense that I draw on elements and characteristics of my identity, but they're not about me".<sup>80</sup>

However, although the portrayal of Evelyn may not singularly signify revolution, throughout the novel gender is used as an indicator of the evolution of both Evelyn's personal journey within the imperial patriarchal narrative and the representational relationship of Britain with Zionism and Palestine. Thus, upon her arrival at the Jewish Agency in Palestine, it is evident that Evelyn, despite her new surroundings is still harbouring a vision of Zionism in Palestine influenced more by the British Jewish imagination than the reality. She describes how "Finally two people turned up, a man and a girl. She had a hard, sunburned body and her legs were covered with long, black hairs. When she lifted her hand in greeting I could see even more coarse, dark hair in her armpits. I was revolted. Hairy Hebrew girl".<sup>81</sup> This statement is juxtaposed with Evelyn's proud declaration a few lines earlier that she is a hairdresser, a trade that can be seen as ensuring women are presented in an acceptable manner as determined by the dominant male in society.<sup>82</sup> Evelyn's attachment to traditional gender models can be read as signifying the impact of her British Jewish upbringing on her ideas of what it meant to be a 'new Jew'. The authority of this part of Evelyn's identity on her ideal of Palestine implies the presence of a family discourse between Britain and Palestine whereby one is greatly influenced by the other due to their close relationship.

In contrast with the place of the Kibbutz in the imperial patriarchal framework indicating that it symbolizes an out-dated ideal of Zionism, the descriptive use of gender suggests that, despite this, it was actually an extremely revolutionary concept. On arrival at the Kibbutz, Evelyn describes how "My clothes were taken away and I was issued with a wardrobe pared down to a utilitarian simplicity...We looked anonymous, all of us, like so many overalled factory hands. Gender was dissolved, annihilated".<sup>83</sup> In these first, idealised, impressions of the Kibbutz, gender differences are erased in the creation of a new, equal society where there are no divisions between people regardless of age, gender, or ethnicity.

However, Evelyn remains separate from this ideal, as by the time her physical appearance resembles that of the other girls, she has utilised her feminine appeal in an attempt to make Maier jealous and has thus begun a process of disillusionment with the Kibbutz itself. By using gender in this way, Grant indicates that, in hindsight, the reality of the state of Israel has not fully

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid, p 132.

<sup>81</sup> Linda Grant, *When I Lived in Modern Times*, p 32.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, p 32.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, p 34

embraced the revolutionary idealism of the early Mandate visions of Zionism. It suggests that although the ideal of the Kibbutz seemed out-dated and ill suited to the reality of 1946, the alternative violent pragmatism was not a better choice.

This reflective commentary on the political situation in Mandate Palestine and the state of Israel is further enhanced by the use of gender in the relationship between Johnny and Evelyn. Despite both sharing the same dream of creating a new, revolutionary society, their relationship remains an unequal one, with Johnny in the role of the hegemonic male and Evelyn as the traditionally submissive female; in this scenario, she is emphasized femininity.<sup>84</sup> Johnny believes that there is a “natural” way to be a woman, that does not involve combative actions or embodying anything but a sanitized vision of femininity (for example, he stayed away from Evelyn “when he knew that the curse was due. The smell of women’s blood offended him”).<sup>85</sup> This perspective is clearly articulated by Evelyn stating that,

Johnny had said there was a natural way to be a man and a natural way to be a woman. He made me want to be a natural girl, as Mrs Linz was not. Was it surprising, I thought contemptuously, that her husband had raped her, trying to turn her back into a woman instead of the weird hybrid thing she had become?<sup>86</sup>

Interestingly, whilst Johnny talks about being a “woman”, Evelyn refers to being a “girl”. In subconsciously assigning Evelyn two different identities based on age, the presence of an imperial patriarchal discourse is reinforced, as detailed in Chapter Two. By calling herself a “girl”, Evelyn is situating her relationship with Johnny within a patriarchal narrative; she feels inferior to her alternative figure of male imperial authority. Yet, Evelyn also imbibes her status with a revolutionary hope, as she is young and full of possibility for a new future whereas Mrs Linz is ‘spoiled’ by her engagement with an imperial past. Additionally, the typically masculine notion that violence has a redemptive and naturally restoring quality is alluded to throughout the novel. The comment regarding Mrs Linz is particularly significant as this violent episode resulted in her bearing a much-loved child, the beginning of future generations of Jewry. Furthermore, the restorative power of violence is additionally substantiated by its close proximity to Johnny’s statement of belief that, “there is nothing so transforming as a bomb. If you want to reinvent a city you put a bomb in it. Everything will be flattened and you can start again from scratch. You can impose any dream you like on a bomb site”.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> R. W. Connell, “Hegemonic Masculinity”, p 61.

<sup>85</sup> Linda Grant, *When I Lived in Modern Times*, p 201; *Ibid*, p 169.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid*, p 201.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid*, p 198.

Significantly, this casting of Johnny as the ultimate hegemonic male strengthens his position during his relationship with Evelyn as an alternative colonial father figure. Johnny's protective role as the imperial patriarchal figure who has a duty to look after his ward of care is clear when he tells Evelyn that "Don't worry, I won't let any harm come to you". This conversation between Johnny and Evelyn centres upon colonial power and de-colonisation within the context of Palestine's future, thus cementing his position within the imperial patriarchal discourse. Although, it is also significant that, in the end, Johnny is unable to fulfil this promise and his basic duty of care towards Evelyn.

If on the Kibbutz gender was equal yet the dream of the kibbutz was deemed old-fashioned romanticism then the unequal gender relationship between Johnny and Evelyn represents Evelyn's newfound direction away from idealism and towards pragmatism. Once again, this symbolizes the shift in British Jewish attitudes towards Zionism from the Kibbutz dream to a more modern pragmatism of a new, independent nation state. Simultaneously it also represents the presence of a continuous discord between British Jewish perceptions of the situation in Palestine and the reality. Despite the employment of a gendered narrative in which Johnny occupies the role of the imperial patriarch, Evelyn's assertion that "Like it or not, Johnny and I were both part of an army, illicit but powerful...A people's army which operated inside what we took to be everyday life and for such a war weren't women ideally placed to play our role?" indicates a fundamental difference in how they each viewed the situation.<sup>88</sup> As Evelyn is symbolic of the British Jewish imagining of the 'new Jew', it is evident that there exists a difference between British Jewish perceptions of what it meant to be a 'new Jew' in Palestine and the reality of the situation.

Thus, even though several minor character descriptions seem to suggest that gender is, in fact, used to denote attempts at creating a new, revolutionary society where everyone is equal, the overarching imperial patriarchal narrative reinforces gender stereotypes. The novel is essentially the story of a girl seeking independence (but, still, being defined by male figures) as she matures, which is used as a metaphor for the relationship of the British Jewish community with Palestine, Israel and Zionism as signified through the colonial parent-child discourse. This is a narrative that, ultimately, is triumphant as it is Inspector Bolton who rescues Evelyn from Palestine, alone and pregnant with Johnny's child, on the eve of Jewish independence. Evelyn fails to find her full independence or to embody the hope for a new, equal, revolutionary society and is instead saved by somebody of a greater social status than her original protector, Uncle Joe; Britain as the imperial policeman of the world is the saviour of not only the 'new Jew' of Anglo-

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<sup>88</sup> *Ibid*, p 203.

Jewry's imagination but of future generations too. The final success of Britain as the colonial patriarch suggests that Grant does not conceive of British Jews and Britain as having achieved independence from each other nor that period of history.

The significance of the imperial patriarch upon the Evelyn and Johnny is further illustrated by an exploration of gender within the concept of the body politic, as previously outlined in Chapter One by Butler.<sup>89</sup> An important development, Evelyn's pregnancy with Johnny's child can be read as a consequence of too much engagement with religious extremism. Evelyn is thus going to suffer the (self-inflicted) pain of labour before being granted redemption in the form of a child as a symbol of and literal hope for the future. In this scenario, Evelyn's pregnancy is used to denote a radical break with her current situation, literally forcing a break with the impact of too much religious political philosophy. It inserts some hope for redemption, as after the initial pain, there will be an opportunity for a different future. The creation of a new child almost suggests that the pain of radicalisation is a rite of passage that must be endured to achieve a brighter future. The use of the body politic within Evelyn's narrative signifies an absence of influential and effective hegemonic masculinity at that stage in the discourse as any personification of it, such as the imperial patriarch – or even, possibly Johnny, is completely absent. However, Johnny status as a version of (acting) hegemonic masculinity is complex. According to application of Butler's theory, the overriding power base of the hegemonic heterosexual masculinity of the imperial patriarch is reinforced by a series of denials and exclusions in all three texts, which as part of the body politic signify absence.<sup>90</sup> Johnny's exclusion of Evelyn from his personal life at all times and his self-inflicted exclusion during her monthly menstruation, in addition to sending Evelyn into actual exclusion (both physically and socially) during her time in hiding demonstrates a level of traditional hegemonic masculinity through the use of denials to substantiate his power over her. Although, as Johnny remains absent and is denied a future with Evelyn during the final exclusion, his masculine authority does not seem so complete, especially as Inspector Bolton performs the role of the hegemonic male in the end. Furthermore, as Johnny uses violence as his only source of power, he cannot be a true version of hegemonic masculinity.

### 3.7 Repetition

It is through the use of repetitions as a theme in the novel, however, that the presence of an imperial patriarchal framework based on hegemonic masculinity is at its most significant. The use of repetitions as a literary device occurs at key moments in the narrative and includes references

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<sup>89</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, P 135.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

to music, poetry, the blue of the sky during overheard arguments and the power of violence and blood, as previously mentioned. That the imperial patriarchal discourse is based upon a seemingly necessary imbalance of power is alluded to through the repetition of the notion that violence and the resulting blood can possess a rejuvenating quality. In her first sexual encounter, as previously mentioned, Evelyn notes how some of her blood nourished the soil of Palestine, whilst the rape of Mrs Linz results in a child, the embodiment of Jewish continuity and survival. Johnny also believes that violence can be restorative, as demonstrated by his previously quoted belief about the cleansing power of a bomb.<sup>91</sup> These examples all suggest that violence is necessary to ensure a break with the past that will allow the future to grow.

However, it is within the character of Mrs Linz that the structure of an imperial patriarchal narrative is especially recurrent. In telling her life story, Mrs Linz repeats, both as a whole and in part, the idea of a relationship with a dominant male within a colonial context. Having married a Jewish male from Salonika, Mrs Linz is raped by her husband before leaving him despite being then being pregnant. Describing how, “It was only when the Ottoman empire was falling apart that the Salonikans entered into modern life and developed a European intelligentsia” before being “largely exterminated” after 1939, Mrs Linz appears to tell an alternative version of the story that would eventually become Evelyn’s. Defending her decision to continue with the pregnancy, Mrs Linz explains that “this child was something I had made out of my own flesh and blood and why would I want to destroy something I had created?”<sup>92</sup> It thus provides a further reflection for Evelyn’s quest for independence and as an indicator of the future; another example of Butler’s concept of the body politic<sup>93</sup>.

That the situation of Evelyn, and the British Jewish ideal of the ‘new Jew’ which she represents, is echoed throughout the novel by different techniques is further substantiated by the use of a piece of classical music. During an afternoon with her landlord neighbour, Mr Blum, Evelyn listens to *Verklarte Nacht* by Arnold Schoenberg, itself inspired by a poem written by Richard Dehmel.<sup>94</sup> The piece of music affects Evelyn very deeply and makes her weep. In being told the story behind the music, the reader is aware of its possibility as an analogy for Evelyn’s current situation and the larger metaphor of the struggle for an independent Jewish state in Palestine. In this reading of the literary devices employed by Grant, Evelyn has gone from the controlling influence of the father figure of Uncle Joe to that of Johnny. Similarly, the struggle for an independent Jewish state has gone from being subjected to the imperial patriarchal narrative

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<sup>91</sup> Linda Grant, *When I Lived in Modern Times*, p 198.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid*, p 173.

<sup>93</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, P 135.

<sup>94</sup> Linda Grant, *When I Lived in Modern Times*, p 172 – 173.

of Christian colonialism, which resulted in the Second World War and Holocaust, to trying to replicate their own nation state in Palestine, as symbolized by the authority of the personification of Johnny as the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* over that of Evelyn as the British Jewish vision of the 'new Jew'. The suggestion that *the Irgun Zvai Leumi* was behaving just as poorly as the British is recurrent throughout the novel. This is evident through the language chosen to describe how the *Irgun Zvai Leumi*, in addition to some segments of the Jewish population, viewed the Arab community, as it echoes that used by the Nazi authorities, and subsequently some British soldiers as detailed in Chapter Two, in reference to the Jews. For example, in response to Evelyn asking who lives in "the slums", Johnny replies that it is "the usual mixture. Arabs...It's dangerous and dirty...during the war they had cases of bubonic plague. It's a cesspit. One day we will raze it to the ground".<sup>95</sup> As the novel proceeds, the Arab population of Palestine take the position of the Jews in a new imagining of the imperial patriarchal discourse. By the end of the novel, Evelyn's adult daughter, Naomi, quizzes an older Mrs Linz, asking,

do you not understand that you were doing *exactly* the same thing as the British?...Colonialism assumed that it was bringing enlightenment to benighted peoples. You Zionists took exactly the same attitude to the Arab population, and of course to the Jews from North Africa and the East who followed. Your ideas are inherently colonial.<sup>96</sup>

The presentation of a new, imperial dynamic whereby Israel, and in this case those who are helping to construct the new nation state, are now a colonial power is a key trait of post-colonial theory. However, it has been increasingly argued that to view the state of Israel through the framework of post-colonialism is anti-Semitic. Efraim Sicher explains how,

ideological bias and political activism work to delegitimize the State of Israel by maligning Israel and Zionism in mainstream British public discourse. Postcolonial theory is one weight against any objective treatment of the Jewish state. The demonization of Israel in the press draws on conspiracy theories familiar from anti-Semitic tropes.<sup>97</sup>

In the context of this chapter, Sicher's argument possesses its most significance when considered in conjunction with Grant's remarks that,

postcolonial theory is problematic for any understanding of Jewish writing, history or cultural experience because Jews have not been colonised as commonly understood, but they are regarded as a coloniser, despite not having the advantages of being part of

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid, p 180.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid, p 252.

<sup>97</sup> Efraim Sicher, *Beyond Marginality: Anglo-Jewish Literature after the Holocaust*, p 1.

### Chapter 3

a first world colonising nation. Postcolonialism overlooks a long history of persecution and genocide – it doesn't have a place for Jewish experience and doesn't have anything to say about me other than to point an accusing finger.<sup>98</sup>

Thus, regardless of the different politics of Sicher and Grant, it is notable that they both share a common consensus regarding the application of post-colonial theory to Israel.

Yet, this raises the question of what the presentation of the Arab population of Palestine/Israel in *When I Lived in Modern Times* means for Grant's particular British Jewish view of the Palestine Mandate and subsequent Israeli history. One reading could be that it demonstrates the overarching influence of 'modern' British notions of identity and perceptions of history on the British Jewish vision of the recent past. According to Calder's research on 'The Myth of the Blitz', the internment of 'enemy aliens' in 1940 provoked a national outcry that was essential to the myth making process.<sup>99</sup> This short-lived episode was symbolic of the decency and traditional values of liberty that characterized the ultimate triumph over adversity of the British in the Second World War; key principles of national identity that were to be upheld even at the toughest of times. The linkage between concepts essential to Calder's 'Blitz Myth' and Anglo-Jewry's relationship with the state of Israel is highlighted by Cooper and Morrison, who detail how,

As the seventies went on, British Jews became to realise that their pride in Israel was double-edged. While Israel was paragon of the fortitude and resourcefulness of the plucky underdog – so beloved by the British – Jews here could retain their innocence. But as Israel began to lose some of its moral stature in the eyes of the world, we British Jews began to experience a deep confusion.<sup>100</sup>

Furthermore, identification with the internal 'other' can be suggested to be a key communal British Jewish trait. Cooper and Morrison have declared that following the 1973 Yom Kippur War, the British Jewish community "knew that now the oppressed were the Palestinians".<sup>101</sup> Thus, rather than signalling a belief in post-colonial theory or a demonstration of its application to fiction, the role and discussion of Palestinians within *When I Lived in Modern Times* highlights the predominant presence of Grant's uniquely British Jewish vision of the modern past upon the authorship.

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<sup>98</sup> Emma Parker, "Linda Grant", p 32.

<sup>99</sup> Angus Calder, *The Myth of the Blitz* (London: Cape, 1991), p 117.

<sup>100</sup> Howard Cooper and Paul Morrison, *A Sense of Belonging: Dilemmas of British Jewish Identity*, p 117.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

In contrast, the employment of repetitions as an overarching theme in the book provides parallels with and alludes to a wider Jewish, not just specifically British Jewish, view of current events fitting within a set template of the past. During her time hiding from the British police, Evelyn experiences her own 'exile', as everything is 'alien' to her – the people, the smells, the environment. She is also isolated from the rest of her world, including, eventually, Johnny. It is during this time that she learns that Johnny has been arrested and sentenced to death, which serves as a second tragedy after the death of her Mother. This reading represents a continuation of the way in which Jews viewed the past as a series of repetitions. Focusing on analysis of the one reference to the Holocaust in Yerushalmi's *Zakhor*, Rosenfeld suggests that Jewish memory continues to have a specific Jewish theme, one dominated by a Medieval response to the Holocaust. He states that,

Drawing on Zakhor's own core thesis, one could possibly argue that, since 1945, many Jews have responded to the Holocaust by fashioning a secularized version of the religiously rooted, archetypal view of history identified by Yerushalmi as so widely embraced by their coreligionists in the premodern era. Just as Medieval Jews interpreted the events that befell them in typological form through the prism of preexisting historical precedents, Jews in the postwar world have repeatedly perceived the unfolding of contemporary history through the traumatic paradigm of the Holocaust.<sup>102</sup>

So, if this theory is extended to include events not only in *When I Lived in Modern Times* but also from before it then it can be argued that, as the past is viewed by Jews as a series of repetitions, then the original Holocaust metaphor of the death of Evelyn's Mother is, in fact, representative of the destruction of the Second Temple. The journey to and subsequent arrival in Palestine of Evelyn therefore correlates with the exile of the Jews into the Diaspora. It is interesting that in this model arrival to Palestine equates with the exile of the Diaspora Jews and is thus not a homecoming, revealing Grant's British Jewish dynamic to this re-interpretation of Jewish history whereby, ultimately, Britain and British Jewry as part of this, are the saviour of the 'new Jew' and not Israel. This confirms that Grant may view not only the Mandate, but all Jewish history through an imperial patriarchal framework. Evelyn's exile from Johnny can therefore be seen as the exiled refugee status of European Jewry in the 1930s and 1940s, with Johnny's sentence of death being representative of Hitler's wish to destroy all Jews. This reading is supported by the fact that it is at this juncture that Evelyn finds out that she is pregnant with Johnny's child; the near death of European Jewry has led to their re-conception in Palestine.

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<sup>102</sup> Gavriel David Rosenfeld, "A Flawed Prophecy? Zakhor, the Memory Boom, and the Holocaust", p 515.

Significantly, Inspector Bolton and his wife rescue Evelyn from this period of 'exile', thus the original imperial patriarch of the father figure has saved the wayward child, ensuring the security and survival of the family's future both metaphorically and literally, as Evelyn is pregnant with the next generation. However, as Inspector Bolton is representative of British imperialism and is not part of the Jewish community, there exists further meaning within this dynamic. Evelyn's rescue from Palestine can be perceived as part of a wider discourse of imperial patriarchy that utilizes the Jewish notion of history as repetition – in this reading Inspector Bolton's actions are symbolic of Britain saving the Jews of Europe from the Holocaust, which hence ensured the survival of future generations, similarly to the argument presented in Chapter Two. Thus, in this alternative interpretation of the novel, the narrative is not just the story of an imperial patriarchal relationship as experienced by a girl living through history nor is it just a symbolic representation of that whole era of modern politics. It is, in fact, representative of the entirety of Jewish history and experience since the destruction of the Second Temple.

### 3.8 British Jewish Visions

The novel does not, simply, limit its comment on Jewish history and memory to theoretical allusions to notions of imperialism. By having a British Jewish author who casts a British Jewish character at its narrative centre, the novel clearly displays several key observations by Grant about British Jewish identity and its relationship with the past. Grant's most striking interpretation regarding British Jewish identity is that it only seems to be defined in the novel when in opposition to something else. Evelyn, as the British Jewish imagining of the 'new Jew', adapts her character to suit what other people and different situations demand of her. This technique is most obviously evident through changes to Evelyn's physical appearance, a technique that indicates a correlating emotional and psychological alteration in her attitude and perception. She leaves Britain as 'Evelyn' and arrives at the Kibbutz as 'Eve', where her physical appearance changes so she looks less like a newly arrived Briton and more like a Palestinian Jew. She describes how upon entering the Kibbutz "My clothes were taken away and I was issued with a wardrobe paired down to utilitarian simplicity...We looked anonymous, all of us, Gender was dissolved, annihilated...I was Eve".<sup>103</sup> After meeting Johnny for the first time and her arrival in Tel Aviv, she dyes her dark hair blonde and acquires a British alias, Priscilla Jones. In each new situation, Evelyn adapts her outlook, actions and attitude in response to the geographical and social requirements of that environment.

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<sup>103</sup> Linda Grant, *When I Lived in Modern Times*, p 34 – 35.

As Evelyn is representative of the vision of the 'new Jew', this ability to alter her position within a changing socio-political situation could be read as being representative of the fluidity of British Jews in responding to Zionism, both at the time and since. It could also indicate the continuous impact of anti-Semitism on how British Jews such as Grant perceive identity, as being defined only in response to an opposing 'other' is a key trait of anti-Semitism, suggesting that this view has been internalised to a degree. According to Gilbert,

Grant's narrative explores and to an extent embraces the ambiguous position of the Jew at this point of British and Palestinian history. As she narrates the story of Evelyn's splintered identification, Grant also suggests that affiliations and loyalties, like subjectivities, are formed through multiple and sometimes contradictory points of connection. Evelyn is a harsh, brusque and arguably dislikable character. She is, by her own admission shifty, untrustworthy, and even treacherous. So, in this respect, she embodies many of the things that the colonial imagination has feared about colonial subjects. She cannot be trusted. She might not be what she seems.<sup>104</sup>

The ability of Evelyn to alter her personality depending on her environment has been noted in several reviews, resulting in negative comments regarding her vacant and distant character. Once again, similarities with Grant's other work, particularly *The Cast Iron Shore*, are apparent. Discussing the central figure in the *The Cast Iron Shore* Brauner describes how

for all the incident and action packed into her life story, there is a hollowness at the core of Grant's representation of Sybil Ross. There is something in her that goes beyond the natural desire to fit in, to belong, something about Sybil's ability to adapt herself to her environment that approaches a Zelig-like urge towards complete assimilation.<sup>105</sup>

According to Brauner, such "ambivalence towards her own...Jewish identity is...classic Philip Roth territory...but Grant deliberately avoids exploring this ambivalence in any detail".<sup>106</sup> Considering the similarities between the two female lead characters, Sybil and Evelyn, it seems that the creation of a key figure that alludes to the vague template of the 'wandering Jew' is a trademark of Grant's writing style. That these characters do not seem to fully engage with the questions of self and communal identity present in the novels suggests that they are, to a degree, influenced by notions of anti-Semitism and assimilation rather than an openness and inquisitiveness to an exploration of the ideas of individual and ethno-religious personality.

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<sup>104</sup> Ruth Gilbert, *Writing Jewish: Contemporary British-Jewish Literature since 1990*, p 95.

<sup>105</sup> David Brauner, "Bellow at Your Elbow, Roth Breathing Down Your Neck: Gender and Ethnicity in Linda Grant and Bernice Rubens", p 105.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid* p 104.

It is therefore interesting that Evelyn casts Johnny as “the new Jew”.<sup>107</sup> Johnny remains an even greater mystery than Evelyn throughout the majority of the novel. Despite claiming several times that, “I know who I am”, Johnny only seems to have a firm identity when he is acting under disguise in response to other people, during which he always acts within the boundaries of their expectation.<sup>108</sup> For example, when he meets a British corporal, he too becomes an off-duty British soldier waiting to be de-commissioned so as to not arouse suspicion, instead appearing safe and familiar.<sup>109</sup> Gilbert has also identified how, despite this, and “Unlike Evelyn, who sees herself as being a kind of modernist portrait, fragmented, discontinuous and relative, Johnny is confident that he knows exactly who he is”.<sup>110</sup> It is only towards the end of the novel that some of Johnny’s mystique is erased as his real name is given away as Efraim. It could be argued that both the characterisation of Evelyn and her positioning of a man as mysterious as Johnny as “the new Jew” indicates Grant’s subconscious belief that this new form of Jewish identity from which the state of Israel was derived from the continued impact of anti-Semitism. Thus, it is not a true reflection of the ideal of a Jewish nation but one tainted by its engagement with Christian imperialism.

This implied notion of confusion regarding, and distance from, British Jewish interpretations of Jewish identity is further alluded to by Evelyn’s awareness that she remains a mystery to even herself. The author introduces this idea towards the beginning of the novel, suggesting that Evelyn feels out of place in both Britain and within herself as she “walked among them and they thought that they knew me, but they understood nothing at all. It was *me* that understood, the spy in their midst”.<sup>111</sup> However, Evelyn does not become any less of a “spy” during her time in Palestine, indicating a continuing failure to find a distinct sense of personal and communal identity that is not based on the male influence. As noted, the novel has been criticised for its limited character portrayals, particularly the perceived inauthenticity of Evelyn. However rather than being a failure of authorship, the vague nature of Evelyn’s character appears to be a deliberate act designed to allow Grant to make a wider point about Jewish, specifically British Jewish, communal identity following the establishment of the state of Israel.

In an analogy for post-Holocaust Jews, that Evelyn remains a mystery to herself throughout the novel is clearly illustrated by the fact that she is not even sure of her past; she does not know the identity of her absent father nor that of her grandparents. The impact of this on Evelyn’s Jewish identity in the years following independence in Palestine is evident through her struggle to

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<sup>107</sup> Linda Grant, *When I Lived in Modern Times*, p 178.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid*, p 140.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid*, p 62 – 65.

<sup>110</sup> Ruth Gilbert, *Writing Jewish: Contemporary British-Jewish Literature since 1990*, p 97.

<sup>111</sup> Linda Grant, *When I Lived in Modern Times*, p 27.

find out these family identities to enable her to make *Aliyah*. Evelyn eventually returns to Tel Aviv many years later. She was previously unable to do so sooner due to not possessing a marriage certificate for her unmarried parents that would have stated they, and thus Evelyn, were legally Jewish. Once again, therefore, Evelyn has experienced exile – this time in the literal Diaspora. The notion of still being in exile despite the presence of a Jewish state has been noted by Cooper and Morrison. They describe how “The self-contempt and insecurity British Jewry felt as an outcome of the Holocaust got mixed up with a kind of deference to Israel”.<sup>112</sup> As a result British Jewry’s subsequent reluctance to emigrate to Israel, the community “found ourselves in a double exile: exile from the promised land, and exile from the very culture which had grown up to sustain us in exile”.<sup>113</sup>

Moreover, this period of isolation from the new centre of Jewish society and culture can additionally be perceived as representative of the relationship breakdown between Britain and its former Mandate, Israel. Britain refused to officially acknowledge Israel during the early years of its existence, placing Israel, and its Jewish population, in diplomatic limbo. The presence of this narrative repetition to indicate history repeating itself again indicates that Grant continues to view the past through a series of paradigms. It is significant that the geographical site where Evelyn is located when she is finally able to discover and prove her Jewish ancestry is not Britain but France. In situating Evelyn outside of the shores of Britain for this crucial period of self and communal discovery, Grant further adheres to Cheyette’s concept of “extraterritoriality”. That Evelyn is unable to return to her original childhood home for this important, and perhaps final, phase of significant self-discovery suggests that imperial patriarchal narrative no longer possesses any influence over the actions and thoughts of its former ward of care. It is only once Evelyn is no longer actively seeking a patriarchal figure that she gains the fulfilment she desires, similarly to Erin’s journey of self-discovery in the following chapter.

The notion of packaging the present within a repetitive past is further evident during the visit of Evelyn’s grown-up daughter, Naomi, to Tel Aviv. Upon meeting the socially liberal Mrs Linz, Naomi challenges her over the attitudes and actions of Israeli Jews to the Arab population also resident within the country, comparing them to the situation of the British and Jews during the Mandate, respectively. In doing so, Grant uses the character of Naomi to place modern Israel within a colonial sphere akin to that of imperialism enlightening the natives. It represents a natural extension of the imperial patriarchal narrative as the grown-up child, Israel, is now behaving in a similar manner to its parent, Britain. This dynamic suggests that British Jewry is still

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<sup>112</sup> Howard Cooper and Paul Morrison, *A Sense of Belonging: Dilemmas of British Jewish Identity*, p 95.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid*, p 96.

struggling to come to terms with the events of the past and their place within this whilst attempting a new relationship with Israel. That this sequence of events demonstrates the presence of a post-colonial framework into which Israel is, rightly or wrongly, placed has already been noted earlier. The significance of this development in aiding knowledge about how Grant views the end of the Palestine Mandate and the subsequent establishment of the state of Israel derives from its impact on the imperial patriarchal narrative.

### 3.9 Conclusion

The entirety of the novel thus centres upon the developing relationship of British Jews with Mandate Palestine and then Israel. It uses the character of Evelyn as the British Jewish imagining of the 'new Jew' to represent this. The narrative of a young girl growing up and the subsequent transferring of the responsibility of care for her suggest that Grant does not conceive of the relationship between British Jewry and Israel as having achieved full independence. The complexity encountered by British Jews in negotiating not only the present but also the future with regards their relationship with Israel is alluded to by Evelyn's continuing dream "for many years to come" of creating a painting of "Tel Aviv in olden times, in the 1920s".<sup>114</sup> This dream represents a perceived yearning of British Jews for the simplicity and purity of the original Zionist ideal of a Jewish Palestine.

Furthermore, the novel highlights the complexity of not only British Jewish and the wider Diaspora identities but also Israeli identity. Through the use of Evelyn as British Jewish interpretation of the now failed 'new Jew' of the 1940s, Grant raises questions about what it means to be an Israeli. The death of Evelyn and Johnny's child at the age of six years old is a poignant ending representative of the death of a young, idealistic Israel, as he was the child of the 'new Jew' responsible for its conception. This linkage is enhanced by a consideration of the date of the nameless child's death being in late 1953. A crucial period for the transformation of the young state of Israel, November 1953 witnessed the resignation of David Ben-Gurion as its Prime Minister. This followed the beginnings of Israel's "retaliation policy", a series of offensive actions that were seen as a departure from the previously defensive role of the Israeli Defence Force.<sup>115</sup> As Ben-Gurion's Mandate image was one of idealism and principles rather than violence, the start of a more aggressive approach by the Israeli Defence Force under his premiership can be

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<sup>114</sup> Linda Grant, *When I Lived in Modern Times*, p 220 – 221.

<sup>115</sup> Zaki Shalom, *David Ben-Gurion, the state of Israel and the Arab world, 1949 – 1956* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2002), p 120.

perceived as signifying the end of a Diaspora vision of Zionist optimism regarding the reality of building a new Jewish nation state in Palestine.

That the novel, ultimately, expresses some disillusionment with and guilt over the actuality of the Zionist ideal in Palestine can be seen as a subsequence of its position within an imperial patriarchal framework. Towards the end of the novel, the implied effect of such colonial parentage is directly referred to, allowing the reader to recall the previous mistakes made by the imperial patriarch; for example, their responsibility in permitting the Holocaust and their actions during the Mandate. Evelyn, as the British Jewish vision of the 'new Jew', asks the reader to "Forgive us. The evil we were making was in our circumstances".<sup>116</sup> It is thus left to the reader to consider such a plea, the ramifications of which are explored in Chapter Four's analysis of Peter Kosminsky's *The Promise*.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Linda Grant, *When I Lived in Modern Times*, p 212.

<sup>117</sup> *The Promise*, Dir. Peter Kosminsky, Channel 4, 2011.



## Chapter 4: Peter Kosminsky's, *The Promise*

### 4.1 Introduction

The continued impact of the issues vocalised by Evelyn towards the end of Grant's *When I Lived in Modern Times* are also present in Peter Kosminsky's *The Promise*.<sup>1</sup> It too asks its main characters (and, to some extent, its global audiences) to attempt to right the perceived wrongs of Jewish actions in Palestine/Israel – or to at least offer the forgiveness so desired by Evelyn.

*The Promise* was a British television drama production, first aired on Channel 4 on the 6 February 2011, prior to international broadcasting.<sup>2</sup> Written and directed by Peter Kosminsky, the four-part mini-series depicted events that occurred towards the end of the British Mandate in Palestine whilst simultaneously portraying experiences in present day Israel. The series attracted high profile responses to its presentation of both the past and present. The impact of the sensitive and divisive nature of the subject matter upon audiences across the world was heightened due to the publication of the personal background of the series' writer and director.

Born in London on 21 April 1956, Kosminsky considers himself to be "racially Jewish", through the lineage of his paternal grandfather who was a child refugee from the pogroms in Poland.<sup>3</sup> Kosminsky's father, however, was a Communist and an Atheist, thus, perhaps, limiting the extent to which Kosminsky himself felt an affinity with the British Jewish community in terms of religious identification.<sup>4</sup> Despite, or perhaps because of, growing up in an "atheist household", Kosminsky is clear on his perception of his identity, stating that, "I'm very, very proud to call myself British. I'm proud of being a Jew, too, but it's not who I am".<sup>5</sup> The implications of his ambivalence are significant. According to Ozick "The secular Jew is a figment; when a Jew becomes a secular person he is no longer a Jew".<sup>6</sup> In an attempt to counter the effects of such a statement, Stähler explains how, "As a literary mode on which to model the new liturgical, and 'centrally Jewish', literature Ozick suggests the Aggadah, which, as she explains, 'comprises the

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<sup>1</sup> Linda Grant, *When I Lived in Modern Times*, p 212; *The Promise*, Dir. Peter Kosminsky, Channel 4, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Peter Kosminsky, 'Peter Kosminsky on The Promise, his drama about Palestine', *The Telegraph*, 04/02/2011 <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/tvandradio/8303231/Peter-Kosminsky-on-The-Promise-his-drama-about-Palestine.html>> [last accessed 08/01/2017].

<sup>3</sup> Rachel Cooke, 'Peter Kosminsky: Britain's Humiliation in Palestine', *The Observer*, 23/ 01/ 2011 <<https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2011/jan/23/peter-kosminsky-palestine-mandate-drama>> [last accessed 08/01/2017].

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Axel Stähler (ed), *Anglophone Jewish literatures*, p 5.

storytelling, imaginative elements in Talmud”<sup>7</sup>. Thus, it appears that, after all, Kosminsky’s Jewish credentials can be validated.

The presentation of the situation in Mandate Palestine and Israel within *The Promise* exists within a *halakhic* framework that serves to support the overarching imperial patriarchal narrative, as will be argued throughout this chapter. Furthermore, Gilbert has identified how, “established writers who have not previously fore-grounded their Jewishness...have recently engaged more explicitly with Jewish themes”, suggesting that Kosminsky is not alone in exploring new areas of personal interest.<sup>8</sup> It may be, however, that Kosminsky’s position as an outsider to the British Jewish community actually helped, rather than hindered, his production of *The Promise*. Using a Victorian example, Sicher acknowledges that “if George Eliot’s aim was to criticize English society for its mediocrity and for the public image of the Jew, those who wrote and lived as Jews tended to write with passion of one who knows Jewish life from the inside and who is ready to criticize its underside”.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, Brauner, using a more recent case study, declares that “If, as Jabes suggests, the final index of a writer’s Jewishness is his/her capacity to see Jewishness everywhere...then it is those ambivalent Jews (like Jabes and Roth) for whom it is most problematic, and hence most in need of explanation, who are most Jewish”.<sup>10</sup> Thus, Kosminsky would seem ideally suited to approach such a controversial subject with the integrity required to create a balanced piece of television.

Kosminsky felt inspired to make *The Promise* after receiving a letter ten years previously “from an old soldier” who, after “Complimenting our programme about peacekeeping in Bosnia...asked us to consider making a film about an earlier peacekeeping effort in which he had played a part” – Mandate Palestine.<sup>11</sup> The veteran who contacted Kosminsky felt shunned and forgotten by British society, hoping that the creation of *The Promise* would help rectify this sense of loss. Kosminsky explained how,

No memorial was erected to mark their campaign; he and his fellow Palestine veterans were denied the right to march to the Cenotaph in formation. Their apparent defeat at the hands of a rag-tag force of amateurs had sullied the reputation of a British military still basking in its victory in the Second World War. Like Vietnam veterans in years to

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ruth Gilbert, *Writing Jewish: Contemporary British-Jewish Literature since 1990*, p 9.

<sup>9</sup> Efraim Sicher, *Beyond Marginality: Anglo-Jewish Literature after the Holocaust*, p 10.

<sup>10</sup> David Brauner, *Post-war Jewish fiction: Ambivalence, Self-Explanation and Transatlantic Connections*, p 187.

<sup>11</sup> Peter Kosminsky, ‘Peter Kosminsky on *The Promise*, his drama about Palestine’.

come, they found themselves shunned, their struggle quickly forgotten. Would we consider making a film about those three arduous years, to set the record straight?<sup>12</sup>

Thus, three years after receiving the letter Kosminsky began the process of interviewing over eighty Palestine veterans, a task which left him with the distinct sense that as the soldiers “were carrying out British policy, even if it’s a policy we would now like to quietly forget...[t]hey deserve our gratitude, our respect and, above all, their national memorial”.<sup>13</sup> Thus, positioning *The Promise* as

standard Kosminsky fare, which was pointing the finger at Britain...we were the colonial power in Palestine and, as in so many other examples of our retreat from Empire, we left it totally fucked up. Chaos. We washed our hands of it. I wanted to say: if you think the Israeli-Palestinian situation is not our problem, think again. We were there, we left, and 60 years later, it is still a problem.<sup>14</sup>

A successful writer and director, Kosminsky possesses a long and varied list of television and film credentials, all of which cement a reputation in which he “cannot be accused of dodging the difficult assignments”.<sup>15</sup> Kosminsky’s “breakthrough” in television drama came in 1999 with the broadcasting of *Warriors*, a programme detailing the experience of British peacekeepers in Bosnia.<sup>16</sup> Then began the production of a series of television dramas in which Kosminsky proved he “is nothing if not in the business of remembering. The kind of things that governments like to forget are his stock in trade”.<sup>17</sup> Dramas on these “uncomfortable subjects” range from the actions of the police in Northern Ireland in *Shoot to Kill*, British-born Muslim suicide bombers in *Britz* and the suicide of Dr David Kelly in *The Government Inspector*.<sup>18</sup> More recently, Kosminsky directed a mini-series, *Wolf Hall*, based on two of Hilary Mantel’s Tudor novels, of the same name and *Bring Up the Bodies* respectively. Described as having “brought his trademark authenticity” to the production, the series won the Bafta Television Award for Best Drama.<sup>19</sup> Although *Wolf Hall* can be seen as a departure from Kosminsky’s usual choice of subject, he believes it fits within his ethos, stating that

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Rachel Cooke, ‘Peter Kosminsky: Britain’s Humiliation in Palestine’.

<sup>15</sup> Author Unknown, ‘Interview: Peter Kosminsky’, *The Jewish Chronicle*, 03/02/2011 <<https://www.thejc.com/culture/interviews/interview-peter-kosminsky-1.20958>> [last accessed 08/01/2017].

<sup>16</sup> Author Unknown, ‘Interview: Peter Kosminsky’.

<sup>17</sup> Rachel Cooke, ‘Peter Kosminsky: Britain’s Humiliation in Palestine’.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Author Unknown, ‘Wolf Hall Wins Best Drama at the Bafta Television Awards’, *The Telegraph*, 08/05/2016 <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/tv/2016/05/08/wolf-hall-wins-best-drama-at-the-bafta-television-awards/>> [last accessed 08/01/2017].

There's no question, my sympathies lie with Cromwell. He's an underdog, he's a person who has risen from absolutely nothing, purely by his own efforts. If I can be honest for a second, I started from not much, my parents did everything they could but we were not well off. So as a human being I sympathise with Cromwell, though of course his journey was far more extreme.<sup>20</sup>

However, it is, perhaps, Kosminsky's work on *The Promise* that has courted the most controversy and become the television series for which he will remain infamous. Despite being "fearsomely well-researched", the four-part drama serial was, ultimately, a fictitious account of one soldier's service in Mandate Palestine and the impact of these events in modern Israel.<sup>21</sup> One press reviewer declared that *The Promise* "wears this attention to detail lightly to create an exciting, powerful and exquisitely crafted drama".<sup>22</sup> Overall, however, reception to the use of drama to portray this period of history was, at best, mixed. Several reviews highlighted factual errors in the script and use of locations, the latter of which Kosminsky defended by admitting that it contained "some geographical adjustment to help the story flow".<sup>23</sup> Meanwhile, the dual chronological sequencing of the two parallel timeframes has been criticised as "clunkily done".<sup>24</sup> In contrast, the same newspaper, but a different columnist, also stated that "Whatever *The Promise* makes you think or feel about Israel, it is a beautiful and peerless example of what television can still do when it tries".<sup>25</sup>

Significantly, *The Promise* has also been criticized for its portrayal of both Arab and Jewish characters. Whilst the lack of an obvious Arab hero was noted, and subsequently contested by Kosminsky, claims that the television drama was, in fact, anti-Semitic attracted far more press attention.<sup>26</sup> This suggestion that *The Promise* was, at the least, unbalanced was hinted at in some of the press reviews, particularly those concentrating on Len, the 1940s male lead. One reviewer stated that although,

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<sup>20</sup> Tara Conlan, 'Peter Kosminsky on Wolf Hall: I'm with Cromwell. He's an underdog', *The Guardian*, 11/01/2015 <<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2015/jan/11/peter-kosminsky-wolf-hall-bbc2-hilary-mantel>> [last accessed 08/01/2017].

<sup>21</sup> Peter Kosminsky, 'Peter Kosminsky on The Promise, his drama about Palestine'.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Author Unknown, "The Promise: Interview with Peter Kosminsky", *JNews*, 24/03/2011 <<http://www.jnews.org.uk/commentary/the-promise-interview-with-peter-kosminsky>> [last accessed 01/07/2014].

<sup>24</sup> Author Unknown, 'TV and Radio Blog: The Promise Delivers But Still Divides', *The Guardian*, 14/02/2011 <<https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/tvandradioblog/2011/feb/14/the-promise-peter-kosminsky>> [last accessed 08/01/2017].

<sup>25</sup> Rachel Cooke, 'Peter Kosminsky: Britain's Humiliation in Palestine'.

<sup>26</sup> Author Unknown, "The Promise: Interview with Peter Kosminsky".

The Promise gets a lot right about the agonising of liberal Israeli Jews, the anger of Palestinians who lost their homes and the humiliation and brutalisation of decades of occupation, symbolised by the West Bank wall...switching between periods doesn't always work: I winced at one transition between the Irgun's bombing of Jerusalem's King David hotel – the British HQ – in 1946 and the bombing of a Tel Aviv cafe by Palestinians during the second intifada 60 years later...by the time the final credits roll, Len's feelings of guilt towards the Palestinians and hostility towards Israel are clear.<sup>27</sup>

The broadcaster regulator, OFCOM, eventually rejected the validity of the forty-four complaints, including one from the Board of Deputies of British Jews, made against *The Promise* on the following grounds:

Just because some individual Jewish and Israeli characters were portrayed in a negative light does not mean the programme was, or was intended to be, antisemitic...Just as there were Jewish/Israeli characters that could be seen in a negative light, so there were British and Palestinian characters that could also be seen in a negative light.<sup>28</sup>

Thus, ultimately, it could be considered that the television drama is “a bleak story that reflects the currently bleak prospects for a resolution of the conflict”, and which, somewhat surprisingly according to this one reviewer, did not support the two-state solution as a means of resolution.<sup>29</sup> However this thesis will argue, in contrast to these “bleak” reviews, that *The Promise* actually presents a far more optimistic interpretation of the current political situation in Israel than previously recognized.<sup>30</sup> By presenting Israel as having originated from the vision of a Zionist utopia and by suggesting that it is this image that the modern nation state should foster, Kosminsky appears to support an inclusive solution over partition or the ‘one state’ alternative.

## 4.2 Synopsis

An ambitious drama mini-series set across several different chronological and geographical locations, *The Promise* follows the story of a British gap year student, Erin, as she travels to Israel to support her British Israeli (Jewish) best friend, Eliza, whilst she undergoes basic training for the Israeli Defence Force (IDF). During this time, Erin becomes enchanted – and eventually “falls in love” – with the story of her Grandfather, Len, who is gravely ill in hospital in the UK but used to

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<sup>27</sup> Author Unknown, ‘TV and Radio Blog: The Promise Delivers But Still Divides’.

<sup>28</sup> Robyn Rosen, ‘Broadcast Regulator Rejects Every Complaint on The Promise’, *Jewish Chronicle*, 21/04/2011 <<https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/broadcast-regulator-rejects-every-complaint-on-promise-1.68528>> [last accessed 08/01/2017].

<sup>29</sup> Author Unknown, ‘TV and Radio Blog: The Promise Delivers But Still Divides’.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

be stationed in Palestine as a Sergeant for the British Army after the end of the Second World War.<sup>31</sup> Through reading her Grandfather's diary from the era, Erin starts to relive his experience in 1940s Palestine, ultimately leading to her undertaking a quest to right the wrongs of the past on her Grandfather's behalf. Key to the unravelling of this plot is Len's involvement with Clara, a European Jew living in 1940s Palestine who occupies the role of his girlfriend, and Mohammed, a 1940s Palestinian Arab who works at the army base, where Len befriends him. Whilst reliving and attempting to complete Len's story, Erin becomes emotionally and sexually involved with two different men, Paul and Omar. A modern British Israeli Jew, Paul is Eliza's older brother who after serving in the IDF is now a peace protestor, much to annoyance of Paul and Eliza's famous liberal (former IDF General) father. A friend of Paul's from their work together in the campaign group, 'Combatants for Peace', Omar is an Israeli Arab of Christian belief living in modern Israel. Intertwined with each other, as the action switches between parallel situations in the past and present, the story of these characters unfolds throughout the series, culminating in an overarching narrative about relationships, which can be read on several different levels.

### 4.3 Level One: Relationships

The first, and least complex, level at which these character dynamics can be read focuses on the development of the plot through which the series becomes a story of British characters, Erin and Len, with their Jewish friends, Eliza, Paul and Clara. In this literal interpretation the analysis can be extended to include the relationship of Erin and Len with their Arab friends, Omar and Mohammed. Through portraying the development of the relationship of both Erin and Len with those previously mentioned, the television audience experiences the significant events present in the life stories of Erin and Len as they occur. For Erin such events include surviving a suicide bombing, witnessing the IDF bulldoze the family home of said suicide bomber and returning the front door key to Mohammed's family that was kept, unintentionally, by her Grandfather for all these years. Serving in the British Army, Len experiences many of the key historical moments following the end of the Second World War, from the liberation of Bergen-Belsen to the bombing of the King David Hotel and the Sergeant's Affair.

Presentations of such historical events are not without fault; for example, for purposes of the development of the plot, several of the details surrounding the Sergeants' Affair are manipulated and fiction presented as fact when they are not. Furthermore, the siting of Len at the

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<sup>31</sup> Author Unknown, 'Peter Kosminsky on The Promise', *Channel4.com*, 08/07/2013 <<http://www.channel4.com/programmes/the-promise/articles/all/peter-kosminsky-on-the-promise/486>> [last accessed 08/01/2017].

liberation of Bergen-Belsen is especially significant due to the particular place of that concentration camp within British memory and understanding of the Holocaust. Kushner has described how the newsreels of the camp following its liberation came to “symbolize the horrors of the Holocaust” and “represent the full extent of human degradation which emerged from the Nazis’ programme of destruction and humiliation”.<sup>32</sup> Emphasizing the importance of Richard Dimbleby’s renowned broadcast from Bergen-Belsen to the national understanding of the Holocaust, Kushner highlights how this particular camp in Western Europe was perceived to be typical, and the worst, of the Nazi regime when in fact the camps in Eastern Europe fitted this bill more satisfactorily.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, the absence of ‘Jews’ from the contemporary reporting was significant and helped present Bergen-Belsen as a tragedy for humanity and not a uniquely Jewish one.<sup>34</sup> Thus, *The Promise* begins by placing Zionist ambition and the creation of Israel within a framework dominated by a failure of humanity – and refers to the heroic role of the British in assisting with rectifying this. It both obscures and yet alludes to Jewish specificity.

Within this plot based reading of *The Promise* it is of importance that every Jewish character betrays Erin and Len in some manner by being dishonest about their intentions and beliefs, which has a direct impact on their happiness and security. The most obvious betrayals of trust happen to Len as a result of the actions of his Jewish ‘friends’. First cast as Len’s romantic interest, Clara deceives Len in order to help advance the struggle for an independent Jewish state before encountering him whilst openly fighting for the *Irgun Zvai Leumi*. When faced with Army orders strongly suggesting the early de-mobbing of a Jewish soldier, Alec, under his command, Len is persuaded to let the soldier in question stay in Palestine with “the lads” after he pleads that he is, after all, “a British soldier”.<sup>35</sup> However, Alec eventually goes AWOL and is next seen aiming his gun at Len whilst fighting in the early War of Independence. Erin’s Jewish ‘friends’ in modern Israel also seemingly betray her as both Eliza and Paul act, on occasion, in a manner conflicting with their earlier statements of belief. During a key scene towards the end of the final episode, Eliza, on duty with the IDF, uses bolt cutters to remove the chain with which Erin has tied herself to explosives that will be used to destroy the house of the family of a suicide bomber. Eliza’s recent statement that the people who live there are “terrorists” contradicts with her earlier, more liberal, attitude that her fellow IDF recruits (and thus their beliefs too)

seem like morons to me too, Rin, that’s the whole point. I know you think it’s like idyllic, happy families out here, but it’s total bullshit. I’ve been to school in England since I was

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<sup>32</sup> Tony Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), pp. 205 – 206.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, p 215.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 213 – 214.

<sup>35</sup> *The Promise*, Dir. Peter Kosminsky, Channel 4, 2011, Episode 1.

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eight years old. I come here for holidays. I can barely speak the language, for God's sake.<sup>36</sup>

Eliza later expands on her sense of dislocation, describing how

It's insane! I mean, the others on the train were so hardline, like, 'Fuck the Arabs, we'll drive them into the sea.' And I'm like, 'Don't be so racist, see the other point of view.' And they're like, 'oh, you're such a lefty pinko,' which I'm totally not, I'm just, you know, saying what anyone from London would say.<sup>37</sup>

Paul also acts in an opposing manner to his previously enthusiastically defended beliefs. During a visit to his old IDF base in Hebron, now under fire from a group of Arab residences, Paul picks up a gun and fires it towards the houses. This is in direct contrast to his view that "once you've met your former enemy...realised he's a human being just like you...you can never go back...never take up that weapon again. Never".<sup>38</sup>

Despite the claims that *The Promise* is anti-Semitic, as previously outlined, there also exists within this reading of the series a counter argument that it is, at least, equally unfavourable towards the Arab characters and their situation. Many of the first instances of violence and aggression depicted are committed by Arab Palestinians or Arab Israelis and not by Jewish Palestinians or Israelis. The montage shown at the beginning of the series seems to emphasize Arab suffering and Jewish aggression, as the first Jewish face depicted is of Clara fighting for the *Irgun Zvai Leumi*. The focus then adjusts to showing the flight of Arabs, such as Mohammed and his family, following the British withdrawal. However, the first example of real time violence is Arab.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, the positioning of Erin and Paul being victims of Arab suicide bombers at the end of the first episode casts Israeli/Palestinian Arabs as being more aggressive than Israeli Jews/the *Yishuv*, as acts of violence by the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* only tend to appear after Arab incidents. Additionally, there are a higher percentage of modern portrayals of violence and aggression focusing on acts, and their consequences, carried out by Arab Palestinians and Arab Israelis. The incident of the suicide bombing and its effects constitutes a large percentage of screen time, including the portrayal of an aggressive argument between Omar, who supports Fatah, and a cousin of the suicide bomber, who "is HAMAS".<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid, Episode 4; Ibid, Episode 1.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, Episode 2.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, Episode 1.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, Episode 1.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, Episode 4.

This latter exchange highlights a key criticism of *The Promise*, namely the non-development of Arab characters, as they appear to be stereotypes, both in the Mandate and modern settings. The only significant Arab characters are Mohammad and Omar, both of whom seem to fulfil a particular role for the progression of the narrative drama and who are cast without the subtlety of the other, non-Arab characters. Mohammad is a simple *Chaiwala* who makes and serves cups of tea at Len's army base whilst Omar is reduced to crude political stereotypes despite the complexity of his personal views, as ascertained by his work with a non-combatant organisation with Paul. Kosminsky has defended this casting by stating that Mohammad needed to be a rural Arab employed at the base, rather than an urban Arab working in the city, as that is how he comes into contact with Len. Hence, according to Kosminsky, Mohammad was cast in a particularly two-dimensional way to enable to progression of the plot rather than to provide insight into the complexity of Palestinian Arab identities. Contrastingly, Kosminsky described Omar as "a leading Palestinian character in the 2005 story" when directly asked why there were no Palestinian heroes in the drama.<sup>41</sup>

Considered together, this first level of interpretation of *The Promise* casts it as a coming of age drama where the main characters' optimism and naivety is challenged. That *The Promise* is indeed a story of growing up, and the role of relationships in this, is alluded to both at the beginning and end of the series. Upon first visiting her estranged grandfather, Len, in hospital, Erin asks her mother if she can "wait out here?" as "You know, hospitals freak me out", before her mother replies that "It's time to grow up, Erin".<sup>42</sup> This opening dialogue between Erin and her mother sets the scene for *The Promise* to be a series in which Erin does indeed "grow up". Erin's education appears complete at the end of the series when she frostily thanks Eliza and Paul's parents for their hospitality, telling them, "Thanks for everything. I learned a lot".<sup>43</sup>

#### 4.4 Level Two: The Imperial Patriarchal Discourse

The second level at which *The Promise* can be interpreted also relies on a further exploration of the character dynamics present in the series. In this metaphorical reading, each of the main characters is symbolic of those entities involved as positioned within the imperial patriarchal framework. Thus, *The Promise* becomes a commentary on the relationship of both the British Empire and The Commonwealth of Nations with Palestine and Israel, respectively. In this scenario, Len and Erin are representative of the Empire and Commonwealth, correspondingly, whilst Clara

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<sup>41</sup> Author Unknown, "The Promise: Interview with Peter Kosminsky".

<sup>42</sup> *The Promise*, Dir. Peter Kosminsky, Episode 1.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, Episode 4.

## Chapter 4

and Eliza symbolize the Jewish population of Palestine and Israel, similarly. This character representation can be extended to include both the Arab communities present in both eras as well as various segments of Israeli Jewish society.

In 1940s Palestine, Mohammed, the *Chaiwala*, and his family are symbolic of the Arab population, who engage positively with the British and offer them assistance with menial tasks, such as providing tea for the soldiers stationed at the base. In contrast, Clara appears confrontational and awkward with some of the very same British soldiers who helped liberate Jews from the Nazi death and concentration camps in Europe. Len, as a representative of the patriarchy of the British Empire, interacts with both sides on an equal basis, trying to be fair to each of his 'colonial children', the Jews and Arabs resident in Palestine. From the beginning of the television series, Kosminsky immediately places events in Palestine within an imperial patriarchal framework whereby the British Empire not only saved Europe's Jews from the Nazis but they went to war to do so. Len's diary begins during his time stationed in Bergen-Belsen before moving onto his experiences in Palestine. Thus, from the outset the notion of Jewish survival and British involvement in the Second World War is linked. In Bergen-Belsen Len states that, "I wish everyone at home could see what I've seen. Then they might understand why we've been fighting this war".<sup>44</sup> This notion of going to war to save the Jews of Europe is further enhanced during an early exchange of dialogue between Len and Clara. After leaving a cinema due to being booed by local Jewish residents for standing during the playing of the National Anthem, Len and Clara reveal their different perspectives in the matter.

Clara: "You are angry"

Len: "I am, yeah. Most of us are on your side, you know"

Clara: "You think we're being ungrateful"

Len: "If I'm honest, yeah. Yeah, I do, after all we did for you in the war"

Clara: "You fought the war for your empire, Len, not for us".<sup>45</sup>

Within the present day setting, Erin, as the granddaughter of Len and thus of the British Empire, is representative of the Commonwealth of Nations. Erin is the heir to the problems of her family's past both literally, through suffering from the same genetically inherited illness (Epilepsy) as Len, explored presently, and through being in possession of the key to Mohammed's former home, and figuratively by being initially seduced by Eliza's vision of Israel, then by Omar and,

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid, Episode 1.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, Episode 1.

finally, Paul's quest for a just peace. Subsequently, Eliza, Omar and Paul symbolize different sections of Israeli society. Eliza is the young, hedonistic vision of a westernized nation whose initially liberal outlook becomes increasingly radicalized when threatened with the possibility and actuality of Arab Palestinian violence.

Omar represents the Arab population of both Israel and Palestine, whose situation is shown as belittling and hopeless. Omar is Christian, not Muslim and supports Fatah, not Hamas. Therefore, Omar is representative of those who believe in a democratic solution to the situation; Omar's innocence in terms of plot development and modern day politics are alluded to by his casting as a Christian, ensuring that his religious beliefs, and possible subsequent actions, are positioned far away from the popular misconception of the Arab populations of the Middle East as being largely Jihadist.

Paul, as the elder brother of Eliza, occupies a more mature and nuanced position than his sister. Having previously served in the IDF, Paul's previously enthusiastic support for the current role of the IDF has largely disappeared as he is now a peace protestor who campaigns for a just solution to the modern situation in Israel/ Palestine. He is thus symbolic of the criticism of the Israeli political policies that emanates from within and outside Israel. This cohort of modern symbolic characters can be further extended by including both Eliza and Paul's father, a famous liberal who was also a General in the IDF, as representative of the contemporary Israeli government, and their grandfather, a former *Irgun Zvai Leumi* member, as symbolic of the divisive past of Israel and a living reminder of the lessons learnt from that.

Considered together, these metaphorical character depictions present a view of the past in which the British Empire let down the Arab population of Palestine, putting them in unnecessary danger; Len cannot keep Mohammed and his family safe nor can he prevent them from losing their home. That Britain, as the former imperial patriarch, possesses some degree of responsibility for not only past events but also the present day situation in Israel/Palestine is a view supported by Kosminsky, as previously detailed.<sup>46</sup> It would thus appear that *The Promise* also supports the view that the Commonwealth of Nations, as the heir to the British Empire, has not acted nor used their authority in a manner that would be helpful or have a positive impact on the on-going political situation. This is depicted by Erin's increasing detachment from the ideal image of Israel, as represented by Eliza, as they both experience various traumatic incidents. That Erin, as the Commonwealth of Nations, was initially infatuated with Eliza, who is symbolic of the ideal of Israel, is supported through analysis of the screenplay during the first episode. When asked by her

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<sup>46</sup> Rachel Cooke, 'Peter Kosminsky: Britain's Humiliation in Palestine'.

mother to consider staying in the UK and thus think about someone else for once in her life instead of travelling to Israel, Erin responds with “I am, I’m doing this for Eliza”.<sup>47</sup> It is thus suggested that Erin’s bond with Eliza is stronger than her own family ones, elevating Eliza to a similar status. Once in Israel, Erin enjoys relaxing by the pool, shopping and nightclubbing with Eliza. Erin appears infatuated with the ideal image of Israel, a portrayal which reaches its climax during a scene in a nightclub where the lyrics of the music appear to allude to the complexities of the relationship. Playing just prior to Erin suffering an epileptic fit, the lyrics of “One love, we’ve got to stand our ground. One love, it’s easy to believe in. One love, believe in you and me” seem to foreshadow the events ahead and the lasting implications of these upon such a relationship.<sup>48</sup>

Erin’s inherited epilepsy has further significance when considered in conjunction with Butler’s notion of the body politic, as outlined in Chapter One.<sup>49</sup> In this reading, Erin’s epilepsy signals the presence of too much engagement with radical religious politics – or, put basically, too much ‘Jewishness’. Similarly, to Evelyn’s pregnancy in Chapter Three, the onset of Erin’s epilepsy is used to create a sharp break with situations in which there is an actual or perceived danger of too much religious political philosophy. Considered with the prominence of gender throughout the texts and its resulting emphasis within this thesis, the application of Butler’s theory signifies a lack of successful hegemonic masculinity present at time the epileptic fits happen and in those situations.<sup>50</sup> By denoting such occurrences, *The Promise* presents a more nuanced and complex depiction of the imperial patriarchal discourse than might initially be apparent. Likewise, Len’s epileptic fit can be explained by this theory, as does the portrayal of Omar.<sup>51</sup>

A key component of the creation of the sustained power base of the imperial patriarch, a series of denials and exclusions as part of the body politic signifies an absence that substantiates his hegemonic heterosexual masculinity.<sup>52</sup> It is most evident when Omar is denied male authority at a military checkpoint, signifying an absence of Palestinian (Christian) hegemonic masculinity in that political situation.<sup>53</sup> Thus, reinforcing the presence and power of the imperial patriarch in comparison. Although *The Promise* stops short of casting Omar as a homosexual ‘other’, the screenplay in that situation can be read to imply that he performs this role: surrounded by other men, versions of both hegemonic masculinity (in this scenario, the IDF soldiers) and Palestinian ‘others’ also waiting to go through the checkpoint, Omar is forced to strip to his underwear whilst

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<sup>47</sup> *The Promise*, Dir. Peter Kosminsky, Episode 1.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, p 135.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> *The Promise*, Dir. Peter Kosminsky, Episode 3; *The Promise*, Dir. Peter Kosminsky, Episode 1.

<sup>52</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, p 135.

<sup>53</sup> *The Promise*, Dir. Peter Kosminsky, Episode 1.

being watched by Paul and Erin. This reduces the viewer to a role in which they too are voyeuristically watching a scene of potential homosexual 'otherness'.

Considered as an entity, Erin and Len's epilepsy, and the depiction of Omar, in addition to Evelyn's pregnancy in *When I Lived in Modern Times* and Treslove's portrayal in *The Finkler Question* as explored in Chapter Five, all suggest a more Jewish reading than may otherwise be apparent. The imagery employed is not similar to that used in Christian depictions of the interaction of the soul and body.<sup>54</sup> Importantly, they also signify a lack of successful hegemonic masculinity present during those situations. In particular, for the male characters concerned these occurrences demonstrate the impact of being duped (Len), belittled (Omar) or feminized (Treslove) by the actions of either a woman or a hegemonic male. For the female characters involved, the use of the body politic symbolizes an absence of influential and effective hegemonic masculinity, as the personification of it is absent at that time (Evelyn's early pregnancy and Erin in Gaza).<sup>55</sup>

Despite the apparent duping and tricking of Len and Erin by the Jewish characters, the significance of this metaphorical reading of *The Promise* lies in the depiction of Kosminsky's view that Britain was, and possibly remains, at fault in its dealings with the past and present situation in Israel/Palestine. Ultimately, within this context, it is the Arab characters who suffer needlessly due to the actions of both the British Empire and the Commonwealth of Nations. However, this interpretation also offers comments on the waning moral authority of Britain at the end of the British Empire. Len, as its representative, often seems to be a bystander to crucial moments as well as possessing minimal influence in his attempts to help those he encounters. He fails to: prevent Mohammad's son's death; return Mohammad's door key; or, to successfully challenge Clara's increasing extremism. In presenting Len and the British Empire in this way, Kosminsky provides an interesting parallel with the British characters in Linda Grant's *When I Lived in Modern Times*.<sup>56</sup> Grant also mainly portrays her British characters, namely those working for the civil and Police services in Palestine, as being largely impotent in the imperial patriarchal narrative; they possess little influence on the plot and serve to illustrate the waning influence of the might of the British Empire. However, ultimately, the casting of Inspector Bolton towards the end of *When I Lived in Modern Times* as Evelyn's saviour indicates the intricate dynamics of a suffocating relationship from which independence may be desired but is not yet realised.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, p 135.

<sup>55</sup> Linda Grant, *When I Lived in Modern Times; The Promise*, Dir. Peter Kosminsky, Episode 4.

<sup>56</sup> Linda Grant, *When I Lived in Modern Times*.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

### 4.5 Level Three: *Halakha*

The third level at which *The Promise* operates is an extension of this interpretation regarding the significance of the symbolism of character representations. In this more complex reading, the television series tells the story of the modern relationship of the Jews with both their conscience and God. Each character represents a different position within Jewish socio-cultural and political thought and the various opinions outlined throughout the course of the series provide the framework within which the audience can question and challenge their notion of God and their (Jewish) conscience. In encouraging the audience to act in this way, through their identification with the main characters of Erin and Len, Kosminsky reveals his ethno-cultural back-ground, as the framework in which this takes place is a uniquely Jewish one. By creating a scenario in which the audience can challenge and reconsider their view of God, as well as their own moral beliefs, in relation to the various socio-political positions outlined in the series, *The Promise* offers a mode of conscience similar to Jewish law, *Halakha*. It can be substantially argued that the importance of *Halakha* lies not only in the rules and teachings that it prescribes but in the conversation it facilitates between God and the person in question through their own personal interpretations of these teachings. It is thus in this space, between the lines of *Halakha*, that God can be said to reside, suggesting that *The Promise* can be interpreted as a quest for *HaMakom*, 'the place' of God, within the modern day situation in Israel/Palestine and its past.

Furthermore, the use of a *Halakhic* framework within *The Promise* serves to substantiate the presence of an imperial patriarchal narrative. It is only through engaging with the issues of one's moral conscience that the path to *HaMakom* can be shown. As Len and Erin are both representative of different eras of the imperial patriarch, the British Empire and Commonwealth of Nations, respectively, it is significant that it is they, and not any of the other characters with dual or foreign nationality, who eventually attempt to complete the quest for *HaMakom*, as will be explored later. This suggests a correlation between British imperial and Zionist ambitions, a key characteristic of the original manifestation of the imperial patriarchal narrative present in the 1940s, as outlined in Chapter Two. It is only through the presence of a *Halakhic* framework that the Commonwealth of Nations (Erin) can begin to correct the previous mistakes made by the British Empire (Len), signalling the start of an inversion of the imperial patriarchal discourse, similar to that present in Jacobson's *The Finkler Question*, to be explored in the final chapter.<sup>58</sup> Moreover, this search for *HaMakom* within an imperial patriarchal framework introduces the theme of gender alongside that of generational relationships. Similar to Grant's choice of

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<sup>58</sup> Howard Jacobson, *The Finkler Question*.

narrator, Evelyn, in *When I Lived in Modern Times*, Kosminsky also cast a female character, Erin, as the main lead in *The Promise*. As both Erin and Evelyn are young and impatient for the future, their status as symbols of revolutionary hope seems assured.<sup>59</sup> Referring back to Evans' work on the Algerian conflict as discussed in Chapter Two, it is evident that the use of emphasizing female gender as an indicator for the rebuilding of a new and equal society has historical precedent.<sup>60</sup>

The importance of *HaMakom* within this reading is supported by an emphasis throughout the four episodes on the importance of space and place within religious belief. During Len's welcoming briefing, his commanding officer describes how in "Palestine, also known as the Holy Land... these Jews see returning to the Holy Land as a fulfilment of a promise made to them by God".<sup>61</sup> Similarly, there also exists a focus on the importance of geographical location and spiritual presence within the modern context. In a conversation between Paul and Erin, the impact of power upon perspectives and its role in the past and present is questioned. Paul describes how,

You know, when I was ten years old, my father took me to see the border. The Jewish side was green and fertile, and the Arab side was brown and barren with a few goats, and...and then he said to me, and this was the big lesson he wanted me to remember, he said, 'Look what they've done with the land in two thousand years. Look what we achieved in fifty'. And this is a good man, a liberal man. It took me years to question the assumptions behind the things he said to me that day. They are not as deserving as we are. They do nothing with the land. They're animals. They hate us.<sup>62</sup>

At one point, Omar, who summarizes the situation even more bleakly and directly, also articulates this search for God within the current political landscape of Israel/Palestine. He angrily asks Erin if she "see's God in this?" whilst motioning in the direction of the West Bank.<sup>63</sup>

That God should be omnipresent but appears to be absent within the modern day situation denotes the religious and political views of the writer and director. In employing a religious framework, *Halakha*, to examine the role of God in events in Israel/Palestine, Kosminsky offers a critical reading of *HaMakom* within the political and geographical environment. If Israel is a nation state founded on the principle of *HaMakom* then surely God is responsible for the current political situation there? However, as *The Promise* uses *Halakha* to encourage its audience to reconsider their own religious conscience, and given that the significance of *Halakha* lies in the

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<sup>59</sup> Linda Grant, *When I Lived in Modern Times; The Promise*, Dir. Peter Kosminsky.

<sup>60</sup> Martin Evans, *The Memory of Resistance: French opposition to the Algerian War (1954-1962)*, p 191.

<sup>61</sup> *The Promise*, Dir. Peter Kosminsky, Episode 1.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*, Episode 3.

spaces between the lines, then the real responsibility for the present seems to rest with those who have and continue to misinterpret these gaps. By misconstruing religious belief and using it for their own ends, those involved in the political processes of Mandate Palestine and Israel/Palestine have created a negative situation under the supposed auspices of God. Thus, in this third level of reading, *The Promise* presents the past and present from an atheist perspective grounded in Jewish ethno-cultural practices, as religion is to blame for the current situation, as well as those that occurred in the past.

Considering the background of the writer and director of the series, *The Promise* can therefore be read as a religious critique of both the situation in 1940s Palestine as well as its consequences in modern Israel/Palestine. Kosminsky suggests that religion, and actions taken in the name of religious belief, are the cause of all the problems evident in the past and present. Despite the apparent impact of atheism upon Kosminsky's presentation of events, he also appears to have been affected by the Jewish lineage of his grandparents.<sup>64</sup> This ethno-cultural influence from his extended family is especially evident within the third level of reading *The Promise* and the presence of *Halakha* and *HaMakom* within it. Within this scenario Erin and Len jointly occupy the position of an Atheist, 'lost soul' of Judaism trying to find their identity through their attempts at negotiating *Halakha* in order to find *HaMakom*.

## 4.6 The Promise

In all three layers of interpretation, the title of *The Promise* is key in explaining the multi-layered direction of each relationship meaning. Within the first level, *The Promise* is the literal promise made by Len to Mohammed to safely return Mohammed's son, Hassan, after he runs away. This is a promise which Len cannot keep as Hassan is fatally shot by a Jewish sniper in the early War of Independence. Although Len is not directly responsible for Hassan's death, he blames himself. In this scenario Len becomes the embodiment of the imperial patriarch trying, but failing, to protect one of his 'colonial' children, Hassan. Ultimately, this serves to support the presence of an imperial patriarchal framework through which events are perceived, as detailed in level two. Kosminsky believes that Britain, as the colonial power, was at fault in Palestine and helped to create the modern day situation in Israel. Thus, in this reading, Britain neglected and/or failed in its parental responsibility to both its children – Jewish and Arab.

Therefore, an interpretation of *The Promise* within the level two reading could allude to the promise of Britain to the Jews in the 1917 Balfour Declaration. Although Britain made similar

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<sup>64</sup> Rachel Cooke, 'Peter Kosminsky: Britain's Humiliation in Palestine'.

assurances to the Arabs, such as in the seemingly contradictory aforementioned 1917 Balfour Declaration and the 1939 White Paper, these are not mentioned within the television series. In this narrative, Britain entered the Second World War to save the Jews of Europe from Nazism, in keeping with its duty as a democratic empire safe guarding the rights of vulnerable groups in need. However, those Jews in Palestine campaigning violently for an independent Jewish State were “ungrateful”, an accusation with which Len agrees.<sup>65</sup> Thus, as the personification of the imperial patriarch, Len fails to keep his own, personal promises that are symbolic of the wider political situation in Palestine in 1948. Ultimately, he fails in his protective, authoritative duty; he cannot save Mohammed’s son, Hassan, who is symbolic of the Arab population of 1940s Palestine. Len is also unable to control his wayward Jewish ex-girlfriend, Clara, who is representative of those Jews who acted aggressively against Britain and the Arab population in 1940s Palestine.

Similarly, in the modern day scenario within this interpretation, Erin, as the Commonwealth of Nations, has made a promise to Eliza, representative of sections of the Israeli community, to support her through her IDF training. This signifies Britain’s contemporary support for the right of the State of Israel to defend itself and its right to exist. However, as Erin later withholds her true motivation for continuing to stay in Israel, as she pretends to do so for Eliza’s sake and does not mention Len’s diary and the quest to return Mohammed’s key, the promise that she previously made seems hollow and false – a development which has both personal and political ramifications. The promise that now motivates Erin to stay in Israel is not one of loyalty to Eliza but to honour her Grandfather and correct his past mistakes. This shift in Erin’s personal politics symbolizes a greater alteration within the international relationship between the Commonwealth of Nations and Israel. As Kosminsky believes that Britain was responsible for creating the present day situation in Israel/Palestine, the weakening of bonds between Eliza and Erin, as represented by the change in nature of *The Promise* between the two girls, suggests that he feels now is the time for Britain to reconsider its duty in and impact on such events.<sup>66</sup>

*The Promise* referred to within the third level of interpretation is that contained within the religious literature, *Tanakh*, which was made by God to the Jews that one they would return to their ancient homeland of Eretz Israel. That the Jews will return to Israel is most commonly referred to during the Seder at Passover when ‘Next Year in Jerusalem’ is uttered as a key part of the *Haggadah*, the story of Passover. As a group allied to the aims of Revisionist Zionism, the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* took a literal definition of such religious commands, believing the area of a

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<sup>65</sup> *The Promise*, Dir. Peter Kosminsky, Episode 1.

<sup>66</sup> Rachel Cooke, ‘Peter Kosminsky: Britain’s Humiliation in Palestine’.

Jewish national home should encompass the territories outlined in *Tanakh*. These readings are referred to throughout the series, both in terms of alluding to the audience's knowledge of the aims of the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* and more explicitly by statements made by several characters. From the beginning of Len's time in Palestine, the situation there is immediately explained in religious, as opposed to political, terms. During a welcome briefing for new soldiers, the commanding officer details how Len is in, "Palestine, also known as the Holy Land. Ruled by Britain under League of Nations mandates since Allenby threw out the Ottomans in 1917. Jews and Arabs have lived here together in relative harmony since biblical times".<sup>67</sup>

Considered together, it is significant that these three levels of *The Promise*, and the impact of this upon the various relationships, are not only how Kosminsky understands 1940s Palestine and continues to view the present in Israel/Palestine but that this is also how he wishes for it to be represented to a wider, non-Jewish, British and international audience. It is therefore an example of constructing an outwards, as well as inwards, focused identity that is not only for Jewish consumption. Linda Grant's work, particularly *When I Lived in Modern Times*, operates in a similar manner, as the intended audience of her work require less understanding of Jewish cultural life and community references than the work of other notable British Jewish cultural and literary figures, such as Howard Jacobson.<sup>68</sup>

## 4.7 Len and Erin

To demonstrate the processes throughout which the three different levels of reading operate it is necessary to further examine the key characters within *The Promise*. The roles of Erin and Len will first be explored, followed by those of Omar and Clara, and, finally, that of Paul. Throughout these discussions, the interplay between the characters and impact of this upon their relationships within the context of the three levels of interpretation will be examined.

Key to the portrayal of events in *The Promise* is interpretation of the main narrative characters of Erin and Len. Cast as grandfather and granddaughter, Len and Erin occupy the same role within the television series. The inherited character traits, such as both undergoing a process of maturity from naivety to a more nuanced view, and plot developments, such as both being victims of a bombing within the same episode, result in a screenplay in which Erin appears to be the modern day equivalent of Len. If this reading is extended, Len and Erin jointly represent the secular, assimilated British Jewish community who have lost not only their faith but also their

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<sup>67</sup> *The Promise*, Dir. Peter Kosminsky, Episode 1.

<sup>68</sup> Linda Grant, *When I Lived in Modern Times*; Howard Jacobson, *The Finkler Question*.

ethnic and cultural identity. In this manner, the depictions of Len and Erin are similar to the ethno-cultural background of the writer and director, Kosminsky. Furthermore, Erin and Len occupy the role of an assimilated, 'lost' Jew who is representative of not only Kosminsky's personal background but also of the alternative perspective that as Christianity emerged from Judaism then all Christians are the 'children' of Judaism. In this re-imagining of the imperial patriarchal narrative, its structure has been reversed to suit a religious context as originally Judaism 'gave birth' to Christianity. In the contemporary re-interpretation of the imperial patriarchal discourse, Britain's role has been recast from that of a child to a parent whose Christian duty is to protect its imperial children, of which the Jewish community is one. The presence of this response can be traced beyond the situation in 1940s Palestine and contemporary Israel. In this reading of the past, Britain has acted as protector of the Jews since their re-admission to Britain in 1656 and continued to do so through, for example, providing sanctuary for those escaping the Russian pogroms in the 1880s to latter day engagements with Mandate Palestine, as outlined in Chapter Two.

Therefore, it could be argued that Erin and Len are not necessarily British Jewish but are Christians of Jewish ancestry. This possibility is particularly significant as Len was adopted at birth and so does not know his parents, resulting in a level of ambiguity, at the very least, around his, and thus Erin's, Christian lineage.<sup>69</sup> Furthermore, there are also several clues that suggest their Jewish ancestry. Both Len and Erin seem to possess what are perceived as stereotypically Jewish characteristics: they are dark haired, fair skinned, slightly built and quietly spoken. To an audience inclined to view these characteristics as representative of a Jewish identity, *The Promise* presents them as such. Hence, Len and Erin remain symbolic of the assimilated Jew rather than Christians. The emphasis here is not on whether or not Len and Erin are actually Jewish but on their portrayal, by a Jewish writer and director, which enables them to be read as such.

This alternative reading of *The Promise* initially appears to oppose the popular, and previously cited, argument from the 1960s that Jews were perceived as "metaphor for the human condition".<sup>70</sup> Furthermore, this statement supports press reviews of *The Promise* in which it was perceived as a series exploring the human condition and the related themes of love and loss; a sentiment that was also applied to Jacobson's *The Finkler Question* by reviewers, as noted in Chapter Five.<sup>71</sup> However, as Jabes stated that, "the Jewish writer is not necessarily the one who

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<sup>69</sup> *The Promise*, Dir. Peter Kosminsky, Episode 1.

<sup>70</sup> David Brauner, *Post-war Jewish fiction: Ambivalence, Self-Explanation and Transatlantic Connections*, pp. 187 – 188.

<sup>71</sup> See: Edward Docx, 'The Finkler Question by Howard Jacobson', *The Guardian*, 15/08/2010 <<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2010/aug/15/finkler-question-howard-jacobson>> [last accessed

charters the word 'Jew' in his writings, but the one for whom the word 'Jew' is contained in all the words of the dictionary, a word more absent for being, by itself, every one of them", the notion that Erin and Len do not have to be overtly categorised as Jewish to be considered as such is substantiated.<sup>72</sup> Considering the personal background of Kosminsky and the presence of narrative and visual cues in *The Promise*, the presence of an alternative reading whereby Erin and Len appear to be British Jewish, at least to sectors of the British Jewish audience, seems probable. This idea has precedence among British television dramas. According to James Jordan, a similar argument is evident in both the original and modern versions of the BBC television drama series, *Dr Who*.<sup>73</sup> Noting the historical absence of obviously Jewish characters in British television programmes, Jordan describes how "One way in which this recognition can be viewed is as a way to find and interpret Jewishness retrospectively in characters not necessarily conceived of as Jewish, something akin to Henry Bial's notion of 'acting Jewish'".<sup>74</sup> Applying this concept to *Dr Who*, Jordan identifies "a sense, therefore, in which the Doctor is a modern everyman, a celebration of migration and rootlessness in the global age. But while exemplifying the modern diasporic condition, there is also something particularly Jewish in his story of wandering, isolation, survival, loss and return".<sup>75</sup> That British Jews can occupy a historically overt absence and yet implied presence in cultural outputs such as television drama series is thus evident.

Therefore if Len and Erin are the assimilated Jew then they both have their pre-existing thoughts, feelings and beliefs challenged by those they meet. Every significant character throughout the series occupies a particular British Jewish and/or Israeli socio-political religious position with regards the situation in 1940s Palestine and modern Israel/Palestine. It is through the interactions between Len and Erin and these representations of the different fields of thought that the 'lost' Jew begins to find their own conscience and learns to interpret the various positions present. In doing so, Len and Erin, symbolic of the assimilated Jew, actually start to engage with God; it is in the spaces between the different positions outlined by those characters representative of sections of the British Jewish and Israeli psyche that a conversation with God, and one's conscience, occurs. This process is similar to that of an assimilated Jew engaging with

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09/01/2017]; James Walton, 'The Finkler Question by Howard Jacobson: Review', *The Telegraph*, 30/07/2010 <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/bookreviews/7916464/The-Finkler-Question-by-Howard-Jacobson-review.html>> [last accessed 10/01/2017].

<sup>72</sup> Jonathon Boyarin, *Storm from Paradise: the Politics of Jewish Memory*, p 65.

<sup>73</sup> James Jordan, "The Wandering Who", *Jewish Quarterly*, Vol. 60 2013, Issues 3 – 4 <<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/0449010X.2013.855448?scroll=top&needAccess=true>> [last accessed 08/-1/2017].

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

*Halakha* as to do so they have to recognise and interpret the body of Jewish law according to their own situation and, above all, their internal moral compass.

This process is best illustrated through a wider examination of both Len and Erin's interactions with the key Jewish and Arab characters. Immediately evident from the first episode is the casting of Eliza, Paul and their father, Max, as symbolizing different areas of Jewish socio-political opinion, as discussed throughout this chapter. Erin's interactions with these British-Israeli Jewish characters result in her preconceived notions about life in Israel in the past and present being challenged. Erin is amazed to discover that the Israel in which Eliza lives prior to IDF training is one of personal swimming pools, idyllic beaches, designer boutiques and nightclubs rather than being a poor desert with little in common with London. Her perceptions are further challenged by her encounters with Paul as, for example, he explains that although the security wall between Israel and Palestine is designed to keep Israel safe from terrorism, the terrorists that the situation creates come from inside the borders of Israel as defined by the wall. A heated discussion between Paul and Max during a family dinner further complicates Erin's perception of the present situation. Paul begins by asking, "You know what happened at Bil'in?...They built the wall right across the village land...The Palestinians couldn't get to their fields to harvest their crops, so what did we do?". Max replies that, "we protested. we wrote letters. We took them to the Supreme Court, all the things my son thinks are a complete waste of time".<sup>76</sup> To which Paul responds:

Do you know what the court did? It made the government move the wall and give the Palestinians their land. A tiny part of their land...Yeah, and for every time the court sides with the Palestinians in the blaze of publicity, there are a hundred cases which no-one hears about where they side with the government, where they throw out the appeal and legitimise the land grab...It's his cosy liberal opposition that perpetuates this fucking occupation. It makes you think Israel is a society like yours. That's how protests help the occupation, by making the world think that this is a functioning democracy, that you can change anything here by political action.<sup>77</sup>

Max then challenges by asking, "what are we, if not a democracy?" to which Paul replies,

A military dictatorship...Begin, Shamir, Rabin, Barak, Sharon? They're all ex-generals. The army controls every aspect of our lives, our roads, our transport, our borders. They mess

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<sup>76</sup> *The Promise*, Dir. Peter Kosminsky, Episode 1.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

## Chapter 4

with our kids' education, and their leaders end up in government. What else is that but a military state?<sup>78</sup>

Similarly, Len's pre-existing perception of the situation in 1940s Palestine is also challenged by his engagement with the main Jewish characters, particularly Clara. Previously linked with the liberation of Bergen-Belsen, Len's sympathetic yet almost patronising view of the Jews is changed by his relationship with Clara. A strong and confident woman, Holocaust survivor Clara is far removed from his descriptions of the inmates of Bergen-Belsen as being the epitome of "human misery".<sup>79</sup> Significantly, both Len and Erin's relationships with the main Jewish characters are punctuated at key moments of provocation with them suffering an epileptic fit, as previously outlined. Whilst Erin suffers several epileptic fits, including in a nightclub with Eliza, during a disagreement with Eliza's parents and after the demolition of a suicide bomber's house, Len only appears to have one, upon discovering and then reporting that Clara has been deceiving him.<sup>80</sup>

If the relationship between Len and Erin with the different Jewish characters is representative of an engagement with various sectors of British Jewish and Israeli fields of thought then Kosminsky's critique of the situation remains an Atheist one; too much engagement with the different interpretations of Judaism literally makes the main characters ill, as signified by the body politic.<sup>81</sup> The use of a framework similar to *Halakha* to explore these positions serves only to indicate Len and Erin's, as well as Kosminsky's, ethnic background rather than religious belief. However, not all of Len and Erin's engagements within this *Halakha* inspired framework are negative. If the analysis is extended to include Arab characters then Len's relationship with Mohammed, the *Chaiwala* at the Army base, serves to ennoble the British Sergeant. At the beginning of episode two, Len defends Mohammed from the racial teasing and abuse of the soldiers under his jurisdiction. Significantly Mohammed also enables Len to save Alec, a British Jewish British Army private who later absconds to fight for the new Jewish state, from a regimental scrubbing following the King David Hotel bombing.<sup>82</sup> Incidents such as these two allow Len to demonstrate his belief in parity for all, thus enabling him to play the imperial patriarchal hero.

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, Episodes 1 – 4.

<sup>81</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, P 135.

<sup>82</sup> *The Promise*, Dir. Peter Kosminsky, Episode 2; Ibid, Episode 4.

## 4.8 Clara and Omar

Further insight into the relationships of Len and Erin with those characters that aid their moral development within a *Halakhic* framework is provided through a greater examination of the roles of Clara and Omar. A 1940s Jewish Palestinian and a modern Arab Israeli, Clara and Omar, respectively, both occupy the position of the societal ‘other’. Furthermore, Len and Erin are both seduced by this ‘other’ of the opposite sex. Stating clearly that she is ‘paid by the city’ to entertain the British Army soldiers and to make them feel at home, Clara is very suggestive, yet seemingly blunt, from her first conversation with Len.<sup>83</sup> It is implied that she will do as is wished of her, from both the city and Len, in order to elicit sympathy for the ideal of an independent Jewish State. In the contemporary scenario, Omar is initially presented as a sexual object during his first meeting with Erin when he is forced to strip to his underwear at an IDF checkpoint, as mentioned earlier.<sup>84</sup> However, the sexual connotations of this interaction are complicated through Omar’s apparent submission to the will of the IDF soldiers at the checkpoint. Despite, or because of, being denied some of his dominant male authority, Omar is clearly cast in terms of being the sexualized ‘other’ – as discussed previously, although he remains a heterosexual figure, some of his scenes can be read as displaying connotations of homosexual ‘otherness’. By kissing Erin after she confides in him that she is not allowed to drive, Omar regains some of his male prowess.<sup>85</sup>

Hence, both Clara and Omar occupy a sexualized form of the societal ‘other’. This presentation is further enhanced by their representation in terms of ethnic and racial stereotyping. Clara thus symbolizes notions of female stereotyping with regard Jewish sexuality and femininity. She is the dominant Jewish female, the temptress who will cause the male downfall. Omar, therefore, is also representative of male stereotyping in terms of Arab sexuality. He is the dangerous predator, who is a threat to the innocent female. However, this depiction is problematic due to his waning hegemonic masculinity in some scenes. Within some contexts Omar appears to be feminized by an absence of societal power. He is belittled at an IDF checkpoint, as previously mentioned, and in the swimming pool with Erin at Eliza’s parents’ house Erin acts in a semi-dominant and sexually suggestive manner.<sup>86</sup> This discrepancy between the sexual ‘othering’ of Clara and Omar implies a fundamental difference in terms of power relations. In 1940s Palestine, it is the Palestinian Jew who possesses the most power whilst in modern Israel/Palestine the Arab Israeli possesses little, especially when he is not within his own territory, such as within an Israeli Jewish residence. This analysis of power dynamics reflects an alteration

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid, Episode 1.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, Episode 1.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, Episode 3.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

within the wider imperial patriarchal framework, whereby the political relationship has transformed from Britain being the dominant power to Israel acting in a similar manner.

The presentation of these societal 'others' as being exotic, dangerous and ethnically and racially different reveals further insights into the mechanics on which the various levels of interpretation within *The Promise* operate. As part of the second level of reading the series, the relationship of Len and Erin with Clara and Omar, respectively, signifies the development and ultimately failure of the imperial ideal. This interpretation operates through a dual process. Firstly, as the societal 'other', Clara and Omar should be protected by those representative of the British Empire and Commonwealth of Nations, Len and Erin; as the former are not awarded this protection successfully, the latter are presented as having failed in their duty. Len fails to prevent Clara from following her extreme Zionist beliefs and Erin places Omar in a situation where he has to escape from the arrival of the IDF as he could face prison if caught in Gaza. Secondly, as the actions of Clara and Omar place both Len and Erin in direct danger, there appears to be a subtext surrounding the hazards of colluding with the 'other'. Clara directly puts Len's life in danger through passing on sensitive military information, which he told her, to the *Irgun Zvai Leumi*; whilst Omar, although he does not intentionally place Erin in danger, enables Erin to travel to Gaza where her safety is put at risk. In this reading, the place of Clara and Omar within *The Promise* is a cautionary tale promoting the peril of colluding with the 'other', similarly to the overarching tone of Grant's *When I Lived in Modern Times*.<sup>87</sup> In allowing the 'other' of the past, Clara, to achieve her dreams, the British Empire, Len, has created a modern 'other', Omar, whose existence jeopardises the nobility of its successor, the Commonwealth of Nations, Erin. This interpretation can be substantiated by considering Kosminsky's view that due to being the ruling power, the British Empire was – and remains – at fault in these events.<sup>88</sup>

A third level of reading the television series further reflects the personal background of the writer and director. On an initial examination, it would appear that the roles of Clara and Omar represent a reading whereby religious extremism has a negative impact on an individual's morality. However, closer exploration suggests this interpretation can be extended to include the incapability of organised religion to contain the 'other'. It is hence ill equipped to deal with the situations created by those acting in the name of religion and so excludes the relationships with the 'other' that subsequently arise. Thus, this process prevents the 'other' from being able to effectively and meaningfully contribute to the situation. The role of the 'other' in the series

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<sup>87</sup> Linda Grant, *When I Lived in Modern Times*.

<sup>88</sup> Rachel Cooke, 'Peter Kosminsky: Britain's Humiliation in Palestine'.

therefore reflects a view of the past and present based on an atheist doctrine grounded in Jewish ethno-cultural beliefs.

Thus, considered from this (anti)religious perspective, the role of the 'other' within *The Promise* is to encourage the audience to consider the effects of temptation and, in particular, the temptation to stray from personal conscience. Using a mix of ethno-racial and religious difference, the story presented is a cautionary one regarding the danger of straying too far from one's community and, more significantly, one's true self. However, as temptation is widely regarded as a sinful quality and as sin is a historically Christian concept, the roles of Clara and Omar as the religious-racial 'other' further reflect the personal background of Kosminsky. In particular, the role of Christianity within *The Promise* demonstrates Kosminsky's experience as a British atheist; his upbringing was within an atheism that itself is based on moral values derived from secular Christianity, albeit without the religious meaning.<sup>89</sup> This principle is portrayed within *The Promise* through the inability of Clara and Omar to positively aid the personal moral development of Len and Erin, respectively. The personal values of neither Len nor Erin benefit from their interactions with Clara and Omar. Situations with their romantic interests do not ennoble the morality of either character. Len betrays his country, and more immediately his friends, by passing on sensitive information to Clara whilst Erin insults the hospitality of her hosts by inviting Omar into their house and then kissing him.<sup>90</sup> Rather than enhancing their quest for moral growth, Len and Erin's relationship with Clara and Omar appears to endanger it as it is only when Len and Erin leave their influence that they are able to continue their personal journey. However, this reading would suggest that engagement with the 'other' is a necessary part of this development as each interaction provides a moral lesson for Len and Erin; they, like Grant's Evelyn, are taught about rebellion, deceit and their youthful naivety is eroded.<sup>91</sup> Ultimately, Kosminsky's use of elements of a Christian influenced version of British atheism does not detract from the overriding impact of his Jewish ancestry on *The Promise*. The casting of Clara and Omar as the 'other' (and the implications of their association with Christian sin) challenges Len and Erin to find the God within themselves, offering them a chance to find *haMakom* and continuing to demonstrate Kosminsky's use of religion as a cultural reference point.

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> *The Promise*, Dir. Peter Kosminsky, Episode 3.

<sup>91</sup> Linda Grant, *When I Lived in Modern Times*.

## 4.9 Paul and Len

However, it is through her relationship with Paul, and subsequently Len, that Erin learns perhaps the most significant lessons contained within *The Promise*. Cast as Eliza's older brother, Paul is a liberal, secular British Israeli Jew, a former IDF recruit who is now a peace protestor campaigning for a fair solution to the Israel/Palestine situation. The role of Paul is to demonstrate how the situation in Israel/Palestine is more complex than it initially appears, especially as perceived by Erin. It is Paul who first poses the idea that terrorists come from inside the security wall, as well as challenging Erin's preconceived binary notions regarding the role of the different Arab communities within Israel/Palestine; by introducing Erin to Omar, Paul alerts Erin to the fact that there exists a Christian, Israeli Arab population. A complicated character, Paul acts as a critique of the unquestioning loyalty of certain segments of the Jewish community to Israel. Despite campaigning for a peaceful, non-violent solution to the situation in Israel/Palestine, a visit to Paul's former IDF base in Hebron results in him taking up arms.<sup>92</sup> This act of defence to protect his former IDF colleagues serves to show that he is not disloyal to Israel even if he is being critical of it; any criticism of the current situation in Israel is thus derived from his belief in its ability to do better as a nation. In remaining loyal to Israel despite suggesting that it does not live up to its potential with regard the situation in Israel/Palestine, Paul provides a parallel with Len, as he too questions the behaviour of the British Empire in 1940s Palestine. Upon reflecting on his experience dealing with newly arrived uncertified immigrants in Palestine, Len states that,

I know there has to be a quota and that this little land can't take every Jew who suffered at the hands of the Nazis. But I think if I'd been through what these people have been through, I'd want a homeland too. I didn't like what we were asked to do today. None of us did. These people have suffered enough. But we responded with barbed wire and baseball bats. It weren't right.<sup>93</sup>

Hence, both men appear to believe in the power of their respective nations to act in a honourable manner, setting an example that all others should follow.

This resemblance is not the only similarity between Paul and Len. By the middle of the fourth, and final, episode it could be argued that Paul serves as the contemporary equivalent of 1940s Len. This likeness is created through the use of similar character biographies for both men. They each went to jail during the end of their military service. They have become disillusioned with the role of the military in their respective contexts and their military service acted as a time

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<sup>92</sup> *The Promise*, Dir. Peter Kosminsky, Episode 3.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid*, Episode 1.

during which they lost their youthful naivety. They are victims of a terrorist attack at similar points in the series – the King David Hotel bombing for Len and an Arab Palestinian suicide bomber for Paul.<sup>94</sup> Despite this, they aim to treat people fairly and do not possess any obvious prejudices. However, both men say they have specifically wronged the Arab community, as Len failed to save Hassan and return the key to Mohammed and Paul pointed his rifle as a joke at a terrified young girl whilst on duty. Consequently, both men are cast as having always been unhappy since their transformational time in the military.

Significantly, Erin only seems to make substantial progress in her quest to return Mohammed's key when Paul helps her. It is through his assistance that Erin gains the name and address of Mohammad's relatives.<sup>95</sup> Paul's role thus appears essential in allowing Erin to negotiate and understand her past through helping her right the wrongs contained within it. Hence, Erin does eventually find the inner peace she has been seeking, but through an acceptance of her ethno-cultural background and the importance of the family dimensions within this rather than through a relationship with God. Likewise, Grant's Evelyn also seems to find a new, (disillusioned) inner peace once she is able to gain public recognition of her family heritage and stops seeking the influence of a patriarch (or external deity) to assist her in this.<sup>96</sup> This secularism of the overriding message of *The Promise* is demonstrated through the role of Paul and his relationship with Erin. Furthermore, if Paul occupies a role similar to Len and Len has a dual purpose in terms of also operating in a manner that resembles Erin's position in the modern context, then the prevailing discourse presented by Kosminsky is that one should always look inwards to satisfy one's conscience before relying on external deities. Thus, God (or an atheist version of this process whereby the term 'God' is representative of true inner sanctum) is to be found within each audience member and not in any external form. Therefore, *The Promise* remains an atheist critique of the past and present of Israel/Palestine. Ultimately, however, this stance correlates with the notion that a resolution to the situation cannot be found in the one nation idea or the partition alternative. Instead, Israel, as the vision of a Zionist utopia, should offer support and inclusion to its own internal Arab 'other' and satisfy its conscience in doing so.

Key to the portrayal of this narrative is the importance attached to Erin's discovery of Mohammed's daughter, Jawda, as this only occurs when Erin ceases to be concerned with herself and is thus more aware of the needs of others.<sup>97</sup> Having been caught illegally in Gaza by the IDF at the family home of a suicide bomber, Erin volunteers to be a human shield for the IDF as they

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid, Episodes 1 – 2.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid, Episode 4.

<sup>96</sup> Linda Grant, *When I Lived in Modern Times*.

<sup>97</sup> *The Promise*, Dir. Peter Kosminsky, Episode 4.

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travel to another house which they wish to demolish.<sup>98</sup> Her motives for doing so are purely to protect and reassure the younger sister of the suicide bomber who the IDF also want to use as a human shield. Whilst in the other house, Erin is singing to the little girl to calm her when a previously unnoticed old lady starts speaking to them. Erin lets the old lady reminisce without any ulterior motive or self-concern before realising that she is Jawda. It is significant that at this point, and during the events prior to it, Erin is alone in Gaza, without Omar, who had to flee when the IDF arrived, or Paul. She has found her own sense of conscience and so does not require external guidance.

Erin's coming to terms with her ethno-cultural heritage is additionally symbolized by the notion that, as Paul can be equated to Len and Len acts in a role similar to Erin, then the fact that Erin lost her virginity to Paul represents an act of finding a sense of herself and belonging. That Erin has found peace, and love, within her family relationships is further alluded to during a scene in which she dreams of a young Len. Ultimately, a reading of *The Promise* based on this third level of interpretation supports the notion that it is an atheist critique of the past and present situation in Israel/Palestine with Zionist sympathies. This is demonstrated through the use of the religious and cultural framework of *Halakha*, as it is through undertaking this journey that both Erin and Len's consciences are soothed and their inner peace eventually found.

Despite some obvious parallels between Len and Erin during the final episode, by the end of the series they seem to occupy different positions representative of the wider political situation in each context. Although they both are hectically trying to protect an Arab child from danger at the hands of their Jewish friends, as Clara is now fighting for the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* and Eliza is in Gaza with the IDF, the outcome for Len and Erin is vastly different.<sup>99</sup> Unfortunately, Len is unable to save Hassan from a Jewish sniper and he dies in Len's arms.<sup>100</sup> However, Erin manages to protect the younger sister of the suicide bomber from danger and returns her safely but traumatized to her family.<sup>101</sup> Furthermore, reconciliation between Erin and Eliza does not seem impossible as, after suffering an epileptic fit in the back of ambulance in Gaza, Erin wakes up to greet Eliza's face with "Hey, dude", suggesting the continuation of an altered friendship.<sup>102</sup>

The difference between the situation facing Len in 1940s Palestine and Erin in contemporary Israel/Palestine is additionally highlighted through analysis of the final dialogue of both Len and Paul. Stating that,

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

I suppose I feel embarrassed and ashamed, like the whole thing was a failure. We've left the Arabs in the shit. I know that if I know anything. But what about the Jews and their bloody state for which they've fought so hard? Three years ago I'd have said give 'em whatever they want. They deserve it after all they've been through. Now, I'm not so sure. This precious state of theirs has been born in violence and in cruelty to its neighbours. I'm not sure how it can hope to thrive.<sup>103</sup>

Len appears to voice the popular sentiment of time with regard the price paid by Britain for the State of Israel.<sup>104</sup> In the modern context, Paul tells Erin that what she did in Gaza was heroic, asking if she will return to Israel:

Paul: Will you be back?

Erin: Why? What's the point?

Paul: Because there's a lot to be done. It was a very brave thing, Erin, what you did.<sup>105</sup>

Considered together, Paul's final words appear to be a continuation of Len's final thoughts and feelings that independence should only be the beginning of a journey, as there remains unfinished business within the nation, both personally and politically. Thus, these statements serve as a dual package of sentiment whereby Len is the pessimist of the past and Paul is the optimist of the future.

This idea that Len is representative of past dreams that have soured and Erin and Paul are symbolic of future hopes can be substantiated by the fact that Hassan dies in Len's arms yet Erin protects the younger sister. As both the Arab children represent the Palestinian future, which only the Jewish community – inside and outside Israel – can help secure, as portrayed by the key roles of Len and Erin, then a clear message about the past and present is conveyed. Len's final thoughts and actions represent a future which has now passed and which was tainted by the pessimism of historical events whilst Paul's final words and Erin's actions in Gaza reflect the optimism of a future yet to come. The overriding significance of this reading is that now is the time to seize the chance of positive political change and that, due to their past relationship and present position, the British Jewish community occupy a special role in facilitating this, as demonstrated through the actions of Erin, representative of assimilated British Jewry. Ultimately, then, this level of interpretation is a Zionist utopian reading of Israel's future whereby Israel has the potential to be a 'light unto the nations' and a beacon of hope. Furthermore, Paul's final words do not cast any

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> See section 2.8.

<sup>105</sup> *The Promise*, Dir. Peter Kosminsky, Episode 4.

doubt over the legitimacy of Israel, unlike Len's final diary entry, and thus *The Promise* supports the view that Israel is a nation that will endure.

#### 4.10 Conclusion

Overall, the dynamics present within this interpretation of *The Promise* represent a continuation of the imperial patriarchal narrative. Through the actions of the characters, a story is created whereby British Jews and Israel achieve (semi)independence in their relationship with each other, as demonstrated by Erin's eventual autonomy in her actions in Gaza, but then the mature 'child' of Israel requires the parental guidance of British Jewry in securing lasting peace, as signified by Paul's final comments to Erin. In this regard, Kosminsky's *The Promise* is similar to Grant's *When I Lived in Modern Times* as both feature young women enduring a 'coming of age' adventure in which the endings of their respective narratives suggest they have matured significantly enough to begin a new phase in their lives, with or without a patriarchal influence.<sup>106</sup> Ultimately, the relationship between British Jewry and Israel is thus still viewed within an imperial patriarchal discourse as the outcome of the internal discussion with one's conscience within the framework of *Halakha* is that there exists a generational, family relationship with each party possessing responsibility and influence over not only the past but also the future. The series therefore suggests that it is the duty of British Jews, and other Jewish communities, to examine their conscience in the manner of engaging with *Halakha* in order to help re-position their now grown up 'child' on the correct path, from which they have strayed. In doing this, the parent must acknowledge responsibility for past mistakes made with the child.

In depicting the past and present of Israel/Palestine within a generational structure Kosminsky is trying to negotiate the boundaries of his past, present and future in a similar manner to his characters. Kosminsky based Erin on his daughters to teach them not to dismiss the older generation, and therefore from his perspective the key outcome of the series was to demonstrate the importance of generational transmission.<sup>107</sup> Importantly, Henry Greenspan has identified how those who survived the Holocaust feel a duty to "bear witness" for those who cannot.<sup>108</sup> However, this act of providing a legacy for the future is often contested through the chaotic and less than ideal process of giving and receiving testimony, as survivors often transmit their stories to their children or grandchildren in a fragmented manner.<sup>109</sup> Through the interwoven narrative of the

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<sup>106</sup> Linda Grant, *When I Lived in Modern Times*.

<sup>107</sup> Author Unknown, 'Interview: Peter Kosminsky'.

<sup>108</sup> Henry Greenspan, "On Testimony, Legacy and the Problem of Helplessness in History", *Holocaust Studies*, Vol. 13/ No. 1 (2007), pp. 44- 55, p 50.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid*, p 50.

Holocaust and the establishment of the state of Israel present in *The Promise* it would seem that Kosminsky's emphasis on teaching his daughters about the past stems from an awareness of such issues. Thus *The Promise* is an attempt to provide a lesson about the past through a different, and more accessible, medium than traditional face-to-face dialogues. Furthermore Len's final dialogue reflects the personal opinion of Kosminsky and that it is this view that he feels is of most importance to transmit to the next generation.

It is within the second level of reading that the importance of generational transmission within the imperial patriarchal narrative is especially revealed. The grandfather to granddaughter relationship at the centre of television series enables a literal interpretation of the dynamics of the ideal parent and (grand)child framework as reading Len's diary enables Erin to undergo a process of increasing maturity through the direct influence of his words and life lessons. It demonstrates the continued, positive, impact of the imperial patriarch on his colonial child, once again highlighting Kosminsky's desire to teach his own daughters to see beyond the fragility of old age. He achieves this by creating a dynamic in which the older generational character has important lessons and experiences to convey to the younger one.

Thus, through use of an imperial patriarchal framework and from analysis of the final words of Paul and Len, the presence of a Zionist narrative whereby Israel should be the light unto all nations is evident. Ultimately, *The Promise* is designed to encourage the British Jewish community, and Jewish communities more widely, to examine their engagement with not only the past and present but also the future of Israel/Palestine. This is achieved by allowing them to examine their communal and personal consciences through use of a framework that would be ethno-culturally familiar to Jewish audiences across the globe and is often used as a means of moral self-discovery, *Halakha*. It is not important whether or not the main characters of Erin and Len or the entirety of the audience are Jewish as the emphasis within the series is on interpretation, allowing Erin and Len to be read as Jewish if perceived as such by the different audiences. That the significance within *The Promise* relies on interpretation is supported by the cinematography of the series, substantiating Kosminsky's complex view of the past and present.

The reaction that the television series provoked, demonstrates the significance of the Palestine Mandate and subsequent events within British Jewish communal memory and identity – even if it does occupy a largely 'forgotten' position. That this episode of recent Jewish history occupies a mainly repressed position within British Jewish memory is alluded to in Chapter Five,

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as analysis of Howard Jacobson's *The Finkler Question* reveals the further presence of metaphors and alternative readings in recent cultural work produced by British Jews.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Howard Jacobson, *The Finkler Question*.

## Chapter 5: Howard Jacobson's, *The Finkler Question*

### 5.1 Introduction

If Kosminsky's *The Promise* ultimately supports a presentation of the creation of the state of Israel as stemming from a Zionist utopian ideal, then Jacobson's *The Finkler Question* seeks to problematize any such notion.<sup>1</sup> Published in 2010, *The Finkler Question* is the fifteenth publication by the British Jewish writer and broadcaster Howard Jacobson.<sup>2</sup>

Born in Manchester in 1942, Jacobson was educated at Cambridge University.<sup>3</sup> Previously describing himself as “not by any means conventionally Jewish”, Jacobson's fiction seeks to explore notions of Jewish identity despite – or because – of his lack of traditional affiliation with the British Jewish community.<sup>4</sup> One of his most successful novels, *The Mighty Walzer* delves into the experience of growing up as a young British Jew in 1950s Manchester, a feature which has been described as “largely autobiographical”.<sup>5</sup> Although many of Jacobson's publications examine, to a greater or lesser extent, British Jewish (male) identity, several of his more recent novels seem more preoccupied with these issues than prior works. Referring to Jacobson's 1993 non-fiction *Roots Schmoots: Journeys Among Jews*, Gilbert noted how,

Jacobson, a British-born Jew, has not experienced the direct losses of rootlessness...His middle-aged exploration of roots is instead framed in terms of a post-war British perspective...In this context roots, or the lack of them, are no cause for sorrow, they are instead an irrelevance for a generation of British Jews who were looking upwards to an assimilated future.<sup>6</sup>

This lack of concern for a shared past appears to contrast with Jacobson's later focus on the impact of Jewish history upon modern British Jewish identity, suggesting that his perspective has evolved over time. In particular, the 2014 novel *J* seems to present a bleak vision of life in Britain following a pogrom event similar to the Holocaust, resulting in it being labelled as “the dystopian

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<sup>1</sup> *The Promise*, Dir. Peter Kosminsky; Howard Jacobson, *The Finkler Question* (London: Bloomsbury, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> Author Unknown, ‘Howard Jacobson’, *British Council: Literature*, 2002  
<<https://literature.britishcouncil.org/writer/howard-jacobson>>, [last accessed 09/01/2017].

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Elizabeth Manus, ‘Howard Jacobson’, *Something Jewish*, 15/09/2015  
<[http://www.somethingjewish.co.uk/articles/1185\\_howard\\_jacobson.htm](http://www.somethingjewish.co.uk/articles/1185_howard_jacobson.htm)> [last accessed 09/01/2017].

<sup>5</sup> Author Unknown, ‘Howard Jacobson’, *British Council: Literature*.

<sup>6</sup> Ruth Gilbert, *Writing Jewish: Contemporary British-Jewish Literature since 1990*, p 62.

British novel of its times”.<sup>7</sup> Jacobson describes how, “Something has happened before *J* starts, and what that something is I can best describe as an annihilation of a people and an idea. Who the people are and how and why the annihilation of them took place – an atrocity officially and popularly denied – is the story the novel tells over its 300 pages”.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, *The Finkler Question* can be argued to contain the ghosts of the past and the impact of this on Jacobson’s view of the future, as will be examined throughout this chapter.

A regular newspaper columnist for *The Independent*, occasionally *The Guardian*, and a broadcaster, Jacobson’s fiction can be seen to satirize those views put forward in his non-fiction work. In recent years, Jacobson has been a vocal opponent of anti-Semitism, anti-Zionism and “anti-Israel stuff” amongst British Jewry and wider society.<sup>9</sup> He believes that “Anti-Zionists fool themselves, demean their opponents and do little to further peace, if they think they have a monopoly on compassion”, whilst also asking,

Which Zionism are they anti? If they want to attack what’s happened to Zionism, I’m with them. When I see ultra-Orthodox Jews stamping all over Jaffa, or when I see them deciding who is a Jew, I think: ‘What’s happened to the grand dream of Zionism?’ I don’t like to see ultra-Orthodox Jews in Israel. What’s wrong with Manchester?...But when I hear a Jew saying Zionism was always colonialism, I say, no it wasn’t. I feel much less defined by Israel than most anti-Zionist Jews are defined by Israel.<sup>10</sup>

Furthermore, Jacobson reserves particular scorn for the presence of anti-Zionism among his fellow British Jews, stating that “We are past dealing with rights and wrongs, truths or untruths. I smell the enemies of my soul. Forget the Palestinians. With them we are just having a family quarrel. The enemies of my soul come from Tunbridge Wells”.<sup>11</sup> Referring to this quotation, Gilbert has identified how Jacobson “suggests, in the end, that the most highly charged associations and disassociations are experienced in the impasses of identities that, for British

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<sup>7</sup> John Burnside, ‘J by Howard Jacobson – the British Dystopian Novel of Our Time?’, *The Guardian*, 21/08/2014 <<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/aug/21/j-howard-jacobson-review-british-dystopian-novel-time>> [last accessed 09/01/2017].

<sup>8</sup> Howard Jacobson, ‘Man Booker Prize: the six shortlisted authors reveal the story behind the book’, *The Guardian*, 10/10/2014 <<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/oct/10/man-booker-prize-shortlist-author-inspiration>> [last accessed 09/01/2017].

<sup>9</sup> Gerald Jacobs, ‘Interview: Howard Jacobson’, *Jewish Chronicle*, 04/08/2010 <<https://www.thejc.com/culture/interviews/interview-howard-jacobson-1.17210>> [last accessed 09/01/2017]

<sup>10</sup> Howard Jacobson, ‘Anti-Zionists are Fools if They Think They Have a Monopoly on Compassion’, *Independent*, 26/02/2016 <<http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/anti-zionists-are-fools-if-they-think-they-have-a-monopoly-on-compassion-a6898636.html>> [last accessed 09/01/2017]; Gerald Jacobs, ‘Interview: Howard Jacobson’, *Jewish Chronicle*.

<sup>11</sup> Ruth Gilbert, *Writing Jewish: Contemporary British-Jewish Literature since 1990*, p 85.

Jews, take place at home".<sup>12</sup> These two comments are doubly significant. Firstly, Gilbert's observation substantiates the continued relevance of the notion developed in previous chapters that despite Mandate-era fiction being based overseas, it remains focused on dealing with more domestic issues facing the British Jewish community. Thus, given that *The Finkler Question* can be read as a metaphor for the relationship of British Jews to Israel, as will be argued throughout this chapter, the preoccupation of the novel with internal community politics and identity further supports the continued presence of this argument. Secondly, the two aforementioned quotations explain and highlight the lack of Palestinian voices in a book read as a metaphor for Israel/Palestine, as Jacobson situates various members of British Jewry as the 'internal other' in *The Finkler Question*. By applying his most scathing humour to the actions of these fellow British Jews, an opponent for his main narrator is cast.

*The Finkler Question* thus metaphorically explores British Jewish identity and its relationship to Israel and the impact of anti-Semitism upon this through an examination of the different lives of three friends. Introduced by the main narrator, Julian Treslove, the story follows the impact of personal and political events on the lives of three men: middle-aged Treslove, his contemporary (and perhaps rival) Sam Finkler and their elderly, former school teacher, Libor Sevcik. Set in London, the three male characters negotiate life events such as bereavement, love, advancing age and the demands of parenthood to adult children. The geographical location for the novel is, at this stage, indicative of the narrative yet to come. According to Sicher, as previously outlined in Chapter One, the deliberate setting of North-West London signals a move away from the authenticity and radicalism of the East End.<sup>13</sup> Instead, North-West London symbolizes a dilution of Jewish identity and fractured sense of communal heritage. This allows Jacobson to create a complex portrait of contemporary British Jewish identity and its relationship with not only the past but also the future.

As a result of such an involved, if ultimately fictitious, study of British Jews, *The Finkler Question* received much acclaim, in both critical and popular terms. Applauded as a humorous study of not only British Jewish communal politics but also Jewish identity more widely, the novel has been identified as "a riotous morass of jokes and worries about Jewish identity".<sup>14</sup> One reviewer stated that

In its insistent interrogation of Jewishness – from the exploration of the relationship between the perpetrators of violence and hatred and their victims, to the idea of the

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Efraim Sicher, *Beyond Marginality: Anglo-Jewish Literature after the Holocaust*, p 25.

<sup>14</sup> Janet Maslin, 'Jewish Funhouse Mirror is Alive and Not So Well', *The New York Times*, 20/10/2010 <<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/21/books/21book.html>> [last accessed 09/01/2017].

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individual at once in opposition to and in love with his or her culture – it is by turns breezily open and thought-provokingly opaque, and consistently wrong-foots the reader.<sup>15</sup>

However, wider consideration of press reviews reveals a more ambiguous, rather than purely favourable, verdict. Considering the claim that the narrative of the novel is, at times, weakened by a chaotic series of polemics, one reviewer stated that

All this might have been more damaging if he wasn't so good at the disordered kind. The spectacle of him letting rip remains as exhilarating as ever – and in any case, nobody will ever read his work for its decorous understatement...For some writers a thorough investigation of the situation of British Jews today might do as the subject for a single book. In *The Finkler Question* it's combined with his characteristically unsparing – but not unkindly – ruminations on love, ageing, death and grief. He also manages his customary – but not easy – trick of fusing all of the above with genuine comedy.<sup>16</sup>

Similarly, another mixed review also noted that,

There are certainly reasons to find this novel annoying. Chief among them, of course, is the tiresomeness of Julian's obsessive, if benevolent, racism...On the other hand -- cue Yiddish accent -- "The Finkler Question" is often awfully funny, even while it roars its witty rage at the relentless, ever-fracturing insanity of anti-Semitism, which threatens to drive its victims a little crazy, too. This is, after all, a comedy that begins and ends in grief.<sup>17</sup>

Significantly, it is this emphasis on grief, a common human experience, which contributed to the classification of *The Finkler Question* as a novel that moves beyond a study of Jewish identity to that of the human condition more widely. Or, as one reviewer proclaimed, "to put it another way, the overwhelming bullshit and the overwhelming beauty of Jewishness, where Jewishness is a metaphor for human culture in general" means Jacobson's novel contains many musings appropriate for wider society.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Edward Docx, 'The Finkler Question by Howard Jacobson', *The Guardian*, 15/08/2010 <<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2010/aug/15/finkler-question-howard-jacobson>> [last accessed 09/01/2017].

<sup>16</sup> James Walton, 'The Finkler Question by Howard Jacobson: Review', *The Telegraph*, 30/07/2010 <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/bookreviews/7916464/The-Finkler-Question-by-Howard-Jacobson-review.html>> [last accessed 10/01/2017].

<sup>17</sup> Ron Charles, 'Howard Jacobson's Booker-winning "Finkler Question," reviewed by Ron Charles', *Washington Post*, 13/10/2010 <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/10/12/AR2010101204537.html>> [last accessed 10/01/2017].

<sup>18</sup> Edward Docx, 'The Finkler Question by Howard Jacobson', *The Guardian*.

Perhaps the greatest testament to the success of *The Finkler Question* comes from it having won The Man Booker Prize 2010. Having previously been nominated in 2002 and 2006 for *Who's Sorry Now* and *Kalooki Nights*, respectively, Jacobson was perceived as a worthy winner.<sup>19</sup> Noting his eventual triumph, Jacobson joked that, "You start to want to blame the judges who have given you the prize for all the prizes they didn't give you. But they aren't, of course, the same judges".<sup>20</sup> However, Jacobson's success was not unanimous with only three of the five judges choosing his novel as the winner.<sup>21</sup> Described as "absolutely a book for grownups, for people who understand that comedy and tragedy are linked", *The Finkler Question* was the first overtly comic novel to win the prize since it began forty-two years previously.<sup>22</sup>

However, despite the largely favourable critical and popular response to *The Finkler Question* it remains largely unexamined with regard to its inherent implications of how a British Jewish author such as Jacobson perceives Britain's colonial past and the methods by which this is presented. As detailed, the majority of the reviews of the novel focus on its exploration of contemporary British – and more generally worldwide – Jewish identity. There is little consideration given in these reviews to the role of the past in forming the present and even less to the plot devices and character development employed by Jacobson to articulate such concerns. In seeking to re-address this imbalance, this chapter will examine the narrative structure and metaphorical discourses present in *The Finkler Question*. In doing so it will aid our historical and cultural understanding of the perspective from which different British Jews view the end of the Palestine Mandate and the resulting relationship with the state of Israel. The chapter will begin by examining the construction of the male characters followed by the role of female ones, before exploring the place of the imperial patriarchal narrative in *The Finkler Question*, after which it will consider the novel as a whole.

## 5.2 Julian Treslove

By the end of the first part of *The Finkler Question* the three main characters have been introduced: they are all male (unlike the female narrators of Chapters Two and Three) and all, at this stage, without a significant romantic partner in their lives. Two of the leads are Jewish and recently widowed – Sam Finkler is from a British Jewish family whilst Libor is a Czech Jew.

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<sup>19</sup> Author Unknown, 'Howard Jacobson Wins Booker Prize', *BBC News*, 12/10/2010 <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-11526278>> [last accessed 10/01/2017].

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid

<sup>22</sup> Mark Brown, 'Howard Jacobson wins Booker prize 2010 for The Finkler Question', *The Guardian*, 12/10/2010 <<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2010/oct/12/howard-jacobson-the-finkler-question-booker>> [last accessed 10/01/2017].

Contrastingly, Treslove is neither Jewish or widowed; in fact, he is single. That Treslove, the main character of the novel, is not Jewish has been noted by some reviewers of *The Finkler Question* to be, perhaps, unusual within Jacobson's scheme of work. However, Treslove embodies many of the character traits familiar within the leading roles of Jacobson's other novels. He is middle-aged and neurotic. Considered from this perspective, the creation of Treslove does not seem such a departure from Jacobson's usual fictitious leads.

Furthermore Treslove can be read as representative of non-Zionist British Jewry and is, therefore, metaphorically Jewish. There are hints at this character development throughout the text. In describing Treslove, Jacobson creates passages that sound as if they could be Treslove himself describing his perception of a stereotypical Jew. In Treslove's view, Jews should be "small and dark and beetling".<sup>23</sup> Jacobson later describes how "Treslove...resembled good-looking people. Symmetry was part of it. He had a symmetrical face. And neatness. He had neat features. And he dressed well".<sup>24</sup> In contrast, Treslove clearly states how Sam Finkler is not a stereotypical Jewish male. He describes how: "Before he met Finkler, Treslove had never met a Jew. He supposed a Jew would be like the word Jew...A secret person. But Finkler was almost orange in colour and spilled out of his clothes. He had extravagant features, a prominent jaw, long arms and big feet for which he had trouble finding wide enough shoes".<sup>25</sup> Additionally, "Finkler never dreamed" – unlike Treslove, who lived inside his own *private* version of reality.<sup>26</sup> Jacobson thus suggests that non-Jewish Treslove is, in fact, more Jewish than Sam Finkler, a British Jew.

However, Sam Finkler does, according to Treslove, possess the common Jewish ability of being playful with language.<sup>27</sup> This serves to reinforce the idea that Treslove is actually Jewish as, despite his own belief to the contrary, Treslove demonstrates his own dexterity with words by calling all Jews 'Finklers', after his Jewish friend.<sup>28</sup> Once again, Treslove is behaving how he believes a Jew should. The irony of this development is not lost on the author who seems to be goading the British Jewish readership of his work, as at one point in a conversation between Treslove and Sam Finkler refers to the notion that even to say "unstereotypically" is to generalise.<sup>29</sup> Considered from this viewpoint, the introduction of two 'Jews', one stereotypical and one not, in a novel which muses on British Jewish, and more widely Jewish, identity helps to create a unique platform from which to debate such complexities. That the word 'Jew' is sparingly

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<sup>23</sup> Howard Jacobson, *The Finkler Question*, p 17.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, p 27.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, p 17.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, p 18.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, P 57.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, p 17.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, p 22.

used in *The Finkler Question* further verifies the status of the novel as one that deals solely with Jewish identities. If, once again, Brauner's analysis that Jewish identity is "most problematic, and hence most in need of explanation" for those who are ambivalent to their Jewishness yet it is they "who are most Jewish", is considered then Jacobson's work occupies a unique position.<sup>30</sup> Starting out as having almost outsider status within British Jewry, Jacobson has now evolved to a more established communal figure. However, the comparative absence of the word 'Jew' in a novel that can be read as musing British Jewish identity in relation to the imperial past suggests an element of continued discomfort on Jacobson's part – despite his transition to 'insider' status within the British Jewish community.

The advent of a key plot device within the first part of the novel further secures Treslove's Jewish, and in particular British Jewish, heritage. Upon leaving Libor's flat one evening after socialising with his two Jewish friends, Treslove is mugged by a woman who, he believes, calls him "you Ju". This leads Treslove to wonder if he is, in fact, Jewish. In a plot development that is not uncommon among Jewish fiction, Treslove does not identify as Jewish until encountering anti-Semitism. Referring to Phillip Roth's *The Counterlife*, Stahler describes how, "In the novel, it takes England, with its snobbish anti-Semitism...to 'make' a Jew of the narrator".<sup>31</sup> Similarly, Gilbert identifies how

In *I Dreyfus*...Bernice Rubens explores what she calls the 'Dreyfus Syndrome'. Rubens does not attempt to directly rewrite the story of the nineteenth-century Dreyfus affair...but instead revisits some of the issues that the episode raised about Jewishness, identity and belonging...Rubens draws from this underlying insecurity for British Jews by relocating the Dreyfus narrative to a 1990s English public school. This bastion of establishment values is presented as a kind of time capsule which contains a muted, but deep, seam of anti-Semitism. Sir Alfred Dreyfus, a self-confessed 'closet Jew', has been raised in an atmosphere of lies and ignorance about his Jewish origins and he manifests a complex relationship to Jewishness throughout the story. His strategic denial of Jewishness enables him to become headmaster of the school. However, when he is framed for the murder of a child (invoking a deep cultural association with Jews and the blood libel), he begins to reconstruct a growing sense of his Jewish identity. The repressed, it is implied, will always return.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> David Brauner, *Post-war Jewish fiction: Ambivalence, Self-Explanation and Transatlantic Connections*, p 187.

<sup>31</sup> Axel Stähler (ed), *Anglophone Jewish Literatures*, p 11.

<sup>32</sup> Ruth Gilbert, *Writing Jewish: Contemporary British-Jewish Literature since 1990*, p 19.

In this sense, then, *The Finkler Question* can be seen as a continuation of a re-telling of Jewish history. However, Jacobson problematizes the essentialist notion outlined by Gilbert that Jewishness is innate, as ultimately Treslove rejects his newly-realised heritage.

This major plot development, then, suggests that if Treslove is a British Jew then the mugging is a metaphor for the impact of the Holocaust upon British Jewry. In this reading, British Jewry had forgotten, to the extent of not realising, that they were Jewish until confronted violently with the specificity of the Holocaust. Correspondingly, Treslove also did not identify as Jewish until the specific actions of an unprovoked attack. References supportive of this theory are evident within the text. In particular, descriptions of the London scenery and action as being similar to typical Holocaust imagery (both prior to and during the actual killings) are present, especially within the passages close to the mugging. Describing the attack, Jacobson details how “It was as he was looking at the violins, lost in these tristful reflections, that he was attacked, a hand seizing him by his neck without warning... Treslove flinched and dropped his head into his shoulders...He knew the people of the street – the beggars, the homeless, the dispossessed. Imaginatively, he was one of them. To him, too, the roads and pavements of the city were things of menace”.<sup>33</sup> Earlier on, Treslove muses his “sense of self – a timid awareness of one’s small place in a universe ringed by a barbed-wire fence of rights and limits”.<sup>34</sup> A few pages later, Jacobson describes how, Treslove “took hold of the bars as though he meant to tear the gates down, but he did nothing violent, just listened to the park breathe. Anyone watching him might have taken him for an inmate of an institution, a prisoner or a madman, desperate to get out. But there was another interpretation of his demeanour: he could have been desperate to get in”.<sup>35</sup>

These references to the physicality of persecution within such close proximity to the mugging can be read as clearly situating Treslove’s experience within an overall narrative based on the Holocaust. Hence, London’s city streets and pavements become places of danger where one can expect to be abused for being Jewish, public spaces such as the park become off-limits as symbolized by the barred iron gates and life exists within a “barbed-wire fence of rights and limits”.<sup>36</sup> Jacobson’s prose plays with notions of stereotypical Holocaust imagery, for example the ‘Arbeit Macht Frei’ sign at the entrance gates to Auschwitz is commonly used in texts to denote all Jewish suffering and persecution by the Nazis. However, Jacobson is also referring to the insularity of British Jewish politics and communal life since the Holocaust, as detailed by Kahn-Harris and

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<sup>33</sup> Howard Jacobson, *The Finkler Question*, p 31.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, p 24.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, p 28.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, p 24.

Gidley's theory regarding the 'politics of insecurity'.<sup>37</sup> According to Kahn-Harris and Gidley, threats and dangers to the existence and continuity of British Jewry have been recently emphasized in spite of its seeming communal security.<sup>38</sup> Prior to this, British Jewry stressed their rootedness and safety in Britain as a response to insecurity fuelled by anti-Semitic actions in a tactic dubbed the 'politics of security'.<sup>39</sup> Considered together with the idea that these comments may also refer to survivor guilt, the proposal that *The Finkler Question* examines the impact of the Holocaust upon British Jews through the use of metaphors, and as understood by Jacobson, seems assured. Significantly, as the majority of established British Jews were non-Zionist up until the advent of the Holocaust, Treslove is, at this point, representative of non-Zionist British Jewry.

That the mugging of Treslove is representative of the impact of the Holocaust upon British Jews is further substantiated by the fact that the assailant is a woman. The opening sentence of the novel, which states that "He should have seen it coming. His life had been one mishap after another. So he should have been prepared for this one", is significant as Treslove was equally shocked that the perpetrator was a woman as he was that he had been attacked at all.<sup>40</sup> Similarly, Germany was considered a western, civilised nation, a country where such an event as the Holocaust was considered extremely unlikely to occur. Additionally, Germany was the birthplace of the Jewish enlightenment, the *Haskalah*, and so was also a place where the desires of certain Jews materialised in regard to enlightenment. Likewise, a woman is also (at least certainly prior to the mugging) an object of desire, albeit one with a tragic ending as well, for Treslove. Expanding further, Jacobson muses how Treslove

was a man who saw things coming. Not shadowing premonitions before and after sleep, but real and present dangers in the daylight world... Women worst of all. When a woman of the sort Julian Treslove found beautiful crossed his path it wasn't his body that took the force but his mind. She shattered his calm. True, he had no calm, but she shattered whatever calm there was to look forward to in the future. She *was* the future. People who see what's coming have faulty chronology, that is all. Treslove's clocks were all wrong. He no sooner saw the woman than he saw the aftermath of her... She didn't leave him for another man or tell him she was sick of him and their life together, she passed away in a perfected dream of tragic love – consumptive, wet-eyelashed, and as

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<sup>37</sup> Keith Kahn-Harris and Ben Gidley, *Turbulent Times: The British Jewish Community Today* (London: Continuum, 2010), p 26.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> Howard Jacobson, *The Finkler Question*, p 3.

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often as not singing her goodbyes to him in phrases borrowed from Italian opera... It was how he knew he was in love: no presentiment of her expiry, no proposal.<sup>41</sup>

Describing the impact of this mind-set on Treslove's actions during the attack, Jacobson states how

life was a disaster movie in which lovely women died, one after another...A tree reared up at him. Swerving, he almost walked into a fallen road mender's sign. DANGER. His shins ached with the imagined collision. Tonight even his soul shook with apprehension... It's never where you look for it, he told himself. It always comes from somewhere else. Whereupon a dark shadow materialised from a doorway into an assailant, took him by the neck, pushed him face first against a shop window, told him not to shout or struggle, and relieved him of his watch, his wallet, his fountain pen and his mobile phone... It was only when he had stopped shaking and was able to check his pockets and find them emptied that he could be certain that what had happened had happened in reality...They could – there was the strange part – have been taken for a couple... That was what Treslove found most galling... what upset him... was the fact that the person who had robbed, assaulted and, yes, terrified him – a person against whom he put up not a whisper of a struggle – was... a woman.<sup>42</sup>

Significantly, the debilitating initial impact of this unexpected attack upon a British Jew such as Treslove is illustrated by the restrictive effect of being mugged by a woman upon his libido and sexual performance.

However, Treslove is then 'radicalised' further. Faced with another targeted act of anti-Semitism when the Museum of Anglo-Jewish Culture, of which Treslove becomes Assistant Curator, is vandalised with bacon, Treslove reacts in a more extreme manner than his romantic and business partner, the British Jewish Hephzibah. He reacts by saying that the perpetrators should be killed.<sup>43</sup> Whilst Hephzibah is understandably worried, she is also slightly amused. Although, she does acknowledge that, "They find us before we find ourselves", suggesting that the specificity of British Jewish identity has formed in opposition to anti-Semitism.<sup>44</sup> Applied to the relationship between the two characters, this comment could refer to both the radicalising impact of the mugging, symbolising the Holocaust, and the bacon incident, which serves as a

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid, pp. 3 – 4.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, pp. 6 – 11.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, p 207.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, p 208.

metaphor for subsequent waves of 'new' anti-Semitism, upon Treslove, as the previously non-Zionist British Jewish community.

Jacobson substantiates these links between the Holocaust and 'new' anti-Semitism by outlining Treslove's belief that, "You have to be born and brought up a Jew to see the hand of Jews in everything. That or be born and brought up a Nazi".<sup>45</sup> Considered in conjunction with Treslove's disproportionate desire for revenge over the bacon attack, as well as Hephzibah's comment, Jacobson again puts the politics of Treslove under scrutiny. Transitioning from a position of indifference to highlighting his Jewish specificity through concern over new anti-Semitism, he is now acting in a prejudiced, or overly aggressive, manner. If Treslove can initially be read as Jewish, after self-identifying as a consequence of an anti-Semitic attack, but then starts to criticize the very identity he was so desperate for to begin with, then does he occupy the role of a Nazi in Hephzibah's quote? This question is left to the reader to decide, however it seems clear that Jacobson is goading that sector of British Jews who, after the Holocaust, transformed from non-Zionist to supporting the establishment of the state of Israel only to begin to criticise it once it no longer suited them to have such an affiliation. In this manner, *The Finkler Question* represents a continuation of a conversation begun in Grant's *When I Lived in Modern Times* and explored more fully in Kosminsky's *The Promise*. The creation of a situation within the novel whereby one is either Jewish or a Nazi reveals Jacobson's politics, indicating his tendency to conflate anti-Semitism with anti-Zionism, as to criticize Israel is to display anti-Semitic prejudice.

A further, and final, reading of this portion of text indicates a critical perception of the relationship between British Jewry and wider society. This passage indicates an awareness of the complexities encountered by British Jewry in negotiating an increasingly multicultural society since the end of the Second World War. In particular, Hephzibah articulates the difficulties faced by minorities living in a society that discourages communal specificity. The idea that Britain is so wedded to the ideals of tolerance and equality that it fails to publically recognize difference is outlined by Tony Kushner in relation to the Holocaust and the liberal imagination.<sup>46</sup> In displaying an awareness of, although not necessarily an agreement with, Kushner's argument, Jacobson situates contemporary debates about British Jewish identity within a discourse dominated by the Holocaust and the establishment of the state of Israel. Hence, in this scenario, the sector of the modern British Jewish community represented by Treslove has formed an identity heavily influenced by both traditional and 'new' anti-Semitism.

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid, p 191.

<sup>46</sup> See: Tony Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994).

### 5.3 Sam Finkler and Libor Sevcik

If Treslove is used as a metaphor for the progression of non-Zionist British Jews then his peer Sam Finkler represents the anti-Zionist, so-called 'self-hating Jew' of the community. According to research by Cohen and Kahn-Harris, Jacobson has cast Sam Finkler as one of the moderately engaged British Jews who are in danger of being 'lost' to the community.<sup>47</sup> Published at approximately the same time as research for the report was conducted, the similarities between Sam Finkler and the focus Jews at the centre of Cohen and Kahn-Harris' analysis reveal Jacobson's concerns over British Jewish continuity. A table of category identifiers within the report highlights a number of similarities between Sam Finkler's biographical details and those of the moderately engaged but in danger of being disengaged British Jews who took part in the research.<sup>48</sup> A famous television philosopher and media personality, Sam Finkler is a recent widow with three university age children. He was brought up in a Jewish family but rejected Judaism as an adult, despite marrying a converted Jew and bringing his children up within the faith. Sam Finkler frequently argues with Libor about what Libor calls "Isrrrae", accusing Libor of basing his case for the existence and actions of the state of Israel upon the advent of the Holocaust, despite Libor not mentioning the Holocaust in the text.<sup>49</sup> This initial response to Israel, coupled together with Sam Finkler's dismay during his later transformation that "if we're family, what's with the boycott? Whoever boycotted his own family?" (therefore, they should not boycott Israel), indicates that Sam Finkler, and the anti-Zionist sector of British Jewry which he represents, understand the relationship between British Jews and Israel within a familial framework dominated by the past of the Holocaust.<sup>50</sup> Later in the novel, Sam Finkler's youngest son is involved in an anti-Semitic incident as the perpetrator. In a similar manner to Treslove, this act serves to radicalise Sam Finkler from a 'self-hating Jew' to a traditionally Zionist, synagogue attending, member of British Jewry. However, despite being outraged by his son's behaviour, Sam Finkler takes no responsibility nor feels any blame for it. He remains unaware of his own role in creating a future generation of British Jewry who are so far removed from their socio-cultural heritage as to not identify with it at all.

If Sam Finkler and Treslove are representative of the dual strands of anti-Zionist and non-Zionist British Jews and their evolution since the Holocaust then Libor is their metaphorical father. An elderly, widowed, Czech Jew who lived through the Holocaust and came to Britain after fleeing

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<sup>47</sup> Steven Cohen and Keith Kahn-Harris, *Beyond Belonging: The Jewish Identities of Moderately Engaged British Jews*.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*, p 11.

<sup>49</sup> Howard Jacobson, *The Finkler Question*, p 25.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, p 145.

communism in 1948, Libor would not wish to live in Israel but is glad it exists as a safety net. As the former school teacher of Treslove and Sam Finkler, Libor represents the impact of the Holocaust and developments in post-war Europe upon Zionism, specifically in relation to the British Jewish community and patriotic Zionism. In particular Libor, as the traditionally Zionist Jew, is now attempting to understand and guide the present generation of British Jewry, Treslove and Sam Finkler, as the non-Zionist and anti-Zionist sectors of community, respectively. Libor's European heritage supports his position as the traditional vision of Zionism inspired by events in Europe after 1945 but the fact he chose to migrate to Britain and not Israel in 1948 reflects his British Jewish identity and that it was this vision of Zionism from which the non-Zionism and anti-Zionism of Treslove and Sam Finkler, respectively, derived. Or, rather, the patriotic Zionism, as outlined in Chapter One, of their 'fathers' transformed the subsequent generations of British Jewry into non- and anti-Zionists.

Later in the novel, Libor meets with an old romantic interest, Emmy. He refuses to help her Jewish grandson who was blinded in an anti-Semitic attack as he now finds it necessary to think ill of all fellow Jews, as he now believes that Jews should hold themselves to a higher standard than others, an attitude for which Emmy accuses him of having "the Yellow Star mentality".<sup>51</sup> In acknowledging the presence of such an argument, Jacobson refers to idea of 'Israel as the collective Jew', in which "Proponents of this view see an equivalence between (a) the individual Jew in the old or classical version of antisemitism and (b) the state of Israel in the new or modern variety".<sup>52</sup> Libor further substantiates such a notion by saying that the issue is always about Jews and not about Israel. He states:

This is not about Israel... I cheer Israel. It's one of the best things we've done these last two thousand years, or it would have been had Zionism remembered its secular credentials and kept the rabbis away... none of it is about Israel. Not even what most critics say about Israel is about Israel. I want to think ill of Jews my way, and for my own reasons.<sup>53</sup>

Thus, Libor, the original manifestation of patriotic Zionism, is now displaying his own anti-Semitic prejudices by placing Jews on a pedestal. Significantly, he is driven to this after losing his true love, the traditional Zionist vision of Israel, his wife, Malkie.

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid, p 215.

<sup>52</sup> Brian Klug, "The Collective Jew: Israel and the New anti-Semitism", *Patterns of Prejudice*, Vol.37/ Issue 2 (2003), pp.117 – 138, p 3.

<sup>53</sup> Howard Jacobson, *The Finkler Question*, pp. 215 – 216.

Considering the basic development of the narrative, from the outset Jacobson seems to be goading British Jews in terms of their responses to Israel and Zionism. Recalling an incident between Treslove and Sam Finkler whilst they were schoolboys, it is described how,

‘J’you know Juno?’ Finkler replied, making inexplicable J noises between his teeth.

Treslove didn’t get it.

‘J’you know Juno? Is that what you’re asking me?’

Treslove still didn’t get it. So Finkler wrote it down. *D’Jew know Jewno?*

Treslove shrugged, ‘Is that supposed to be funny?’

‘It is to me,’ Finkler said. ‘But please yourself.’

‘Is it funny for a Jew to write the word Jew? Is that what’s funny?’

‘Forget it,’ Finkler said. ‘You wouldn’t understand.’

‘Why wouldn’t I understand? If I wrote *Non-Jew don’t know what Jew know* I’d be able to tell you what’s funny about it.’

‘There’s nothing funny about it.’

‘Exactly. Non-Jews don’t find it hilarious to see the word Non-Jew. We aren’t amazed by the written fact of our identity.’<sup>54</sup>

Treslove then considers Libor’s relationship with his Jewish identity and the state of Israel. He describes how, “Israel, too, he spoke up for, as a Finkler himself, though that was more about needling people with the fact of its existence... than wanting to live there”.<sup>55</sup> By retelling these jibes, Jacobson refers to the idea that the establishment of the state of Israel has both validated and undermined the British Jewish community. It gave British Jews status through the significance of the past relationship with Mandate Palestine and yet also relegated their significance due to placing them within a wider diaspora, as referred to previously. During a scene where Sam Finkler and Libor have dinner together without Treslove, the latter is described as “always having been in waiting”. Once again, Treslove represents a non-Zionist British Jewry who were so far from self identifying as to not realise they were Jewish until the specificity of the Holocaust – an event

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid, pp. 16 – 17.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, p 20.

which, in turn, led to the establishment of the state of Israel. Thus Jacobson further suggests that British Jews were both undermined and recognised by each of these events.

#### 5.4 ASHamed Jews

If the first part of *The Finkler Question* is largely dominated by the impact of Treslove being mugged then the second part begins by focusing on the exploits of Sam Finkler. Detailing how he joins a group of fellow “ASHamed Jews”, with whom he meets every other Wednesday, “festivals and High Holy Days permitting”, Jacobson explores the effect of such involvement upon the identity of Sam Finkler and his various relationships. The ASHamed Jews are a group of prominent British Jews who disagree, as Jews, with the actions of Israel. After describing how “Some [in the group] still felt a tender attachment to the faith in which they’d been nurtured”, it is clarified that “In the case of such ASHamed Jews as these it wasn’t the J word but the Z word of which they were ashamed”. This differentiation is significant within the text as previously Jacobson has conflated anti-Semitism with anti-Zionism, suggesting that to criticise Israel is to display hatred towards one’s Jewish heritage, thus providing the basis for a satirical consideration of those who oppose the idea of the “collective Jew”, such as Brian Klug.<sup>56</sup> Klug argues that as, “antisemitism is the process of turning Jews into ‘Jews’”, notions of the ‘collective Jew’ risk doing the very same.<sup>57</sup> Thus, supporters of Israel as the ‘collective Jew’ ignore that, “primarily and for the most part, hostility towards Israel is not based on the fact that the state is Jewish, let alone on a morbid and timeless fantasy about ‘Jews’. It springs from Israel’s situation in an Arab and Muslim Middle East and the direction taken by successive Israeli governments, especially in the Occupied Territories”.<sup>58</sup>

The use of the two aforementioned plot devices, the mugging and ASHamed Jews, to further such an exploration of British Jewish identity supports this notion, as the narrative comprises of two acts defined by the Holocaust and the establishment of the state of Israel. Prior to establishment of the state of Israel any visible anti-Jewish feeling was labelled as anti-Semitism whilst the emergence of the new nation state created a more public and focused emphasis on anti-Zionism in the British Jewish community. Whilst there had been anti-Zionism within British Jewry prior to this, as noted earlier, it was less of a public and more of subtle divide not instantaneously recognizable to the wider community. Beginning the novel as an ASHamed Jew, Sam Finkler embodies the opposite of the notion of the “collective Jew” against which he

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<sup>56</sup> Brian Klug, “The Collective Jew: Israel and the New anti-Semitism”.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, p 7.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, p 19.

campaigns. However he is then radicalised by his personal experience of an anti-Semitic incident, after his son acts in a manner similar to the Nazis by knocking the headwear off the head of an Orthodox Jew. Thus the character progression of Sam Finkler, from anti-Zionist to pro-Zionist Jew, symbolizes the impact of the Holocaust and the establishment of the state of Israel upon the originally (prior to the Holocaust) anti-Zionist segments of British Jewry.

That Jacobson uses Sam Finkler as a metaphor for a particular sector of the British Jewish community is further evident through descriptions of ASHamed Jews. Detailing how Sam Finkler writes letters to newspapers on behalf of ASHamed Jews, Jacobson has created a critical, ironic portrayal of the real-life actions of such groups as 'Independent Jewish Voices', who have written several well-publicised letters and statements within recent years. This satirical description is, at times, very thinly veiled. In particular, a passage in which a famous comedian, who has recently discovered he has Jewish ancestry, signs a letter, appears to mimic the actions of Stephen Fry, who signed the declaration made by Independent Jewish Voices in February 2007.<sup>59</sup>

Jacobson's criticism of certain segments of British Jewry is not limited to the present; he also seems to pass comment on the past (in)action of the British Jewish community. Describing how "a fourth [member of the ASH group] questioned the efficacy of writing letters to *The Guardian* at all. 'Gaza burns and we quibble over efficacy', Finkler remonstrated. A sentiment which could have been said to meet with universal approval had Finkler only approved it himself", Jacobson thus links the previous struggles of British Jewry to the present. Within this interpretation, the letters written on behalf of ASHamed Jews symbolize the similar actions of the past, in particular the letters and deputations made by communal organisations such as the Board of Deputies of British Jews in the 1930s in response to increasing Nazi persecution of the Jews. This notion is further supported by the fact that Sam Finkler writes these letters prior to his own personal Holocaust – his son being a perpetrator in an anti-Semitic incident. Thus, they originate during the period of Sam Finkler's life that can be seen to being metaphorically akin to the 1930s within the British Jewish community. In situating such events within an alternative chronology, Jacobson is critical of the ineffective approach of those representing of the community at crucial periods in the past.

However, Sam Finkler soon realises that the problem for him is not the situation in Gaza but the boycott. His previously quoted statements demonstrate how the relationship between Britain and Israel is understood by British Jewry as a familial one, as outlined in Chapter Two.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Independent Jewish Voices, "Letter", *Independent Jewish Voices*, 02/2007 <<https://ijv.org.uk/ijv-letters-statements/>>, date last accessed 02/12/2016.

<sup>60</sup> Howard Jacobson, *The Finkler Question*, p 145.

Considered together, the sudden and dramatic transformation in the personal politics of Sam Finkler as a metaphor for a similar change within the communal politics of British Jewry suggests that Jacobson is critical of the actions of this sector of the community. Furthermore, it also indicates that he perceives such confusion and ineffectiveness as representative of an overall identity crisis within British Jewry since the Holocaust and the establishment of the state of Israel. This is symbolized through the character progression of both Sam Finkler and Julian Treslove, who each experience their own identity crises as a result of an anti-Semitic incident.

## 5.5 The Next Generation

This portrayal of both men as being symbolic of the British Jewish community is additionally aided through the roles given to their children within the story. Collectively, the children of Julian Treslove and Sam Finkler represent the next generations of British Jews. In assigning this role to the future generations, Jacobson offers a grim assessment of the future of British Jewish identity; namely that the actions of their communal elders, Julian Treslove, a non-Zionist British Jew, and Sam Finkler, an, at least initially, anti-Zionist British Jew, have resulted in the creation of the next generation of British Jewry being so far removed from their Jewish heritage as to not identify as such. To illustrate this point, both of Treslove's sons, Alfredo and Rodolfo, are named after European 'high' culture rather than, say, a Yiddish alternative that would express their Jewish ancestry. The suggestion that Treslove's children are symbolic of the 'self-hating' Jew of future generations reaches its peak in a scene in which a drunken Alfredo meets Sam Finkler whilst the latter is searching for a prostitute.

Aware that his father now believes he may be Jewish, Alfredo starts asking his "Uncle Sam" about all this "Jew shit".<sup>61</sup> Alfredo is concerned as he has heard from friends and read in books that the Holocaust was invented in the past and is used as justification for Israel's actions in the present.<sup>62</sup> Considered in context of the entirety of the novel, Alfredo's conversation with Sam Finkler suggests that the former is so far removed from his Jewish heritage, as symbolized by the discord with his father, that he does not recognize it and would, in fact, deny it – to violent effect.

However, Alfredo is not the only offspring to act in a worryingly anti-Semitic manner, as Sam Finkler's youngest son, Immanuel, exhibits behaviour similar to that of the Nazis in the years of persecution prior to the Holocaust.<sup>63</sup> This anti-Semitic event serves to radicalise Sam Finkler into displaying a more sympathetic view of his own Jewish identity, although, by not considering

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid, p 219.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, p 188.

his own role in creating the next generation of 'self-hating' Jews, he appears to relinquish taking any parental responsibility for the incident. Thus, Jacobson issues a cynical verdict on the communal and personal evolution of both his character and wider British Jewry, particularly the anti-Zionist sectors of the community.

Furthermore, Jacobson also uses Alfredo to offer a pessimistic verdict on the human condition and recent British Jewish history. Alfredo states that his father has wronged him "Because we're all such lying, cheating, thieving bastards". Expanding on this, he says that his father invites friendship one minute and then does not want to know him the next, citing a recent joint holiday, after which Julian Treslove started living with a new partner without informing his son, as evidence of this. Considered within the same context as the rest of the novel, this suggests a critical interpretation of non-Zionist British Jews, as represented by Treslove, since the Holocaust and the subsequent establishment of the state of Israel. In this reading, once they had re-discovered their Jewish identity, British Jewry were fleetingly interested in the future of the domestic community before they moved on after recognizing the need for and existence of a Jewish state. This process denotes the evolution of the position of the British Jewish establishment since the Nazi persecution of the Jews. For example, the Board of Deputies of British Jews followed a similar path; the election of a mainly Zionist Board of Deputies of British Jews in 1943 signalled increasing sympathy with, and active support for, the creation of a Jewish 'national home'.<sup>64</sup> Similarly, Treslove only wanted to know his self-hating Jewish offspring when it suited him before abandoning them once he found his own, personal, Israel: Hephzibah.

## 5.6 Female Characters

A key figure within the latter stages of the novel, the role of Hephzibah is typical of Jacobson's use of female characters positioned within *The Finkler Question*. Considered as a whole, the deployment of women in the novel serves to illustrate the complexity of their male counterparts' relationship with Zionism, in general, and Israel, in particular. Female characters in *The Finkler Question* are all symbolic of their (current or former) male partners' relationship with their personal ideal, or actual image, of Israel specifically and Zionism more generally. Through analysis of the relationship between the male and female characters it is evident that the women possess a geographical and chronological symbolism that corresponds with the men's metaphorical status, suggesting an element of emphasized femininity within the text.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Gideon Shimoni, "The Non-Zionists in Anglo-Jewry, 1937 – 1948, *The Jewish Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 28/ No. 2 (1986), pp. 89 – 115, p 91.

<sup>65</sup> R. W. Connell, "Hegemonic Masculinity", p 61.

This theory is most apparent through analysis of the female characters romantically involved with Treslove. If Israel can be perceived, within, at least, certain segments of the British Jewish community, as the 'true' homeland of Jews then it is significant that all Treslove's romantic encounters within the earlier portion of the novel have names beginning with the letter 'J'. In becoming romantically involved with these women, Treslove seems to be fulfilling the vision, recalled at the start of the novel, of a fortune teller who predicted that his true love would have a name beginning with the letter 'J'. In creating an alternative reading of *The Finkler Question* whereby the female characters all represent different visions of Israel and the British Jewish relationship to it then Jacobson also provides an echo of the biblical origins of the Jewish return to their ancient homeland, as God prophesized an eventual homecoming for the Jews to Israel. This correlation between the romantic interests of Treslove and the British Jewish relationship to Israel is substantiated by an apparent similarity between Treslove's emotions towards each woman and communal feelings about the creation and development of the nation state of Israel. The British Jewish community at first felt both elation and pity towards the creation of and need for the new country, before fearing its demise at the hands of stronger powers. However, in reality, Israel proved to be stronger than the British Jewish community who were relegated to diaspora status.

Treslove too falls in love with women that rouse feelings of both elation and pity in him, as picturing their eventual death is a key component of his process of falling in love. Ultimately, though, the women prove to be stronger than Treslove and without need for his constant concern as they are the ones who leave him. Although Hephzibah appears to deviate from this theory, she too occupies a similar position within the narrative. She remains symbolic of the British Jewish relationship with Israel. It is only after Treslove has fully embraced his Jewish identity that he meets his 'true' Israel, Hephzibah – or as her friends call her, Juno. That Treslove has thus come to terms with his contemporary identity and Jewish ancestry is evident through his relationship with Hephzibah; he no longer pictures her demise and it is she who makes him stronger. Thus, in an inversion of the hegemonic masculinity of the imperial patriarchal relationship, as will be discussed fully below, Treslove no longer feels responsible and protective for his romantic interest but is being cared for – both emotionally and practically – by her. Furthermore, Hephzibah's Jewish ancestry represents a specific reversal in the typecasting of women within Jacobson's work. Regarding the fact that many of the women in Jacobson's novels are British non-Jews, Gilbert explains how, "The erotic charge of this frisson has been exploited to comic effect...His fiction is populated by a series of hapless Jewish men who suffer repeated romantic and sexual humiliations at the hands of the heartless Aryan women whom they find unbearably cruel and

magnetically irresistible".<sup>66</sup> The deliberate casting of the significant romantic interest of the main lead as Jewish thus identifies *The Finkler Question* as an exception to this rule. In fact, in a straightforward reading of the novel, this premise appears to be reversed – it is the male, non-Jewish lead who is seduced by a Jewish female.

Although the significant others within the past and present lives of Libor and Sam Finkler do not possess names only beginning with 'J', their respective female relationships also occupy a similar role to the emphasized femininity of Hephzibah. If Libor is representative of traditional Zionism and the impact of European anti-Semitism upon this, from Jewish emancipation to the establishment of the state of Israel, then his relationship with his now deceased wife Malkie serves as a metaphor for the relationship between 'western' civilisation and Zionism during this time. For example, it is frequently noted that Libor had many opportunities to stray from his wife but refused to do so and, as a consequence, they both remained faithful to each other until her death. This is symbolic of the relationship between British Jewry and wider British society, in particular the notion that each has remained faithful to the other despite challenges to their relationship, such as the establishment of Israel and subsequent political events. As the counterpart to Libor's traditional Zionist outlook, Malkie's role serves to highlight the origins of majority British Jewish support for the establishment of Israel. Whilst she is alive, Malkie's relationship with Libor is representative of the fragile optimism present in the mid to late 1940s amongst British Jewry who had survived the threat of Nazism and the Holocaust to believe in the utopia of Palestine and later Israel as a homeland for all Jews who required refuge and were not as fortunate as themselves. Throughout the text, Jacobson creates a portrait of Libor as having found his 'refuge' in life with Malkie. Libor "relinquished Hollywood" for Malkie and she "kept him sane".<sup>67</sup> However, once Libor's guiding light, Malkie, has ceased to exist, he appears smaller, more elderly and frail. Treslove observes how, "Libor looked smaller tonight than he remembered him, as though the streets diminished him. Unless it was being without Malkie that did it".<sup>68</sup> Such a depiction suggests that Jacobson believes that British Jews have also undergone a process by which their communal status and strength seems to have diminished. Therefore, the relationship between Libor and Malkie can be read as symbolic of the development of Zionism and impact of anti-Semitism, and the related creation of Israel, upon the older generation of British Jewry who survived the Second World War only to witness their dream of a Zionist utopia fail, at least partially, to meet their original vision. Without this Zionist ideal present in their lives, British Jews appear less influential and more vulnerable within the wider Diaspora. They are no longer able to

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<sup>66</sup> Ruth Gilbert, *Writing Jewish: Contemporary British-Jewish Literature since 1990*, p 6.

<sup>67</sup> Howard Jacobson, *The Finkler Question*, pp. 19 – 20.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*, p 93.

demonstrate any influence over matters which once concerned them, as portrayed through Libor's lack of control over the behaviour of his two rival 'sons', Treslove and Sam Finkler.

Representative of the next generation of British Jewry, Sam Finkler's relationships with women reflect the relationships between British Jewry, 'new' anti-Semitism and the state of Israel. This is especially demonstrated through analysis of Sam Finkler's relationship with his recently deceased wife, Tyler. The shorter marriage between Sam Finkler and Tyler in comparison with that of Libor and Malkie can be read as being symbolic of a shorter 'honeymoon' phase from the establishment of Israel to the emergence of 'new' anti-Semitism. In particular, it is suggested that both parties involved failed to live up to their side of the arrangement for a successful, happy relationship but that on retrospect it was overall a semi-satisfactory one. Describing their last conversation, Sam Finkler describes how, "Tyler's life was over much more quickly...[she] shook hands with Finkler as over a deal that had not worked out wonderfully but had not worked out too badly either, all things considered and died".<sup>69</sup> Thus, if Sam Finkler is representative of the now middle-aged anti-Zionist segment of British Jewry and Tyler serves as a metaphor for their relationship with Israel then it is suggested that neither has been successful in adhering to the ideal image imagined by the other side of what life would be like after 1948. In alluding to such a scenario, Jacobson apportions blame for this outcome. It is suggested that, like his wife, Tyler, Sam Finkler lived in the present; he ignored the Yiddish of his Father's past and changed his name from Samuel to Sam when at Oxford University, although he kept his surname as an indication of his family heritage. Sam Finkler is cast as someone who lives in the now without regard for the past despite its continual impact. Even when he attempts to confront the past, he feels less than satisfied with the resulting interaction, as he is unable to do so satisfactorily. After an evening spent with Libor discussing their different approaches to grieving for their wives, Sam Finkler

went into the bedroom and opened his late wife's wardrobe. He had not removed her clothes. There they hung, rail after rail of them, the narrative of their life together... He tried for sadness. Was there something she hadn't worn, that would break his heart for the life she had not lived? He couldn't find a thing. When Tyler bought a dress she wore it. Everything was for now. If she bought three dresses in a day she contrived to wear three dresses in a day. To garden in, if she had to. What was there to wait for... He breathed in her aroma, then closed the wardrobe doors, lay down on her side of the bed and wept... But the tears were not as he wanted them to be. They were not Libor's tears. He couldn't forget himself in them.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid, p 269.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, p 46.

The passage thus suggests that whilst Libor is consumed by the past, his offspring often fails to even acknowledge it in a meaningful way.

The use of female characters as versions of emphasized femininity to demonstrate their male counterparts relationship towards Zionism and, in particular, Israel is especially significant in regard to Treslove's position within the novel as a metaphor for non-Zionist British Jewry. Having never been married, and without a significant other in his life at the beginning of the novel, Treslove is thus unable to relate to the sense of loss experienced by his two widowed friends. Furthermore, he is then made impotent through the experience of being mugged. This sequence of events can thus be read as suggesting that Treslove, and therefore non-Zionist British Jews, occupy a position of impotence within wider national and international communal affairs as they have yet to successfully engage with their communal past or present, as signified by Treslove's lack of a significant other. Both Libor and Sam Finkler have experienced a life changing loss, as demonstrated by the symbolism of the now deceased wives representing the impact of the Holocaust and the subsequent establishment of the state of Israel. However, Treslove's relationships all fail. Considered together with the impact of the mugging and its metaphorical status representative of the Holocaust, it is indicated that the Holocaust only served to make non-Zionist British Jewry impotent and that they have remained so since in their relationship with the past and present, in regard to the place of Israel within communal identity. In his depiction of Treslove, Jacobson also suggests that the British Jews of which he is representative are immature and in need of guidance. Such descriptions support the presence of an imperial patriarchal narrative through which British Jewry perceives events in the past and present. In this reading, Libor is the parental figure whose communal influence in past events has resulted in two almost competing but entirely different offspring, Treslove and Sam Finkler, as non- and anti-, but later pro-, Zionist British Jewry, respectively. In employing various female characters within the novel to chart the evolution of the three male characters, Jacobson successfully chronicles the multifaceted, and ever-changing, nature of the various sub-identities within British Jewry and the role of the hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity of the imperial patriarchal discourse upon this. In this sense, *The Finkler Question* can be read as essentially a novel in which three men seek their true identities, as charted through their various romantic relationships.

## 5.7 Kimberley

That Jacobson uses women in the novel to measure the development of his male characters' personal, cultural and religious relationships is additionally evident through analysis of three female characters yet to be fully discussed. Early in the narrative, Treslove has a romantic engagement with an American woman, Kimberley. This encounter further enhances Treslove's

belief that he is Jewish whilst revealing Jacobson's perceptions of the relationship between British and American Jewry. Stating that "She looked too amazed by life to be English" and that "Treslove felt like a prostitute", Jacobson clearly positions Treslove, representative of non-Zionist British Jews, as being in awe of and subservient to the more dominant symbolism of mainstream American Jewry.<sup>71</sup> The complexity of this relationship is further illustrated by the key role assumed by Kimberley in helping Treslove recognise his Jewish identity. Recalling the events of that night, Treslove realises that as Kimberley initially mistook him for being a series of actor lookalikes, all of whom were Jewish, "The resemblance he bore to these men must, in that case, have been of another order. It must have been a matter of spirit and essence. *Essentially* he was like them. *Spiritually* he was like them".<sup>72</sup>

Given the chronological setting of this encounter, as it occurs after Treslove is mugged, it is symbolic of the relationship between American Jewry and non-Zionist British Jewry after the end of the Second World War and prior to the establishment of Israel. To substantiate this interpretation, the impact of the mugging on Treslove's ability to perform sexually with Kimberley is evident to the reader. Describing it as a "Jolly" night of sex despite Kimberley being married and Treslove being sexually premature, Jacobson elaborates on the possible reasons for the latter. Treslove states that it was a night "to be pleased with and proud of", although he did not usually engage in such activity.<sup>73</sup> Furthermore, despite the mugging not being sexual, Treslove believes that is why he was premature throughout the night, as he had been "half" thinking about the woman who assaulted him.<sup>74</sup> In linking the mugging with Treslove's inability to perform as he usually would like to in an encounter that both frustrates and also reassures him with regard to recognising his Jewish identity, Jacobson depicts the Holocaust, as symbolised by the mugging, as being both a beginning and an end. In this scenario, the Holocaust prematurely ended Jewish engagement with *Haskalah* and western European civilisation but also lead to the community's rebirth in Israel and the wider Diaspora.

Once again, Butler's research on the body politic, as explained in Chapter One, can also be applied to the portrayal of Treslove.<sup>75</sup> His sexual problems only occur after he becomes a self-identifying Jew, implying a negative impact of too much engagement with being 'Jewish'; Treslove appears to behave obsessively in pursuit of confirming what he believes is his Jewish ancestry. This indicates a very Jewish interpretation, as the use of the body in this way to depict the soul is

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid, pp. 69 – 71.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, p 135.

different to that imagery employed in Christianity. Furthermore, it also serves to reinforce the hegemonic masculinity of the imperial patriarchal discourse. Treslove's sexual prematurity occurs after he has been attacked by a woman and thus made to feel inferior to his assailant, demonstrating his own lack of hegemonic masculinity in that situation.

## 5.8 Tyler Finkler

However, it is through further analysis of the role of Tyler Finkler that Jacobson's use of the emphasized femininity of female characters to chart their male contemporaries' cultural and personal development is especially evident. Recalling how his affair with Tyler Finkler began, Treslove states that, "She was the eternal Finkler woman. Hence there never being the remotest possibility of his refusing her when she offered. He had to discover what it would be like to penetrate the moist dark womanly mysteriousness of a *Finkleress*". Treslove is then extremely disappointed to discover that Tyler is, in fact, a converted Jew. Such a description alludes to the literary technique of non-Jewish women as occupying the role of the temptress stereotype, as commonly present in the Jewish fiction of authors such as Philip Roth.<sup>76</sup> In a similar trajectory to that of Jacobson's Sam Finkler, Roth's main character in *American Pastoral*, Seymour 'Swede' Levov, "marries the shiksa Dawn Dwyer Miss New Jersey 1949".<sup>77</sup> However, reviewer Katy Brand argues against such tactics amounting to a negative portrayal of women, suggesting instead that, "Roth has always paid women the greatest compliment - to him, the genders are the same - he writes individuals, not just ciphers, mothers, sluts and goddesses".<sup>78</sup>

Likewise, it could hence be suggested that Jacobson depicts women in a certain manner to knowingly to create a positive counterargument. In this alternative interpretation, it would seem that Jacobson challenges the negative assumptions behind presenting both non-Jewish, and Jewish, women as seductive temptresses through creating female characters that possess the power to change, or at least influence, events. In comparison to the impotence of the three main male characters in both their private lives and wider communal roles, the women in *The Finkler Question* are depicted as proactive entities within their personal and communal spheres of influence. Such a notion is further consolidated by Treslove's description of one of his sexual encounters with Tyler Finkler. He states that, "They put the television on but didn't watch a frame

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<sup>76</sup> See Philip Roth, *American Pastoral* (New York: Vintage, 2016) or Philip Roth, *Portnoy's Complaint* (New York: Vintage, 1995).

<sup>77</sup> Tim Adams, 'Miss America Turns Bomber. Do You Still Blame the Parents?', *The Guardian*, 25/ 05/ 1997 <<https://www.theguardian.com/books/1997/may/25/fiction.philiproth>> [last accessed 10/01/2017].

<sup>78</sup> Katy Brand, 'Philip Roth's writing is anything but misogynistic', *The Telegraph*, 11/ 11/ 2012 <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/womens-life/9670062/Philip-Roths-writing-is-anything-but-misogynistic.html>> [last accessed 10/01/2017].

of Sam's programme. 'He's such a liar', she said, stepping out of a dress she could have worn to see her husband get a knighthood". By referring to Sam Finkler by his first name for the first time in the novel during an illicit meeting with Sam Finkler's wife instead of calling him by his surname, which by this point is used to describe anyone – or thing – that is Jewish, Treslove diminishes the impact of Sam Finkler within both his private domain, as demonstrated by the present lack of influence over Tyler Finkler, and his professional one, as symbolised by the lack of attention paid to Sam Finkler's television programme. It is thus suggested that Sam Finkler possesses a reduced status without his wife, as her absence from the role of a traditionally 'good' Jewish wife during these encounters appears to minimise his personal and communal influence. His hegemonic masculinity is therefore less significant without the presence of Tyler's emphasized femininity.

In portraying these narrative developments, Jacobson comments on the key communal role of British Jewish women. As Jewish women are traditionally placed within the domain of home, it is they who are deemed responsible for the continuation of the Jewish faith in British Jewry. It is mainly within the private sphere of the home that British Jewry remains connected to its religious identity, through domestic routines such as the *Shabbat* dinner. Furthermore, away from the home and without female influence, British Jewish men are only Jewish if they identify themselves as such. That Jacobson deliberately employs such notions can be substantiated by consideration of the correlation in the text between Sam Finkler becoming an ASHamed Jew and Tyler Finkler having an affair with Treslove. If Sam Finkler and Treslove represent anti- and non-Zionist Anglo-Jewry at this point, respectively, and if Tyler Finkler is used to denote their relationships with the notion and actuality of Israel, then the growing discord between Sam and Tyler Finkler in their personal lives reflects the increasing divide between the ASHamed Jews and Israel at this time in the narrative.

Despite this interpretation of Jacobson's use of female characters, the novel does not initially appear to serve the role of the Jewish woman well. Derogatory statements about Jewish women, alongside references to the stereotype of the domineering Jewish mother, create a negative portrayal of Jewish females. As such, *The Finkler Question* can be considered 'typical' of Jacobson's work, and more generally, the wider genre of male-authored Jewish literature, famously popularised by American writer Phillip Roth. In fact, many international reviews of the novel note the similarities between the two, with one stating that "Mr. Jacobson doesn't just summon Roth; he summons Roth at Roth's best".<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Janet Maslin, 'Jewish Funhouse Mirror is Alive and Not So Well', *The New York Times*.

However, although the frequent statements in this portion of the novel about the role of Jewish women as conforming to negative stereotypes appear to further limit the significance of the female characters, they too can be understood in a more positive manner. Considered within the context of the imperial patriarchal discourse, the declaration that it is “natural” for a Jewish boy to disobey his Jewish father although he would never even think about doing so to his Jewish mother has a direct impact on the narrative structure of *The Finkler Question*. It is thus suggested that it is only “natural” for Libor to have created two ‘children’, Sam Finkler and Treslove, who are so different to him in terms of personal, religious and communal identities. It is an accepted right of passage for a Jewish boy to rebel against his father, therefore accounting for the generational differences between Libor, Treslove and Sam Finkler with regard their private and socio-religious politics. In this scenario, the patriarch of the Jewish family has only a negative impact whilst the matriarch actually possesses the influence over people and events. Therefore, whilst the role of female characters may initially appear limited in the novel, they serve to highlight the frequent impotency of their male counterparts but, in a manner similar to that of emphasized femininity, still act as a benchmark against which to chart their development.

## 5.9 Tamara Krausz

It is through examination of Sam Finkler’s romantic encounter with fellow ASHamed Jew Tamara Krausz, rather than by analysis of his marital relationship, that this theory is particularly evident. Substantiating the presence of a discourse that situates male and female characters within a romantic narrative to depict the various responses of British Jewry to Zionism, and thus Israel, Sam Finkler describes how, at a public debate between ASHamed Jews (therefore also involving Tamara) and community figureheads,

the screaming he anticipated was not to be confused with the sounds a vain man fancies he can coax out of a sexually frustrated woman. The screams he heard in advance of Tamara Krausz actually screaming them were ideological. Zionism was her demon lover, not Finkler. She could not, in her fascinated, never quite sufficiently reciprocated hatred of Zionism, think about anything else. Which is how things are when you’re in love.<sup>80</sup>

After Sam Finkler and Tamara Krausz’s side wins the debate against members of the British Jewish establishment, Sam Finkler, unexpectedly, delivers a monologue that is against the principles of ASHamed Jews, pro-Zionist and in support of Israel. In response to an audience member’s congratulations to the winning team, he proclaims:

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<sup>80</sup> Howard Jacobson, *The Finkler Question*, p 231.

How dare you, a non-Jew...how dare you even think you can tell Jews what sort of country they may live in, when it is you, a European Gentile, who made a separate country for Jews a necessity. By what twisted sophistication of argument do you harry people with violence off your land and then think yourself entitled to make high-minded stipulations as to where they may go now you are rid of them and how they may provide for their welfare? I am an Englishman who loves England, but do you suppose that it too is not a racist country? Do you know of any country whose recent history is not blackened by prejudice and hate against somebody? So what empowers racists in their own right to sniff out racism in others? Only from a world from which Jews believe they have nothing to fear will they consent to learn lessons in humanity. Until then, the Jewish state's offer of safety to Jews the world over – yes, Jews first, while it might not be equitable cannot surely be construed as racist. I can understand why a Palestinian might say it feels racist to him, though he too inherits a history of disdain for people of other persuasions to himself, but not you, madam, since you present yourself as a bleeding-heart, conscience-pricked representative of the very Gentile world from which Jews, through no fault of their own, have been fleeing for centuries...<sup>81</sup>

Jacobson then describes Sam Finkler's response to his outburst:

Fuck it, he thought. It was at that moment the sum total of his philosophy. *Fuck it.*

He turned his head to Tamara Krausz. 'So what do you think?' he enquired.

She had a strange smile on her face, as though everything he had just said he had said at her bidding.

'Hysterical', she told him.

'You wouldn't care to lie in my arms and scream that, would you?' he asked, in his most inviting manner.<sup>82</sup>

Hence, Sam Finkler has transformed from an anti-Zionist to pro-Zionist, as symbolised by the possibility, at this stage in the text, that he has found redemption, at least temporarily, with his new personal Israel, Tamara. However, as Tamara is an anti-Zionist British Jew, the significance in this romantic encounter lies in its ability to then allow Sam Finkler to have a spiritual and emotional reconciliation with his recently deceased wife, Tyler, through coming to terms with her death.

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid, p 236.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, p 237.

## 5.10 The Imperial Patriarchal Discourse

Thus, by this point in the novel, two of the three main male characters, Treslove and Sam Finkler, have found or reconciled with the 'Israel' in their lives, Hephzibah and Tyler. Both men have transformed from being non- and anti-Zionist to pro-Zionist supporters of Israel. The only male who has not yet reconciled with his vision of Israel is Libor, representative of the older generation of Zionism from which they derived. After losing his true love, Malkie, who symbolised the original, utopian ideal of a Jewish nation state, Libor now finds himself becoming a "self-hating Jew", similar to his estranged grandchildren. These 'grandchildren' are the children of Treslove and Sam Finkler, and it is notable that they are all male, except for one female character who does not play a significant role in the narrative, therefore further substantiating previous comments regarding the place of women in Jacobson's work more generally. By including the younger generation within the narrative, Jacobson suggests that it is essentially a fable whereby the story is destined to repeat itself through the same patterns as displayed by the older generation. Each of the three generations involved in the novel are radicalised by their own versions of the Holocaust, designed to depict the impact of persecution and prejudice upon personal and communal systems of belief. Consequently, the older generation transforms from anti- or non-Zionist beliefs to pro-Zionist ones, by which time the same process is beginning to unfold again in the younger generation. The presence of this discourse within *The Finkler Question* further consolidates the notion that Jews, as a whole, perceive their past as a series of repetitions. In creating such a narrative, and in a similar manner to Linda Grant's *When I Lived in Modern Times*, it would seem that Jacobson is, at least subconsciously, demonstrating the continued impact of Yerushalmi's theory of memory upon British Jewish visions of the past, as will be expanded upon presently.

However, it is through the presence of an implied imperial patriarchal narrative that Jacobson's use of gender as a metaphor for wider socio-political issues within British Jewry is especially evident. From the outset of the novel, the three men represent a cross-section of the British Jewish community within an imperial patriarchal narrative. So, once again, Libor is representative of the impact of the Holocaust and Communism on the personal and communal experience of British Jewry. He is symbolic of 'traditional' Zionism, with a utopian vision of Israel combined with some elements of patriotic Zionism. Libor may, one day, require the sanctuary of a Jewish state but, for now, he supports it as part of his duty as a member of British Jewry.

Treslove remains symbolic of non-Zionist British Jewry until he is radicalised into being a self-identifying Jew by his own, personal Holocaust, the mugging. In creating such a narrative, Jacobson is making a statement about the power of the Holocaust on re-affirming British Jewish

identity. It was both a beginning and an end; it marked British Jewry's transformation from the largest surviving Jewish community in Europe after the Holocaust into part of a diaspora dominated by American Jewry.

Sam Finkler, as a personification of anti-Zionism, is in denial of his Jewish heritage but remains privately unfulfilled by his professional success and personal life despite conquering the 'gentile' world. Having married a converted Jew, he is now having an affair with his Jewish production assistant. Tyler Finkler explains how, for her husband:

It's the Gentiles he's out to conquer. Always has been. You must know that. He's done Jewish. He was born Jewish. They can't reject him. So why waste time on them? He'd have married me in a church had I asked him. He was the tiniest bit furious with me when I didn't... I'm another version of him... We were out to conquer the other's universe. He wanted the goyim to love him. I wanted the Jews to love me... I'm still the shiksa to him. If he wants the forbidden he can get it at home. The irony is that he's out fucking Jews. That lump of lard Ronit Kravitz, his production assistant. I wouldn't put it past him to be converting her...to Christianity.<sup>83</sup>

Sam Finkler is later radicalised by his own involvement, through his son's actions, in an anti-Semitic incident. His son has become so non-Jewish as to be acting in a manner similar to that of the Nazis.

That Jacobson conceives of British Jewish politics through an imperial patriarchal framework is evident through references and discussion relating to the ASHamed Jews. Upon learning that Sam Finkler has joined the group, Treslove remarks how,

I always feel that when he talks about Palestine that he's paying his parents back for something. It reminds me of swearing for the first time when you're a kid – daring God to strike you down. And wanting to show you belong to the who already do swear. But I don't understand the politics. Only that if anyone's going to be ashamed then maybe we all should.<sup>84</sup>

This association is additionally present during Sam Finkler's own consideration of his role within ASHamed Jews and the socio-political origin of it. In stating that,

It was here, about two years into his association with the group, that Finkler felt, for the first time since he'd joined – since, not to beat about the bush, he'd as good as fathered

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid, pp. 77 – 78.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, p 122.

it – that there was growing opposition to his influence. He wasn't sure what caused it.

Envy, presumably. Even the best causes are susceptible to envy

Jacobson clearly deploys a patriarchal narrative.<sup>85</sup> In using a parent/child dynamic to describe how Sam Finkler is sensing rebellion within the group, Jacobson's humour is once again evident. Despite, placing Sam Finkler in the parental role within this patriarchal framework, the implication is that Sam Finkler is actually behaving more akin to a child than an adult, further revealing the author's personal views on anti-Zionism within British Jewry. Sam Finkler's interpretation of British-Israeli politics through a patriarchal narrative is further evident through his previously outlined statement in relation to the Israeli boycott by ASHamed Jews.

Together, then, all three men personify the imperial patriarchal narrative whereby Libor is the parent and Treslove and Sam Finkler are the children. Furthermore, Treslove and Sam Finkler's children are so far removed from their cultural heritage that they have either forgotten or never known it, as demonstrated by their anti-Semitic actions and words. Thus, Libor's Czech background serves to reflect both the multifaceted ethnic diversity of British Jews as well as the impact of the Holocaust on them, as subsequently the organisations of British Jewry (such as the Board of Deputies) supported calls for a Jewish state more fully despite hoping they would never need it. That Treslove and Sam Finkler are originally cast as non- and anti-Zionism, respectively, adds to their depiction as part of a British Jewish imagining of the imperial patriarchal relationship as they have disobeyed their father figure, Libor, by not following in his Zionist beliefs, as discussed previously.

Considered within the novel as a whole, the interplay of family dynamic and patriarchal rebellion feeds into the notion that *The Finkler Question* is, ultimately, a moral fable. The key warning of the story is thus: British Jews should not ignore the events and experiences of the past nor deny their cultural heritage unless they wish history to repeat itself. This is demonstrated by the actions of the 'grandchildren' within the imperial patriarchal narrative, Treslove and Sam Finkler's children. Their actions directly contribute to occurrence of scenes with echoes from the Nazi past. Within this dynamic, the role of women within the novel serves to emphasize the impact of the differing socio-political positions of Libor, Treslove and Sam Finkler on Israel, as the respective relationships personify this. Therefore, creating a warning to British Jewry not to ignore the existence or ideal of Israel as to do so is to deny a relationship with an integral part of its family, the 'mother' figure. Such interpretation also demonstrates the significant position of Israel in terms of its relationship with British Jewry. The imperial patriarchal narrative is now reversed,

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid, p 142.

in comparison with Libor's generation's imagining of it, with British Jewry, the 'parent', now requiring the support of Israel, its former 'child'.

This, then, substantiates the character representations of the original 'children', Sam Finkler and Treslove. Sam Finkler is looking for fulfilment with a Jewish mistress whilst Treslove's romantic interests enter his life as objects of pity whose emotional (and cultural) strength ends up overpowering him. Thus, the course of the romantic engagements of this generation of male characters reflects the development of British Jewry's relationship with Israel. Additionally, Libor, as the older generation, has been part of a loving relationship with his wife, only to see her die, reflecting how his ideal vision of Israel has also ceased to exist recently yet he remains in love with the original concept.

### 5.11 Hephzibah

It is through analysis of the relationship between Treslove and Hephzibah that the inversion of the imperial patriarchal narrative is especially evident. If Treslove's previous relationships begin with the premise of visions of each woman's swift demise, then the relationship with Hephzibah is much different. She appears to him as a port in a storm. Referring to her relationship history, inclusive of that with Treslove, Hephzibah muses how, "Either way their demands wearied her. Who did they think she was – America? *Give me your tired, your poor...the wretched refuse of your teeming shore*. She looked strong and secure enough to house them, that was the problem. She looked capacious. She looked like safe harbour".<sup>86</sup> Instead of Treslove saving her, Hephzibah is offering him sanctuary. The impact of this romantic development is astutely noted in a conversation between Libor and Sam Finkler. After Libor muses that "It would seem that what he [Treslove] always needed was a mother", Sam Finkler agrees that he "Always did".<sup>87</sup> This dialogue further consolidates the symbolic role of women in the novel as personifications of images of Israel. In depicting an inversion of the imperial patriarchal relationship, Jacobson alters the importance within the text assigned to Treslove's romantic interests; the narrative centres much more on Hephzibah whilst Treslove almost seems relegated to observing events. Thus, in this reading, the relationship reflects a change in the socio-political influence of Zionism, Israel and British Jewry upon each other. This point is additionally substantiated by the behaviour of Hephzibah. It is explained how

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid, p 291.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, p 182.

In keeping this from Treslove, not mentioning the guard who had been shot, not telling him about the emails, not passing on what Libor had told her – though it was not impossible Libor was telling him himself – Hephzibah recognised that she was protecting him as she would have protected a parent or a child. Though more a parent, in that she was being careful of Jewish susceptibilities. She would have done the same for her father had he been alive.<sup>88</sup>

Furthermore, the possible restraining effect of the inversion of the imperial patriarchal relationship upon the actions of Hephzibah, and thus Treslove's imagining of Israel, is alluded to. Through Hephzibah's statement that, "He constrained her. He wanted her to be a certain kind of woman and she didn't want to let him down...It was a strain being a representative of your people to a man who had decided to idealise them. It wasn't only him she didn't want to let down; it was Judaism, all five thousand troubled years of it", Jacobson is highlighting the prejudiced position of those Zionists who still believe in Israel as a Jewish utopia but in doing so present arguments akin to the concept of Israel as the 'collective Jew'.<sup>89</sup> In doing so, Jacobson presents a counter argument to that demonstrated at the end of Kosminsky's *The Promise*, as detailed in Chapter Four.

Ultimately, it is the impact of Treslove's relationship with Hephzibah upon the imperial patriarchal discourse when considered in conjunction with Butler's theory of the body politic that possesses the most significance in this reading.<sup>90</sup> Treslove is excluded from and/or denied a loving, longer-term, successful relationship until he meets Hephzibah. However, he ultimately rejects this and returns to an innate state of separate-ness. Treslove's behaviour represents a perceived lack of British Jewish hegemonic masculinity at the present and a transfer to Israel, as symbolized by Hephzibah's emphasized femininity as the hope for the future. In this scenario, emphasized femininity has grown out of its role supporting and signifying hegemonic masculinity, as demonstrated by the increasing emphasis in the text on Hephzibah.

## 5.12 Endings

However, it is the relationship between Libor and Sam Finkler that possesses the overriding influence of the imperial patriarchal framework within the novel. Initially rebelling from the beliefs and values of Libor, the original patriarch, Sam Finkler transforms to mirror his communal

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid, p 229.

<sup>89</sup> Brian Klug, "The Collective Jew: Israel and the New anti-Semitism".

<sup>90</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, p 135.

elder and assume position as his successor. An examination of the three male characters at the end of the novel is required to further explain this point.

By the end of the novel, Libor has committed suicide, as he can no longer live without his beloved Malkie. After learning of Libor's death, Hephzibah comments that she feels that Libor seemed to have departed from them all long ago, when Malkie died. In contrast, Treslove believes it was later than that. For him, Libor's distance began when Treslove became romantically involved with Hephzibah. However, it is the youngest generation within *The Finkler Question* that are left bearing the most direct responsibility for Libor's death. Unknowingly, Alfredo sits opposite Libor on his final train journey to Brighton. Through this plot development, Jacobson assigns blame to the youngest generation of British Jews, the self-hating or in-denial Jew, for the death of the elder generation of British Jewry, the communal grandparents from which they originated. In doing so, Jacobson consolidates the notion that Libor's relationship with Malkie is, actually, a metaphor for faith, both in terms of belief in God and the Jewish people. It is significant that once Libor is no longer pro-Zionist after suffering the loss of Malkie, his vision of Israel, Jacobson essentially kills Libor off. Thus, Jacobson suggests that once certain individuals or segments of British Jewry no longer believe in Zionism and the redemptive power of Israel then they become lost to the community. As a further extension of this argument, the communal impact of this development would be its eventual demise and therefore the success of Nazi ideology. If *The Finkler Question* is, therefore, a fable then Libor's story ultimately serves to highlight the potential dangers facing British Jewry regarding Jewish continuity.

Following the death of Libor, it is Sam Finkler who experiences perhaps the most dramatic change in personal and communal beliefs within the novel. He becomes very much an unashamed Jew. Attending the synagogue he frequented as a child with his father, Sam Finkler says Kaddish for Libor for (at least) eleven months after his death, thus further cementing the presence of an imperial patriarchal relationship between the two generations, as Sam Finkler elevates Libor to the status of family through this process. During this time, Sam Finkler is also able to finally grieve for his wife, Tyler. However, this development only occurs once Sam Finkler is able to have an amiable, and even fond, relationship with Hephzibah, suggesting that the opposition of anti-Zionists within British Jewry to their vision of Israel will only be overcome as a result of an improved relationship with present notions of Israel. Furthermore, as this process occurs after the death of traditional British Jewish ideals of Zionism, as represented by Libor, Jacobson indicates that anti-Zionism within the subsequent generation, as typified by Sam Finkler, is based on opposition to an out-dated, and thus redundant, idealised vision.

In contrast to the reconciliation of Sam Finkler with the women in his life, past and present, Treslove fails to secure his happy ending with Hephzibah. By the end of the novel, Treslove has left Hephzibah, along with his faith in British Jewry. Immediately prior to leaving Hephzibah, Treslove becomes embroiled in an altercation with an anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic group protesting outside the opening of the Museum of Anglo-Jewish Culture after which he is then involved in a minor road traffic collision. This dramatic, and darkly comic, development comes as Treslove's earlier optimism concerning Hephzibah diminishes. Treslove thus starts to, once again, seek out gloom as "He had begun to wake to the old sense of absurd loss again. Searching for the acute disappointment he felt...He was seeing too many dawns. Dawns did not suit Treslove".<sup>91</sup> Earlier Jacobson observes how, "For Treslove a woman's death was a beginning. He was a man made to mourn. He had always imagined himself bent double...revisiting the torn haunts of love".<sup>92</sup> Simultaneously, at this juncture in the novel, Treslove begins to feel that "It was all too much for him – children, parties, face paints, families, Finklers. He had bitten off more than he could chew".<sup>93</sup> Treslove complains that,

He was always a curiosity to them. Always a bit of a barbarian who had to be placated with beads and mirrors. He charged himself with ingratitude and humourlessness. Each time he fell into a pet he promised he would learn to do better. But he never did. They wouldn't let him in. Wouldn't let him in.<sup>94</sup>

He remains worried about issues of anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism on behalf of British Jewry, stating that "after a year of being an adopted Finkler in his eyes if in no-one else's – they didn't have a chance in hell"; further demonstrating the presence of an imperial patriarchal framework as Treslove continues to try and act as a protective father to Hephzibah.<sup>95</sup> However, Hephzibah believes that Treslove belongs in the category of men she tried, and failed, to save. She views him as an elderly parent, requiring support and supervision.<sup>96</sup>

The presence of reconciliation and resolution within the end of the novel suggests that, ultimately, *The Finkler Question* is a redemptive cautionary tale. For Sam Finkler this certainly appears to be true. He rediscovers his Jewishness, not just on an ethno-cultural level but also on a religious one too, as demonstrated by his attendance at Synagogue. Furthermore, Sam Finkler has also transformed from an anti-Zionist to a more 'traditional' Zionist, as depicted through Labor.

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<sup>91</sup> Howard Jacobson, *The Finkler Question*, p 289.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid*, p 284.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid*, p 265.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid*, p 261.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid*, p 267.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid*, p 229; *Ibid*, pp. 290 – 291.

Thus, it would appear that Libor and Sam Finkler are the actual personification of the imperial patriarchal relationship, as illustrated by the their father and son dynamic.

In contrast, Treslove is vilified, rather than redeemed, by the end of the novel. He becomes the personification of the well meaning but still prejudiced Zionism that Sam Finkler rebelled against at the debate with the ASHamed Jews. This is particularly evident through Treslove's relationship with Hephzibah, as he puts her on a pedestal and consequently applies higher standards of conduct to her behaviour than that of others, as previously outlined.<sup>97</sup> In doing so, Treslove's actions can be considered anti-Semitic in terms of the notion of 'the collective Jew', especially given Hephzibah's symbolism as a British Jewish vision of Israel.<sup>98</sup> Treslove is thus depicted as reverting to an even more hypocritical position than non-Zionist British Jewry as he is now a pro-Zionist, anti-Semitic Philosemite.<sup>99</sup> The politics of the author are therefore further revealed. Jacobson depicts the transformation in Treslove's beliefs very scathingly, highlighting his negative personal opinion of non-Zionist British Jews. This suggests that Jacobson views non-Zionist British Jewry as being worse (in their rhetoric and actions regarding Israel) than anti-Zionist British Jewry; within the novel the anti-Zionists at least acknowledge their Jewishness, unlike Treslove, before eventually redeeming themselves, as in the case of Sam Finkler.

However, it is Libor who fairs the worst in terms of redemption. Prior to his suicide, he is left heartbroken by both the previous death of his beloved wife and the behaviour of his two 'children', Treslove and Sam Finkler. Not only has Treslove betrayed his 'brother' Sam Finkler by having an affair with Tyler Finkler but both men seemed to be competing over the attentions of Libor's great, great niece, Hephzibah. The importance of Hephzibah within the end of the novel ensures Libor's on-going presence despite his death, as Hephzibah is the continuation of his lineage, both personally in terms of family ties and socio-religiously as the embodiment of a British Jewish ideal of Israel. Libor's lasting communal influence is further evident through the transformation in Sam Finkler; he represents a further continuation of Libor's religious-political beliefs as the embodiment of 'traditional' Zionism within the British Jewish community. It is through consideration of events immediately prior to Libor's death, however, that the enduring nature of the various manifestations of the imperial patriarchal relationship possesses significant impact. His death is aided, or at least not prevented, by Alfredo, Treslove's son. As Treslove had kept them both apart, neither had any idea who the other was and what the impact of their

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid, p 227.

<sup>98</sup> See Brian Klug, "The Collective Jew: Israel and the New anti-Semitism", p 3.

<sup>99</sup> A pro-Zionist, anti-Semitic Philosemite is someone who simultaneously views Jews positively as a unique group, but at the same time believes they should be removed from contemporary society as they are unsuited to it, feeling that such a move would benefit both parties.

meeting would – or could – be. So, Libor, as the ‘traditional’ Zionist of British Jewry is unwittingly assisted, in his suicide plans by Alfredo, the third generation, self-hating Jew who does not even realise his Jewish heritage. Thus, Jacobson alludes to the issue of Jewish continuity after the Holocaust.

### 5.13 The Novel

The significance of the dual issues of the Holocaust and Jewish heritage is further apparent when the novel is considered as whole. In particular *The Finkler Question* as a literary piece of work is in disguise, and possibly denial, with regard to its own cultural heritage, seeming to be one thing when it is, in fact, another. Given Jacobson’s socio-political opinions, the most likely explanation for this masquerade is to create additional satire with which to mock those sectors of the British Jewish community with which he disagrees. This pretext of subterfuge, which is apparent throughout the entirety of the novel, is achieved most notably by references to significance pieces of ‘western’ European, ‘high’ culture, such as Italian Opera and Shakespeare. The resulting effect is that the *The Finkler Question* then appears to be a tragedy masquerading as a comedy, as the attempts of the main characters at engaging with these cultural echoes is often humorous. For example, the often quarrelsome Treslove and Sam Finkler discuss the merits of Hamlet and, for once, both agree on its superior quality, when notes of betrayal between them have already been hinted at, seeming to reflect the main plot of Shakespeare’s play. Similarly, Treslove’s naming of his children after his favourite Italian opera characters is pretentious and a satirical comment on his lack of passion for either them or their mothers, as his demeanour could not be more different from the emotive (anti) heroes. Furthermore, examined within an even wider sphere of the place of *The Finkler Question* within Jewish fiction, the presence of these techniques within the novel ensures an additional religio-cultural linkage; in being a tragic fable masked as a comedy the novel is actually referring to and aping its Jewish heritage as Yiddish fiction is famed for a similar style of writing, as evidenced by the popularity of Sholom Aleichem’s *Tevye the Dairyman and Railroad Stories*.<sup>100</sup>

This analytical development adds a further note of irony into the ‘moral’ of Jacobson’s modern fable. The warning of the narrative, which employs the imperial patriarchal framework, is, thus, for British Jewry to ignore their cultural heritage at their peril. The naming of Alfredo and Rodolfo after an external cultural high point, that of the Italian Renaissance, possesses added satirical impact when it is remembered that eighteenth century England also understood this era within mainland Europe to be the epitome of ‘high’ culture, as demonstrated by the fashion

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<sup>100</sup> Sholom Aleichem, *Tevye the Dairyman and Railroad Stories* (New York: Schocken, 1987).

among the upper classes for the 'Grand Tour'. Therefore, Treslove identifies more with another time and place than his own, albeit initially unrecognised, Jewish heritage. The connotations of Treslove attempting to mimic an outdated version of English identity, which is, itself, modelled on another culture, are hence apparent in the behaviour of his children. Jacobson implies that those British Jews who are so far removed from their heritage that they either do not recognise it, as Treslove does not at the beginning of the novel, or who reject it, like Sam Finkler does, have produced offspring that identify more with another culture than their own lineage. Considered with the emphasis in this reading of *The Finkler Question* on Israel and the resulting implications for British Jewish identity, these developments within the narrative directly refer to the fact that a sizable minority of the more recent generations of British Jewry no longer support Israel but instead sympathize with Palestine. For Jacobson, British Jewry has created its own 'self-hating' Jew.

Jacobson's possible contempt for various sub-sections of British Jewry can be further evidenced by the idea that the use of 'traditional' 'high' European cultural references allows those portions of the narrative to be situated in pre-Holocaust Britain. They are employed to describe events and conversations prior to Treslove being mugged, his own personal trauma. Subsequently, such portions of the novel are referring to a time before the catastrophe of the Holocaust and, in the pre-ceding century, the period culminating in emancipation following the *Haskalah*. In doing so, Jacobson once again mocks British Jewish engagement with and belief in Anglicisation and assimilation, as the main characters of *The Finkler Question*, a novel focusing on Jewish identity, have chosen to ignore their own cultural heritage.

This reading of *The Finkler Question* also alludes to the notion that Jews tend to view the past as a series of repetitions, as it highlights the presence of repetitions in and of the text itself, similar to Grant's *When I Lived in Modern Times*. As a romantic tragedy masked as a romantic comedy, Treslove is infatuated with a romantic ideal that he requires to 'perish' in order to for him to feel in 'love' with this ideal. The ideal is two-fold. Firstly, in a literal sense, this relates to the role of Treslove's romantic interests. He must pity and foresee the untimely demise of each woman to indicate his being in love. Secondly, if women within *The Finkler Question* represent different manifestations of Israel and Treslove is symbolic of non-Zionist British Jews then Jacobson is, once again, making a judgement on British Jewry's relationship with Israel. Casting the dynamic as a romantic tragedy, it is suggested that despite the idea of Israel appealing to British Jewry, they have failed to translate their longing into emigration but have now, ultimately, given their children to this instead.<sup>101</sup> Furthermore, Treslove muses how "Libor's story about

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<sup>101</sup> Howard Cooper and Paul Morrison, *A Sense of Belonging: Dilemmas of British Jewish Identity*, p 116.

Heifetz at the Royal Albert Hall...wasn't it a bit uncomfortably close to Libor's story about Malkie and Horowitz at the Carnegie? They could conceivably both be true, but then again, the echo, once one heard it, was disconcerting".<sup>102</sup> In using Treslove to make such a statement, Jacobson is suggesting that fear over another Holocaust occurring is exaggerated within certain segments of the British Jewish community; details of anti-Semitic incidents feed this very anxiety through encouraging hyper-awareness of any kind of possible threat which, in turn, justifies the original stance. Jacobson would thus appear to be providing a satirical response to the notions put forward by Kahn-Harris and Gidley concerning the 'politics of insecurity' of British Jewry, as previously outlined.<sup>103</sup> This linkage of the Holocaust and Israel with the use of repetition in the text is often employed to create a humorous dialogue, such during Libor's Seder.<sup>104</sup>

The centrality of Israel and the Holocaust within the presence of these repetitions suggests that, by its very formation, this literary technique reflects the personal British Jewish identity of its author. However, through consideration of the work of Fukuyama, it could be suggested that such dynamics are representative of the wider, non-Jewish world in which Jacobson situates *The Finkler Question*. Fukuyama declared that, "the century that began full of self-confidence in the ultimate triumph of Western liberal democracy seems at its close to be returning full circle to where it started".<sup>105</sup> By using repetition in such a manner, similar to Grant in *When I Lived in Modern Times*, Jacobson suggests that the entirety of the novel supports a similar notion. The multi-layered presence of repetition based on the Holocaust and Israel implies some British Jews are no longer writing new pasts but are, instead, basing their histories and futures on old experiences. In this interpretation, these texts understand the Holocaust as the end of history. This interpretation of communal history can be seen as a continuation or updated version of Katz' teleological notion that the end point of British Jewish history was previously understood to be emancipation.<sup>106</sup> However, as the Holocaust was, and continues to be, understood in relation to previous anti-Semitic events such as pogroms then it could be suggested that, in this reading, Jacobson, as a British Jew, perceives the end of history to be even earlier than both emancipation and the Holocaust.

However, it is through further analysis of the role of Holocaust as both an end and then a beginning that its significance within the repetitions is realised. The entire novel is set a time

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<sup>102</sup> Howard Jacobson, *The Finkler Question*, p 99.

<sup>103</sup> Keith Kahn-Harris and Ben Gidley, *Turbulent Times: The British Jewish Community Today*, p 26.

<sup>104</sup> Howard Jacobson, *The Finkler Question*, p 128.

<sup>105</sup> Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?", *The National Interest*, 1989

<<https://ps321.community.uaf.edu/files/2012/10/Fukuyama-End-of-history-article.pdf>> [last accessed 07/02/2017].

<sup>106</sup> David Katz, "The Marginalization of Early Modern Anglo-Jewish History", in Tony Kushner (ed), *The Jewish Heritage in British History: Englishness and Jewishness* (London: Frank Cass, 1992), pp. 60 – 77, p 61.

within the Jewish calendar for endings and beginnings. This is particularly evident when Libor hosts a Seder in September; instead of celebrating the end of one year and the beginning of another as is common at this time in the Jewish calendar, Passover is being unseasonably marked. Thus, the first part of the novel is situated during a time when the 'ghosts' of the previous year are respectfully acknowledged and the new one is begun with hope for the future. The tactic of using Passover to unmask Jewish collective memory has a precedent both within and outside British Jewish literature. Identifying its presence in the work of Jewish writers as diverse as Yerushalmi and Linda Grant, Gilbert describes how

Within Jewish ritual, food functions at an even more fundamental and structural level... Grant, like many others, places this thought in specific relation to Passover...The Passover story is remembered each year through a highly ritualized series of symbolic and narrative enactments, many of which are centred on food. As Yerushalmi notes, the Seder (the ritual dinner) is the 'quintessential exercise in Jewish group memory'.<sup>107</sup>

It is therefore apparent that by placing the novel within this portion of the Jewish calendar, Jacobson is promoting the view that the Holocaust was both a beginning and an end not only for British Jewry but also Jewish communities worldwide. It is, after all, significant that Treslove was mugged only a few weeks previously and it is at the Seder that he meets Hephzibah. Or, in a more metaphorical reading, it is only a few weeks after the Holocaust has prompted non-Zionist British Jews to identify as Jewish that they are introduced to their vision of Israel with whom they form a romantic but ultimately doomed relationship. The situating of this event during an unseasonable Passover serves to link the Holocaust with the biblical exodus and the idea of repetitions in Jewish history. After witnessing an old lady, who is also a guest at Libor's Seder, gain pleasure from a children's pop-up story book of Passover, Treslove decides that, "So it was repetition for the fun of it, not the venegence".<sup>108</sup>

The significance of the Seder within the text is further substantiated by its reference to the imperial patriarchal framework. In using Treslove to ask the 'four questions' with assistance from Hephzibah by his side, Jacobson places him in the role of the 'child' within the imperial patriarchal relationship. This foreshadows the end of the novel when Hephzibah views Treslove as an elderly parent who requires assistance as a child may do, rather than as a romantic interest.<sup>109</sup> Furthermore, the linkage of the Holocaust and a Passover held during the end of the Jewish year is additionally highlighted by this plot development. Treslove muses that,

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<sup>107</sup> Ruth Gilbert, *Writing Jewish: Contemporary British-Jewish Literature since 1990*, p 31.

<sup>108</sup> Howard Jacobson, *The Finkler Question*, p 126.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid*, p 229.

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If the answers to his questions amounted to anything it was that this had to be told and retold – ‘The more one speaks about the departure from Egypt the better’, he read. Which wasn’t, if he understood the matter correctly, remotely Finkler’s position. ‘Oh, here we go, Holocaust, Holocaust,’ he heard Finkler saying. So would he say the same about Passover? ‘Oh, here we go, Exodus, Exodus...’.<sup>110</sup>

In this interpretation, it could be suggested that similarly to how Moses saved the Jews at Passover, Israel saved the Jews after the Holocaust. This is further substantiated by the fact that it here that Treslove meets his Israel, Hephzibah. Furthermore, it seems that by the very act of repetition something more concrete is created. Thus, the emphasis within the text is on the repeating of a past which makes the present and future more solid, as demonstrated by Treslove; his ‘story’ of origin, from the mugging onwards as this is when he identifies as a British Jew, is often repeated, resulting in an increasingly firmer sense of identity.

However, Gilbert conversely identifies how, “with its emphasis on the suffering and bitter tears of the Jewish past, and the emotive aspiration to return to the mythical Promised Land (‘Next Year in Jerusalem’), Passover can remind British Jews that they might still be strangers in a strange land”.<sup>111</sup> Considered within the entirety of the novel, then, Jacobson includes the Seder as a plot development to not only represent a transition to the future for Treslove, and the British Jewish community, but also to signal to the reader that all is not what it initially seems within the narrative. Or, put more bluntly, that Treslove and Hephzibah, and that which they represent, may not be all they seem. Jacobson thus suggests that readers should remain on alert at this juncture in the text.

The metaphorical importance of situating the novel during these particular times in the Jewish calendar is additionally substantiated by its construction in two acts. The first act can be seen as the end of Jewish history as represented by the Holocaust, its aftermath and the rediscovering of British Jewish identity whilst the second is the re-beginning of Jewish history, as demonstrated by the establishment of the state of Israel and its consequences. This reading is supported by the text being situated not only during the Jewish New Year but simultaneously during Passover. Jacobson thus ensures that double meaning and repetition are again apparent during these scenes celebrating the delivery from evil of the Jewish people and the end of one period of Jewish history and the start of another.

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid, p 128.

<sup>111</sup> Ruth Gilbert, *Writing Jewish: Contemporary British-Jewish Literature since 1990*, p 32.

This idea that the notion of endings and then beginnings is a constant is reflected in use of the imperial patriarchal narrative, as it is through Jacobson's development of each separate generation of British Jews that patterns begin to emerge. Jacobson details a familiar course: each generation of British Jewry rebel against the previous, parental generation until they are radicalised by an anti-Semitic incident, which reconciles them to their parents generational viewpoint, by when the cycle has already begun for the next generation.

## 5.14 Conclusion

Thus, considered as an entirety, *The Finkler Question* is a modern fable based on Yiddish tales from the past. It utilises recent Jewish history, applicable to Jews around the world, with the notion of an imperial patriarchal narrative, specific to British Jewry only. Reflecting Jacobson's politics, it contains a warning to all segments of British Jewry, with non-Zionist British Jews faring the worst. Its bleak final message is in contrast to the more optimistic and hopeful interpretation of the current situation evident at the end of Kosminsky's *The Promise* and even Grant's reserved plea at the end of *When I Lived in Modern Times*. At the centre of *The Finkler Question*, then, along with *When I Lived in Modern Times* and *The Promise*, is the impact of the past and present upon the diaspora and notions of exile.

According to Rushdie 'exile' is associated with an individual who thinks of a "pure and bounded homeland" whilst for Said it represents Palestinian national narratives.<sup>112</sup> In contrast, Rushdie believes diaspora equates with the masses and Said associates it with Jewish nationalism.<sup>113</sup> However, Hall states that "The diaspora experience...is defined, not by essence or purity, but by recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of 'identity' which lives with and through, not despite, difference", although the Boyarins criticize Hall for not including Jews in this hybridity.<sup>114</sup>

It would therefore seem that Jacobson, Grant and Kosminsky are trying to negotiate a way between these understandings of diaspora and exile. Jacobson moves beyond Hall's explanation and counters the critiques put forward by the Boyarins, as he emphasizes and teases the reader with the notion of hybridity in the British Jewish community in relation to Israel and the shared

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<sup>112</sup> Bryan Cheyette, *Diasporas of the Mind: Jewish and Postcolonial Writing and the Nightmare of History*, pp. 27 – 28; Edward Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), pp. 141 – 142.

<sup>113</sup> Bryan Cheyette, *Diasporas of the Mind: Jewish and Postcolonial Writing and the Nightmare of History*, pp. 27 – 28.

<sup>114</sup> Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora" in Jonathan Rutherford (ed), *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990), pp. 235-6; Bryan Cheyette, *Diasporas of the Mind: Jewish and Postcolonial Writing and the Nightmare of History*, p 29.

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past. This search for hybridity and a middle way is particularly evident in Kosminsky's *The Promise* whilst Grant's *When I Lived in Modern Times* also counters the understandings of exile and diaspora previously outlined. Significantly, all three texts examined in this thesis counter the idea endorsed by Jewish nationalism that diasporic Jewish history ended with the Holocaust, providing evidence of a reversed extraterritoriality. This is an essential component of the argument presented herein as without rejecting the notion that the Holocaust ended diasporic Jewish history there would be no overarching imperial patriarchal discourse present in the work of Jacobson, Grant and Kosminsky. The place of the Holocaust in the heritage of the imperial patriarch is a key part of the discourse and it is from this corner stone of three particular British Jewish understandings that these texts have emerged detailing the evolution of British Jewish perceptions of mandate Palestine and the establishment of Israel.

## Conclusion

This thesis increases understanding of different perspectives relating to not only the British Jewish past but also its present identities. It does so through a discussion and exploration of the argument that some British Jews use an imperial patriarchal discourse to help understand their perceptions of Mandate Palestine and modern Israel. Beginning by outlining the historical precedent for an imperial patriarchal narrative with regard its presence in the British Jewish press, communal and private correspondence, and *Mass Observers* between 1944 and 1948, it then examined how notions of a shared recent history, age, and gender all served to undermine the role of the imperial patriarch in reference to British actions in Palestine. Moving forward, a modern literary interpretation of this manifestation of the imperial patriarch was highlighted through a cautionary romantic tale in which a version of the (British) imperial patriarch was triumphant in rescuing Grant's Evelyn in *When I Lived in Modern Times*. However, the eventual failure of the (British Jewish) imperial patriarch was then illustrated, as Kosminsky's Len could not save Hassan's life nor Clara from her extremist ambition in *The Promise*. Instead, the imperial patriarch of the past was left to rely on his (female) descendant's assistance in the modern setting through the character, Erin. Finally, the thesis explored the end of the original (British Jewish) imperial patriarchal vision of Zionism in Jacobson's *The Finkler Question* due to Libor's death, but provided some indication for the present and future perspectives of British Jewry as Hephzibah now assumed a more protective and caring role. Together, the three texts analyzed ranged from a 'traditional' 1940s presentation of the imperial patriarch in Grant's *When I Lived in Modern Times*, to its evolution regarding modern repercussions in Kosminsky's *The Promise*, and, finally, an inversion within Jacobson's *The Finkler Question*.

However, despite the presence of this overarching discourse, there are differences between the three narratives. Namely, if Grant's novel fails to include consideration of the internal 'other', in this case the Arab population of Mandate Palestine/Israel, then Kosminsky's television series does not. In highlighting the internal communal divisions between not only Jews but also Arabs, Kosminsky offers a more complex portrayal of historical events. Jacobson also provides an intricate account of communal differences between Jews in relation to Israel, with British Jewish non- and anti-Zionists assuming the role of the internal 'other' (although, once again, the Arab perspective is missing).

A further significant difference between the three pieces concerns the influence of Grant, Kosminsky and Jacobson's political outlook on their works. Undoubtedly influenced by her position as a left-leaning liberal British Jew, the ending of Grant's *When I Lived in Modern Times*

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contains a critique of Israeli actions at the time of its publication. The earlier optimism of the novel is replaced by a sense of ambiguous despondency; Evelyn has failed to be a revolutionary and was rescued by the personification of the imperial patriarch, Inspector Bolton. No less critical, Kosminsky's production is affected by the atheism of his father, presenting the idea that the present day possibilities for lasting peace derive from a shared humanity rather than religious difference. His heroine of the series, Erin, is given the power to influence the future after successfully righting the wrongs of her grandfather's actions. Contrastingly, Jacobson presents his perspective that anti-Zionism equates with anti-Semitism, suggesting that Israel remains a foundation stone for British Jewish identity. Within the narrative of *The Finkler Question*, it is only once Finkler has reconciled with his actual and perceived visions of Israel that redemption is possible. This is elusive for Treslove and impossible for Libor to realize.

Nevertheless, overall there exist more similarities than differences between the fictive accounts analysed. Hence, in its entirety, this thesis identifies an expansion of Cheyette's theory of extraterritoriality from being focused only on a geographical relocation to also include notions of chronology.<sup>1</sup> Whilst both Grant and Kosminsky evidently play with time as well as place within the two plots, Jacobson also recasts his narrative of London and the characters resident in it to become symbolic of various eras in British Jewish history. Thus, within all three texts examined relocation away from the confines of British Jewry is required in order to explore the complexities of such an identity.

However, that the presence of the European continent as a dangerous site of self-(re)discovery served as an established literary tactic for earlier British, non-Jewish, writers suggests that it is a common technique within the creation of fiction to use relocation as metaphor for escape and the un-masking of the true self. For example, the British Nineteenth Century writer Georg Eliot showcased Germany as both as nation of empirical reason and progress and of a place of wickedness and lowering of morals in *Daniel Deronda*.<sup>2</sup> Therefore this implies that the presence of territoriality was not confined to British Jewish writers as presented by Cheyette but British authors more widely.<sup>3</sup> Rather, this thesis argues that the chronological and geographical re-siting of narratives within the three texts reflects the wider, British *and* Jewish, cultural and social milieu in which they were created and intended for reception.

The most successful and obvious way in which this complex cultural influence is demonstrated is through the presence of an imperial patriarchal narrative. It is through the

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<sup>1</sup> Axel Stähler (ed), *Anglophone Jewish literatures*, p 12.

<sup>2</sup> Georg Eliot, *Daniel Deronda* (Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1876)

<sup>3</sup> Axel Stähler (ed), *Anglophone Jewish literatures*, p 12.

presence of this framework that the specific socio-political position of the three texts' perceptions of British Jewry's past and present is fully recognized. Notably, Israel is cast as the 'collective Jew', demonstrating the wider impact of new anti-Semitism upon the texts.<sup>4</sup> Correspondingly, they also illustrate understandings of the communal baggage of British Jewry's domestic past, especially the impact of Britain's imperial role. There are differences in the vision constructed in each text, revealing the politics of each producer, as previously outlined. However the flexibility of the imperial patriarchal discourse allows these to be accommodated without detracting from the overarching narrative. It thus reveals the wider historical and communal discourse from which Grant, Kosminsky and Jacobson emerged. Despite differences between the texts, they jointly illustrate the presence of three collective memories of perspectives not only specific to Jewish communities, such as the Holocaust and establishment of the state of Israel, but also British-orientated collective memories from the domestic sphere encapsulated by the Second World War and the decline of Empire.

Despite being grounded in historical actualities (to varying degrees), all three texts are re-imaginings of the past. By doing so, they insert elements of hope into a historical sequence of events in which, in reality, hope was eventually perceived to be somewhat extinguished. They enable the present to not be confined by an unsatisfactory past. Thus, limiting the impact of the notion that the high point of the establishment of Israel also marked the decline of the very same hope from which it originally evolved. Indeed, they allow the British Jewish future to be invested with a promise of hope untainted by the realities of the past and present. Thus although they detail historical events, all three texts allow the audience to move beyond such issues to re-imagine a future free of violence and full of hope. The three texts, to various degrees, only engage with such political and cultural happenings in order to attribute different amounts of responsibility and culpability for not only the past but also the present.

However, rather than purely attributing blame, their shared tactic serves to enable the audience to re-invest hope into the future. This is achieved due to the three texts collectively creating a present day scenario whereby certain amounts of culpability for past actions, or inaction, is assumed in order to create a more balanced view than previously elicited. From these, a platform based on greater parity is suggested and from which hope for the future can be built upon. In doing so, Grant, Kosminsky and Jacobson offer a narrative attendant to Kahn-Harris and Gidley's 'politics of insecurity' whereby despite the apparent rootedness of British Jewry within

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<sup>4</sup> Brian Klug, "The Collective Jew: Israel and the New anti-Semitism", *Patterns of Prejudice*, Vol.37/ Issue 2 (2003), pp.117 – 138, p 3.

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Britain, there is a fear of danger and insecurity felt within the community.<sup>5</sup> By rejecting this negative presentation (either by direct contrast, as in Grant's and Kosminsky's work, or through a satirical reflection, as in Jacobson's novel), the three texts create the possibility of a hopeful future, both in terms of domestic politics and international relations.

Such a counter-argument to the negativity of the politics of fear is substantiated by further equality within the narratives being realized by the eventual positioning within all three pieces of the main female character as the heroine of the story. It is she who possesses the power of change for the future. This shared lasting role of the woman as being symbolic of hope for the future demonstrates the use of gender equality as a signifier of revolution across Grant's, Kosminsky's and Jacobson's work.<sup>6</sup> This concept gains additional significance when considered in conjunction with the notion of Jewish continuity and the position of British Jewish women as the holders of the communal future, providing a further element of warning to the British Jewish community.

Tracing the development of the concept of the father in pre – and Revolutionary France, Hunt has described how prior to the Revolution, French novels were “asking the good father to curb his own powers”.<sup>7</sup> However, the “rise of the child-centred family meant changes in the role of the father as “A stern, repressive father was incompatible with the new model of the family as emotional centre for the nurturing of children and the new model of the individual as an autonomous self”.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, by the end of the Eighteenth Century, even male authors wrote fathers out of narratives, as being absent, lost, dead, or unknown.<sup>9</sup> A direct reference to the three texts analysed is thus apparent. As the endings of all three novels concentrate on female continuity and Jewish rebirth after the Holocaust, the application of Hunt's research to this thesis reveals the presence of very particular, unique anxieties. Also displayed in the 1940s British Jewish press, the primary concern of both the newspapers and the three texts seems the survival and rebirth of Jewish community, considering so much security of continuity had been lost in the Holocaust. Thus, the inversion of the imperial patriarchal discourse, in which the male father (Britain) owns up to his past mistakes and allows the female child (Israel) to become more independent, is a necessary part of this process of rejuvenation. Emphasis on women as the holders of communal hope within the endings of the three texts substantiates this theory.

Additionally, by presenting a woman who ultimately triumphs over adversity and has the

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<sup>5</sup> Keith Kahn-Harris and Ben Gidley, *Turbulent Times: The British Jewish Community Today* (London: Continuum, 2010), p 26.

<sup>6</sup> Martin Evans, *The Memory of Resistance: French opposition to the Algerian War (1954-1962)*, p 191.

<sup>7</sup> Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution*, p 19.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, p 21.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, p 23.

potential (if only in theory and not in reality) for a happy and successful (British Jewish) future, and thus a fulfilling relationship with Israel (or her true self) as part of this, all three pieces counter the Roth presentation of women. The three texts therefore demonstrate that they are composed of a uniquely British Jewish element as opposed to an American Jewish one, an argument outlined in Chapter One. Indeed, these influences upon the work of Grant, Kosminsky and Jacobson are distinctly separate to those of similar American-Jewish cultural outputs.

However, despite the seemingly revolutionary use of gender within the three texts and the historical material, doubt regarding the extent of their progressiveness is present due to the gender and sexual orientation of the imperial patriarch. Explaining the mechanics of gender performatives, Butler states that:

acts, gestures, and desire produce the effect of an internal core or substance, but produce this *on the surface* of the body, through the play of signifying absences that suggest, but never reveal, the organizing principle of identity as a cause. Such acts, gestures, enactments, generally constructed, are *performative* in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are *fabrications* manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means...If the 'cause' of desire, gesture and act can be localized within the 'self' of the actor, then the political regulations and disciplinary practices which produce that ostensibly coherent gender are effectively displaced from view. The displacement of a political and discursive origin of gender identity onto a psychological 'core' precludes an analysis of the political construction of the gendered subject and its fabricated notions about the ineffable interiority of its sex or of its true identity.<sup>10</sup>

Hence, all three texts display performative, heterosexual gender constructions and thus obscure the debate from being political to being one of personal motivations of self and views of identity. The three texts are therefore not as progressive as they may first appear in terms of open debate, as they substantiate the status quo regarding inner and outer senses of self and areas of space. Although it could be suggested that this is a way of retreating from (failed) political views of the situation and instead relocating the discussion to more (possibly effective) personal level, ultimately, by reinforcing the hegemonic masculinity of the imperial patriarch, the three texts attempt to present a more unified situation than the reality by emphasizing the 'natural' state of heterosexual coherence. This serves to create a scenario whereby the relationship between

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<sup>10</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, p 136.

## Conclusion

Britain, British Jews and Israel is perceived as part of 'natural' family dynamic, as encompassed by the role of the imperial patriarch.

Furthermore, referring to 'multidirectional memory', as outlined in Chapter One, Rothberg describes how

The competitive model takes the scarcity of civic space...as the basis for its understanding of public memory... The polemical thrust of my argument has been to reject the reductionism of the nation-centred, real-estate development model in favour of a more open-ended sense of the possibilities of memory and countermemory that might allow the 'revisiting' and rewriting of hegemonic sites of memory.<sup>11</sup>

Although Rothberg offers a way forward for the situation in Israel/ Palestine, an environment where civic space is highly contested and scarce, this concept poses challenges for the imperial patriarchal discourse, which itself is a hegemonic system of memory and historical understanding as well as modern perceptions. Despite appearing adaptable, to an extent, and trying to be moderately inclusive, the imperial patriarch is, ultimately, a version of hegemonic masculinity. Regardless of this difficulty, the texts analysed here introduce the key positions concerning who should be recognized, what should be represented and what form this should take in future understandings of the past and present of the Palestine Mandate. Such a development supports Nancy Fraser's research on "framing justice" in which it is advocated that the notion of 'multidirectional memory' can "contribute especially to rethinking questions of recognition and representation".<sup>12</sup>

Discussing the fluidity of such histories and in reference to the Israeli historian, Benny Morris, Rothberg summarises that Morris' overall "discourse undergoes rapid shifts in perspective between the positions of victim, perpetrator and bystander. The backdrop against which these shifts take place, however, is a consistent worldview: that of colonialism".<sup>13</sup> Within the three texts, the research in this thesis on the presence of imperial patriarchal discourse reveals that the consistent worldview is one of persecution and protection. In this sense, they are modern Jewish fables, in a similar vein to Sholem Aleichem's fiction, detailing the moral adventures of a perceived utopia against a backdrop of prejudice and acceptance.<sup>14</sup> However, they are stories with a wider appeal than their historical specificity, as the interwoven narrative of the imperial

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<sup>11</sup> Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization*, p 310.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, p 312.

<sup>14</sup> Sholem Aleichem, *Tevye the Dairyman and Railroad Stories* (New York: Schocken, 1987).

patriarch can itself be re-cast to denote the challenges encountered by nation states. Together, they identify how three separate texts utilized an imperial patriarchal narrative to denote three specific British Jewish perspectives concerning their shared communal place within a changing international landscape and domestic sphere. By examining the contemporary cultural British Jewish response to the end of the Mandate in Palestine and the establishment of the state of Israel, this thesis reveals an area of previously underexplored scholarship. Although studies on British Jewish literature and the historical era exist, it remains an underdeveloped field, with interdisciplinary research, especially cultural studies, such as this thesis absent. This thesis is therefore not only a study of three British Jews' perceptions of the past and present but also of hope for their interlinked communal futures.



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